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Rationalism and the professional development of graduate teaching associates

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RATIONALISM AND THE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF GRADUATE TEACHING ASSOCIATES

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Communication Studies

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Master of Arts

by

Diana C. Woodhouse

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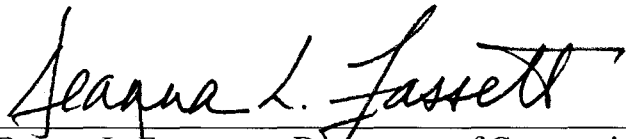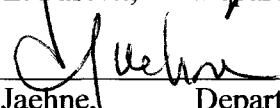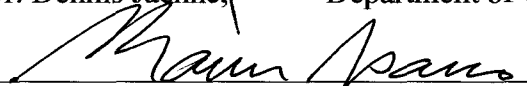
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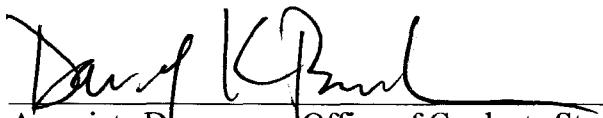
RATIONALISM AND THE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF GRADUATE TEACHING ASSOCIATES

by
Diana C. Woodhouse

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ABSTRACT

RATIONALISM AND THE PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT OF GRADUATE TEACHING ASSOCIATES

By Diana C. Woodhouse

The majority of instructional communication research identifies the main goal of

instructors and effective teaching as securing teacher control and student compliance.

Traditional instructional communication research decontextualizes student misbehaviors

by eliding deeply emotionally invested issues of race, culture, socioeconomic status, and

gender. This study explores how this decontextualization is a result of a rationalistic

framework that marginalizes oppressed groups.

Using a method of rhetorical criticism on instructional texts for graduate

teaching associates, this study identifies four key representations of rationalistic

discourses across these texts: advocation for decontextualization within the classroom as

an attempt to omit emotion, suppression of negative emotion within the classroom,

controlling of emotion through rationality, and a disregard for graduate teaching

associates' subject position as a productive liminal space. Since these findings can

influence GTAs' future careers as educators, this study concludes by considering the

broader implications of these representations of rationalism for both students and

teachers.

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I am forever indebted to the writings of Paulo Freire, Parker Palmer, Nel Noddings, and bell hooks for their collective enrichment of my personal teaching philosophy.

Finally, thank you to my friends and family for their quiet but constant support in every aspect of my life.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In embarking upon my first year of teaching as a graduate teaching associate, I was terrified that my students would reveal me not as a confident, knowledgeable and credible teacher who was selected from an impressive pool of qualified applicants, but rather as a girl not much older than themselves, uncertain in her pedagogy, and still a student herself. What if my students called me out, questioned my teaching methods, or my subject knowledge? And if they did, could I easily cast these students as "trouble-makers" and antagonists, or should I recognize that perhaps a student who is irritated, concerned or angry that his or her teacher may be under-qualified or under-experienced might be justified in feeling that way? My coping method, similar to many in my novice position, was to plan and prepare—to consider and scrutinize any and every possible situation that could occur in my classroom and to have a prepared course of action ready to relay. While never revealed as an impostor, while never the recipient of such student emotion, at least not in any obvious or discernable manner, I quickly began to realize that I could never adequately prepare for or control any instance of student emotion, that while organization and structure are helpful components of the classroom, their equal and opposite components are chaos and uncertainty. Adding an additional layer to my discomfort with embracing students' emotion in the classroom, was the knowledge, which was becoming increasingly apparent in my own engagement of critical texts during my course of graduate study, that my own behaviors—my want to control my students and to restrain their emotion— were to silence and marginalize them in one fell swoop. And while my students never revealed to be an impostor, I shamefully bestowed the title

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upon myself. I found myself, a person who had prided herself on always attempting to be both a critical and thoughtful scholar and instructor, in short, a hypocrite. The most painful and significant lesson I learned in that first year teaching, a lesson I continue to struggle with, was/is that effective teaching means grappling with and working productively within chaos and control.

According to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2003), teacher attrition rates in the first three years of service are close to 50 percent nationally. Extant instructional communication research (Burroughs, Kearney, & Plax, 1989) attributes such dissatisfaction to some of the "chaotic" components of teaching, deeming student resistance and misbehavior, and teachers' management of disruptive classroom behavior, a source of workplace stress. Such a list of possible causative agents for teacher burnout and ensuing attrition rates are neither without worth nor unfounded; however, this research frames the problems and, subsequently, the solutions of our current educational settings, not as complex and slippery ones that encourage a reflexive grappling with tensions, but instead as monolithic and linear, as clearly identifiable problems or "stresses" with identifiable, prescriptive solutions.

The tendency to reduce such complicated educational problems to linear, accessible problem-solution formulas is an understandable inclination. As Westernized souls, we are driven and conditioned to think in polarities and to view the world through an analytical lens that has encouraged us to divide and conquer. The scientific method, as it is valued and exalted in America, has become so embedded in our culture that we can rarely recognize how it frames so many of our problem-solving approaches. We are

trained from grade school on to first identify a problem and then create a step-by-step solution towards addressing it. Born of this structured practice in which we isolate variables and test solutions are America's privileged and valued processes of rational thought and logic.

Such thought processes are celebrated in our culture as higher ordered and are associated with the advancement of society. Indeed, this thinking at a distance has afforded us great power and privilege, bearing computers and other gifts of modern science. I am wholly thankful that these analytical tools allow me to develop these pages you read, both in terms of helping to create the machine that types and prints them and in teaching me the skill necessary to structure cohesive and developmentally sound prose that my reader can follow. Similarly, I find great comfort in knowing the airplane I board and the car I drive have passed a series of rigorous mechanical tests, serving as both a product and benefit of years of scientific research and rational, systematic thought-processes.

Admittedly, the powers of scientific thought, objectivity, and analysis have a welcome and necessary place in society. However, the aim of these pages is not to further elevate and promote an unreflective reliance on rational and logical thought, but rather to question how, in certain contexts, particularly in the context of education and the professional development of teachers, accepting and promoting rational thought and logic systems a priori has lead instructional communication research and practices to a dangerous place—one where we fail to acknowledge and explore how such systems of thought affect the instructors who are shaped by the theories and practices of this

research, the students these instructors teach, and the society in which all teachers, students, and researchers co-exist.

More specifically, in this thesis, I will explore how the seemingly benign construct of rational thought is transformed, within the context of education, into an often-oppressive ideology of rational*ism*, which urges, unreflectively, for a "thinking of the world apart" (Palmer, 2007, p. 64) through attempts to isolate and control for variables, specifically emotion, within the classroom. What makes this perspective troublesome, however, is that students are not beakers filled with various chemicals; they are human beings in flux—collections of varying life experiences. Science may be able to isolate the components and contents of different substances, but this practice becomes abusive when, as researchers and instructors, we rely on logic and reduction to understand, manipulate, or "solve" the varying degrees of turmoil or joy a student or teacher brings with her or him into the classroom. Within science, "solutions" come as *this* not *that*, *black* not *white*, *plus* not *minus*. While these dichotomies are helpful and necessary to the scientific community, to computer systems, and to mechanical processes, they transform into false binaries, misnomers, and placards of rationalism and its ills when placed in the context of the classroom—a world that requires the ability to think not in *either-ors* but *both-ands*. This crucial ability—so lacking within rationalist educational discourses—is reflexivity. My hope is to contribute to a more nuanced dialogue within instructional communication that is not focused on teacher versus student or student compliance versus student disruption as independent and dependent variables of an equation, but rather explores how all of these factors exist in productive, unavoidable, and meaningful

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tension.

Within these pages, I wish to explore the ways that rationalistic language and processes within instructional communication research that suppress emotion in favor of reason can be replaced with or challenged by reflexive language and processes that embrace productive tension between reason and emotion. I will argue that language is not simply a vehicle for transporting messages, but that language helps to create our material world and its consequences, ultimately asserting that rationalism is substantiated and reiterated in language without reflection. Fundamental to understanding instructional communication research as imbued with oppressive discourses is the recognition that,

> language is neither a camera lens nor a mirror. That is, language does not capture nor does it reflect a reality that exists "out there" independent of the speaker, but instead shapes and is shaped by its users' overarching ideology. This language-as-ideology perspective defines language as an instrument for assigning the phenomena of human experience to conceptual categories. (Wright, 1998, p. 6)

By accepting this assertion that language creates and frames, and imposes structure and meaning onto our world, we can begin to look critically at the language surrounding us, and start to notice the cracks and fissures in what once appeared a smooth façade.

If it is true that America's educational system is in crisis, with teacher attrition rates at record highs, then we can begin to use logic and rational thought in a cautious and careful manner to understand this problem. In believing that language does in fact contribute to and help to create our realities, then we must look to the language surrounding how we teach our teachers. This logic leads us not towards a government instituted, bullet pointed plan, which outlines and defines effective versus ineffective instructional language, but instead towards critical reflection of language of instructional

communication as rigid, obfuscating, and unemotional.

This thesis begins with the assertion that rationalist ideology has permeated and had ill effects upon instructional communication research, and the teaching practices for which it advocates. As a product of both our Westernized society and an educational system that values control and compliance over emotion and reflection, I have struggled in my GTA role with the tendency to want to control my own classroom, out of fear of the unknown and unscripted—a fear that stems from deviating from what has been subtly reinforced in my own consciousness, by both society and educational systems alike, for all of my life. These subjective experiences that I have endured have lead me to question why I face this struggle and what is responsible for these difficult-to-reconcile tensions. In hope of reconciling these tensions, I urge for an investigation and encouragement of reflection and reflexivity upon this rational thought, in the belief that "changing language is part of the process of changing the world" (Freire, 1992, p. 88). I plan to add to the existing body of instructional research in exploring effective communication in the classroom; however, I will be approaching the term "effective" not in a binary sense of *this* or *that*, as does much extant research, but instead from a reflexive viewpoint of *this* in light of *that*, heretofore underaddressed in our field. Until reflection and reflexivity in tension with rational thought and logic takes root in instructional communication research, this research will continue to contribute to and constitute reductive rationalistic discourses in the professional development of instructors.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review concerns itself with the ways in which extant instructional communication research has approached the professional development of teachers, particularly in light of this field's emphasis on and approach to the study of classroom management. In light of my own experiences as a GTA, particularly my fear of emotion and chaos within the classroom, I am interested and concerned with how, in what overarching senses, instructional communication's approach to the education of teachers affects teachers, in general, and GTAs, in particular. This literature review aims to shed light upon this educational discourse's elision of emotion in its approach to classroom control. In light of recent school tragedies such as Columbine and Virginia Tech, it is becoming increasingly obvious that we can no longer dismiss or neglect student emotion, hence, substantiating a rethinking, re-teaching, and reprioritization of the traditional view of classroom management and its relationship to effective teaching.

In hopes of contributing to a discussion surrounding the development of a more nuanced and reflective view of effective instruction that embraces emotion as worthwhile to the pedagogical process, I begin by explaining rationalism and how it oppresses marginalized groups, such as woman and people of color, by controlling emotion. Next I provide examples of rationalistic methods of teacher training rooted within instructional communication research, offering a critique of the predominant research in this field. Finally, I survey critical views of language within educational discourses and explore the role of language as constitutive of and complicit in the rationalistic discourses of predominant research within instructional communication.

Rationalism

Having discussed briefly the ways in which rational thought, a useful structuring and organizational method, differs from rationalism, an ideology of control that maintains the status quo, I will go on to unpack this difference at length, as the purpose of this thesis is not to discount or demonize rational thought or rational argument, but rather to pinpoint when and how an unreflective use of, and an over-reliance upon, rational thought creates an unquestioned ideology of rational*ism*, which marginalizes liminal groups, by ignoring and demonizing emotion.

Rationalism and ethics

Historically, moral progress has been characterized by an increasing accordance with moral rules and an increasing distance from natural or animalistic tendencies. In viewing ourselves as humans, as opposed to animals, who are capable of using reason and logic as mental faculties toward moral progress, our society has created laws and structures that reiterate and constitute largely universalized views of right and wrong. Indeed, rape and murder top lists of ethical and moral transgressions, viewed in society as savage, uncivilized, and animalistic. However, in relying on capacities of reason to create such morals and ethics, and by placing reason in opposition to the animalistic, instinctive, and emotive, these qualities, still inherent in humans, become the enemy of the rational, as corrupting, temperamental, and self-interested. Philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas reiterates the problematic position of reason as rightfully and necessarily separate from all else when he says, "the intellectual nature is alone requisite for its own sake in the universe, and all others for its sake" (1991, p. 203).

Rationalism and universalism

Isolating mental processes of logic and reason as a means towards delineating ethical and moral premises has paved the way for laws and legislature that rely on universalized views of right versus wrong. And while these laws have a necessary and welcome place in our society that is not to say that the reliance on rationality as a means of universalizability has not had its ill-effects, as well. Universalization, from a Kantian framework, is an effort to hold natural self-interest in check. Hence, in order to for ethics to achieve universalizability, they must move away from the particular—*my* family, *my* tribe, *my* circumstance, *my* self—eschewing these subjective criteria as personal or selfish (Plumwood, 1991). By ignoring subjectivity, we create a framework for morality based on abstraction and based on a concept of reason as oppositional to the personal and emotional. Many feminists critique this masculine model of moral life (Blum, 1980; Nicholson, 1983), arguing that such a model draws distinct divisions between public, generalizable realms (as masculine) and private, particular realms (as feminine), posing subjective relationships, as morally irrelevant, at best, and at worst, a possible obstacle to moral life (Blum, 1980).

Rationalism and dualism

Relying on a rationalistic framework to structure our society's views of morality—of right and wrong——has also unfortunately lead to a society that not only subjugates the emotional to rational and logical thought, but also one that creates a dualistic, as opposed to organic, view of human nature. On this dualism of reason versus emotion, Plumwood (1991) argues that views of universalizable ethics have

played such a major role in creating a dualistic account of the genuine human self as essentially rational and as sharply discontinuous from the merely emotional, the merely bodily, and the merely animal elements. For emotions and the private sphere with which they are associated have been treated as sharply different and inferior as part of a pattern in which they are seen as linked to the sphere of nature, not the realm of reason. (p. 5)

Plumwood argues that rationalism attempts to frame society around ethics and morality; however, those very ethics and morals are predicated on the differences between human reason and animal/natural instinct, and it is in the name of such reason that the feminine, the emotional, the bodily and the natural world have become subjugated to the masculine's emphasis on separation and autonomy, on reason and abstraction. In this sense, rationalism can be seen as oppressive, and as a "regulated and systematic use of elements of language [that] constitutes rational competence as a series of exclusions—of women, people of color, [and] of nature as historical agent" (Ellsworth, 1989, p. 304).

Rationalism in education

Educational systems reflect the values of any given society. America's educational system, then, reflects the universalizable tendencies used to structure Westernized morals and ethics. Because of this, educational systems in America reflect the dualistic tendencies of rationalism and the tendency of rationalism to suppress emotion.

hooks (1994) offers support for dualism present in educational discourses, in her discussion of the mind/body split. Most academic disciplines, following Augustine and the Church Fathers (Conquergood, 2006), have created a mind/body hierarchy of knowledge in which the sensual experiences of the body, of passions, and of emotions are considered inferior to mental abstractions of rational thought. These bodily experiences then become "an inferior realm of experiences to be controlled by the higher powers of

reason and logic" (Conquergood, 1991, p. 352). hooks (1994) sheds light on this

mind/body split in relation to teaching, as an unfortunate phenomenon where, within

academia, we become so accustomed to valuing and relying on our mental faculties, that

we begin to ignore or devalue our bodily, emotional and visceral reactions as animalistic

tendencies we must ignore or subordinate. Performance studies and autoethnography

have served as a response to this critique of education, where bodily, emotional and

subjective processes are legitimated as worthwhile learning and research methods. While

these methods have gained credibility in recent years in the communication studies

discipline, they still remain relatively unsubstantiated within traditional approaches to

education.

Noddings (1992) offers support for the challenge to rationalistic tendencies within

education in terms of controlling or ignoring emotion as a worthwhile pedagogical

process. She rejects the notion of universalizability, calling out its tendency to

delegitimate the personal and subjective, and its framing of these as insignificant to moral

order when she asserts,

> There is also a rejection of universalizability, the notion that anything that is morally
> justifiable is necessarily something that anyone else in a similar situation is obligated
> to do. Universalizability suggests that who we are, to whom we are related, and how
> we are situated should have nothing to do with our moral decision making. An ethic
> of caring rejects this....If we decide that the capacity to care is as much a mark of
> personhood as reason or rationality, then we will want to find ways to increase this
> capacity. (p. 21, 24)

Noddings' critique of universalizability in both schools and society at large reframes the

subjective as worthwhile and necessary to the emotional act of caring in school. Caring

requires a valuing of profoundly emotional constructs such as religion, race and gender in

understanding a student's unique subject position. Noddings' views on the ethics of

caring and subjectivity lay in stark contrast to more traditional approaches to subjectivity

in education. In contrast to Noddings, Rowland (2006) argues that,

> Rational argument is inherently person respecting because, in argument, all that
> matters is the evidence and reasoning that you cite, not race, religion, gender, and so
> forth…In this way, decision making based on rational argument is the very opposite
> of violence or coercion. (p. 190)

Rowland frames subject position as insignificant to rational thought, posing constructs

such as race, religion and gender in opposition to rational argument. Instead of viewing

these deeply personal constructs as valuable in "person respecting" (p. 190), Rowland

(2006) poses them as barriers to agreement, and constructs a rational individual who

should rise above or overlook them.

