Journal of communication Pedagogy

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Introduction

Making a Difference: The Launch of the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*

Scott A. Myers

As this volume goes to press, it will mark the end of my 30th year of college teaching. Since I began my teaching journey in Fall 1987 as a graduate teaching assistant at Illinois State University, I have had the opportunity to teach a variety of courses across a variety of formats at several types of institutions. These courses have ranged from general education requirements (including the basic communication course) to graduate seminars. I have taught these courses face-to-face as well as in blended and online formats. My course enrollments have spanned from as little as two students meeting in my office to as large as 200 students gathering in an auditorium. These schools have served both residential and commuter students enrolled at institutions as varied as the community college, the private college, and the Research 1 university. And through it all, as I mentioned in a 2013 *Spectra* article, my goal always has been to be viewed by my students as an effective instructor who, "as clichéd as it may sound, might possibly make a difference in [their academic] lives" (Myers, 2013, p. 22).

When I was asked to serve as the editor of the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, I welcomed the opportunity to assist the Central States Communication Association (CSCA) in creating a journal devoted specifically to the pedagogical practices and ideas that also could make a difference in the teaching lives of CSCA's members. Despite the contributions made by formal education courses, the implementation of departmental or institutional training programs, the availability of established programs and lines of educational communication research, or even influential mentors, communication pedagogy should be at the forefront when it comes to effective instruction. Mottet and Beebe (2006) conceptualized pedagogy as "the systematic study of teaching and teaching methods. . . . [that] is primarily directed at teacher behaviors and self-perceptions of teacher efficacy and teaching satisfaction that contribute to enhanced learning" (p. 10). Adding to their conceptualization, I would suggest that *communication pedagogy* is the systematic study, reflection, and identification of teaching practices across communication course curricula that results ultimately in effective classroom instruction, gains in student learning, and the establishment of a supportive learning environment.

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As such, this volume is organized around these three practices. *Original research studies* (i.e., the study of teaching practices) are articles that focus on the teaching, the assessment, or the scholarship of teaching and learning of a specific communication course, extra-curricular activity (e.g., forensics), or curriculum (e.g., internships, concentrations/areas of emphases, undergraduate programs). *Reflection essays* (i.e., the reflection of teaching practices) are articles that center on a pedagogical problem or issue encountered by instructors when teaching a specific communication course. *Best practices* (i.e., the identification of teaching practices) are articles that offer tips for teaching or assessing a specific communication course, extra-curricular activity, or curriculum. This volume contains two original research studies, three reflection essays, and eight best practices articles, all of which represent exemplars of communication pedagogy practices, albeit in different forms. Furthermore, I would contend that while recognizable (and well-researched) bodies of instructional literature (i.e., instructional communication, the basic course, critical communication pedagogy, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and service-learning) do exist, these bodies have the capability to inform communication pedagogy scholarship, and vice versa. To support this contention, this volume contains a forum that reviews the evolution of communication pedagogy as a field of study and offers ways in which these five aforementioned bodies inform the study of communication pedagogy.

Staton (1989) posited that effective instruction requires instructors to be both content specialists and competent communicators. I would add further that effective instruction also requires instructors to be(come) well-versed in communication pedagogy. It is my hope as editor that the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy* emerges as a resource that enables instructors to do just that by not only assisting them in increasing their classroom effectiveness, but also helping instructors teach in a manner that does, indeed, make a difference in their students' academic lives.

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The Evolution of Communication Pedagogy

Jerry D. Feezel

Abstract: This article is an overview of the major developments in the field of communication in education. From the history of the national association over 100 plus years, specific attention is paid to changes leading to the advent of this publication. Changes in nomenclature, conferences, publications, research, and educational trends are discussed. The essay is intended to provide a view of history as setting for inauguration of the Journal of Communication Pedagogy. It also is intended to invite and stimulate other scholars' reflections on the nature and evolution of the field.

Perhaps it is presumptive to title this article "the" evolution of the field or discipline. Rather, this article is one person's view of how a major subject area of research and teaching has changed over a century. This article is a chronicle of events and developments that have impacted a field of study, not through revolution but more as an evolutionary change. One could say that communication pedagogy (or the various names and labels used over the years) has gone through reductions, expansions, contractions, phases, and foci that represent the process of growth and maturity. So, this chronicle is done through my lens with the hope that anyone who is newer to work in communication pedagogy will have a sense of our history. Perhaps this article will encourage others who have a different perspective, or a different set of lenses, to add to this overview.

The field of Communication study and its teaching can be traced back centuries to Greek scholars Isocrates, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle as well as Roman scholars Cicero and Quintilian, among others. However, I restrict this article to the American developments of professional and scholarly work for a little more than 100 years. The prominence of the National Communication Association (NCA) that many of us call "home" began early in the 20th century and evolved from another broad-based professional association, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Seventeen members left NCTE in 1914 to form the National

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Association of Academic Teachers of Public Speaking. At the time, these teachers were designated as oral English teachers and relegated to lower status than the composition and literature teachers. This origin, and the developments in our national "home-base" from 1914-1945 is explored by Cohen (1994). Among other things, Cohen noted that these early leaders were primarily teachers and needed to establish themselves as researchers as well. Other aspects of our disciplinary history (e.g., emergence of departments) are reviewed by Friedrich and Boileau (1999). Past NCA executive secretary William Work also reviews the growth in members, journals added, and changes in names and services up to the NCA name change and relocation to D.C. (Work & Gratton, 2002).

This history brings us almost within a decade of the 100th Anniversary NCA Conference in 2014. (A longer, more detailed association history can be found on the NCA website.) Shifts in the nomenclature over those years reflected the changing perspective that as scholars we were interested in the total process of communication, not just the one element of public speaking. The regional associations existed independently, but affiliated with the national organization throughout those years and underwent similar changes in names.

Now, let us examine more closely the events and some changes that occurred since 1945. Sometime in the early 1960s, Ron Allen at the University of Wisconsin used the term "speech pedagogy" as an alternative label for the work being conducted in speech education. I don't recall the use of the term "pedagogy" being common at that time, although I had been teaching high school Speech and English and readying myself for graduate study at the University of Wisconsin. It was circa 1965 when I met Ron in my graduate program and became his doctoral advisee. Thus, I was an academic grandchild of Gladys Borchers (one of the first women in speech education) who directed Ron Allen's dissertation. Dr. Borchers was a three-time Wisconsin alum who intended to teach elementary school. However, she was persuaded to join the Wisconsin faculty until retiring. With much of early speech education focusing on elocution (i.e., voice and diction), she was known for using a pig's throat to blow through, demonstrating sound made by the larynx.