Walkerdine (1985) adds support to my charges against Rowland and rationalism alike

when she states that, "the practices operating in schooling…aim at producing an

autonomous and rational individual, who is class-and gender-neutral, while at the same

time ensuring that these categories assume a built-in deviance, a problem to be dealt with

and corrected" (p. 207). Rather than viewing students as a tabula rasa, approaches to

education must begin to realize that one's subject position—one's race, gender, or

socioeconomic status—are not barriers to rationality, but rather, that one's subject

position creates one's material realities and hence constitutes their rational thought

processes. Similarly, by demonizing anger and tenacity, emotions germane to oppressed

groups, rationalism elevates calmness as a form of privilege. Rationalism works to

reaffirm the status quo and existing social inequalities by denying the emotion required

by the masses to incite a revolution. This ideology of control,

ensure[s] the production of individuals who are self-regulating through the powers of rationality. Not swayed by irrational forces and free from conflict, they are to become the free agents of bourgeois democracy who will, by choice, accept their place in the new order and will not rebel...the regulation of conflict becomes centrally its displacement on to rational argument. (Walkerdine, 1985, p. 207)

Threads of rationalistic discourses, in their elevation and supposed creation of value-free individuals, are mirrored in the elevation and supposed creation of value neutral observations, or objectivity, within the scientific research method's attempts to regulate, control, and operationalize. Scientific research reports are imbued with Westernized ideologies of isolating variables to divide and conquer. Sprague (1994) underscores the potential dangers and limitation of this approach when she asserts,

> For social scientists to objectify human experience in order to study it as natural or physical scientists to study objects, there is an agreed upon set of conventions that involves transforming questions phrased in ordinary language into research questions phrased in conceptual language, then into testable hypotheses phrased in operationalized terms and finally into measures of the operationalized terms, i.e., numbers. Inevitably, some connotative richness is drawn out with each step of the process as a trade-off in the move toward measurability. (p. 278)

The protocols of writing observed by scientific research papers position authors as voiceless, faceless reporters of facts, via passive voice style that does not identify or imply human biases. This disavowal of biases finds its roots in rationalism's original intention of creating universalizable morals at the expense of subjective experiences.

Rationalism within instructional communication

Rationalism elides emotion, naming it as subjective, as a means to eliminate variables or particularities in its quest for universalizability. The constructs of rationalism assume, a priori, calm and logical participants in order to control for emotional variables. What becomes debilitating about these requirements is that such characteristics stem from

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privileged backgrounds and perspectives. Emotion, while a shared characteristic of all

human beings, is also deeply and inextricably linked to oppression. The intersections of

rationalism and calmness or removal of subjective experiences, lends itself to individuals

who have not been systematically oppressed each day of their lives. The predominant

paradigmatic perspective of instructional communication research lends itself to

"objective" research methods that reiterate rationalistic tendencies towards

generalizability, and our current approach to teacher training reifies these debilitating

tendencies. In quoting Walkerdine (1985), Ellsworth further underscores rationalism as

oppressive to traditionally marginalized groups when she says,

> Rational argument has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other,
> which has been understood historically as the province of women and other exotic
> Others. In school, rational deliberation, reflection, and consideration of all
> viewpoints has become a vehicle for regulating conflict and the power to speak, for
> transforming conflict into rational argument by means of universalized capacities for
> language and reason. (1989, p. 301)

This regulation and transformation of conflict into rational argument is representative

of how privileged groups prefer "rational" or "calm" discourses to ones of tenacity,

emotion, and overt anger. McIntyre (1997) offers support for this charge against

privileged groups when she discusses and offers characteristics of white culture, in what

she calls "a culture of politeness" (p. 46). In "white talk" McIntyre identifies common

passive-aggressive traits such as derailing the conversation, evading questions,

withdrawing from discussion and remaining silent as notable ways white people, as a

privileged group, tend to regulate, control and shy away from overt displays of anger or

emotion. McIntyre also points out that despite the diversity of students in our schools,

teachers are predominantly white. Because educational systems, teacher training, and

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instructional communication research are largely maintained by people belonging to these privileged groups, we begin to see how the research and training surrounding education caters to an ethic and culture of whiteness and privilege. In a diverse student setting, however, this training does not provide for a liberatory education, but instead poses school as ideological structures that reiterate status quo socioeconomic locations by suppressing emotion (Brantlinger, 2003). Because privileged groups (read: white) are privileged in their ability to exert calm, they are much more likely to be free from subject positions of oppression. Privileged groups are less likely to embody both physical and verbal manifestations of oppression, and are more likely to become uncomfortable when marginalized groups emotionally assert their oppression. hooks (1994) offers further support for schools as bastions of whiteness that ignore emotion as a pedagogical tool, when she asserts that in her own education, "Loudness, anger, emotional outbursts, and even something as seemingly innocent as unrestrained laughter were deemed unacceptable, vulgar disruptions of classroom social order. These traits were also associated with being a member of the lower classes" (p.178).

Burroughs, Kearney and Plax's (1989) study, "Compliance-resistance in the college classroom" further supports these charges in which rationalistic discourses serve to devalue emotional responses within the classroom. In this study, students were asked to construct messages of resistance to one of four teacher compliance-gaining strategies. These messages were then coded and classified by the researchers, yielding 19 categories of both active and passive forms of resistance. These categories were then further subcategorized and identified by the researchers as either "constructive" or "destructive"

forms of resistance. Ten of these 19 categories were arbitrarily deemed "destructive,"

including blame, disruption, excuses, hostile defensive, and revenge. Compared to their

"constructive" counterparts of advice, priorities, reluctant compliance, and modeling

behavior, "destructive" messages of resistance have a much stronger connection to overt

emotional response on the part of the student. This research's dismissal of emotional

responses on the part of the student, in labeling them as "destructive," serves as an

example of instructional communication research's denigration of (negative) emotion as a

worthwhile pedagogical construct, serving to reiterate rationalism's requirement of the

regulation of emotion.

Rationalism equates education to capitalism

Due to the elevation of systematization within education, we begin to see how

rationalism shapes education as a corollary to capitalism. Purple and Shapiro (1995)

provide a frame for the existing connection between rationalism and capitalism when

they assert that "the technical education of human capital embodies a rationality in which

ends, purposes, and effects of economic activity are, to a large extent, presupposed (the

'bottom line' is always efficiency, the minimization of costs, and the maximization of

profits)" (p. 185). Once realizing the ways in which rationalism shapes capitalistic

ideologies and educational discourses alike, we can begin to draw connections to the

ways in which, due to rationalism, education serves not as a means of social

enlightenment and social justice, but a corollary to these capitalistic ideologies.

Just as capitalism maintains the status quo by systematically elevating privileged

groups while oppressing marginalized groups, and thriving on the "de-skilling" of

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workers, rationalist discourses begin to shape educational systems as bastions of

capitalism, by the "de-skilling" (Giroux, 1988) of teachers who manage classrooms and

implement teacher-proof curricula designed by others. Sprague (1992) highlights this

discussion of schools as buttresses of capitalism and rationalism when she asserts,

> The vocabulary of classroom management is part of the larger educational metaphor
> system...that sees students as workers and the function of schools as the preparation
> of a compliant labor force. From this perspective, then, critical theorists
> conceptualize the "misbehaviors" of students as a form of resistance against the
> devaluation and dehumanization of their labor...Teachers are victims of the deskilling
> process in another sense and find that the only way to preserve some vestige of
> autonomy lies in maintaining a class that is free from major disruptions. Locked in
> this system, they and their students strike a muted agreement that often amounts to
> trading compliant behavior for lowered academic standards. (p. 16)

Similarly, Palmer (2007) adds support for this connection of education and capitalism,

and its dangers, in equating education and teachers with product or service and students

with consumer, when he says,

> The marketing model of community is blitzing American education today under the
> flag of Total Quality Management...The norms of the marketing model are
> straightforward: educational institutions must improve their product by strengthening
> relations with customers and becoming more accountable to them. Bill-paying
> students and parents must be treated as the consumers that they are and given ample
> opportunity to criticize their purchases. These criticisms must be passed on to the
> people who produce the product to help them change the way we educate people and
> satisfy more customers. (p. 95)

Steeped in an ethic of logic and constant progress, it becomes "natural" for our society

to want to find solutions to problems; however, this overt reliance on decontextualized

methods in our professional development of teachers becomes problematic when

"techniques, programs, or tactics become our dominant focus. We know how easy it is

for an agenda to become reified—to become separated from the moral/political vision

that originally gave it life and become simply an end in itself" (Purple & Shapiro, 1995,

p. 173). Indeed Purple and Shapiro underscore how rationalism, which started as a means to create a moral and ethical vision, has become reified as an agenda that oppresses by ignoring profoundly emotional constructs. I have explored how reification of rationalism manifests itself within universalizability and capitalism and will now explore how rationalism manifests itself within instructional communication research.

Instructional Communication Research

Instructional communication is the "investigation of the role of communication in the teaching of all subjects at all levels" (Sprague, 1992, p. 1). This area of communication research should not be confused with communication education, which is dedicated to the pedagogy of effective communication. While communication education deals in teaching those in the communication studies discipline itself, instructional communication has both the privilege and unique challenge of teaching *all* teachers, not just teachers of communication, how to be credible, thoughtful, and emotionally whole. With this great challenge comes great responsibility and great opportunity for agency and social change; however, instructional communication to date has largely fallen short of this responsibility, creating an agenda of teacher training that elevates and reiterates existing social inequalities of classism, sexism, and racism. These charges are not imposed upon the researchers or instructors themselves—indeed, it is not the aim of this thesis to name these individuals as oppressors—but more importantly to call out the ways in which the methods and language surrounding instructional communication research and practices, and the ways these methods and language are propagated in organized ways, via doctoral

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institutions, and the objective writing styles required for publication by particular scholarly journals, serve as material examples of the ways in which an objectivist and rationalistic model is so deeply embodied and reconstituted within our collective consciousness. By failing to recognize and reflect upon it, we continue to give this model power to negatively affect the way we teach instructors, and what we deem "effective" teaching.

In its most ideal form, instructional communication would concern itself with the complex and difficult questions regarding "effective" teaching such as recognizing socioeconomic hierarchies in schools (Brantlinger, 2003), critical investigations of student resistance to an instructor's perceived gender and race (Johnson & Bhatt, 2003; Cooks & Sun, 2002), and investigating how, from an instructional standpoint, to approach issues of race in a multi-cultural classroom (Cooks, 2003; Warren, 2001). In *Courage To Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, Palmer (2007) navigates the ways personal and spiritual renewal of an instructor serves as a positive approach toward addressing teacher burnout, offering an insightful juxtaposition to the work of current instructional communication research. Palmer asserts that good teaching is rooted in the identity and integrity of the teacher, focusing on strengthening and shedding light upon these complex facets of identity. Instructional communication research, however, reduces good teaching to mere technique practiced by the instructor, and respectively focuses on transient techniques used to manipulate either teacher or student, rather than exploring the more nuanced areas of teacher/student experience and marginalization. Such reductions are a result of a model of research, reconstituted within

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instructional communication, that focuses solely on behavioral responses, rather than exploring the underlying tensions and motivational factors surrounding these reactions, thus decontextualizing complex and subtle dynamics to a behavior-response mechanism.

Serving as an example of rational processes taken to the extreme of rational*ism* within instructional communication research is the "power in the classroom" series (McCroskey & Richmond, 1983; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984; Kearney, Plax, Richmond & McCroskey, 1985; McCroskey, Richmond, Plax & Kearney, 1985; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey & Richmond, 1986; Richmond, McCroskey, Kearney & Plax, 1987). By using a predominantly behaviorist approach to explore the issues of power, resistance, and learning within the classroom, this particular approach concerns itself not with the interdependent relationship between students and teachers' respective emotional or lived experiences, but rather with conditioning the student by reinforcement from the teacher.

James McCroskey and Virginia Richmond's (1983) study, "Power in the classroom I: Teacher and student perceptions" was a first in communication research regarding power in the classroom, laying the foundation for a program of research that concerns itself with power and classroom "control" and "compliance." This original research spanned nearly five years and seven separate articles and instructional communication researchers still heavily reference and build upon this research and research model today (i.e., Gorham, 1988; Golish & Olson, 2000; Witt & Wheeless, 2001; Schrodt, 2003; Pogue & Kimo, 2006; Burroughs, 2007; Schrodt, Witt & Turman, 2007). At first blush, such research sounds heuristic and worthwhile, questioning assumptions of power, privilege and oppression within the classroom; however, this research provides findings from a

quantitative standpoint and poses its "solutions" as behaviorist techniques that focus on regulation and reinforcement. While there is certainly value or comfort to the novice instructor in having had laid out for him/her possible techniques or strategies in asserting and maintaining authority in his/her classroom, this approach to instructional communication provides prescriptive strategies instead of the reflexive tools needed by an instructor to unpack and understand myriad tensions within the classroom (Palmer, 2007). Because these authors and their methods are so prolific within instructional communication, the teaching techniques advocated for by these authors become a part of the discipline's assumed vernacular and begin to embody themselves in the ways we draw upon this research in our education of instructors.

While the hope of any scholarly researcher would be that his or her research moves beyond the ivory tower of academia and into the collective notions of society at large, in the case of instructional communication we see this happening, but not in a manner that is cause for celebration. What becomes problematic and is obfuscated by such research and practices is that it is the unsuccessful or non-compliant student, as named by this series of studies, who is marginalized. Extant instructional communication research, as exemplified by the "power in the classroom" series, is problematic to both the student and teacher in that it advocates for a manipulative relationship between teacher and student, it decontextualizes cultural influences or factors in determining classroom "misbehaviors," and it equates and reduces effective teaching from a complex, slippery and multi-faceted interaction to a singular construct of student compliance.

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Advocation for manipulation

Within the "power in the classroom" series, researchers attempted to determine a degree of shared perception of power, stating that, once determined, "both teachers and students can be taught what types of power produce certain outcomes" (p. 175). In accepting the authors' reduction of power from a complex and fluid construct to the very narrow definition of the ability of one person to manipulate another person to do something he or she would not do otherwise (French & Raven, 1968), we can begin to see how the claims put forth by these authors serve as a looking glass from which we can discern the problematic assumptions that are perpetuated by such research. At best, the research assumes a manipulative relationship, and at worst, a coercive one, between students and teachers, suggesting that by pulling certain strings, certain reactions will ensue; maneuver A will cause reaction B. Indeed, McCroskey and Richmond's (1983) use of logic had sound beginnings—power can and does produce certain outcomes—and to recognize this is the first step towards dismantling power imbalances and inequalities present in the society in which we live. However, McCroskey and Richmond do not couch this important statement regarding the nature of power within their research as a means to end inequalities, but rather unreflectively and perhaps unintentionally, they add to a discourse that uses power only to control a student and manage their "disruptions" as means toward "effective" and "efficient" teaching.

Similar to the majority of instructional communication research, in falling victim to rationalist thought, the logical underpinnings of the "power in the classroom" research begin with sound foundations; however the authors' reliance on logic, without its

counterpart, emotion, leads to pathological applications of this research that focus on teacher control over the student. In an objective, scientific game, where as many variables as possible are controlled, emotion becomes an unknown—something that is hard to quantify, operationalize and parse out. When a researcher begins to factor a teacher's or student's emotions and life experiences into the equation, these "subjects" fail to remain interchangeable pieces that techniques can neatly and uniformly affect. Instead of considering these variables of emotion within their research, historically, instructional communication researchers have omitted them in favor of things that are easier to identify and quantify. These research decisions contribute to and reconstitute an educational discourse that continually ignores emotion and does not wish for a symbiotic relationship of learning and growth between student and teacher (Freire, 1970/2003), but either a banking model where the student acts as a tabula rasa, passively accepting all that is offered to him or her by the teacher, or a model where the student resists this passivity, in which case the instructor must then control him or her.

Elision of cultural constructs

In addition to advocating for a manipulative relationship between teacher and student, the "power in the classroom" series elides cultural influences or factors in determining classroom "misbehaviors." In "Power in the classroom III: Teacher communication techniques and messages," Kearney, Plax, and McCroskey (1985) seek to create a broader understanding of teacher control, focusing on communication behavior techniques and messages known as Behavior Alteration Techniques (BATs) and Behavior Alteration Messages (BAMs). An example of a BAT would be to appeal to a

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student's fear of punishment as means of eliciting a desired response, while the corresponding BAM may be something like, "If you do not start showing up for class, you will fail this course." The authors identified seven categories of BATs deemed most likely to elicit desired responses (read: control) from students: 1. Reward from behavior; 2. Reward from source; 3: Personal responsibility; 4. Expert power; 5. Self-esteem; 6. Altruism; and 7. Duty.

Several problematic extrapolations stem from this article. In this thesis, my aim is to investigate how rationalism is constituted by logic without reflection, that is, a reflection of how logic, while necessary or helpful in certain contexts, can also marginalize certain individuals in its need to limit and define. To this end, "Power in the classroom III: Teacher communication techniques and messages" serves as a key example of this damaging lack of reflection. The researchers' original intent, to identify and classify techniques instructors can use in managing a classroom, at first blush, appears an innocuous one that addresses a very realistic concern of any instructor: the "out of control" classroom or student. However, reducing the issue of classroom management to a list of techniques and messages is to fall short of being a thoughtful researcher or instructor. What is missing in this article, and in the larger instructional communication discourse, is a pairing of this list of classroom management techniques to supposedly turn to when you are losing "control" of your students, with a reflection on the nature of classroom management and classroom "misbehaviors." Elided is a discussion of why we fear losing control, why we fear the overt emotion the out-of-control student (as opposed to the hidden or constrained emotion of the model student), and whether or not, in certain

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situations, losing control and subsequently allowing our students to participate in the exercise of power and display of unrestrained emotion, while scary, may also be an intellectually and pedagogically productive process.

Similarly, what is neglected in this list of techniques used to curb student "misbehaviors" is an honest questioning of who or what is determining what we deem "misbehaviors." A most worrisome issue with the "power in the classroom" series is that it ignores cultural constructs in its discussion, or rather lack of discussion, of student "misbehaviors." We know that there are cultural differences in terms of what is considered polite and impolite, and appropriate or inappropriate, and that these distinctions are certainly pertinent to the different cultures within the classroom. Gee (1989) explains that status in a society is determined by culture and cultural discourses, stating that certain discourses are socially dominant, carrying with them the social power and access to economic success, while some are non-dominant. Success and status within a society are partially determined by the level of congruity between an individual's primary discourse, that which is learned at home, and secondary discourses, which are attached to institutions or groups, for example the middle-class home discourse to school discourse. Gee's argument, underscored and supported by Delpit (1995), in relation to "power in the classroom" explains how certain discourses of power and compliance, and acceptable behavior within the middle-class and within public educational discourses alike, may drastically differ from what is socially acceptable, for example, amongst working-class African-American home discourses and Black church discourses. Therefore, the attempts made by the "power in the classroom" series to

search for a shared perception of power reduce complex issues of power to simplistic delineations set forth by this research, whereas in reality, power and "compliance" are multi-faceted issues, conditional upon socioeconomic and cultural factors.

This concern for lack of cultural sensitivity in terms of naming student misbehaviors is reiterated by similar instructional communicative discourses. Lee, Levine, and Cambra (1997) in their study "Resisting compliance in the multicultural classroom," add a multicultural dimension to the issue of student resistance of compliance-gaining strategies on the part of the instructor, in positing that student grade level, gender and cultural background would influence a student's compliance-resistance. By factoring in Hofstede's (1980) collectivism-individualism distinction, the authors concluded that students with a collectivist cultural orientation were less likely to be resistant to teachers' compliance-gaining strategies, while students identifying with an individualist cultural orientation were more inclined to resist attempts made by the instructor to gain compliance. Despite these authors' good intentions in asserting multicultural dimensions surrounding classroom management, the work fails to reflectively redress the laden terms of "resistive" and "resistance." By failing, within this study and within the larger instructional communication discourse, to reframe these terms, both perpetuate erroneous assumptions that students of certain cultures or ethnicities are more inclined to be problematic or "resistive" (read: emotional) towards the teacher's attempts at classroom management.

Reduction of teaching to classroom management

Having discussed the ways instructional communication research advocates for a

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manipulative relationship between teacher and student, while eliding cultural influences or factors in determining classroom "misbehaviors," we must finally consider the ways in which the overarching discourse of rationalism present in instructional communication research, in its tendency to classify and fragment, begins to reduce the complex undertaking of teaching to the singular construct of classroom management. Having discussed the ways in which this research's decontextualization serves as a means to obfuscate variables of social class, gender, and race, and emotion, which often accounts for perceived instances of misbehavior, instructional communication research also decontextualizes important facets of effective teaching, such as the emotional development of a student, instead reducing effective teaching to classroom management.

With the "power in the classroom" series being substantially drawn upon in subsequent instructional communication research (Lee, Levine and Cambra, 1997), this program of research substantially contributes to the discussion surrounding classroom management. I argue that one of the larger assumptions of this series, and hence an assumption heavily drawn upon within subsequent instructional communication research, is that teacher power is required to suppress "deviant" behavior from a student, in that "in the context of classroom management, power-based strategies contribute to the teacher's ability to maximize student on-task behaviors and to minimize student disruptions that interfere with the learning process" (Kearney, Plax, Richmond & McCroskey, 1985, p. 20). There are several problematic extrapolations stemming from this assumption. First, in speaking of "minimizing student disruptions that interfere with the learning process," the authors of these studies assume that learning is defined as the absence of disruption,

and that effective learning and teaching are solely functions of a teacher's ability to control classroom behavior. Similarly, the authors suggest that assertive discipline is supposed to free teachers for their primary responsibility, instruction in subject matter.

This excessive desire for technique in order to control the classroom is mirrored in Noddings' (1992) book *The Challenge To Care In Schools: An Alternative Approach To Education* in which she expounds upon the dangers of excessive desire for method, not only in terms of classroom control, but also in terms of subject matter, when she asserts that these particularities of teaching are,

> not their [teachers'] main task. It is one task and an important one...I will ask whether it is helpful to restrict the function of instruction to one main task...But if the school has one main goal, a goal that guides the establishment and priority of all others, it should be to promote the growth of students as healthy, competent, moral people. This is a huge task to which all others are properly subordinated. We cannot ignore our [students]—their purposes, anxieties, and relationships—in the service of making them more competent in academic skills...Intellectual development is important, but it cannot be the first priority of schools. (p. 10)

Noddings' assertion that emotional development within our students should shape both subject matter of the course and instructional technique, is not an anti-intellectual one, but rather an anti-rationalist one. She explains that much like classroom management, intellectual development is important, but that neither should take precedent over the emotions that guide and shape our students. Noddings serves as another testimony against our educational system's view of privileging of classroom management over the emotional development of students and its framing of emotion as a barrier to learning. Certainly, the tenets of classroom control can be helpful in the education of new instructors; however, they should not be elevated above richer issues of teacher-student connection, and emotional development of both the teacher and the student.

Within the professional development of instructors, whether pre-service teacher credential candidates, experienced teachers enrolled in master-level instructional communication courses, or college-level graduate teaching associates, instructional communication approaches to teaching have, regrettably, become entrenched in these rationalistic discourses. When these instructional communication resources we give to our pre-service teachers rely heavily on formulaic and methods-based teaching instruction such as the implementation of BATs and BAMs (e.g., Cooper & Simonds, 2003), we must begin to identify and question the over-arching effect this begins to have on the teachers who matriculate from professional-development programs. We must begin to question how the language, contents, and goals of teacher-training set the stage for an educational system that concerns itself above all with instructor control and student compliance (Freire, 1970/2003), further reiterating rationalist discourses present in education that oppress already marginalized groups. It is such preparation that perpetuates an educational system that ignores or fears emotion and tension/disruption as a worthwhile pedagogical experience and as a site of transformation.

Language

The above discussion has looked at the ways in which decontextualized discourses are subtly reiterated throughout instructional communication research; however, this thesis aims not to simply rehash frequent complaints against the forms and practices present within positivist and behaviorist methods, but instead it aims, first, to focus on how the language, contents, and goals of instructional communication set the stage for

an educational system that elides emotion as a pedagogically worthwhile construct, and second, to explore the ways in which neglect of emotion within instructional communication discourses reiterates privileged rationalistic discourses that are present in our educational system. In discussing these marginalizing discourses of instructional communication research, I invoke these discourses' tendencies to focus on decontextualized findings that ignore teacher/student emotion and subjective experience. Historically, this suppression of emotion in favor of logic and rationality, reiterating an ideology of rationalism, has been the province of both Westernized ideals and white men. If privileged classes create these discourses, they will inevitably favor and advance the interests of these same privileged classes, while subordinating and oppressing already marginalized groups. In light of these concerns, I now look at the language surrounding instructional communication to demonstrate how certain viewpoints surrounding language, and how specific linguistic forms have such material consequences within our educational discourses.

Language as transparency

Dissimilar to a behaviorist viewpoint, a social constructionist viewpoint realizes that the constructs of language do not act as a mere symbol of our realities, but instead, serve to co-create them. For critical theorists, such as Habermas and Foucault (1993), and communicative theorists like Stewart (1995), language is constitutive of our realities, not a mere reflection. Mumby (1997) discusses the detrimental effects of viewing language not as constitutive of our realities, but as representational or as transparent. Indeed, if language were always obvious and transparent, serving only as a stagnant symbol for any

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object or thought, miscommunications would cease to occur. However, language is not a mere symbol, but rather a living force, into which we breathe life (and which breathes life into us), shaping our realities. This approach to language, mirroring the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, yields insight into how particular groups or individuals view their social world from differing interpretations, and how their specific language practices constitute and create these varying perspectives of the world. Wright (1998) summarizes this ability of language to structure and frame the world we live in, for better or for worse, when he says, "...language allows for the imposition of the structure and meaning on the world. In this sense, a sentence or set of sentences does not reflect or represent some external reality, but frames or constructs that reality" (p. 6).

Metaphors as frames

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) mirror this discussion of language as more than a symbol of our realities, but as a shaper and framer of it, in their exploration of metaphorical and linguistic concepts. According to Lakoff and Johnson, metaphors, by their very nature, highlight certain concepts while masking others. The authors provide a common metaphor present within our conceptual thought process of *argument is war*, offering examples of expressions present in our everyday vernacular that illuminate this metaphor such as, "*attack a position, indefensible, strategy, new line of attack, win, gain ground*" (p. 7). Each of these words or phrases helps to form a systematic way of equating an argument with battle. Conversely, these words or phrases, and the metaphorical construct of *argument is war* surrounding them can serve to obfuscate particular aspects of reality, by distracting our focus from other aspects of the concept that are inconsistent with that

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metaphor, offering,

> For example, in the midst of a heated argument, when we are intent on attacking our opponent's position and defending our own, we may lose sight of the cooperative aspects of arguing. Someone who is arguing with you can be viewed as giving you his time, a valuable commodity, in an effort at mutual understanding. But when we are preoccupied with the battle aspects, we often lose sight of the cooperative aspects. (p. 10)

This discussion of metaphors and language and their ability to illuminate certain aspects of a phenomenon while obfuscating others becomes important to our discussion of rationalism as a metaphor present in instructional discourses. I have offered that rationalism relies on an overt usage of logic, exemplified by the scientific method and objectivist models of research, while eliding the construct of emotion. Lakoff and Johnson address this issue via the conceptual metaphor of *rational is up; emotional is down*, offering as examples the ways this metaphor is reinscribed in our daily speech, such as "The discussion *fell* to the *emotional* level, but I *raised* it back *up to the rational* plane. We put our *feelings* aside and had a *high-level intellectual* discussion on the matter. He couldn't *rise above* his *emotions*" [emphasis added] (p. 17). Mirroring my claims of the rationalistic tendency to neatly order and control, the authors provide both a physical and cultural bias for this metaphorical framework. They assert,

> In our culture people view themselves as being in control over animals, plants, and their physical environment, and it is their unique ability to reason that places human beings above other animals and gives them this control. CONTROL IS UP thus provides a basis for MAN IS UP and therefore for RATIONAL IS UP. (p. 17)

Lakoff and Johnson's discussion of language and its ability to illuminate and obfuscate certain realities offers an opportunity for reflexivity in approaching a critique of rationalism within instructional communication research by maintaining a balance

between the rational and the emotional. In considering this balance, I pair the viewpoint of *rational is up* with the equal and opposite, yet necessary tension, often masked by this conceptual metaphor, of *emotional is up*. Lakoff and Johnson's work, *The Metaphors We Live By*, underscores this reflexivity, providing fertile ground for my own research on language, by urging its readers to be both critical and thoughtful of the language that surrounds us, and how this language shapes our realities.

The language of instructional communication

I have previously discussed the ways in which instructional communication research fails to address both the cultural and emotional relationship between teacher and student, and how language plays a key part in the (mis)construction of these relationships. Having spent time parsing out the material consequences of current teacher training methods, we must now turn to see the complicit role that the language of these discourses plays in creating and reiterating these consequences.

hooks (1994) aptly discusses the possibly marginalizing and detrimental effects of language when she says, "it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize" (p. 168). This discussion of language appropriately underscores my own charges against the language of predominant instructional communication discourses as a language that both limits and defines how we approach the instruction of novice educators. In her writing "*Communication Education*: The spiral continues," Sprague (2002) serves as a credible proponent of the limits and effects of the language set forth and reiterated by instructional communication

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discourses, identifying linguistic lapses within current instructional communication research reports. Identified first is the notion of *concept names that lack face validity* (p. 345). Within this heading, Sprague discusses confusing and confounding labels present within the instructional research dialogue, for example the label of verbal immediacy. According to Sprague, unlike nonverbal immediacy, which constitutes an understandable set of theoretically linked behaviors, verbal immediacy was operationalized by asking 47 students to brainstorm about the specific behaviors that characterized the best teachers they had over the years, resulting simply in a wide-ranging list of generally preferred teacher behaviors, few of which related to the original conceptual framework posed by researchers, and henceforth naming the composite scale "verbal immediacy" with no real justification. As a result, dozens of studies have used this possibly erroneous measurement of effective teaching.

Secondly, Sprague discusses the pitfalls of *conceptual language that is at odds with lay usage* (p. 345), regarding the appropriation of unusual meanings to familiar terms, such as the use of "student misbehaviors" throughout instructional communication research. According to instructional communication scholarship (Plax, Kearney, Tucker, 1986; Kearney, Plax, Sorensen & Smith, 1988), "student misbehaviors" may refer to an entire range of behaviors a teacher might target for modification via behavior alteration techniques and messages, such as talking out-of-turn, overactivity, apathy, or inattention; however, the question remains whether such student actions should really be relegated to the title of a "misbehavior." Much like the previously discussed term of "resistance," framing these actions as "misbehaviors" offers no appropriate cultural or emotional

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considerations that may factor into such behaviors, and serves to reiterate what privileged discourses label as inappropriate. Failing to recognize or identify behavioral "deviations" in the classroom as social and cultural constructions presents these particular interpretations of deviance as natural or given.

Similarly, Simonds (1997) underscores the concern about decontextualized language of "student misbehaviors," reframing the language instead as a "challenge behavior." This reframing, however, is not simply in its term, but also in the discussion and reflexivity behind this term. Simonds frames challenge behavior not merely as a deviation from expected and predicated classroom norms, (i.e., "power in the classroom" series), but instead as a strategy students employ to share power in the classroom and to mediate their own discomfort of uncertainty in classroom culture or expected norms. In keeping with problematic assumptions surrounding "student misbehaviors," Sprague calls out the emergence of the term "teacher misbehaviors," yielded from an open question to students about what they dislike about teachers, producing a laundry list of behaviors ranging from giving boring lectures to having an accent, to sexually harassing students. It is remiss of a line of scholarship to be so unreflective as to combine such diverse and dissimilar actions into a single construct or to use the general term "misbehavior" to apply to any uncomfortable action perceived by the student about his or her teacher, so as to be flip about teachers with accents or to undermine serious transgressions like sexual harassment. Such uncritical use of language is just as problematic when these researchers apply "misbehavior" to any action by a student with whom the teacher is uncomfortable. This decontextualization of the term "misbehaviors" frames these particular student

behaviors not as a site for reflection, contextualization, and a possibility for growth, but instead as negative issues a priori, to be identified and controlled.

The danger of erroneously reducing terms such as "student/teacher misbehaviors" to their component parts is to decontextualize the classroom environment from the many details involved. Delpit (1995) warns of the danger of decontextualization when she asserts, "Much scholarly research and writing focuses on disconnection. Traditional bastions of academe distance people from one another as they create power relationships whereby one group maintains the power to 'name' the other" (p. 91). To name someone or something implies privilege, and the authors of "power in the classroom," and the research resulting from this series, exhibit this privilege in their numerous acts of naming, delineating and separating out the components of power and learning, attempting to reduce these complex, slippery phenomena into component parts. The "power in the classroom" series identifies these delineations of power as coercive power, reward power, legitimate power, referent power, and expert power, while identifying the measurements of learning as cognitive learning and affective learning, and even further sub-categorizing the techniques and messages used to attain power and learning within the classroom as "immediate reward from behavior," "deferred reward from behavior," "legitimate-higher authority," "legitimate-teacher authority," and "normative rules" to name only a few. With all this naming and decontextualizing we must begin to ask ourselves, what is being lost in translation?

Instead of concentrating on intellectual matters of teaching, such as questioning assumptions of power, privilege and oppression within the classroom, instructional

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communication has concerned itself with relatively presentational matters of "effective" teaching techniques, such as using humor in the classroom and using verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors. According to Sprague (1992),

> The connection of these behaviors to cognitive learning has required some tortured definitions of learning. More substantial is the connection between variables like immediacy or humor and students' good feelings about a course. When the definition of instructional communication is reduced to these presentational aspects of teacher behavior, it is a small wonder that instructional communication scholarship has not had much impact on the educational community in general. Though good teachers as a group may, in fact, smile more or use more animated voices than poor teachers as a group, does anyone seriously argue that teaching such skills to teachers causes their students to learn more? (p. 8)

Simply because a teacher smiles frequently and is more immediate with her students does not mean she is an effective instructor; it means that she embodies a shared characteristic of many other effective teachers.

Similarly, we begin to see the ways instructional communication scholarship frames the word/construct of "immediacy," posing it not as a means to connect with students, to set them at ease, and to be considerate or caring of their emotional needs, but rather as a manipulative strategy in which student compliance may more likely to be achieved. Stemming from a previous study (Burroughs, Kearney & Plax, 1989), where student resistant messages were coded and categorized, Kearney, Plax & Burroughs (1991) expanded upon this research, exploring the relationship between the attribute "teacher immediacy" and student resistance decisions, specifically, whether the former influenced the latter. According to the authors, the findings of the study suggest that, "teacher immediacy, not the compliance-gaining messages, directs students' resistance decisions" (p. 340). While these findings may look to students to better understand the power

dynamic between themselves and the teacher, perhaps a useful chunk of knowledge to the novice instructor, we also cannot ignore how this study speaks to the larger issue of the omissions of emotion from the larger instructional communication discourse. As evidenced by this study, immediacy is not posed as an emotional construct with connections to care, but rather as a means of manipulating the student on the part of the instructor to produce order and control.

Growth through reflexivity

Assuming instructional communication scholars had nothing but the best of intentions in their original goal of understanding what creates an effective teacher, ultimately they have become lost in their own limiting language of definitions, delineations, and operations. As humans, we tend to separate and label for convenience; however, instructional communication is a testament to what happens when these labels or words begin to go beyond the literature and seep into our lives, focusing only on what is stated, and ignoring the unsaid. Because of this danger, we need to begin a discourse that practices and encourages not definitions, how-tos, and ideologies of control, but reflection and reflexivity. In light of this charge upon educational discourses, Giroux (1988) reiterates that it is not simply the concrete and tangible conditions and problems present in our educational system that we must look to for critique, but instead, we must look at the meanings embedded in language surrounding education, and create two languages, one of critique, and one of possibility. I will offer that, with reflexivity, we can create a cohesive discourse or language of education that simultaneously offers critique and hope.