For decades, the teaching of speech was heavily rhetoric based, deriving from the ancient Greeks and Romans, and many other scholars down through the ages. Then in the late 1960s, the area of interpersonal communication became prominent. Focusing upon dyadic and small group relationships and interaction, much of interpersonal communication research built upon social psychology research. Then early textbooks for teaching interpersonal communication emerged from speech communication people, most notably by John Keltner, Kim Giffin, and Bobby Patton. Shortly thereafter in the mid-1970s, textbooks were authored by John Stewart, Gary D'Angelo, and Joe DeVito that still exist in multiple editions today. Many prominent researchers also began to develop research programs in interpersonal communication. Thus, speech education included training not just in public speaking, debate, and discussion, but also one-to-one, small group, verbal and nonverbal communication, with relationship building.

A next major development was the convening of a national meeting of those educators who were researching and preparing teachers of speech communication for colleges, elementary schools, and secondary schools. The Speech Communication Association (SCA; this was the name of the NCA at the time) invited people to gather August 27-30, 1973, in Memphis, Tennessee, for a special conference of teacher educators in speech communication. The 30

conferees who accepted SCA's invitation then discussed, debated, and passed various resolutions regarding the future directions of speech communication education. This conference was considered a landmark advancement in the study and development of teacher education. The NCA's Instructional Development Division (IDD) had just been established in 1971; the Memphis Conference was used to forward IDD's agenda. Some of the items on the agenda included attaining professional identity, applying prior research to teaching, and using instructional domains, systems approaches, and behavioral objectives in the classroom. The proceedings of the Memphis conference is detailed in Newcombe and Allen (1974).

A second landmark conference was held in 1988 in Flagstaff, Arizona, with the proceedings published a year later (Cooper & Galvin, 1999). Although copies seem to be no longer available, the work of this gathering of 33 high school and college educators has been explored in other publications (see Feezel, 1992). Issues emerging from this conference included engaging in student-centered teaching, attending to student diversity, developing communication in children, teaching intercultural communication, and integrating all language arts. Another issue recommended holding a national conference on assessment, which SCA did convene in 1990 (Christ, 1998). Out of that issue, a major line of research on communication assessment instruments and practices was borne (see Christ, 1994).

Certification of teachers of speech, mostly at the secondary school level, had been the primary activity of speech educators for decades. With shifts in state certification, this activity changed over the years. Although varying from state to state, periods of time saw movements to a broad-based Communication certification and then more recently to Whole Language or Integrated Language Arts licensure. These movements involved combining English Education with Speech Education and other areas that had previously separated from English Education (i.e., Reading, Theater, and Radio-TV). Unfortunately, in my view, these movements eventuated in the decline of prominence and depth in our oral/aural emphasis on speech communication. Although a sensible and practical holistic approach to teaching all modes of communication together emerged, it did reduce the attention to, and the centrality of, speaking and listening. Thus, we have seen a kind of returning to the fold that we left in 1914, but with a broader function and greater respect.

Rather than mourning this development, however, let us note the simultaneous expansion of what teachers and scholars in speech communication education were doing. Though teacher certification had been the core of communication pedagogy over the decades, with the influences of two landmark conferences, other aspects of the field gained attention. In 1985, Rebecca Rubin and I were conducting research together and discussed the various divisions of the traditional communication education study (c.f., Rubin & Feezel, 1986). An acronym that I toyed with then, but did not include, was DICE to suggest that speech communication education had morphed into Developmental & Instructional Communication Education (DICE). That is, DICE represents a broad scope of instructional development: the development of communication in children and adults, communication education as the training of communication teachers, and instructional communication as the role communication plays across all acts and fields of teaching. All three areas were noted and discussed at both the 1973 Memphis and the 1988 Flagstaff landmark conferences. Many researchers focused on instructional communication as integral to instruction in all subject areas, giving rise to a greater breadth of research and teaching.

A major shift in the speech communication field began in the late 1960s and carried through the decades. For example, in Waldo Braden's 1961 high school methods textbook, course chapters addressed public speaking, discussion and debate, interpretation, drama, radio and television, and voice and diction, plus two chapters on speech and hearing disorders. Ron Allen's, Clay Willmington's, and Jo Sprague's (1991) methods textbook reflected changes in the subject areas to be taught in high schools. Today, we would include methods for teaching intercultural communication, interpersonal communication, mass communication, business communication, health communication, and crisis communication, among others. This switch reflects what we teach at the college level.

Equally important was the shift from just teaching our classes to conducting research that examined communication across all types of classrooms, with this movement initially led by the work of James McCroskey and his colleagues at West Virginia University. The work of Jody Nyquist, Jo Sprague, Donald Wulff, Ann Darling, and others such as myself in teaching basic pedagogical skills for graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) fostered a national movement recognizing the importance of communication in teaching all subject areas (see Nyquist & Wulff, 1992). Several textbooks (e.g., Bassett & Smythe, 1979; Civikly, 1992; Hurt, Scott, & McCroskey, 1978; Galvin & Book, 1972; Seiler, Schuelke, & Lieb-Brilhart, 1984) that focused on the role that communication plays in the classroom management and student learning process began to be published, with more contemporary work taking its place today (Bolkan, 2017; Dannels, 2015; Simonds & Cooper, 2010).

Whither the directions of communication pedagogy today? Some directions in teaching and research already underway include distributed learning, online education, computer-mediated communication, critical pedagogy, intercultural education, teaching Hispanic/Latina learners, and cross-national communication education. What topics will be added by the next generation is yet to be identified. Recall that this article is my retrospective, not a crystal ball. Looking at change, Bertelsen and Goodboy (2009) studied course offerings at four-year colleges and universities. They compared course listings for increases and decreases in offerings over a decade. Declines in offerings were found for Teaching Methods, Public Address History, Voice/Diction, and Coaching Forensics; all have declined in frequency and ranked in the lowest 1/3 of 30 courses since 1999. In contrast, Interpersonal, Organizational, Persuasion, Intercultural, Gender, Nonverbal, and Conflict Communication offerings increased, ranking in the top 1/3 of courses offered in higher education. Their study may reflect some changes in topic areas of focus in research and teaching.