In keeping with Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) discussion of metaphorical language and the possibility for approaching metaphorical concepts with a reflective and reflexive attitude, Fassett and Warren (2007) similarly discuss a language of possibility through reflexivity, one that invites educators to understand how, through both language and action, we are both products and producers of oppression and agency alike. Unlike current instructional communication research, instead of turning a blind eye to educators' and researchers' participation in the oppressive quilt of today's educational system, Fassett and Warren wholeheartedly address these issues, urging educators and researchers to be reflective and reflexive in regard to their participation in these structures. Instead of offering linear, simplistic band-aids for the problems of our educational system, focusing energy on naming, delineating and operationalizing these problems, they offer that, "reflexivity is not linear....if reflexivity is what enables us to perceive the stroke against the wave, then it will be, by necessity, a perpetually unsettling process" (pp. 86, 89). Therefore, this thesis serves not to charge instructional communication scholars as unthoughtful, rationalistic oppressors, responsible for the ills of all public education, but rather to explore and encourage a productive tension of logic and emotion in re-weaving a tattered educational fabric.

Conclusion

In terms of language, education and structured, regulatory systems, it is not that everything is problematic; however, everything is dangerous, and because of this, every construct, category system, taxonomy, or hierarchy should be scrutinized and

approached with caution because it is potentially dangerous (Cherryholmes, 1988). This literature review has illustrated how the language and exercise of extant instructional communication research are steeped in reductive and rationalistic ideologies that are ultimately oppressive to marginalized groups. Within this thesis, I plan to look at the language used within the professional development of teachers, both within specific GTA programs and specifically by the GTA coordinators of these programs, in an attempt to understand how this language may contribute to the development of teachers who value control and compliance above dialogue and growth, reduction and division over autonomy, and restraint and regulation over emotion. I have selected the investigation of texts used by GTAs because as a GTA myself, I find the experience both a rich and engaging one. Of equal importance, as a GTA, I feel that we embody a unique and liminal subject position that connects the individual experiences of both teacher and student. Because this thesis concerns itself with the effects of elision of emotion on both teacher and student, texts used by and designed specifically for GTAs would provide for meaningful analysis. Because I wish to effect change, I think great potential exists here to emerge with a greater understanding of how the methods, texts and vocabulary we use in teacher training are designed to reiterate oppressive ideologies. Only by naming what appears natural and benign (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995) within educational discourses can we begin to identify them in hopes to alter them, and this work will, I hope, serve as a step in that direction.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

As evidenced from my review of the literature, considerable instructional communication research has published and elevated a behaviorist standpoint, which favors and supports control of the classroom by eliding emotion as a worthwhile pedagogical construct, and in doing so, assuming and promoting a manipulative relationship of power practiced by instructors towards students. Conversely, much research exists on the study of language from a critical perspective, fostering the belief that language helps to facilitate and create power, in that "language and symbolism are important in the exercise of power. It is helpful for social actors with power [instructors] to use appropriate political language and symbols to legitimate and develop support for the decisions that are reached on the basis of power" (Pfeffer, 1981, p. 184). As evidenced by my review of literature, the "power in the classroom" has had a large impact on instructional communication research's elevation of classroom control as a central issue of concern for instructors. My thesis connects these areas of research, focusing on mapping the intersections among critical theory and instructional communication research's concern for classroom control by focusing on the ways in which this elevation of classroom control is supported by a rationalistic framework that ignores or devalues emotion in this classroom.

I have chosen rhetorical criticism as a method to guide my investigation because its qualitative and critical nature intentionally challenges the positivist or behaviorist paradigms within which the majority of instructional communication research falls. As discussed in my review of the literature, these behaviorist and positivist paradigms, which

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rely heavily on the scientific model, contribute to the narrow focus of instructional communication research. Sprague (1992) questions the value of current instructional communication research in its avoidance of exploring language that systematically excludes and demeans women and minority students. Similarly, Pelias (2000) expresses his own discontent regarding the limitations of the scientific model surrounding issues addressed in instructional communication, when he says,

> you read the abstract and shake your head, not because you are confused by the content, but because you cannot understand how the scientific model continues to thrive in the discipline given the number of arguments that show why the heart needs to accompany the head, particularly with such topics as communication apprehension, intimacy, compliance gaining strategies, communication competence, gender, relational maintenance and empathy. (p. 223)

While the scientific model has allowed for not only luxuries and modern conveniences, and has a necessary place within our society (in some cases, improving health, creating safer buildings and structures, etc), instructional communication research has embraced this model in ways that negate emotional ways of knowing.

Incommensurate paradigms

Extant instructional communication research relies heavily on the positivistic paradigm. This perspective maintains that personal values or influences are denied and excluded within research, serving positivists' ultimate goal of both predicting and controlling communicative phenomena through classifiable, commensurable data; this data is collected through conventional benchmarks of "rigor"—internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity—allowing for duplication and generalizability. All of these specifications to their research methods serve the positivists' ultimate goal of explaining reality in generalizations and cause-effect linkages (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

This paradigm's goal of generalizability creates the necessity to identify and itemize variables in order to deposit them into particular categories and classifications. Because of these strict stipulations, the positivist paradigm, and hence the instructional communication research seated within this paradigm, is likely to eschew the complex and difficult to operationalize variable of emotion from its research and research findings. By investing in a positivist perspective and foregoing an investigation of emotion, instructional communication uncovers nothing more than behavior and response processes. Due to the consequences of extant instructional communication research's adherence to a positivist paradigm, this thesis finds an exploration of instructional communication that is interested in emotion to be better framed by a critical paradigmatic perspective.

While the positivist paradigm seeks to predict and control an objective reality, the critical paradigm is based around the presupposition that reality is socially constructed, shaped by historical and social processes, structures and factors; hence reality becomes a subjective interpretation as each individual understands it, grounded in his or her social, political, economical, gendered and cultural experiences. Due to these varying and complex facets in the creation of our subjective realities, the critical paradigm is uninterested in and incredulous of understanding and measuring our world through one objective lens. In light of this viewpoint, the critical paradigm discourages research that claims to be free of biases or value judgments, and instead contends that our subjective values inevitably shape our subjective realities. The critical paradigm then encourages subjective evaluations, finding them both desirable and valuable (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

While the positivist paradigm's goal is to find generalizable cause and effect theories of phenomena, the ultimate aim of the critical paradigm is to critique behaviors in the hopes of altering them for social justice. Critical researchers approach this goal by examining the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender structures that constrain and exploit humankind. This application of critical research into instructional communication would look at the ways in which emotion in the classroom is treated and how this treatment of emotion subverts or supports privileged rationalistic discourses, and marginalizes oppressed groups.

Paradigmatic focus of this research

I plan to contribute to the (limited) body of critical research surrounding instructional communication by exploring this research through a postmodernist lens. On postmodernism, Hunt (1991) remarks,

> Postmodernism's starting point is a critique of the Enlightenment as a failed
> rationalist project which has run its time but which continues to encumber
> contemporary thought with illusions of a rational route to knowledge, a faith in
> science and in progress. The radical core of postmodernism lies in its mission of
> shedding the illusions of the Enlightenment. (p. 81)

Since the breadth of my research and critique of instructional communication names the area of study as one imbued with rationalist discourses, whose research aims to systematize and name in hopes of "uncovering" linear truths, absolutes, and precepts regarding effective teacher training, approaching this research from a postmodernist perspective is both appropriate and justifiable, and will strengthen my research, in that postmodernism critiques modernist characteristics such as,

> (a) belief in the power of reason and the accumulation of scientific knowledge
> capable of contributing to theoretical understanding; (b) belief in the value of

centralized control...and mass communication; (c) adherence to established norms of testing validity claims; (d) acceptance of the Kantian view of the possibility of establishing universalistic value statements. (Thomas, 1993, p. 23)

Similarly, my investigation will critically question the role that language choices and constructs play in contributing to the limiting and marginalizing discourses present in current predominant instructional communication and teacher training. Again, this deconstruction and questioning of language lends itself to a postmodern lens in that,

> If postmodernism is about anything, it is about the materiality of language as a dynamic force in the ritual of social transformation...Language that keeps us at a distance; or language that brings us together in a certain way, while exiling other ways of interpretively making sense of and/or being in relation to each other. (Pfohl, 1991, p. 10)

This postmodernist approach to my research will serve to strengthen and support my charges against behaviorist methodologies, rationalism, and the material consequences of specific language choices fostered by such ideologies. I will apply this approach through the practice of rhetorical criticism.

Rhetorical Criticism

Rhetorical criticism looks to any symbolic artifact such as words, phrases, performances, images, texts, and "discourse" in general to discover how, and how well, they work in order to instruct, inform, move, arouse, entertain, perform, convince, and persuade their audience. According to Andrews (1990), when practicing rhetorical criticism, the critic must be aware that when a speaker crafts his/her original text,

> *Analyzing the argument* will also enhance a speaker's ability to construct and employ rhetorical structures that use evidence effectively through persuasive reasoning. Attention to the function of language in promoting argument can help speakers make stylistic choices that best fit their purposes and audience expectations. [author's

emphasis] (p. 5)

Because my research is concerned with the myriad ways in which the language of instructional communication is enacted and reiterated, I argue that employing rhetorical criticism of instructional texts commonly used by GTAs in orientation, training and other professional development activities serves as a means to analyze the ways instructional communication employs rationalistic vocabulary and language constructs as a persuasive means of promoting and reiterating marginalizing ideologies specific to this discipline and its research. Rhetorical criticism allows me to enter into the fray of the public discussion of instructional communication, using both critical abilities and perspectives to become an active participant in the solution of the problem via careful investigation of this discipline's rhetoric and its consequences.

According to Brummett (1994), texts influence meaning. "Scholars in the field of critical studies describe this state of affairs when they note that meanings, and therefore the texts that generate meanings, are sites of struggle.... struggles over power occur in the creation and reception of texts" (p. 70). Because this study is one concerned with issues of power in the classroom, from a critical investigation of the language surrounding these discourses, specifically how language choices shape our realities, it seems fitting to engage in rhetorical criticism, as such a method requires a deep and close reading of texts, including careful investigation of language choices as symbols of persuasion. While rhetorical criticism allows for the engagement of a variety of schools of thought, because my investigation deals with issues of power, I have approached the rhetorical criticism of GTA training texts from a perspective of Marxist criticism.

Marxist criticism

I align myself with Marxist criticism, as it is an approach concerned with ideology, class, and with the distribution of power in society. While Marxism originally concerned itself with the material consequences of economic systems, most Marxists now agree that churches, hospitals and schools are as material as the economic system is. In engaging Marxist theory, Althusser (1971) names these structures as ideological state apparatuses that generate ideologies and contribute to the overdetermination of social and cultural inequalities. Moreover, Marxist criticism makes the argument that these ideologies are embedded in and take form in everyday experiences and objects, thus supporting my claim that the texts surrounding GTA training may very much so contribute to the ideas and concepts found within our overarching educational discourses. In my own close reading of these texts, I focused on oppositional readings of the texts, keeping in mind rhetorical themes of subject position, implied strategies, metonymy and power.

Subject position

Subject position is part of the structure of a text, and is what that text persuades and encourages the reader to be as he or she encounters that text. Regarding subject positions Brummett (1994) offers that,

> Subject positions are defined by the type or category of a person that is called to by the text: male or female, old or young, and so on. Subject positions also imply certain characteristics, such as happy or unhappy, active or passive, and the like. Finally, subject positions imply a consciousness, which as we learned before, is a system of meanings linked to a group identification. (p. 99)

Within my own analysis of the texts, I engaged this notion of subject positions by questioning what types of preferred and oppositional readings of subject positions these

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texts allow. A Marxist criticism would question which type of subject positions and characteristics are most strongly encouraged by the texts, but would also locate within that text and within the readers of that text, resources that allow for oppositional constructions of subject position. For the purposes of my selected texts, all of which overtly state by the author(s) that they are designed for novice GTAs, I am interested in investigating if this preferred subject position may be complicated by oppositional or inflected subject positions.

Implied strategies

Because a Marxist point of view would argue that the marginalizing effects of ideology are reiterated *subtly* in systems, schools of thought, and the signs which constitute them, I will be examining my chosen artifacts in their implication of signs, the relationship among them, how these signs are arranged and so forth, through the rhetorical category of implied strategies. Following the work of rhetorical critic Kenneth Burke (1969), I will be engaging these texts through the different lenses of implied strategies of *association* and *conflict or absence*.

The implied strategy of *association* concerns itself with the question *What goes with what?* Or more specifically, what signs, words, phrases or images are linked together within the text? When signs occur consistently in pairs in a text, the rhetorical critic must consider how this linking of signs becomes a strategy on the part of the author to borrow and transfer meaning from one sign to another (Brummett, 1994). In engaging this answer, I examined signs linked together within the selected texts. Because my work is concerned with the ways in which the ideology of rationalism intersects with language,

these signs may likely manifest themselves in particular language or word choices, or in overarching themes (re)created by these language choices.

Unlike association, an implied strategy that concerns itself with the pairing of signs, *conflict,* as an implied strategy, concerns itself with the pairing of two particular signs or concepts against each other, in the form of opposition or contradiction, while *absence* concerns itself with omission of particular signs. In order to locate these particular signs, the critic must compare what the text did not say against what it did say, and ask: *What is missing?*

For a Marxist critic, the manifestation of such implied strategies prompts an investigation that questions how these strategies might be a way to mask the production or a structure of power by transferring meaning from one discourse or sign to another, by removing one sign or discourse from another, or by putting two signs or discourses in opposition to each other. These choices on the part of the author may be conscious or unconscious, contributing to and reiterating possibly marginalizing ideologies.

Metonymy

In discussing and analyzing the associative signs of a text, the concept of *metonymy* becomes very important. Metonymy can best be described as the simplification of complex imagery and information into a "smaller, more manageable image" (Brummett, 1994, p. 63). The use of metonymy often occurs as a result of increases in "population, technology, pluralism, and perhaps most of all, knowledge" necessitating the emergence of a collective shorthand when engaging in discussion of complex social issues (Brummett, 1994, p. 101). Because education and the professional development of

instructors has very much become a complex social issue, it seems practices of metonymy may become very important to the ways in which these texts influence our educators. Particularly, keeping in mind Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) discussion of language and metaphor, it becomes important to question what this metonymy both illuminates and obfuscates. As evidenced by the review of the literature, rationalistic forms suppress and obfuscate emotion in favor of control—control of emotion, control of the classroom, control through structure. In discussing metonymy, a possible metonymic construction of rationalism, in a way to mask and subvert the power and privilege behind this ideology, is the replacement of the complex notion or imagery of rationalism and its marginalizing consequences, with seemingly benign constructions of control or structure.

Self-reflexivity

One can best describe self-reflexivity as, "the process of personally and academically reflecting on lived experiences in ways that reveal the deep connections between the writer and her or his subject" (Goodall, 2000, p. 137). This thesis proposes a unique challenge in that throughout my review of the literature, I have argued for a necessary and thoughtful balance between the logical and often removed, with the emotional and often subjective. I reflect upon this necessity within my methodological choices by engaging in rhetorical criticism, a method that traditionally distances the researcher, in conjunction with my own autoethnographic experiences as a GTA. In light of this necessary tension, I feel it remiss of the thoughtful critic to eschew his or her own personal observations or experiences in hopes of "objectivity." Similarly, it is my identity as a GTA that prompted my initial interest and inquiry into this topic, and this

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identity will inevitably shape my conclusions surrounding this research; failure to openly address this research's intersections with my own identity and own lived experiences would be, in certain respects, misleading.

Selection of Texts and Analysis

In approaching this study from an openly subjective stance, concerning myself with the ways members of social groups create their lives, I find it appropriate and necessary to consider my own subject position as a GTA. In valuing and incorporating my own subjective experiences within this research, I have chosen three instructional texts used within my own GTA cohort and training, including: *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research and Theory for College and University Teachers* (McKeachie & Gibbs, 1999), *The Teaching Assistant's Guide to the Basic Course* (Hendrix, 2000), and *First Day To Final Grade: A Graduate Student's Guide To Teaching* (Curzan & Damour, 2009. While these texts allow for personal, nuanced intersections within my own subjective experiences, they also meet standards of criterion for selection of artifact in that each of the three texts explicitly state that they were written for the intended audience of novice GTAs. The fact that the three selected texts have three different publishers assures variegation of viewpoint. Finally, each text is available to a wide audience of readers, with *McKeachie's Teaching Tips* being in its twelfth edition and with *The Teaching Assistant's Guide to the Basic Course* being recommended as a supplementary text to GTAs by Cengage Publishing.

My data analysis consists of close readings of all gathered data and texts, and then

open coding using rhetorical criticism, identifying themes of rationalism in specific

regard for discussion of classroom management and control. In my analysis, I code

rationalism as an elision of emotion, or advocation for the suppression of emotion, and/or

overt reliance upon mechanization and linear or reductive discussion of instructional

communication. Blatant discussion of classroom "tricks" or "techniques" with no

decontextualization of processes or possible ramifications of such techniques would be an

exemplar of rationalistic discourses. In coding for rationalistic discourses, I looked for a

lack of reflexivity in terms of possibly marginalizing effects of the instructional

communicative methods that are discussed and/or advocated for within the gathered data.

Fassett & Warren (2007) posit reflexivity as careful reflection,

> where competing desires end in tension, with [out].... the sacrifice of one ethical
> belief for another. I see the potential, the significance of reflexivity even as I realize
> that it can also be painful, disappointing.... reflexivity is what enables us to perceive
> how we are both products and producers of communication, of strategies and tactics.
> (p. 86)

Through my literature review, I have posed rationalism as a marginalizing discourse,

aided by behaviorist perspectives, that looks for linear and undeviating techniques or

precepts. Rationalism looks for simplistic and one-sided causation to solve classroom

problems. Reflexivity then, serves as the antithesis to rationalism, in its urging for

members of particular groups, in this case instructors or researchers of instructional

communication to consider not only efficient "solutions" to classroom management and

decorum, but to consider reflectively how these possible solutions may marginalize and

disenfranchise.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

For I have known them all already, known them all:

Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,

I have measured out my life with coffee spoons

T.S. Elliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

[emphasis added]

(Elliot, 1917, p. 1231)

The above epigraph, from T.S. Elliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," crystallizes many of the themes of rationalism I address within this thesis. The poem's literal discussion of spiritually exhausted people existing in the impersonal modern city parallels approaches to instruction that attempt to remove the spiritual or emotional persona through sterile, formulated, and impersonal "modern" approaches toward education. Both this famous poem and current educational discourses demonstrate a Westernized estrangement between passions and modern "civilized" life.

I approached my selected texts with both skepticism and perspective——skepticism that these texts would break free from an ideology of rationalism that I increasingly see manifested in the structures (and poems) surrounding me, but reminding myself to keep the perspective that the authors of these texts are, like me, teachers, and that, in my heart of hearts, I truly believe that individuals approach teaching with the aim to do good, not bad. I remind myself that a teacher can still be a good one, even if he or she (inevitably) makes mistakes, as I know I have made mistakes in my fledgling teaching career. I remind myself that what I view as "effective" teaching is one perspective in a larger

discussion surrounding teaching, no more valuable or worthless than the views of the authors of these selected texts. However, I also believe that a teacher should assert his or her own beliefs and experiences at the forefront of any lesson or lecture and carry those beliefs in and through oneself and, hence, in and through his or her teaching. I then approached these texts with perspective, not divorcing my beliefs and personal experiences from my analysis of the artifacts, but rather maintaining these in productive confluence.

This chapter reports on data collected from the rhetorical criticism of three texts: *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers* (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006), *First Day to Final Grade: A Graduate Student's Guide to Teaching* (Curzan & Damour, 2009), and *The Teaching Assistant's Guide to the Basic Course* (Hendrix, 2000). This chapter reports the four main themes collected from the data presented within these texts: advocation for decontextualization within the classroom as an attempt to omit emotion, suppression of negative emotion within the classroom, controlling of emotion through rationality, and a disregard for graduate teaching associates' subject position as a productive liminal space. Though there were many more themes, notions, and concepts that surfaced in these texts, I have selected the four themes that best address my research question of how these texts address issues of classroom control

Elision of Emotion Through Decontextualization

By ignoring emotion rationalism negates the opportunity for transformative teaching, in that it denies both teacher and students the opportunity to learn from each other's mutual subjectivities and experiences (Freire 1970/2003), and instead, promotes objective viewpoints, and singular ways of knowing or of existence. Rationalistic ideologies thrive and manifest themselves through a privileging of linear and decontextualized discourses. Decontextualized teaching lays in opposition to transformative teaching, in that transformation occurs with mutual teacher-student risk taking and disclosure, while reductive instruction seeks removed and decontextualized instructional approaches to learning. Within the texts, we see material examples of the ways in which rationalistic discourses elide emotion through decontextualization, both in terms of the physical structure and layout of the texts, and through the treatment of emotion as a barrier to this decontextualization.

Decontextualization

"Would it have been worth the while/ To have bitten off the matter with a smile/ To have squeezed the universe into a ball/ To roll it toward some overwhelming question" (Elliot, 1917, p. 1232). So often in teaching I find myself thinking I have bitten off more than I can chew, that there are questions to which I cannot ever provide an easy "answer." Indeed, this profession is often overwhelming. And in times of crisis, we teachers, we humans, often find comfort in structure. Often times, structure, quite literally, is support. However, structure can also be debilitating—it can often lead to a drawing out of connotative richness. In understanding this double-bind of structure, the rhetorical critic

can look to the structure of an artifact as a means of explicating the richness of a text. In the case of my analysis, structure becomes not just an analytical tool to unpack these artifacts, but also a material example of the rationalistic structures I seek to explore.

Structure and layout as conduits for decontextualization

The authors of both *McKeachie's Teaching Tips* and *First Day to Final Grade* offer paragraph explanations regarding the organizational framework of their books, with Curzan and Damour (2009) explaining that, "Each topic in this book is divided into headings and subheadings for easy reference. You will find a detailed table of contents in the front to help you locate exactly what you need at any given point during the term" (p. 9). Similarly, McKeachie and Svinicki (2006) offer,

> The organization of this book begins with the issues involved in getting started, then moves on to the basic skills needed by all teachers—getting student participation, lecturing, assessing learning, and assigning grades (Parts 1 and 2). Equally important are awareness of, respect for and ability to adapt to differences among students (Part 3). Parts 4 and 5 deal with additional skills and strategies important for other aspects of teaching. In Part 6 we discuss the goals of education going beyond simple memorization of facts, concepts and theories, and in Part 7 we point toward your continued development as a teacher. (p. xvii)

The above excerpt serves as an example of the general layout of each of these three instructional texts. Collectively, each book begins with a chapter overviewing the GTA experience, including the culture of university and academic departments, while the second and third chapter of each book concerns preparing for the first week of class and meeting with one's class for the first time. The individual texts then devote chapters to facilitating discussion, lecturing, and grading, with these chapters constituting the middle portion of the books. With the exception of Hendrix, who weaves both pragmatic and developmental issues of instruction evenly throughout the middle and end of her text,

only toward the end of Curzan and Damour's (2009) and McKeachie and Svinicki's (2006) texts do we see chapters surrounding less overtly "practical" or pragmatic issues of teaching, such as "The Ethics of Teaching and the Teaching of Ethics," (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006), "Vitality and Growth Throughout Your Teaching Career" (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006), and "The Balance of School and Teaching" (Curzan & Damour, 2009).

As a rhetorical critic, I ask: If these texts are designed and marketed by their authors as a quick reference or handbook, then how does the placement of complex and thorny issues as secondary to the pragmatics or banalities of instruction (e.g., how to write students letters of recommendations, how to respond to emails, and where to hold office hours), model or suggest for the GTA that these complex issues should not only be considered as secondary to the pragmatics of teaching, but also, as issues that can and should be approached by instructors as removed from these practicalities of instruction? Even where these authors discuss such complicated issues surrounding students' and teachers' cultural and ethnic backgrounds, with the exception of Hendrix's work, these chapters and the concerns raised within them are divorced from the overall narrative of the text. For example McKeachie and Svinicki (2006) include a chapter on "Teaching Culturally Diverse Students"; however, nowhere else in the book do the authors discuss these cultural differences in terms of their intersections with teaching. By omitting issues of cultural sensitivity from the many other nuances of instruction touched upon in this text, the authors seriously devalue the complexity of such a multifaceted issue, suggesting that cultural sensitivity exists in a vacuum. For example, the next chapter, entitled

"Dealing with Student Problems and Problem Students (There's Almost Always at Least One!)," fails to address the issues from the previous chapter surrounding multiculturalism, even when, as evidenced in my review of the literature, issues of classroom management often have at their root differences in cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds between the teacher and the student. Even more concerning, Curzan and Damour include no discussion of the cultural or socioeconomic dimensions of teaching. Instead, on the discussion of "disruptive" students, they assert, as fact, "Do not teach to disruptive students. They are squeaky wheels, and you will often find yourself bending over backward to please them or keep them interested in class" (p. 59). Such omissions and inconsistencies within the texts regarding the complex nature of student and teacher subject positions are indicative of a larger teaching community that has become adept at dividing and subdividing instruction into its component parts, but does not reflexively interrogate how these parts come together to effect the larger sociocultural context of teaching

On Dasher, on Dancer, on Donner and divorcées: Emotion as a barrier to decontextualization

I remember it was Christmas. I remember my oldest sister. I remember her angry and yelling at me. I remember her recent divorce. I don't remember what started the fight. I don't remember her feeling like a statistic. I don't remember her self-worth questioned. I don't remember her marriage as an abusive or unhealthy one.

When I think of my sister, Andrea, screaming at me at the top of her lungs that Christmas afternoon for no reason that I could discern, I don't remember much, but thinking that she was acting "crazy"—thinking that she needed to calm down, thinking

she needed to explain all the things I didn't know, that I didn't remember, in a calm and logical manner. How else was I supposed to figure out all these connections she was drawing from our argument, from my behavior, to her recent divorce? Why was she taking out these frustrations on me? But she didn't calm down, and I didn't comfort her. Instead I told her I refused to engage in a yelling match and that once she could control her emotions, I'd be willing to have a discussion with her. We didn't talk for two months.

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I think about the fight my sister and I got in that day, the circumstances surrounding it, more than I would like. I think of the ways my own white, middle-class upbringing has left me still uncomfortable with rage, anger and emotion. I think of how I then equated calm and polite with civilized or ideal. I think of the privileged life both my sister and I lead together, and the ways in which that privilege was stripped from her; how she became marginalized and oppressed as a result of her self-described dysfunctional marriage and ensuing divorce. I think of how I could not understand her oppression, because my own privilege allowed no frame of reference, no metaphor, for understanding it. And in that moment, in that fight, instead of caring for her rage, giving it a space to be, I attempted to sequester and control it. That instance and many others remind me that my subject position will always predispose me to rationalistic ideologies, and that my struggle will be to recognize and push back reflexively on those tendencies, particularly in the classroom, where I want to care for my students' experiences and give them space to exist. When these thorny, sensitive or multifaceted issues like race, culture and gender

become palpable in the classroom, we instructors may be fearful of discussing them, because so often in approaching these kinds of issues, "facts" are harder to divide out and decontextualize from our own (and our students') deeply invested emotions. Much like with my sister, I was looking for reasons, or factual answers as to why I had so upset her— only now, years later, am I able to have some semblance of the "reasons" why she was so angry with me, with the world. It has taken me, recognizing my own subject position as the outsider, as the privileged, much reflection to understand her reality in that time and space. And with that event, I will always question how it would have played out differently, had I not viewed Andrea's anger as a barrier to our mutual understanding, but from the start, viewed it as a necessary and important contributor to that understanding. Curzan and Damour draw classroom parallels to my initial framing of Andrea's anger as a block to understanding and a barrier to the process of decontextualization in their discussion of "handling sensitive material;" for example,

> At times, your course may call for the discussion of a *sensitive topic*. Questions involving issues of gender, race, culture, class, sexual orientation, or any other "political" topic will make the task of running a *free-flowing, balanced,* and *thoughtful* discussion more challenging than usual [emphasis added]. (p. 56)

Cast as interruptions or barriers, these authors teach their reader that "sensitive topics" are not possible avenues or rich areas for discussion and understanding of teacher and student experiences, but rather that these experiences might exist as a (false) binary to a "free-flowing" or "balanced" or "thoughtful" discussion, essentially arguing that emotion is a barrier to thoughtfulness, rather than a conduit.

Hendrix's work, however, serves as a positive model of an instructor/author modeling the reflexivity needed within the classroom. Hendrix weaves, throughout each of her

chapters, a constant narrative of teachers investigating the subject position of their

students and themselves even in regard to the practical applications of teaching. Much

like the necessary questioning of my own subject position in relation to my sisters and

her experiences, Hendrix reminds her readers/teachers, throughout each chapter of her

book, to consider their own experiences as differing from or similar to the experiences of

their students. For example, in her chapter "Knowing Yourself as Classroom Teacher"

she asserts, "As an instructor you will interact with people from different backgrounds.

To maximize your effectiveness, you should face your biases, recognize yourself as a

GTA of color (if applicable), and consider the context of your teaching" (p. 21). Hendrix

contributes to a subversion of rationalism in two specific ways that McKeachie and

Svinicki and Curzan and Damour do not; where the latter authors parse out and separate

the pragmatics of instruction from the sensitive or complex issues as separate tasks,

Hendrix addresses both issues simultaneously, modeling an organic, as opposed to

reductive, method of teaching. Secondly, Hendrix asks her readers/teachers to further

complicate the "practicality" of issues like group discussion as more than a mere teaching

strategy or tool, by encouraging her readers to question their own and their students'

subject positions. For example, in her chapter "Lecturing and Group Discussion,"

> In order to create a good working environment, a good leader is aware of how culture may influence interaction between and among group members. The leader should determine members' perceptions of how groups function—for example, individualistic versus collective goals. An effective leader will also recognize that females may engage in what Deborah Tannen (1990) refers as "rapport talk" whereas men in the group might predominantly express themselves using "report talk." Tannen's research indicates that women can and do explain themselves but they are not usually given the opportunity to do so as men engage in domineering talk such as interrupting, controlling the topic, and giving long explanations. (p. 40)

Here Hendrix complicates lecturing and group discussions as more than practical issues of instruction by imbuing these practicalities with issues of gender and its intersections with communicative styles. In addition to isolating specific chapters that address the more theoretical, thorny and sometimes controversial discussion of race and gender (Chapter 4: "Knowing Yourself as Classroom Teacher," Chapter 5: Strategies for Non-Native English Speaking GTAs"), as evidenced above, Hendrix also cohesively ties these discussions throughout the "practical" chapters of her book, creating a unified, as opposed to reductive, approach to instruction. By combining the subject position of the teacher (and student) in her discussion of pragmatics, Hendrix shores up support for Palmer's (2007) claim that "good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10).

Hendrix creates a text that logically parses out particular areas of instruction that a GTA would concern him or herself with, but also imbues each of those areas with the important issues that a GTA may not immediately think to ask. What fails when creating a handbook designed primarily for reference with the content of each chapter divorced from another, is that if the student/reader is not necessarily considering, for example, the intersections of an aggressive or "disruptive" student along the axes of race, culture and gender, then he or she may not think to refer to the chapter on "Teaching Culturally Diverse Students." Rather, he or she would more likely refer to the chapter on the practicalities of classroom management. Therefore, in attempts to offer direct univocal answers to the new instructor, by means of reducing intricate, multidimensional issues into isolatable categories, Curzan and Damour and McKeachie and Svinicki not only

leave out important information for their readers (and the many, many students effected

by that readership), but also, they model for their readers reductive practices in teaching.

Suppression of Negative Emotions

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;

Am an attendant lord, one that will do

To swell a progress, start a scene or two,

Advise the prince; *no doubt, an easy tool,*

Deferential, glad to be of use,

Politic, cautious, and meticulous;

Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse

At times, indeed, almost ridiculous--

Almost, at times, *the Fool.*

T.S. Elliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

[emphasis added]

(Elliot, 1917, p.1233)

When friends complain to me about their jobs, when they tell me how meaningless

they seem in the grand scheme of it all, I am thankful—thankful to have a job I love, a

job that challenges me, and a job that feels genuinely important. On the opposite side of

the coin, however, I find myself thinking that at least those who hate their "meaningless"

jobs can leave them at the office. The problem (and blessing) of a job that challenges you

and that you love, like teaching, is that you tend to carry it with you wherever you go. At

least for me, teaching has quickly become a part of my identity, so much so that I can't leave it at the office (or in the classroom), even if I wanted to do so.

Teaching, while it provides a great deal of reward and satisfaction, also allows for resentment. Living in a society that valorizes teaching as a humble and selfless profession leaves little room for the so-called humble and selfless instructor to vent about the hardships of teaching, the excessive demands, and impossible impositions. But if I were to claim these hardships publicly, onlookers might tell me I have entered into the wrong profession, for selflessness leaves no space for frustrations.

The above epigraph illuminates the side of the teaching in which I publicly have no space to voice— that sometimes I want a job that is easy, that doesn't involve risks; a job in which I can be of use to others and helpful ("deferential, glad to be of use"), but one that does not seem, at times, impossible; a job where I don't constantly have to take risks ("politic, cautious, and meticulous"), and risk being made a fool. (Un)fortunately, that is not the job I have. Nor do I think the solution is to be a teacher who plays it safe or simply goes through the motions. The solution instead is to provide a space for teachers, especially new ones, where we tell them the truth about teaching—the double-bind of risk and reward, passion and exhaustion——at the forefront of their professional development. The solution is not to disillusion pre-service and novice instructors with ideas of teaching as good, clean fun.

Across these works, I begin to see the way these instructional texts for pre-service teachers reify ideas of instruction as a primarily favorable experience, by focusing and placing emphasis on the positive emotions of teacher, while negating or eliding the

equally important, negative and difficult emotions surrounding teaching. Within the submissions of our primary authors, we see several implied strategies within the text that elide the construct of emotion as a valuable pedagogical tool. Of these implied strategies, I look to the ways in which "negative" emotion (fear, anger, embarrassment) within the context of teaching is almost always superseded by positive emotions (happiness, confidence, a feeling of reward).

> Many of you will find it hard to believe that the students will accept your authority or expertise...*Relax!* The power of role expectations always amazes me. If you are the teacher, students will accept your authority and expertise... I hope this book will add to your *helpfulness. Have fun!* [emphasis added]. (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006, pp. xxi-xxii)

The above exemplifies the authors' attempt to set aside (perhaps cavalierly) the fears of the new graduate teaching instructor as insignificant in a somewhat placatory manner. Instead of addressing these fears as understandable and productive on the part of the new instructor, these authors encourage the GTA to "relax!" and "have fun!," serving to immediately replace these difficult emotions with positive or more "agreeable" emotions. Moving past the preface and to the first page of the text, the authors continue to replace any mention of negative emotions with placatory positive sentiments. They assert,

> Most of us go into our first classes as teachers with a good deal of fear and trembling. We don't want to appear to be fools; so we have prepared well, but we dread the embarrassment of not being able to answer the students' questions.... In most cases, *anxiety passes* as one finds that students do respond *positively*, that one does have some expertise in the subject, and that class periods can be *exciting*.... More often than not, the key to a *good start* is not the choice of interesting content, but rather the ability to manage the activities of the class effectively. *Simple teaching techniques* get the student involved so that they can get to work and learn....The new teacher who has *techniques* for breaking the ice, for encouraging class participation, and for getting the course organized is more likely to get off to a *good start*. Once you find that teaching *can be fun, you will enjoy devoting time to it*, you will think about it,

and you will develop into a contemporary teacher [emphasis added]. (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006, pp. 2-3)

In light of eliding negative emotions, the authors make some troubling assertions in suggesting that the teacher rely on tactics or "simple teaching techniques" as a means of controlling the class, undermining the negative emotion felt by both the instructor and the students in that moment, and replacing it with a value of control. Again, once this tool of control is asserted, the more positive emotions regarding teaching as fun or enjoyable are promoted.