Although teaching was the focus from the beginning in 1914, the first serial publication with that focus was *The Speech Teacher* (launched in 1952). As Loren Reid and others who started *The Speech Teacher* have indicated, its purpose was to contain articles on the field of speech education. It continues today as a major journal under the name *Communication Education*. As this outlet increasingly provided for researchers, SCA saw a need for an outlet on pedagogical work in the classrooms; thus, joining *Communication Education* in 1986 was *Speech Communication Teacher* (now *Communication Teacher*) with an aim of publishing K-12 and college teaching practices and assessment. Until today, these two journals were the only focused outlets for scholarship and practice related to teaching of communication. Now, the

newest publication outlet is the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, which will provide the best research on the art and science of teaching communication courses.

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Instructional Communication Scholarship: Complementing Communication Pedagogy

Alan K. Goodboy

Instructional communication "refers to the study of the human communication process across all learning situations independent of the subject matter, the grade level, or the learning environment" (Myers, Tindage, & Atkinson, 2016, p. 13). Accordingly, much of instructional communication scholarship is generalizable, providing pedagogical findings about "communication variables, strategies, processes, technologies, and/or systems as they relate to formal instruction and the acquisition and modification of learning outcomes" which are "applicable to many disciplines, educational levels, and environments" (Lashbrook & Wheeless, 1979, p. 439). Although instructional communication scholars historically have examined effective teaching behaviors that foster student affective, behavioral, and cognitive learning (Hurt, Scott, & McCroskey, 1978), they also study communication processes in the classroom (see Witt, 2016), which include instructor characteristics and actions (e.g., how instructors effectively provide written or oral feedback to students), student characteristics and attitudes (e.g., how students' communication apprehension affects their group work), pedagogy and classroom management (e.g., how classroom technology policies encourage student engagement), and developmental communication across the lifespan (e.g., how children and adult learners benefit from communication training programs). More recent instructional scholarship has continued to examine effective teaching behaviors (Conley & Ah Yun, 2017), but with a greater focus on understanding student communication behaviors in the classroom (Mazer & Graham, 2015).

How does Instructional Communication Inform Communication Pedagogy?

Instructional communication is relevant to communication pedagogy because at its core, instructional communication is studied as a three-way intersection (Farris, Houser, & Hosek, 2018) among the disciplines of pedagogy (with a focus on teaching), educational psychology (with a focus on the student learner), and communication (with a focus on meaning and messages). Instructional communication offers a general perspective on instructor

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communication competence in the classroom, and what it offers to communication pedagogy is a core pedagogical repertoire of effective teaching behaviors that optimize students' learning in any course, despite the course's learning outcomes or subject matter.

Therefore, instructional communication and communication pedagogy are complementary areas of inquiry; that is, communication instructors will not be effective educators without strategically considering--for each course taught in a given semester--both pedagogical techniques (e.g., writing accurate course objectives; choosing or creating activities that align with the objectives; teaching communication skills using proven pedagogical strategies) and instructional communication practices (e.g., communicating with students clearly; confirming students; integrating appropriate humor). These disciplines offer micro (i.e., communication pedagogy) and macro (i.e., instructional communication) perspectives on teaching that both deserve close attention as instructors strive to be the best educators (and communicators) in the communication courses that they teach.

When I think of instructional communication scholarship and how it informs my teaching, I am most drawn to the programmatic research conducted to date on instructor clarity. For nearly five decades, instructor clarity research has offered our discipline teaching behaviors that help students' understand the course material (Titsworth, Mazer, Goodboy, Bolkan, & Myers, 2015). Clarity during teaching is communicated to students in a multitude of ways (i.e., preinstructional clarity, organizational clarity, explanatory clarity, language clarity, adaptive clarity; see Titsworth & Mazer, 2016) and starts before we even begin teaching a lesson as we provide students with advanced organizers (e.g., a graphic organizer such as timeline) so they can identify the most important parts of a lesson. We know that structuring our messages in a clear format will help students learn (e.g., providing students with a note-taking handout with major points hierarchically organized). We know that the order in which we present material matters for student understanding, so we consider how we present and time our examples in a lecture (e.g., scaffolding examples so students apply their knowledge to several examples in class). We know that the words we choose to convey course concepts are important so we make sure we avoid unclear language (e.g., word mazes that require us to start over and try again with a new explanation). We know that clarity is a process of mutual classroom understanding, so we present information in a way that does not exceed students' working memory limits (e.g., keep the amount of information on a PowerPoint slide to 5 or less chunks of information) and allow students to check for misunderstandings (e.g., taking class time to stop and answer students' questions, repeat material that is not well-understood). In my own teaching, I prioritize clarity not only because it has the greatest impact on my students' learning potential (Titsworth et al., 2015), but also because my students view it as the most essential teaching behavior instructors can use in the classroom (Goldman, Cranmer, Sollitto, Labelle, & Lancaster, 2017).

Conclusion

Indeed, the bodies of instructional communication scholarship and communication pedagogy scholarship inform each other reciprocally. When we teach communication competencies to our students using the best pedagogical practices derived from communication pedagogy, we also should serve as model communicators for our students by incorporating effective teaching behaviors gleaned from instructional communication. Both bodies of literature should speak to us in tandem when we consider how to best teach our students.

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Basic Course: Informing Communication Pedagogy through Teacher Training and Program Assessment

Cheri J. Simonds

In the most recent survey of the basic communication course, Morreale, Myers, Backlund, and Simonds (2016) defined the basic course as "that beginning or entry level communication course either required or recommended for a significant number of undergraduates; that course which the department has, or would recommend, as a requirement for all or most undergraduates" (p. 341). As with previous surveys, these authors found that public speaking is the most used orientation of the course followed by the hybrid (or survey) orientation. Interestingly, the authors also found that 80% of the institutions responding noted that the basic course is included or required in their general education program. Beebe (2013) described the basic course as the "front porch" of the discipline as it welcomes both teachers and students to communication studies. As such, the basic course serves as a training ground for our future faculty as well as an introduction for students to the discipline. Additionally, through curriculum design and assessment, the basic course provides a context for practicing communication pedagogy and research within general education.

How Does the Basic Course Inform Communication Pedagogy?

In serving as a training ground for future communication educators, the basic course is uniquely placed to explore issues of communication pedagogy. Communication Pedagogy is a domain of study that informs communication teachers of the best practices in teaching communication competencies. As a basic course director in the Department of Communication at Illinois State University, my role is to provide communication teachers with the tools they need to effectively teach our introductory communication course. To be effective in this role, it is important to research methods of teacher training and program assessment. In the remaining paragraphs, I will provide two examples of how my basic course scholarship has informed communication pedagogy in both teacher training and program assessment.

First, when I started preparing teachers to teach, my instructors had difficulty getting students to prepare for class. My curiosity about these student behaviors led me to begin a program of research on using certain instructional tools (e.g., reading objectives, extended

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comments, participation sheets) to motivate and prepare students to contribute to class discussions (Rattenborg, Simonds, & Hunt, 2005). This research culminated in a training packet that all instructors could use to do the same. This packet includes a video on Leading Classroom Discussions as well as tools for authentic assessment of student preparation for participation in class (Simonds, Simonds, & Hunt, 2004).

I also have worked with colleagues on classroom management training (Meyer et al., 2008; Meyer et al., 2007) to help provide our instructors with the tools they need to foster a positive classroom climate conducive to learning. More recently, we have explored working with social support systems on campus to create and implement a behavior modification plan specific to the basic course. Additionally, as a course director, I (and my co-directors Steve Hunt and John Hooker) wondered about the fairness and consistency of how multiple instructors evaluate student speeches. This line of research resulted in several publications as well as a criterion-based training packet and a series of videos that we have shared with numerous other universities (Frey, Simonds, Hooker, Meyer, & Hunt, 2018; Reynolds, Hunt, Simonds, & Cutbirth, 2004; Simonds, Meyer, Hunt, & Simonds, 2009; Stitt, Simonds, & Hunt, 2003).

Second, the basic course is in a unique position to address many of the goals and outcomes of any general education program. In fact, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) championed the vital role of communication in liberal education in two of its four learning outcomes: *Intellectual and Practical Skills,* and *Personal and Social Responsibility.* To clarify this role, the National Communication Association adopted a resolution on the role of the basic course in general education by mapping and aligning communication knowledge and skills to these essential learning outcomes (Simonds, Buckrop, Redmond, & Hefferin, 2012). In terms of *Intellectual and Practical Skills,* the basic course is well-suited to address inquiry and analysis, critical and creative thinking, written and oral communication, information literacy, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. The basic course may also address *Personal and Social Responsibility* through civic knowledge and engagement, intercultural knowledge and competence, ethical reasoning and action, and foundations and skills for lifelong learning. While the NCA Resolution aligns communication knowledge and skills to general education, it also advises course directors to examine the specific general education goals at their respective institutions to engage in a similar process.

Our ongoing assessment efforts to design and evaluate our pedagogy takes an outcomes-based approach (Wallace, 2015) as a way to ensure relevancy in general education. These efforts involve mapping and aligning our basic course to general education outcomes, developing intentional and deliberate pedagogy to address those outcomes, developing standards and rubrics that map to those goals, assessing student learning, and making necessary modifications based on what we learned. For example, we have followed this approach to assess student written and oral communication (Frey et al., 2018; Simonds et al., 2009), student use of pre-emptive argumentation skills (Meyer, Kurtz, Hines, Simonds, & Hunt, 2010), and student political and civic engagement (Hunt, Meyer, Hooker, Simonds, & Lippert, 2016).

Conclusion

As the basic course is becoming increasingly central to general education programs, basic course scholarship has allowed us as course directors to sustain the relevancy of our course at our institution. This approach offers a way to inform disciplinary communication pedagogy through

the development of teacher training programs and ongoing assessment efforts. The basic course provides the context for communication educators to not only practice, assess, and refine communication pedagogy, but also, in doing so, to enhance the stature of the discipline.

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Critical Communication Pedagogy in/about/through the Communication Classroom

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Critical Communication Pedagogy (CCP) signals a critical approach to Communication and Instruction scholarship (Fassett & Nainby, 2017; Fassett & Rudick, 2016; Fassett & Warren, 2007). *Critical* signals a recognition that social reality is inherently political and encourages individuals to work with/in communities to identify, intervene into, and change oppressive systems. *Communication and Instruction* scholarship refers to (a) research concerning how to teach communication principles, theories, or knowledge (i.e., Communication Pedagogy or Communication Education) and (b) research about communication as it manifests in or about all types of educational spaces (i.e., Instructional Communication). CCP is not guided by a single methodology; rather, it signifies both an intellectual tradition and an umbrella term for critical approaches to Communication Pedagogy and Instructional Communication (e.g., Communication Activism Pedagogy, Critical Performative Pedagogy, and Critical Intercultural Communication Pedagogy; see Frey & Palmer, 2014; McRae & Huber, 2017; Atay & Toyosaki, 2018, respectively).

How Does Critical Communication Pedagogy Inform Communication Pedagogy?

The goal of CCP is to identify knowledge as a site of privilege/oppression, the uses of communication to perpetuate/reclaim power, and the ability of communicative actions to open spaces for intervening into normative structures of education. To this end, CCP sets social justice as its guiding principle to Communication Pedagogy. We define *social justice* as "the process and goal by which people work together to transform unequal power relations [and] realize a world where all people feel emotionally, physically, and economically secure to realize their full capabilities," (Rudick, Golsan, & Cheesewright, 2018, p. 3). CCP is characterized by "10 Commitments," but, in the interest of brevity, we distill these tenets into three concepts: identity, social (re)production, and power. These concepts provide a language for recognizing how teaching communication knowledge should be understood within a political-moral imagination that centers social justice.

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Identity

Within CCP, identity is not viewed as a series of demographic characteristics; rather, identity is a combination of historical, personal, and cultural positionalities that are articulated communicatively. For example, although those individuals who are considered "White" may seem obvious today, what constitutes it has frequently changed over the past 500 years. However, CCP extends beyond recognizing how identity is arbitrary to demand a pedagogy that intervenes into how identities are supported and/or marginalized within current systems.