Similarly, Curzan and Damour also encourage a mitigation of negative emotion, specifically on the part of the instructor, when they say,

> In extreme cases, you may find that talking with an antagonistic student or writing *reasonable* comments on their papers is *failing to curb their behavior*...These situations can be personally upsetting [but] *you will never gain* by letting yourself become *visibly angry* or *irrational* with the student, so *find other outlets for your frustration* [emphasis added]. (p. 119)

And while it should be acknowledged that Curzan and Damour do offer realistic scenarios of teaching when things may go awry, similar to McKeachie and Svinicki, these authors support suppression of negative emotion on both the part of the student and the teacher, suggesting "reasonable" approaches to eliminating negative emotion felt by the antagonistic student, and cautioning against any sort of overt or visible suggestion of negative emotion on the part of the teacher.

As I have mentioned previously, teaching can indeed be a frustrating, and at times, lonely endeavor. Curzan and Damour's suggestions that instructors repress negative emotions, and "find other outlets for [their] frustration" speaks back to my previous discussion of the idealized notion held by our society of teachers as selfless. This

enabling fiction is underscored here with the author's proposal that frustration be vented elsewhere, suggesting that the classroom is not an appropriate space for an instructor's negative emotions. Again, this compartmentalizing of the who's, what's and where's of "appropriate" emotion speaks back to a rationalistic approach to education that aims to decontextualize and control emotion.

We can compare McKeachie and Svinicki's and Curzan and Damour's approach towards negative emotion as something to be ignored to the more problematized and complicated approach taken by Hendrix within the first chapter of her work when she asserts,

> Inexperienced GTAs—including those who have transferred to a new institution, and those being assigned to new course preparation—normally experience self concerns where they are preoccupied with academic survival, managing their classroom credibility, and maintaining control in their classrooms (Darling & Dewey, 1990). As a result, while it is important to develop content knowledge, it is equally important to *reduce the levels of uncertainty, fear, and stress*, which you might experience after being assigned to teach. One way of reducing your anxiety level and *increasing your confidence* is to acquire information to assist with the process of socializing into your new role as GTA [emphasis added]. (p. 1)

> The more you know about what is expected of you---and the normal phases of anxiety experienced by new teachers—*the more control you will sense over your circumstances*. Eventually, you will *gain confidence* and *enjoy* your opportunities to facilitate the learning process of your students as well as your own. Doubtless, you will be *nervous* as you begin your first few weeks of teaching....*even with experience our anxiety and fear of the unknown increase as our environment changes. GTA concerns are not without merit*, and so, it is natural to be concerned about your position as a GTA rather than viewing it as a casual responsibility [emphasis added]. (p. 3)

Much like McKeachie and Svinicki, in the above excerpt, Hendrix also contributes to an approach towards education in which ideas of control and positive emotion supersede the negative emotions. However, instead of casually casting aside the fear experienced by

the GTA as insignificant, and offering simple techniques of classroom management or "ice breakers" as an answer to this fear, Hendrix does a much more reflexive job indicating care for these feelings of uncertainty and fear. Instead of offering easy solutions, she reminds her reader that these feelings are natural and productive, and that her reader is not alone in feeling this way. Rather than providing techniques or tips as a means of mitigating these emotions, Hendrix points to less tangible or immediate answers of time and knowledge. In terms of time, she says that eventually, the GTA will gain confidence; however, she does not pinpoint an exact framework of time. Again, the approach and metaphor for instruction offered by McKeachie & Svinicki not only frames teaching in capitalistic language, but it reduces teaching to a mathematical equation in which the optimum formula is one where risk is low and reward is high, posing teaching as a profession steeped in instant gratification.

Quite to the contrary, even in my limited two years as an instructor, I realize that teaching can often be a job where the tangible "payoff" is seldom. Despite what media representations of teachers portray, students do not often take you aside to tell you what a marvelous instructor you are, or how you have changed his or her life. Instead, we teachers must often subsist on the stolen and fleeting moments of gratification—the high of a particularly engaged lesson or class meeting, or the positive feedback about our instruction on an anonymous teaching evaluation at the end of the semester, or the student who sought us out to share a personal problem or triumph. Indeed, perhaps one of the reasons teacher attrition rate within the first three years of teaching is at an all-time high of fifty percent nationally (National Commission on Teaching and America's

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Future, 2003) is because our approach to teacher training does not foreground teaching as a lifelong learning process, in which immediate reward is seldom. By omitting this critical knowledge, and instead providing GTAs with training materials that promote misleading constructions of teaching, authors may inadvertently contribute to the unfortunate consequence of teacher burnout. Further, because instructional texts articulate emotion, particularly negative emotion, within the classroom as something that instructors should avoid, these authors model for their readers that the negative emotions surrounding teaching, surrounding burnout, are similarly something instructors should easily chose to avoid. However, the choice to avoid burnout is not always easy, nor is it always a choice; were authors of these and similar texts to whole-heartedly admit that failure, risk, and fear are natural and productive elements to teaching, both on the part of the instructor and within the walls of classroom, we may stand a better chance of preparing instructors who may realize and embrace this tension from the onset of teaching, instead of being blindsided by it and unprepared to cope.

Measuring Teaching (With Coffee Spoons): Reducing and Controlling Emotion Through Rationality

It was the final exam for my first semester of teaching. For their culminating experience, my students had voted in favor of impromptu speeches over a written final, and so I created a variety of topics for my students to choose from to deliver their final speech. Creating these topics required some thought, knowing that my students would have no time to research their speeches. So I chose topics I felt related to their opinions and values. Of the four options, I remember two very clearly: "Explain why money

makes the world 'go round'" (for the "cynics") or "Explain why love makes the world 'go round'" (for the "idealists"). I also remember Hope. Hope chose the latter topic. In the first forty-five seconds of her speech, which focused largely on her recently-deceased grandmother's love for her, Hope lost her composure and began to cry, delivering the remainder of her two and half minute speech in tears.

While maintaining eye contact with and focus on Hope as she spoke, I was secretly in a panic. Her emotion startled me, and I wasn't prepared for it. No one else's speech had been so emotional, so personal, and I was worried her classmates might take advantage of her vulnerability and laugh at her—I wanted to protect her. Moreover, I had no idea how to grade her speech. I had a rubric, with clearly identifiable parts—introduction, with a thesis statement, clear transitions between main points, a conclusion with a recap, and extemporaneous delivery—how did crying fall into extemporaneous delivery? She didn't follow the structure I had given and missed the recap of her main points. But, it was a beautiful speech; my clearly organized rubric had failed me, or more correctly, if I followed it, it would fail Hope. I was torn between my commitment to the importance of instilling a sense of organizational rigor into this skills-based, general education course, and Hope's bravery in taking such a beautiful risk.

•••

My personal narrative above serves to illuminate the tension of head versus heart present within teaching. In my review of the literature, I have argued that this tension exists due to an overarching ideology of rationalism present in Western society, particularly in Western educational discourses. Instead of viewing the emotive and

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experiential as equally powerful learning tools, our current agenda of education urges that

these constructs are, at best, placed secondary to logic and structure, and, at worst,

removed altogether. As Ellsworth's (1989) discussion of rationalism in terms of

educational discourses illuminates,

> Rational argument has operated in ways that set up as its opposite an irrational Other, which has been understood historically as the province of women and other exotic Others. In school, rational deliberation, reflection, and consideration of all viewpoints has become a vehicle for regulating conflict and the power to speak, for transforming conflict into rational argument by means of universalized capacities for language and reason. (p. 301)

Having already illustrated the ways in which rationalism asserts itself through

mechanisms of structure and control, reducing complicated issues into reductive

component parts, we can now focus on the ways in which rationalism aims to assert

control over conflict, by privileging thought processes of logic and reason, which

generally support white supremacist capitalist patriarchy (hooks, 1981), and white ways

of sense-making. I now look to my selected artifacts in their discussion of "regulating

conflict" within the classroom as a means of supporting or subverting this rationalistic

agenda.

Within the texts I find support for Ellsworth's (1989) claims that rationalism is

buttressed by the regulating or controlling of conflict within the classroom, by means of

reason and logic, particularly in these instructional guides' discussion of conflict

management or facilitating discussion. Under the heading of "Problematic Arguments"

Curzan and Damour (2009) assert,

> At times students will mistake *polemic* for *proof*. This is especially likely when students have strong personal and antagonistic feelings about an issue. Your best approach is to show students *how weak a proofless polemic is*. Push students to

defend their positions with specific facts and a recognition of the merits of their argument in light of opposing views. *Antagonistic arguments* are often based on generalization and *empty rhetoric*...If your grading is based on the quality of the argument, you can explain it to the student *without having to engage in a personal discussion* of your views on this particular issue [emphasis added]. (p. 119)

In naming student emotion as a "polemic," and posing strong opinions as a false binary to "proof," these authors suggest there is a universal truth worth arriving at, and that a student's (and teacher's) personal opinions or experiences must somehow be "proven" in order to legitimate themselves. More disturbing is their suggestion that we use grades as a way of supporting and reiterating this viewpoint. Doing so suggests a manipulative teacher-student relationship where teachers yield power and grades as means of mediating or altering student experiences and beliefs. Similarly, these authors advocate for discussion techniques that urge for a removed or "unbiased" position as a means of coming to consensus, in order to regulate conflict within the classroom, such as the role of devil's advocate (Curzan & Damour, p. 57; McKeachie & Svinicki, p. 38), debates in which speakers must first argue one side of the issue and then switch to the opposing side (Curzan & Damour, p. 87; McKeachie & Svinicki, p. 257), and Socratic discussions (McKeachie & Svinicki, p. 42) to name a few. In their chapter "Running a Discussion," Curzan and Damour assert,

> You can encourage students to think about material in a *thoughtful (as opposed to reactive)* way by directing their thinking with your questions. It often helps to start the discussion in an "objective" way, asking about what arguments exist on either side of an issue or what relevant ideas students have heard. In this way, *you are not directly soliciting students' personal opinions*, thus creating *a safer space* [emphasis added]. (p. 57)

Here Curzan & Damour again engage in problematic false binaries, posing "thoughtful" as averse to "reactive." This binary reiterates a framing of student/teacher reactions or

emotions as a lesser response than that of quiet, calm contemplation. Similarly, this passage suggests that personal opinions, experiences and emotions are something to be avoided as a way to create a "safe space," and in doing so, equating "safe" with the decontextualized—an area removed from the personal, emotional or experiential.

While these approaches may be helpful tools in certain contexts of learning, the authors offer no alternatives, or recognition of the power of personal narrative and experiential learning as equally powerful learning tools, nor do they include any instruction on development or ideas for these types of tools in their discussion of "Trusty Class Plans" (Curzan & Damour's Chapter 6, pp. 83-101). Even Hendrix, whose authorial narrative appears, more so than McKeachie & Svinicki (2006) and Curzan & Damour's (2009), to avoid or subvert constructions in the classroom that regulate emotion, voices concerns regarding the student who moves away from the structured lesson plan to offer personal experience.

> There may also be instances where a student reveals what others may view as *highly personal information* (such as having an abortion). Let the student speak and try to acknowledge that you understand her comments. Then move the conversation back to the day's lesson and other examples. If the student continues revealing personal information and, as a result, increasingly makes you (or your other students) *uncomfortable*, it may be necessary to contact her to discuss the *uncomfortable atmosphere* on a one-to-one basis [emphasis added]. (p. 62)

While Hendrix makes greater allowances for the instructor to draw upon or share personal experiences or subjectivities (e.g., race, gender, nationality), across the texts, the only possible note of personal experience or other creative channels available to *students* are through writing. Curzan and Damour offer that "writing can also be an opportunity for students to build an academic argument in a systematic, detailed, and appropriately

supported manner" (p. 35). However, "[regarding writing] If you want to encourage

them to be creative, tell them... If you expect to see a coherent argument/thesis, remind

them" (p. 146). Again these statements firstly assume that, within schools, writing's first

objective is to provide a venue for "systematic, detailed and appropriately supported"

arguments, with any other agenda, such as creativity or self-expression as the exception

or experiment. Secondly, it creates a false binary between logic and creativity,

suggesting that these two learning tools exist in opposition rather than in productive

tension.

Further, *First Day to Final Grade* (Curzan & Damour, 2009) and *McKeachie's*

Teaching Tips (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006) appear to suggest that, within the context

of the classroom, any type of negative emotional response, no matter what the issue at

hand, is better served by a sense of calm or careful organization. Note the hypothetical

classroom example offered by Curzan & Damour of an appropriate (as opposed to

"polemic") way of addressing (read: controlling) conflict within the classroom:

> Steven has proposed that women who are raped want sex but are afraid to ask for it.
> The tension created by his comment is palpable. Why does his statement cause such
> an emotional response? Can we pause for a moment and think through how this idea
> could be engaged in an academic, not polemical, manner? (p. 61)

While I am not suggesting the teacher and students collectively berate a student for his or

her opinion, I do think serious transgressions, for example, overt hate-speech, may both

warrant and benefit from a strong emotional response by students and/or teacher. Indeed,

this example serves as an illustration of how the advocating of reason and calm as

oppressive. Rather than offering modes of teaching or techniques that promote processes

that regulate conflict through logic and order, I turn to Hendrix's more considerate

address of such issues when she says,

> You or your students may decide to discuss controversial topics. This will be particularly true, and is the very essence of class periods which may be devoted to persuasive speaking. However, *controversy and disagreement may occur at any time during the term*. It is *your responsibility* as the course instructor to watch out for the "isms" which might enter into classroom discussions---ageism, racism, sexism and others. Students may make negative comments about other group members who may not visibly be present within the room (for example, homosexuals).... Do not allow offensive comments to be made simply because it appears members of the "group" in question are not present in your classroom. Set an example for our students by discussing the strengths associated with being members of a diverse society. If necessary, speak with particular students in-person and express concern regarding the atmosphere which they are creating in your class. Indicate with *reasonable attention to the feelings and experiences of others* [emphasis added]. (p. 61)

Note that Hendrix's discussion surrounding the management of sensitive topics is neither

punitive, nor does it ignore the emotion of the student or the teacher, but rather

encourages that the instructor consider and trust both his/her own and perceived emotions

of others in a concerted effort to create a classroom concerned with social justice. This

disparity between Hendrix and the other two texts may very well be a result of Hendrix's

own subject position as a communication studies scholar. On that note, in comparison to

the respective works of McKeachie and Svinicki and Curzan and Damour, we find

Hendrix's book to be much shorter due to a noticeable absence of itemized or detailed

teaching techniques surrounding debate or similar regulated modes of exchange that

focus not on mutual risk-taking, but rather mutual control of emotion.

hooks (1994) pays interest to the unfortunate phenomenon, present in Westernized

society and particularly within academia, known as the mind/body split. Feminist theory

explains to us that the feminine is often associated with the embodied—the flesh, the

body, the emotional—while the masculine is often associated with the mental faculties and processes of logic. hooks introduces the mind/body split in relation to teaching as a sort of phenomenon where, within the academy we become so accustomed to valuing and relying on our mental faculties that we begin to ignore or devalue our bodily, emotional and visceral reactions as animalistic tendencies to be ignored or subordinated. hooks then urges her readers/students to value these bodily, lived experiences, not as animalistic or less civilized, but as deeply valuable ways of knowing. McKeachie and Svinicki repeatedly appear to shore up this mind/body split, in focusing solely on traditionally masculinized process of control and regulation of emotion, while undermining embodied experience as valuable ways of knowing, as exemplified below:

> A(n) essential component [in the process of strategic learning] is the use of executive *control processes, or self-regulation.* These control processes are used to manage the learning process from the beginning (setting the learning goal) to the end. Strategic learners use executive control processes to (1) *organize and manage* their approach to reaching a learning goal, (2) keep them on target and warn them if they are not making sufficient progress toward meeting the goal in a timely and effective manner, and (3) build up a repertoire of effective strategies that they can call on in the future to complete similar tasks, thereby *increasing their learning efficiency and productivity.* When students are facing new and unfamiliar tasks they must do a lot of planning to help identify potentially effective methods to achieve their goals for *task performance.* Unfortunately, many students simply adopt a trial-and-error approach to learning, or they try to adapt other familiar strategies they have used for different tasks to the current one. Students do no realize that this approach is often neither effective nor efficient.... In addition to learning how to learn course content and learning how to *control motivation and volition....students must also learn "emotion control"—the management of emotions and levels of arousal while learning* [emphasis added]. (p. 312)

McKeachie and Svinicki advocate for a process of learning that valorizes systematized processes and a regulated emotion. Their discussion of systematization and many of their specific word choices (i.e., "manage," "regulation," "efficiency," "productivity," "task

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performance") bear troubling parallels to a language of capitalism, framing the purpose

of education as preparation for a compliant labor force (Sprague, 1992), and the purpose

of instructors as regulators of Total Quality Management (Palmer, 2007). Similarly,

these authors undermine a student's abilities to learn from past lived experiences and

attempt to adopt and adapt these experiences to their current situation, by likening such

skills to an unsophisticated, ineffective and inefficient "trial-and-error" approach. It is

this rejection and denigration of the visceral, of the lived, within educational discourses

that brings me to my third and final thematic finding of these three instructional texts.

Thinking About Subject position: Exploring Productive Liminalities as a GTA

"Are you *out* to your students?"

Within my own GTA cohort, this is a common question we ask of each other. But we

aren't talking about our sexuality, we're talking about our status as graduate students, and

whether or not we're upfront with this information to our students. Personally, I've

approached this topic with both caution and trepidation. I am *not* out to my students.