Communication instructors guided by CCP are sensitive to how identity shapes disciplinary knowledge. For example, public speaking pedagogy overly represents Western forms of presentation and argument; interpersonal pedagogy privileges heteronormative relationships; and organizational pedagogy supports managerial interests over workers' rights. Although scholars have confronted our discipline about these issues, many of their criticisms have gone unaddressed in undergraduate pedagogy. This situation implicitly marginalizes some identities while privileging other identities as "normal" or "correct." CCP encourages instructors to choose course materials that provide equitable representation of voices, and to be sensitive to the historical trajectories that shape individuals' positionalities.

CCP research is interested in the dialectical relationship between identity and culture. Scholars bring attention to the ways everyday communication connects to culture and how culture shapes everyday practices. For example, researchers could explore how students in communication courses talk through/about/across their identities and how these instances of inter-group communication are opportunities for sensitively experiencing the Other. Ultimately, CCP scholarship about identity complicates normative assumptions concerning classroom instruction and unpacks how even mundane practices can have toxic influences on students' identity development.

Social (Re)production

Traditionally, Communication Pedagogy research has presupposed education as a benign institution. For some, communication knowledge is important insofar as it helps students attain economic mobility, while other people view it as a way students participate in a democratic society. CCP recognizes educational institutions as places both liberation *and* dehumanization, advocacy *and* alienation, equity *and* colonization. Therefore, CCP seeks to intervene into how institutions of education (re)produce existing asymmetries of access/distribution.

Instructors grounded in CCP recognize how institutional rules and social norms can solidify existing hierarchies. For example, our discipline touts democratic deliberation as an important student outcome. However, we wonder how this is performed in everyday communication classrooms as a 50-minute lecture about the importance of democratic deliberation may do more harm than good when working to realize civil political practices. CCP encourages instructors to engage their classroom as part of a larger system and sensitizes them to how content, relationships, and organizational cultures are sites for intervening into processes of social (re)production.

Research from a CCP framework is concerned with interrogating the goals of the communication discipline and the means used to secure them. Important to this agenda is

rejecting the idea that learning only has instrumental value or that students' worth is exhaustively defined by their economic potential. For example, researchers could explore how societal disparities along racial, gender, and/or class lines are maintained through course content, bureaucratic control, and/or legislative action. CCP asserts a moral imagination that recognizes the complexities of the human experience and the importance of protecting it from the intrusion of technical rationality, marketplace logics, and social Darwinism. CCP research disrupts the process of (re)production by reconnecting students with a deep appreciation for community.

Power

Many Communication Pedagogy scholars understand power within the context of student-instructor interactions. This view of power, although important, must be placed in a framework tracking the multi-level ways power flows through the communication classroom. A CCP approach asserts that stopping the analysis of power at the level of student-instructor mystifies the institutional (e.g., administrators), judicial-legislative (e.g., laws), and cultural (e.g., public sentiment about education) ways it influences education. Such an understanding is formed in the hope of working with students to realize their potential as change agents.

The communication classroom is a natural site for teaching students about power. Helping students view power as multi-level in romantic relationships, family rituals, organizational bureaucracies, public addresses, and intercultural connections are just a few of the ways that instructors can offer students a language for intervention. Importantly, instructors guided by CCP should seek not only to make students sensitive to its ebb and flow (although, certainly, that is a worthy goal), but also provide opportunities for students to exercise it within and beyond the classroom (e.g., communication activism).

CCP research about power explores the ways that it manifests in or influences the communication classroom. For example, CCP scholars can utilize methods (e.g., longitudinal, ethnographic) that address how communication students' communicative practices shift over the course of their enrollment and beyond, and how this shift makes them more open to difference or more likely to view social problems as contextually and historically informed. These methods point to CCP researchers' responsibility to ensure our discipline embraces its responsibility to realize a society where concentrated power (e.g., wealth) does not overcome social justice.

Conclusion

CCP maintains a hope that the world as it currently is, is not what it has to be. Together, communication students and instructors can articulate and pursue a utopic vision for our world. We are excited to see Communication Pedagogy scholarship increasingly embrace CCP. Rudick et al.'s (2018) textbook provides advice and activities to new/seasoned instructors implementing CCP into the communication classroom. Pensoneau-Conway and Atay (2018) co-edited a special issue on CCP in *Communication Teacher*, showcasing ways to implement social justice within/beyond the classroom. Hundreds of edited collections, journal publications, conference papers/roundtables, university workshops, hallway conversations, and individual choices keep social justice at the heart of Communication Pedagogy. It is this labor that ensures a bright future for our students, discipline, and society.

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Communication Pedagogy and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: A Natural Match and a Promising Future

Mary Ann Danielson

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) views "the work of the classroom as a site for inquiry, asking and answering questions about students' learning in ways that can improve one's own classroom and also advance the larger profession of teaching" (Huber & Hutchings, 2005, p. 1). Much like the Communication discipline, SoTL scholars recognize and accept "the diversity in definitions or understandings of SoTL [communication] that exist even among experts in the field" (McKinney, 2007, p. 5), even as we affirm the work of the professoriate involves the scholarship of teaching (Boyer, 1990). As Huber and Hutchings (2006) observed:

> There has always been a literature about the classroom. But systematic attention to teaching has largely been the province of small, disconnected communities of faculty reading and contributing to the few newsletters, journals, and conferences where pedagogical issues in their fields were aired. (p. 26)

As previously described (Danielson, 2012), SoTL offers a systematic approach to the study of teaching and learning by transcending effective teaching or even scholarly teaching (Smith, 2001) and entails a public account open to "critical review by the teacher's professional peers and amenable to productive employment in future work by members of the same community" (Shulman, 1998, p. 6). Although "there are many ways to improve the quality of education, we believe that the scholarship of teaching and learning holds special promise" (Huber & Hutchings, 2006, p. 25), as does the *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*.

How does Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Inform Communication Pedagogy?

Engaging in principles of good SoTL practice elucidates communication pedagogy and offers communication scholars opportunities to contribute to both the Communication discipline and a(n) (inter)national body of scholarship. Felten (2013) identified five principles of good practice in SoTL: (a) inquiry focused on student learning; (b) grounded in context; (c) methodologically sound; (d) conducted in partnership with students; and (e) appropriately public.

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The first principle invites us to think of teaching practice and the evidence of student learning as [research] problems to be investigated, analyzed, represented, and debated (Bass, 1999). Inquiry-driven research questions may be framed as "What is," "What works," "visions of the possible," and "formulations of new conceptual frameworks" (Hutchings, 2000, pp. 4-5). Although all research should be both grounded in both scholarly and local context and be methodologically sound, the second and third principles remind us to recognize how different disciplines incline faculty toward different questions and distinct ways of collecting and analyzing evidence of student learning [see Miller-Young and Yeo's (2015) Conceptual Framework for an illustration of the range of theories and methodologies available to SoTL researchers]. The fourth and fifth principles implore us to remember that when we engage student voices, we improve student learning and enhance faculty "communities of learning" (Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011; Duda & Danielson, 2015), which then requires that these findings be made public.

Opening our classrooms to educational inquiry has long been a SoTL hallmark. Communal and public sharing is necessary as Bernstein (2008) argued, "When we describe teaching as serious intellectual work or scholarship, we need to prove that the products of teaching can also be rigorously evaluated for excellence by a community of peers" (p. 51). Among our communication peers are SoTL pioneers and former Carnegie Scholars Carolyn Calloway-Thomas and Tracy Russo as well as Sherry Morreale (Huber & Morreale, 2002), whose work highlighted disciplinary styles' influence on inquiry into teaching and learning.

Drawing upon this seminal work, communication scholars now have opportunities to advance an understanding of communication signature pedagogies and threshold concepts, as but two of our limitless research agendas. Signature pedagogies "reflect the deep structures of the discipline or profession" (Ciccone, 2009, p. xiii). So, how does Communication as a discipline or interpersonal, organizational, or mass communication (or insert your communication sub-discipline) help students think like disciplinary experts? How do we move our students from generic to disciplinary learning (Pace & Middendorf, 2004) or from surface (recognition) to deep (complex, multi-layered, contextualized) learning? Deepening our students' knowledge--and our understanding of their knowledge--may be advanced through exploration of threshold concepts:

> Once students attain a deep understanding of such a concept, there is no going back; the new understanding integrates all previous knowledge into a transformed understanding of the subject, and also delineates its boundaries from other related subjects. Such knowledge, and especially the process of gaining it and transforming one's understanding, can often be difficult and troublesome for students, as it involves changing and rearranging previous conceptions and misconceptions. (Wismath, Orr, & MacKay, 2015, p. 64)

What are Communication's threshold concepts? Which communicative concepts produce a transformed understanding of our discipline? If you are not sure Communication threshold concepts exist, consider your course "bottlenecks" or where students struggle to learn or rearrange previous (mis)conceptions. These "teaching problems" may invite you into "the work of the classroom as a site for inquiry, asking and answering questions about students' learning" (Huber & Hutchings, 2005, p. 1).

Conclusion

Why a *Journal of Communication Pedagogy*, particularly as grounded in SoTL principles? Borrowing from Shulman (2001): Essentially, it is our professional obligation to be scholars and educators in our disciplines; additionally, this work is practical and will help us and others (as it is made public) improve teaching and learning. Most importantly, you join a "community of educators[-scholars] committed to pedagogical inquiry and innovation [who] come together to exchange ideas about teaching and learning and use them to meet the challenges of educating students" (Huber & Hutchings, 2005, p. x).

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Service-learning as an Effective Pedagogical Approach for Communication Educators

Sara Chudnovsky Weintraub

Service-learning combines the learning goals of a course with service to the community. Through service-learning, students engage in action and reflect on their experiences in order to connect what they see and do in the community with what they are learning in their courses. As Britt (2012) stated, "Conceptually, service-learning is a form of pedagogy that engages students in community service and regular guided reflection on the service in order to deepen learning and enrich communities" (pp. 80-81). Whether service-learning projects account for part of a course or an entire course is centered on service-learning, service-learning works because it connects theory with practice. Service-learning is an important pedagogy because it offers students a chance to do meaningful work that helps their community and teaches them the importance of civic engagement.

The theory of experiential learning provides the basis for including service-learning in the curriculum as it actively engages students with the curriculum they are studying. Service-learning projects provide students with the opportunity to tackle real issues and work in concert with real groups to solve real and practical problems. When students participate in a service-learning project, their experiences help them relate to the subject matter in a deeper and more significant manner. Rather than presenting abstract or theoretical examples and concepts in the classroom that may cause students to remain disconnected to the course content, with service-learning, students grapple with a variety of issues, become more involved in their own education (Weintraub, 1998) and increase their knowledge of the subject they are studying as well as their ability to apply this knowledge to social issues (Magarrey & Francis, 2005; Michael, 2005; Novak, Markey, & Allen, 2007).

How does Service-Learning Inform Communication Pedagogy?

From a pedagogical perspective, service-learning provides several important benefits to students. First, it engages students in their own education. Because service-learning connects students with what they read in their textbooks and hear from their instructors with actual

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experiences they observe, analyze, reflect on and learn from, this pedagogy provides students with a richer educational experience. As Tannenbaum and Berrett (2005) noted, students feel that service-learning assignments "increased the academic relevance and understanding of course content" (p. 199). As a result, students are no longer simply receivers of knowledge but active learners who engage with the material and link their experiences with the course content.

Second, service-learning helps prepare students for their civic life because it moves them beyond the classroom and helps them see firsthand societal issues about which they may have little knowledge or understanding. It gives them the chance to become involved with the community and helps them realize they can help be agents for social change. Stevens (2001) concluded that service-learning can help build a sense of citizenship in students who participate in this type of pedagogy. Similarly, Maresco (2005) found service-learning gave students "an understanding of the importance of working together for the benefit of society" and raised their awareness about "social, political, environmental, health and educational issues in the community" (p. 77).

Third, through service-learning, students are better able to identify the interconnectedness of their lives with the lives of others. Despite the significant focus on global citizenship (e.g., AACU, 2011; Crawford & Kirby, 2008; Lumina Foundation, 2014; Tarrant, 2010) in the contemporary classroom, questions still remain about whether college students are aware of how other individuals live on a day-to-day basis. Getting students out of the classroom and into the lives of others beyond the institution helps sensitize them to issues about which many of them previously could only speculate.