Each of my four semesters teaching I've toyed with the idea, especially with the

reassurance from my fellow GTAs that their students generally respond well to this

admission. But still I find myself terrified of the prospect, reminding myself: *But I look*

younger than she does. I'm a woman, and he's a man. My credibility will be threatened.

Even though I've made small steps toward becoming comfortable with my liminal

position as both teacher and student, outing myself to individual students, perhaps in the

privacy of office hours, the truth of the matter is that I was and am terrified that my

students won't see this unique subject position as a reason to trust me, but rather as a reason to challenge me.

I do, however, try to make amends for what I feel in my heart is deceitful, for what I know is rooted in my own fear of *losing control*. I try very hard to connect with my students on a personal level, and I don't pretend to be older than I am. I ask them how their courses are going, relating anecdotes about my own undergraduate career at San Jose' State University. I remind them that it wasn't long ago that I was in their place, and that I can be an ally for them or a confidante if need be.

Despite my own misgivings about outing myself to my students, I realize what I might be losing out by (not) doing so. I also realize that even if I do not tell my students I am a GTA, that I still embody this unique subject position, and that this very position of occupying a liminal space between teacher and student has material consequences in our classroom.

Subject positions. According to Brummett (1994), when engaging in rhetorical criticism, the power a text has over you relates directly to what kinds of subject positions it encourages or forces you to inhabit. In regard to my three selected artifacts, within the first few pages of the texts, there is some mention or preface that this book is designed specifically with GTAs in mind, indicating that as the preferred reading of subject position in this text; however, upon close examination, I find that, with the exception of Hendrix's work, the explicitly stated audience of these texts (the GTA) is divorced from these authors' implicit subject-model (the traditional teacher). Both *McKeachie's Teaching Tips* and *First Day to Final Grade* do not attempt to disrupt traditional agendas

of teaching by valuing the liminal subject position of the GTA, especially when dealing with emotion and its intersections with self-disclosure on the part of the student and the teacher.

The advocation for status quo approaches to instruction is not only manifested and modeled in terms of reduction and decontextualization, but is also manifested in these author's misunderstanding of subject position. Based on my own personal experiences, it's clear that being a GTA is a complicated and often liminal position; you are both teacher and pupil, faculty member and student, a figure of authority, yet still an apprentice. Embodying and finding oneself betwixt and between each of these positions all of the time is often emotionally taxing, but *because* of this emotional engagement (as opposed to *separate from*) it becomes intellectually productive work. Because GTAs must constantly negotiate multiple tensions, members of this group can offer an extremely valuable perspective to traditional educational approaches that *teach for teachers*, whereas the GTA experience allows for a type of reflexivity that is more inclined to teach for teachers *and* students

Hendrix exemplifies this reflexive approach to teaching for students and teachers by drawing on both the student and teacher experience of the GTA. In her chapter "Grading Oral Performance," she reminds the reader that, "Students will inevitably be nervous about delivering their speeches just as you feel anxious about your lecture and facilitations" (p. 48). Here she lessens that power differential between student and teacher in drawing on a common, shared experience. Similarly, Hendrix reminds her readers that they share a commonality with their students, reinforcing a shared sense of

student status, when she says, "Being preoccupied with preparing for your teaching and completing your own coursework is certainly understandable" (p. 65).

In my own discomfort with outing myself to my students, I consider not who I may be alienating, but which students might I not be reaching out to and helping by drawing on our common experience? Further, how might I be contributing to and participating in an educational agenda that seeks control by valuing objectivity and removal of self from academia? Despite McKeachie and Svinicki's (pp. xxi-xxii) and Curzan and Damour's (p. 1) claims that they authored these texts with GTAs in mind, it does not appear that they, themselves, have considered these same questions. Instead of asserting or complicating the liminal position that GTAs embody, these authors seem instead to advocate for removal of self-disclosure or shared experience as a means to control the classroom, reiterating traditional views of student-teacher relationships.

Instead of addressing both teacher and student subject position (and often sensitive issues) of race, culture and gender in the classroom, inviting students belonging to marginalized groups associated with these issues to feel they have an ally within their academic community, Curzan and Damour offer the following blanket suggestions:

> There is no reason to discuss your age or the age difference between you and your students *unless, for some reason, it becomes relevant*. The same is true for other aspects of your personal life; if they see a wedding ring, they will figure out its significance, but outside of that, *there is no reason* to divulge the details of your personal life, your sexual orientation, and so on, unless you feel this information is *relevant to the class* [emphasis added]. (p. 16)

> Unless you are teaching a class about gender, it is unlikely that you will need or want to make an explicit issue of the gender-related power dynamics in your classroom. (p. 17)

Again, unless you are teaching a course on racial or cultural issues, you may not need or want to make racial and cultural differences an *explicit issue* in your classroom [emphasis added]. (p. 18)

Instead of providing a model of the classroom where these important issues are always discussed, Curzan and Damour argue that such sensitive topics should only be addressed if the subject matter of the course addresses such issues, or if these issues somehow "become relevant," eliding a view of the classroom, or the world for that matter, where these issues are always relevant, and again advocating for an environment of control where these often complicated issues are placed secondary to or as a barrier to learning. McKeachie and Svinicki offer further support for these traditional teacher-centered views of the classroom, cautioning against self-disclosure, not only on the part of the student, but also on the part of the professor when they argue,

> The choice of instructional strategies such as journaling and small-group problem sharing may violate your students' rights and *be harmful as well as unethical*...Use of such teaching methods raises the issue of trust... Similar issues of trust arise during the discussion of sensitive topics, such as race, sexual preference, and religion. When faced with a potentially sensitive situation, you can
> - Provide early disclosure of the potentially sensitive nature of the topics.
> - Make sure that students understand what is being presented as fact and what as opinion.
> - Offer extra time outside of class to those students who need to discuss the topics and their reactions to them (Koocher & Keith-Speigel, 1998) [emphasis added]. (pp. 330-331)

While it should be recognized that McKeachie and Svinicki attempt to approach self-disclosure on the part of the student with caution and provide some reflexive approaches towards facilitating the process, these authors again appear to control emotion by attempting to prevent insecurity or risk on the part of the student, instead of viewing risk and insecurity as possibly productive. Similarly, it is unsettling that the authors imply

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such pedagogical approaches may be "unethical" without any reflection on the ethics of the status quo teaching techniques that their book largely promotes. Equally unsettling is that nowhere in their discussion of self-disclosure on the part of the student is it pointed out or suggested that self-disclosure on the part of the GTA may make the process a more reciprocal and open one in which the student may feel more comfortable by knowing his or her instructor can relate to him or her on a more personal level.

We can juxtapose this omission to Hendrix's more reflexive assertion that "You do not need to disclose high levels of personal information; however, if you want your students to disclose so you can get to know them, the process should be a reciprocal one" (p. 23). Here, Hendrix indicates a line between excessive or inappropriate self-disclosure, while still realizing the possible advantages of mutual risk-taking between the teacher and the student.

Instead of advocating for the drawing of shared human experience and emotion as a means to provide for a transformational, as opposed to banking, model of education (Freire, 1970/2003), the authors offer trite and decontextualized examples of connecting to the students, including the suggestion that "If you can find a cartoon or funny story that illustrates your point, humor helps maintain interest" (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006, p. 65), or,

> Using a post office to explain aspects of computer storage, referring to social disagreements as a way to explain conflicts in organizations, and using the structure of a bird to explain design elements of an airplane are all ways we use analogies to help students build meaning for new concepts that may at first seem dissimilar. (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006, p. 305)

And in regard to introducing yourself to the class for the first time, "You might share that you were given an F in singing as a kindergartner or some equally silly tidbit" (Curzan & Damour, 2009, p. 28).

While analogies and media representations should not be discounted as ways to explicate concepts in the course, what is concerning is these authors' advocation for more removed methods of instruction as opposed to methods that create a sense of community through mutual risk-taking. By ignoring an instructor's complex subject position, in relation to his/her students, as a means towards learning, the authors create an invisible wall between the teacher and the student, a wall that for all intents and purposes, particularly for the GTA and student, does not really exist. Even in the example of personal crisis on the part of the student, Curzan and Damour still maintain and advocate that self-disclosure should be avoided as a means of boundary-control. In regard to "Students with Personal Problems," they assert that,

> You should not approach a student about a personal problem unless you are quite sure that something is going wrong for that student outside of the classroom.... Regardless of what is going wrong for the student, once you have arranged a meeting, you can talk with your student about their work and suggest extra help in the following manner.... *Keep your focus on the student's performance in the class* [emphasis added]. You and the student must determine if and how they can improve their performance in the class and how you can assist in *that* process [author's emphasis]. (pp. 115-116)

> More commonly, a student will come to you to discuss a personal problem. When this happens, be sensitive to what they are telling you, without letting them *"spill"* too much. If you allow a student to give you an overly detailed account of their personal problem (e.g., confusion about how to handle their girlfriend's pregnancy), you risk *blurring the boundary* between being their teacher and being their friend or counselor [emphasis added]. (p. 116)

Despite the authors' use of quotation marks, "spill" acts as a revealing container metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), one that illuminates the subtle ways in which the authors view emotion as something to be sequestered, contained and controlled within the person. Further, Curzan and Damour continually advocate, as means of controlling these possibly uncomfortable situations, that the GTA not address any of the emotional or blurry issues of this situation, but instead focus as much as possible on the scholarly aspects of the situation, "keep[ing] your focus on the student's performance in the class," suggesting again that emotion and life circumstances should not intermingle, or that if they do, this is a deviance and the teacher's rightful job is to again separate the two, restoring order.

Beyond Analysis

And I have known the eyes already, known them all--

The eyes that fix you in a *formulated phrase*,

And when I am formulated, *sprawling on a pin*,

When I am *pinned and wriggling* on the wall,

Then how should I begin

To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?

And how should I presume?

T.S. Elliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

[emphasis added]

(Elliot, 1917, p.1231)

Throughout my findings, I have shown the ways in which instructional texts for GTAs largely support rationalistic constructions through the elision and regulation of emotion. The tenets of rhetorical criticism provide a lens for viewing particular language choices and written constructions as more than just words on a page, but as "eyes" that continue to "fix you [teachers] in a formulated phrase." These eyes, these verbal choices become much more than the sum of their parts, but rather contribute to and constitute teaching and learning as creations that should be only formulated phrases and regulated "safe' processes. They pose education and teaching as scientific endeavors, with instructional methods not as ones that allow for transformation of student and teacher, but rather as tips or techniques that aide in decontextualization and dissection. Elliot's poem crystallizes the emotions of one instructor's (my) disavowal of this dissection and my own resentment of instructional approaches that leave me and my students, like flies, pinned and wriggling, ready to be cut up and apart, into neat components and compartments of head versus heart.

And so, Elliot (1917) asks "And how should I presume?" The final chapter of this thesis will venture to answer how we, as caring and thoughtful educators, shall presume. I will explain the significance of my findings, including a discussion of the broader issues reflected therein. Finally, I will address implications for further study of the instruction of GTAs as well as this study's applications for the instruction of all pre-service instructors, including K-12, drawing some conclusions on its importance not only within the field of communication studies, but society at large.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS

I am sitting in a chair. Surrounding me on the walls are ugly, framed floral prints, worthy only of lonely hotel room décor, and serving as sterile, benign place-keepers. On the nearby bookshelf are various books on depression. My leg hurts; there's a cramp in my left thigh. I want to wince in pain, but feel it would be inappropriate in comparison to the emotional pain that permeates the room. I am holding back tears, as I listen to my student Mikhail despondently respond to the counselor and psychiatrist as they ask him a series of questions.

"Do you ever see things that other people don't see?"

"Yes."

"Do you ever hear things that other people don't hear?"

"Yes."

"Do you ever hear something or someone telling you to hurt yourself?"

"Yes."

"Do you ever hear something or someone telling you to hurt other people?"

"No."

"Do you hurt yourself?"

"Yes."

"Do you ever think of suicide?"

"Yes."

"Is that what you were thinking about when you cut your wrist?"

"I don't know…but if I died it wouldn't have mattered."

I hold back tears because I can't help him. I can't reach him. I can't intervene. I hold back tears, until, two hours after talking, the university police officers handcuff Mikhail, check him for weapons, and escort him outside, downstairs, to a squad car that will take him to the nearby psych ward because he may be a threat to himself. And I can't hold back anymore. I cry.

<div align="center">•••</div>

The above happened to me and one of my students towards the end of my completion of this thesis. After Mikhail was taken to the hospital on a 5150 hold, I could only bear to imagine, for moments at a time, the fear or uncertainty he must have been facing on a daily basis. After this ordeal, I was fearful and uncertain, not just for him, but for myself. Having been teaching for less than two years, I was already, in some ways, living *with* my students, *feeling their struggles, entwined* in *their* lives. After all the reading and writing I had completed, including this thesis, that idolized this kind of teaching and this kind of student-teacher relationship—following Freire's words of not just teaching your students, but letting your students teach and shape you, teaching as transformation—in that moment, I didn't feel reverence for this kind of teaching. I didn't feel proud of myself for being the teacher to whom Mikhail chose to surface his inner struggles; I felt scared. And not just for Mikhail, but for myself. How often would these situations present themselves to me in my teaching career, and could I "handle" them? Maybe the very authors that I had been critiquing for suggesting a sense of removal, a sense of distance from your students and from these very emotional and complicated issues, maybe they knew something that I hadn't thought about until now. Maybe those authors

understood the danger of teachers as sponges, who might absorb the struggles of their students. Maybe they wrote those books not to hurt students, as I had originally considered, but instead, to protect teachers.

After leaving the counselor's office, after Mikhail had been taken, I instinctively called my own GTA advisor and met her in her office. There I cried as I told her what had happened. There she listened and absorbed what I was feeling, what I was experiencing. There, she reaffirmed and tweaked Freire's teachings for me.

"I want you to feel this experience, Diana. I want you to feel it, and let it shape you, let it change you... but I also want you to be able to let it go."

She reminds and reaffirms what I already know, that good teaching is difficult, because it involves, not impossibility, but paradox. It involves holding onto things—experiences, emotions, consequences—while simultaneously, letting those things go. This echoes Palmer's (2007) discussion on paradox, when he says,

> Teaching and learning require a higher degree of awareness than we ordinarily possess and awareness is always heightened when we are caught in a creative tension. Paradox is another name for that tension, a way of holding opposites together...Not all good teachers use the same techniques, but whatever technique they use, good teachers always find ways to induce this tension. (p. 76)

And so, I let Mikhail's (and now, my own) experiences shape me, as I reflect and write this chapter, forever shaping and changing me. And in doing so, I also let it go.

Strengths and Limitations

By approaching this study from a personal and subjective standpoint, I realize from the beginning that every interpretation of a particular reality or discourse is always only

partial and incomplete. In light of this, I realize a key limitation of rhetorical criticism is the need for the critic to examine the object of study "from a more emotionally distant, broader, and theoretically informed point of view, rather than from the position of rhetor or audience members" (Stoner & Perkins, 2005, p. 15). For a study that calls out emotionally removed participants and/or researchers as complicit in contributing to the larger problems of the very educational discourses I am critiquing, I note the irony and seriousness of this limitation to my study; however, I address these limitations tactically, by openly complicating the notion of rhetorical critic as removed, in identifying my own personal experiences as a GTA as part of my analysis. In this sense, I model for my audience the educational discourse and approach toward rational thought that I advocate for throughout my research—one that reflexively meters issues of removal, structure and control, with a thoughtful balance of emotion, chaos, and paradox. As I have argued throughout my research, it is only through a thoughtful mixture and productive tension of both of these approaches within the professional development of teachers that these instructors will be equipped and prepared to engage and endure the complicated, multidimensional aspects of teaching that will inevitably follow and challenge them throughout their careers, as they have already challenged me in my four semesters of teaching. It is with these tensions in mind that I go on to discuss the implications of my research and the intersections of communication and education for both instructors and students alike.

A second possible limitation of this study is the disparity between the production values of Hendrix's (2000) texts and McKeachie and Svinicki's (2006) and Curzan and

Damour's (2009) respective texts. My findings illuminate Hendrix's subversion of rationalistic instructional approaches, while McKeachie and Svinicki and Curzan and Damour appear, more often than not, to support these approaches. This disparity may be due to Hendrix's text being written for hire as opposed to the other two texts being written for profit. Cengage Learning provides copies of Hendrix's texts to those who adopt any of their introductory public speaking courses. This means that they're distributed to course coordinators, GTA supervisors and GTAs for free. And while this text is available for purchase online, the circumstances surrounding its production are quite different than the ones surrounding *McKeachie's Teaching Tips* and *First Day To Final Grade* in that its primary reason for production was not for profit. However, this possible limitation of difference among textual production values may also help to illuminate the intersections of rationalism and capitalism. As discussed in my review of the literature, rationalism helps to shape education as a corollary to capitalism. Excerpted selections of McKeachie and Svinicki and Curzan and Damour do indicate capitalistic language that equates productivity and efficiency to learning. In light of the connections between capitalism and rationalism as oppressive ideologies, it is not wholly surprising to find that texts created for profit may be more inclined to embody rationalistic discourses than those created primarily for the education of a new instructor.

Implications For Future Research

A rhetorical criticism of three common instructional texts used for GTA professional development offers a construction and instruction of how particular authors address

issues of control in the classroom, either as a strategy to control emotion or as a productive tension to be situated with its equal and opposite tension of chaos or ambiguity. Both of these constructions manifest themselves in the presence and absence of decontextualization within the texts, the treatment of negative emotions surrounding teaching, discussion of and approaches toward conflict in the classroom, and preferred and oppositional readings of graduate teaching assistants as occupying a liminal, productive space within educational discourses.

The nature of this research specifically concerns itself with the training and professional development of graduate teaching associates in the college setting; however, the implications of this study have much farther reaching consequences, not just concerning GTAs and their professional development, but the many future students of GTAs who will benefit or suffer as a result of their instructors' pedagogical approaches. Beyond affecting teachers and students in the college setting, this research can be applied to the training of all instructors (and their students), touching and shaping K-12 approaches towards instruction as well.