Fourth, service-learning helps meet actual needs within the community. Because students, faculty, and community members work together to determine the needs of the community and how the project will be implemented, significant work can be completed which contributes to the community and which community partners might not otherwise be able to accomplish.

Conclusion

Service-learning provides communication educators with a pedagogy that informs the curriculum and serves the community. Linking what is done in the classroom with work that serves the community enhances the teaching-learning process and acts as an effective communication pedagogy.

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Assessing Students' Writing and Public Speaking Self-Efficacy in a Composition and Communication Course

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Abstract: One avenue for assessing learning involves evaluating self-efficacy, as this psychological belief is a strong predictor of academic achievement. As such, the purpose of this study was to evaluate writing self-efficacy and public speaking self-efficacy in a composition and communication course. This course is structured to develop both writing and public speaking competencies; the research sought to determine whether students believed they were leaving the course feeling more confident in their capabilities within each respective academic domain. Results (*N* = 380) from pre- and post-test data suggest that students' reported writing and public speaking self-efficacy significantly increased over the semester. Additionally, students' mastery experiences, operationalized as informative essay and informative speech grades, were related positively to changes in self-efficacy at the end of the semester. These results offer three implications for teaching within this course design and structure.

Hart Research Associates (2016) reported that of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) member institutions, 99% assessed general education learning outcomes related to students' writing skills and 82% assessed oral communication skills (e.g., public speaking). Together, these outcomes represent two of the top four skills desired for undergraduate students (Hart Research Associates, 2016), echoing Booher's (2005) position that "the ability to express yourself orally and in writing is the single most important skill to career advancement" (p. 13). Consequently, many institutions have shifted towards general education courses planned around principles of multimodal communication, highlighting written and oral outcomes (Reid, Snead, Pettiway, & Simeneaux, 2016). This focus on a variety of skills has led researchers to refer to this design as *the basic composition and communication course* (BCCC; see Housley Gaffney & Frisby, 2013; Strawser, Housley Gaffney, DeVito, Kercsmar, & Pennell, 2017). This nuanced design reflects the changing needs of university administration (Valenzano III, 2013) by building competencies across multiple modes and forms of communication. Such

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changes in curricula necessitate additional approaches to the assessment of students' achievement of competence regarding these two communication skills.

This study meets this need by investigating students' perceptions of their writing and public speaking competence in a BCCC. To this end, the researchers utilized the concept of self-efficacy from Bandura's (1986, 1997) social cognitive theory (SCT) as a framework for understanding students' capabilities. Although self-efficacy does not directly evaluate learning, it has been strongly linked to academic achievements (Klassen & Usher, 2010; Multon, Brown, & Lent, 1991) and conceptually framed as an affective learning outcome (Housley Gaffney & Frisby, 2013). The findings should provide support for the BCCC as an important course in developing students' communication skills as part of their general education requirements.

Basic Composition and Communication Course Design

At the University of Kentucky**,** the BCCC is a combination of the introductory writing and oral communication courses required by the university's core general education curriculum. As part of a yearlong, two-semester sequence, students are exposed to both written and oral communication content with the goal of cultivating skills in each area. The first course, primarily taken by first-year, first-semester students, concentrates on the process of informing, describing, and explaining topics objectively. It generally is expected that these students will subsequently enroll in the second course in the sequence, which introduces persuasion and argumentation.

Both courses emphasize multimodal communication, with an overlapping focus on writing and speaking content. For example, the first course in the sequence includes two major projects assessing writing and public speaking skills. The first project is a research-based informative essay; the second project involves the presentation of an informative speech. While instructional content prior to the submission of the essay is focused largely on developing writing skills (e.g., grammar, sentence clarity), content following the essay includes a greater proportion of information about public speaking (e.g., delivery, presentation aids). Building to these projects, students also apply knowledge through smaller scaffolding assignments designed to promote mastery. This means that content generally is focused in one academic domain, yet students are exposed to assignments involving principles of both disciplines across the semester. For example, early in the course, students complete a written rhetorical analysis, in which they critique a speech. This analysis provides an opportunity to introduce and discuss principles of public speaking, as well as a template for applying grammatical and syntactical writing knowledge gained prior to the major essay project.

Many safeguards are in place to ensure students have the desired expertise upon completion of the course, including instructor training, ongoing assessment, and standardized rubrics. However, mixed research findings raise questions regarding whether students are sustaining the competencies they develop over the length of the course (Housley Gaffney & Frisby, 2013; Housley Gaffney & Kercsmar, 2016; Strawser et al., 2017). Contrary to courses centered solely on public speaking, the inclusion of a composition requirement introduces additional objectives and outcomes that may influence how much students feel they have learned and developed (i.e., Social cognitive theory, self-efficacy; Bandura, 1986, 1997). SCT posits that human thought and action result from a system of dynamic interplay between personal, environmental, and behavioral factors in a process labeled triadic reciprocity. As a personal

factor, self-efficacy refers to "one's perceived capability to accomplish given academic tasks and can be thought of in terms of *can do* statements" (Usher, 2015, p. 148). Scholars treat self-efficacy as a universal belief contextualized across specific academic domains; it reflects separate changes in the development of writing and public speaking skills (Bandura, 1997). In other words, it is possible for students to feel confident in one area while feeling simultaneously inadequate in another. When writing and public speaking skills are taught in the same course, the assessment of domain-specific outcomes is needed to ensure student growth in each area.

Writing self-efficacy has been extensively studied as a predictor of achievement (Pajares, 2003), and research supports the notion that students' beliefs about their writing capabilities are related to their composition performance (Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1989). Students who rate themselves higher in writing self-efficacy are more likely to write better essays than students who see themselves as less competent (McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985). Similarly, research examining the relationship between public speaking self-efficacy and achievement generally shows a positive association. Dwyer and Fus (1999, 2002) demonstrated that public speaking self-efficacy was positively correlated with cumulative course grade at two different times within a semester. Specifically, public speaking self-efficacy was associated positively with students' grades at both the middle and the end of the semester. Together, these results show promise in assessing public speaking self-efficacy as an indicator of future student success.