Throughout this thesis I have identified the ways in which a rationalistic lens shapes current approaches to instruction, offering four themes or intersections of rationalism and instructional communication texts. Of these four themes I name the presence of decontextualization through both layout and structure of the texts, and in the authors' treatment of emotion as barriers to decontextualization, the treatment of negative emotions surrounding teaching, discussion of and approaches toward conflict in the

classroom, and preferred and oppositional readings of graduate teaching assistants as occupying a liminal, productive space within educational discourses.

My review of the literature addresses the ways in which rationalistic approaches to instruction rely on highly structured, linear and decontextualized instruction. In naming rationalism as an oppressive ideology, I have argued that such an approach towards instruction privilege traditionally white Western ways of thinking and behaving over ways of being more traditionally embodied by marginalized groups, specifically women and people of color. Extrapolating beyond the university setting, we can begin to see how traditional models of teaching place schools as ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971) that reiterate the status quo, in elevating already privileged groups while continuing to subordinate traditionally oppressed groups. A timely example of this positioning of schools as ideological state apparatuses through vehicles such as rationalism lies in the current national implementation of the Congressional act No Child Left Behind. This federal law serves as a material example of the ills of rationalistic ideologies, which are already deeply imbued in our educational discourses, becoming not simply a thought process or way of understanding the world, but a part of legislation that forces others to embody these viewpoints, and fails them when they cannot. NCLB, like rationalism, focuses on structure and standards-based outcomes by setting quantifiable, measurable goals in educational arenas and developing instruments (read: standardized tests) for measuring these goals. The parallels to such approaches to education bear an uncanny resemblance to post-positivist, behavioral research methods that are heavily drawn upon by authors and researchers in creating current approaches toward the

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professional development of instructors. These parallels serve to illuminate the ways in which privilege and power manifest themselves subtly, at both ends of the spectrum—in the education of students, and in the education of instructors—tackling both sides of the educational spectrum and meeting in the middle.

Because such rationalistic approaches heavily emphasize "teaching to the test," we begin to see how classrooms and teachers must become even more skilled at "cutting the fat" in our approaches to teaching, so as to see that our students are not penalized for not passing these standards-based tests. Unfortunately, this "fat" manifests itself in issues that cannot be readily assessed, issues not of fact, with a capital T truth, but the slippery, complex lessons, surrounding power, privilege, emotion and pain. NCLB was passed in June 2001, creating students entering into our college system who have been steeped in a culture of education that teaches primarily to test-taking for up to eight years of their formative development. Because of this, and particularly in a field like communication studies, one that is concerned with intricate issues regarding privilege, marginality, and social justice, we must face the stark reality that these students have not been prepared in their K-12 educations to tackle such issues that may not be posed on a true/false or multiple choice type tests.

My third theme, which addresses the discussion of and approaches toward conflict in the classroom, also has serious implications for the students who are subject to such approaches to managing conflict in the classroom. By regulating and controlling subjective student subject positions and lived experiences and suppressing complicated and often deeply-invested emotional issues, we begin to see even more devastating

examples of the consequences of a society that is not comfortable addressing these issues inside the walls of our schools. Columbine, Virginia Tech, and the many other instances of school shootings that have cropped up in the past ten years illustrate the undeniable fact that secondary and higher education can be lonely and confusing institutions for many underprivileged students. As instructors, on top of all else we must consider and carry out, we must not forget nor shirk the emotional development and emotional intelligence of our students. Given these tragedies, it becomes clear that educational discourses must begin to reframe not only how and who we target in our approaches to classroom management, but also how we must approach intellectual issues of conflict in the classroom, regarding deeply-rooted issues of race, culture and gender. Without giving credit to these emotions through the "safe" outlets within the walls of the classroom, students may turn to destructive and violent ways of asserting these feelings.

My second theme addresses the suppression of negative emotions surrounding teaching, and has implications that move beyond the needs of our students, and considers the implications for instructors matriculating from and embodying this instruction in their professional careers. Returning to the personal narrative opening this chapter, I consider the pain and uncertainty I felt (feel) when finding myself entwined in the struggles of my students, in addition to the deep-rooted struggles I must face regarding my own teaching, questions of: *Am I a good teacher? Do my students respect me? Is my instruction giving my students the skills they need in order to succeed not only at this institution, but also in life? Do they trust me? Am I an ally to them?* Knowing that teacher attrition rates are at an all-time high, in many regards I am not surprised. We must begin to consider the

implications of instructional texts designed for novice instructors that undermine and argue against personal and emotional connections to one's students. We know these connections are not only important, but are often unavoidable, and so it becomes remiss of such instructional texts to place these issues of emotion on the backburner when preparing teachers for their career. Instead of ignoring these realities, we must begin to create and carve out texts that touch upon these realities and provide instructors with the emotional coping strategies for a career that can be intellectually productive, incredibly rewarding, but also emotionally challenging, and potentially isolating. By instructing our educators to ignore or suppress emotions (in their classrooms and in their thoughts towards teaching as a profession) we begin to see how teachers, too, may not have been provided with the proper outlets for these emotions, and as a result renounce instruction.

My fourth and final theme addresses the authors' engagement of graduate teaching assistants as occupying a liminal, productive space within educational discourses. The implications lay in the potential for a reframing of how we teach not only GTAs, but all pre-service instructors. Invoking Freire's (1970/2003) discussion of transformative teaching, we can begin to push back on both oppressive approaches of *teacher centered* learning, but also against the buzz word *student centered* learning, by creating teacher-student centered learning. This approach to education looks at both teachers and students as capable of teaching each other about their respective and unique subject positions, as opposed to an instructor depositing information into a student, posing the student as a tabula rasa or sponge, or, the opposite view of teaching in which the "selfless" teacher thinks not of his or her subject position and emotional wellness, but only of the needs of

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his of her student. GTAs provide a rich area of investigation for teacher-student centered learning in that GTAs embody both positions simultaneously. In constantly negotiating this tension of student and teacher, GTAs can serve as a reflexive site for understanding the mutual needs of both teacher and student.

Directions For Future Research

Graduate college.

Don't speed in residential areas.

Never get a tattoo.

These are the lessons of my father. And with the exception of occasionally speeding, I have followed these lessons in earnest. Growing up, he asked very little of my sisters and me, except for these straightforward requests. While these particular maxims make for an enjoyable anecdote of a doting father, I also recall the occasional and ever-so-subtle hints of authoritarianism in his open assertions that he would treat my sisters and me much differently had we been boys, responding to my complaints of inequity with "Life's not fair" and most memorably, his adage "Do as I say not as I do." That last one really jarred me and my views of my father, even as a child.

In my own GTA training, a common theme that is underscored is the use of modeling in the classroom. As a means of equalizing the power differential between student and teacher, I consciously attempt to remind myself to never ask my students to do something, inside or outside the classroom, that I would not do myself. For example, if I ask my students, as a speaking engagement, to share a personal narrative behind the

story of their names—how or why they were given their names, their names' cultural or familial significance—I make a conscious effort to share with them the story behind my own name. I do this in light of Freire's (1970/2003) disavowal of a banking model of education in which students act not as mutual meaning-makers or equal power holders in the classroom but rather as empty receptacles in which to deposit information and instruction. Moreover, in teaching a public speaking course, this concept of modeling becomes even more relevant and useful as a means through which my lecture and lesson plan should model the elements I will be looking for in the students' speeches—structured transitions, clear previews and reviews, extemporaneous delivery, and overall organization and preparedness.

If we look at the authors of these selected textual artifacts as teachers, teachers of "effective" teaching, and the readers of these texts as students, students who are learning how to teach "effectively," then we can begin to examine the ways in which these texts model for their readership the tenets of instruction. In engaging in a rhetorical criticism of these texts, it is important to examine the artifacts by going beyond the direct tactics of the book to see what type of implied strategies and structures are occurring below the surface-reading of the texts (Brummett, 1994). Just as I use modeling in the structure of my lesson plan to reiterate my own preferred structural agenda of public speaking, I have also argued within this thesis that the structure of these selected texts serves in many ways to underscore the preferred teaching agenda of each author. So then, in finding aspects of these texts problematic, the question remains: *What would a text that subverts rationalistic approaches to education look like?*

Future research and writing surrounding instructional texts for pre-service instructors may avoid a drawing out of narrative or connotative richness of complex topics by focusing both scholarly and literary acumen on creating instructional texts that are more than the sum of their parts, so to speak. As stated by Curzan & Damour (2009, p. 3), the partial goal of these instructional "guides," "strategies" or "tips" is to provide a reference for GTAs to turn to in times of question or confusion regarding their teaching; however, in purposeful design by the authors to serve as an index in which the GTA can easily locate an "answer" to whatever question he or she may have, I question what overarching sense of narrative or theme may be drawn out, by means of reduction, in each author's teaching philosophy, especially when these handbooks' authors design the texts in such a way that they can and should be taken by the reader, not necessarily as a whole, but as a reference to individual chapters, sub-chapters, or pages. The questions of cohesion, layout, and narrative become critical if the author truly wishes to model for his or her reader/student by taking care that this personal teaching philosophy is woven and modeled evenly throughout each of his or her chapters, so that when each "chunk" is taken separately or out of context by the reader, he or she will still recognize this modeling throughout each portion of the text.

Future research and writing surrounding instructional texts for pre-service instructors may draw on instructional texts that incorporate issues of critical pedagogy with autoethnographic narrative (Fassett & Warren, 2007; Wink, 2005). In doing so we can hope to see texts that not only cohesively incorporate complex themes of critical pedagogy, such as power and privilege both inside and outside the classroom, but also

weave in an overarching sense of narrative or authorial voice, that uses subjective authorial experiences as a model for a classroom that similarly encourages discussion of both teacher and student lived experiences. In drawing on personal narrative or autoethnographic accounts, the authors of these possible texts may invoke and model tenets of feminist pedagogy that value these subjective experiences, as opposed to decontextualized or "objective" modes of instruction. Similarly, by creating a narrative through-line that weaves in tenets of both critical and feminist pedagogy, the authors avoid producing a text that invokes a streamlined or "handbook" style text or reference manual that risks divorcing the everyday practices of instruction from the richness of issues concerning critical and feminist pedagogy, such as culture, race and gender.

In the same vein of authorial self-disclosures, instructional texts for GTAs would be well served if the authors of these texts drew upon the liminal subject positions of GTAs as both teacher and student. Doing so would provide as a rich site of for the possibility of transformative (versus transactional) teaching. While extant instructional communication has drawn on the knowledge and experience of GTA supervisors (Sprague & Nyquist, 1989), the voices of GTAs is noticeably absent. Instead the authors speak on behalf of GTAs, and in doing so, possibly eliding their personal and subjective experiences. To Curzan and Damour's credit, interspersed throughout their text are excerpted "teaching anecdotes;" however, it is unclear if these anecdotes are taken solely from GTAs, or across teachers in general. Similarly, these excerpts are indeed anecdotes of only one or two sentences, bearing incidental relations to their respective subject matter, as opposed to thoughtful and reflective autoethnographic accounts. Gingrich-Philbrook (2005)

illuminates the power and agency of autoethnography by teasing out the differences

between autobiography and autoethnography by asking,

> How universal is this knowledge? If it makes a universal claim, how does it avoid *essentialism*?...Does s/he state it as explicit maxims, axioms, tenets, slogans, refrains, motifs? If explicit and memorizable, how does it *avoid reduction, didacticism and ideology*? [emphasis added] (p. 306)

Gingrich-Philbrook's questions relate not only to the quality and purposefulness

necessary for autoethnography to act as a vehicle for reflexivity, but are also applicable to

my own critiques of the decontextualized and generalizable knowledge surrounding

teaching that is bodied forward within these instructional texts. By incorporating

autoethnography into these instructional texts, we may be more inclined first, to avoid the

reduction and ideology present both within my own charges against rationalism and in

extant instructional texts, and second, to create cohesive and nuanced instructional texts

whose narrative through-line precludes the novice instructor from searching for simple,

bullet-pointed "answers" to complex pedagogical questions.

While future instructional texts for GTAs should productively draw on a GTA's

negotiation of both teacher and student roles, these texts should also negotiate a

productive tension between logical and emotional thought processes. The third finding of

this thesis addresses the ways in which these texts use logical pedagogical strategies (e.g.,

devil's advocate, parliamentary-style debate, and Socratic discussions) as a means to

regulate conflict within the class. Much of my review of the literature draws a distinction

between rational thought and rationalism, asserting rational thought becomes rationalism

at the devaluing of emotion. In arguing the importance of emotion in the classroom, I

also value the importance and necessity of logic and reasoning; because each of these

ways of knowing allows for rich discussion and understanding, future texts should

embrace both equally. If a text wants to include an entire chapter on highly structured

class plans that provide instruction on the likes of debating and consolidating lists, then it

should provide equal attention to instructional methods that privilege bodily and

emotional thought processes such as performance and performative pedagogy (Boal,

1985), and autoethnographically-attuned writing.

Finally instructional texts for pre-service GTAs should move beyond issues of

instructional techniques and tools, providing also honest discussion of the hardships of

teaching. According to Palmer (2007),

> We rarely talk with each other about teaching at any depth—and why should we
> when we have nothing more than "tips, tricks, and techniques" to discuss? That kind
> of talk fails to touch the heart of a teacher's experience...we must talk to each other
> about our inner lives—risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks
> safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract. (p. 12)

Indeed, new and old instructors alike need a space to hear about the deeply personal

difficulties of teaching, moving beyond the antagonistic student or the student who does

not come to class or complete his or her assignments, instead discussing matters of

teaching that can both grow and break the heart. Texts that openly discuss the

(productive) failures that a teacher will endure throughout his or her career can serve to

reveal the enabling fiction of teachers as selfless, perfect heroes, and help prepare new

instructors for the difficult but rewarding path that lies before them. On teachers as

heroes, Fassett & Warren (2007) remind us that,

> ...heroes are flesh and blood. They have faults, they have lives that sometimes
> deliver curve balls and changeups. They don't have the time to be worshiped while
> they are undergoing family or professional crisis. Being heroes leads to
> disappointment and places unfair expectations on those we claim to love. (p. 142)

They say that imitation is the greatest form of flattery. All new instructors have that one

teacher they hold in such reverence—the one they place on a pedestal and wish to

emulate in their own fledgling instruction. Ultimately, the new instructor will fail, not

only him or herself, but also, in his or her own mind, that amazing teacher he or she

wished so much to be like. I know that I did, as I have reminded my readers throughout

this work—Hope, Mikhail, my sister and countless others that I am sure I will let down as

I continue to teach and live out my life. And in recognizing this, in talking about it here,

for other teachers to read, I let them know that failure is inevitable, necessary, and

productive. Failure with reflection is not a failure. I say this now because I believe it to

be true—because I hold onto and carry that knowledge with me; but as I say it here, I also

let it go.

Final Thoughts

> Taking pedagogical clues from a text does not imply slavish adherence to it; the most
> boring classes I ever took (or taught) stayed so close to the text that we might as well
> have stayed home. By a good text I mean one that is fundamentally sound and—
> another paradox—one with enough unexplained gaps that it cannot be followed like a
> cookbook. (Palmer, 2007, p. 81)

The above quote foregrounds several important intersections of this work and my own

experiences as a GTA. I highly value and hold sacred the pre-service instruction and

continued professional development that I have received at San José State University in

the Department of Communication Studies. The pedagogical approaches towards

instruction, the sense of community, and the personal relationship I have with each fellow

and graduated GTA and my GTA coordinator interrupts the charges I make against

traditionally rationalistic approaches to the instruction of GTAs; however, my choosing

to critique three texts that have been introduced to me by this program illuminates a

certain irony. If these texts are indeed reiterating the oppressive ideologies that I speak

so passionately against, why do I not feel these texts have debilitated me and the other

GTAs in my cohort who have read them? The answer to this question lies in and speaks

to a larger problem of the education of instructors.

Within my own experiences as a GTA, these instructional, straightforward, manual-

style texts were not provided as a key element of our training and instruction. They were

indeed the more practical side to a coin, whose other side held more complex and

"messy" issues of teaching, posed by authors like hooks (1994), Boal (1979), Freire

(1970/2003), and Palmer (2007). In and through these complex texts and the discussion

surrounding them, was born the critical educator that I one day hope to become. The

practical texts provided really only a quick reference for me, as a last resort if I could not

pose my teaching question to my GTA coordinator, an advanced GTA, or GTA alumni. I

make these statements, aware of the privilege that surrounds them. Unlike many new

instructors and many GTA programs, I have had the privilege of a thoughtfully

constructed, tightly-knit community of caring teachers, no doubt a product of years of

work on the part of instructors within my department. I make these statements because I

realize my department and my institution may more often than not be the exception to the

pre-service teaching rule. More often than not these practical, straightforward, and often

reductive teaching handbooks or manuals have no opposite side of the coin—they have

no critical communication pedagogy (Fassett & Warren, 2007), they do not allow for

reflexivity through theoretical readings that complicate issues of teaching. For the

majority of instructors, they are looking for easy answers because they have no one— no

group, no community—pushing them to think about the more complex "answers" (as if

they ever existed) surrounding their teaching. Due to this unfortunate reality, we must be

critical of and hope to reform these types of instructional, practical manuals of teaching

to weave together not just the practical but also the emotional. We enter into this project

knowing full well that no text can ever include or cover all the myriad complexities

surrounding teaching. We know that each text will have its shortcomings and gaps, but

we strive to create a text where these gaps make us think, make us curious to seek out

other research to further complicate what we already know. Again, we must strive for

texts, "with enough unexplained gaps that it cannot be followed like a cookbook"

(Palmer, p. 81). Let us not view teaching as a recipe to be measured and followed, but

rather an endless process of creation, which often leaves a messy kitchen.

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