Mastery Experiences and Self-Efficacy

Communication researchers have investigated several antecedents to the development of students' self-efficacy. These sources include instructor relevance (Weber, Martin, & Myers, 2011), classroom justice (Vallade, Martin, & Weber, 2014), and clarity (LaBelle, Martin, & Weber, 2013) as well as student state motivation (Weber et al., 2011) and academic entitlement (Vallade et al., 2014). However, the notion of student performance on a task as an influencer of self-efficacy is seemingly absent from the instructional literature. This absence comes in contrast to SCT, which emphasizes the importance of performance accomplishments, or mastery experiences, as a source for cultivating capability beliefs (Bandura, 1977, 1997). Mastery experiences represent engagement with tasks that provide authentic evidence of mastery in a domain. Despite a tendency for communication research to value learning and performance as *outcomes* (Clark, 2002), a SCT framework including mastery experiences suggests that it may be prudent to use past performance as an indicator of future potential (i.e., self-efficacy) for assessment.

It is important to note that mastery experiences are not synonymous with gaining new skills (McCroskey, 1982). Rather, self-efficacy stems from reflection on one's experience, as success or failure prompts a judgment of one's competence (Pajares, 2006). Thus, mastery experiences can also be conceptualized as a result of one's level of achievement (Bandura, 1977). Usher and Pajares (2008) further described this process:

> After students complete an academic task, they interpret and evaluate the results obtained, and judgments of competence are created or revised according to those interpretations. When they believe that their efforts have been successful, their confidence to accomplish similar or related tasks is raised; when they believe that their efforts failed to produce the effect desired, confidence

to succeed in similar endeavors is diminished. (p. 752)

Within the domain of writing, the relationship between mastery experiences and self-efficacy is dependent on measurement (Pajares, 2003). That is, students experience different levels of self-efficacy between writing *task* self-efficacy (e.g., "write a term paper of 15 to 20 pages," Shell et al., 1989, p. 99) and writing *skills* self-efficacy (e.g., "correctly use parts of speech," Shell et al., 1989, p. 99). At the collegiate level, expectations for students' composition skills may change when writing is framed as a process of scholarly inquiry (Downs & Wardle, 2007). With the potentially different expectations for "college-level" writing and the lack of an exclusive pedagogical focus in this area, it remains unclear whether students can fully cultivate their writing self-efficacy. For example, while Strawser et al. (2017) concluded that students in a BCCC did not report greater writing self-efficacy at the end of the semester compared to the beginning of the semester, Housley Gaffney and Kercsmar (2016) discovered that students did report greater self-efficacy at the end of a similar course. Given the limited research on BCCCs and these conflicting results, the following research question was posed:

RQ1:   Do students in a BCCC experience greater writing self-efficacy at the end of the semester compared to the beginning of the semester?

Compared to writing, less is known about the influence of students' public speaking mastery experiences on self-efficacy. This lack of knowledge may stem from the idea that many students do not receive public speaking instruction as adolescents (Morreale & Backlund, 2007); thus, students entering the BCCC without prior public speaking knowledge need skills training to enhance their self-efficacy. For example, Dwyer and Fus (1999, 2002) found that public speaking self-efficacy at the beginning of a semester was unrelated to students' final grades. To develop competence, it seems that students must be exposed to effective public speaking behaviors and training.

As such, measurements of public-speaking self-efficacy should identify specific skills associated with competent performance. Although Dwyer and Fus (1999, 2002) assessed public speaking self-efficacy, their studies omitted behaviors associated with public speaking mastery (e.g., delivery, audience analysis, outlining). In contrast, Warren (2011) created a public speaking self-efficacy scale based on these expected behaviors such as "I can make it clear that I am a credible speaker during my speech" and "I can use vivid language during my speech" (p. 42). Yet, empirical evidence of the effects of gaining this knowledge on student competence is mixed. Housley Gaffney and Frisby (2013) reported that students claimed to be more confident in their abilities after gaining new knowledge, but Strawser et al. (2017) found that students in a BCCC did not experience changes in public-speaking self-efficacy over time. Consequently, given the lack of clarity of these findings, the following research question was proposed:

RQ2:   Do students in a BCCC experience greater public speaking self-efficacy at the end of the semester compared to the beginning of the semester?

The BCCC in this study incorporates a variety of scaffolding assignments that illustrate concepts and generate instructor feedback. Students then use this information to complete a major project in each communication domain. Viewed from the lens of SCT, students' performances on these major assignments will prompt them to significantly reflect on and interpret their abilities (Bandura, 1986, 1997), which then should lead to greater perceptions of competence. Based on Hodis and Hodis's (2012) findings that students' self-efficacy increased over a semester in a public speaking course, it is expected in this study that students' self-efficacy will linearly increase as well. However, they noted that the magnitude of this increase depends on the communicative context (e.g., writing or public speaking).

In this study, students' grades were chosen as an operationalization of one potential variable that may influence this increase. Because students use grades to reflect on their own performance and form judgments of their abilities (Pajares et al., 2007), using grades as an indicator of mastery should provide a link between students' performances and subsequent interpretation of their abilities. While other studies also adopt this perspective, they often utilize final grades, an outcome conflated by multiple other assessments (e.g., attendance, participation; Dwyer & Fus, 2002). This study chose to utilize a specific assignment--the informative essay--as a synthesizing mastery experience within the writing domain. Following SCT, students who feel their efforts have been successful (based on their essay grade) should report increases in writing self-efficacy over time (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Thus, the first hypothesis is proposed:

> H1:   In a BCCC, mastery experience (i.e., informative essay grade) will be related positively to increases in writing self-efficacy from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester.

Similarly, the incorporation of a major public speaking assignment accurately depicts mastery experiences specific to public speaking (Bandura, 1997). Additionally, public speaking self-efficacy is dynamic and changes depending on students' experiences with success or failure. The culmination of several experiences in the form of a major project should provide students with an opportunity to form a judgment of their skills. Thus, the second hypothesis is proposed:

> H2:   In a BCCC, mastery experience (i.e., informative speech grade) will be related positively to increases in public speaking self-efficacy from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester.

Methods

Participants

Participants included 380 undergraduate students (135 men, 245 women) enrolled across 23 sections in the BCCC at a large Southeastern institution. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 24 years ($M = 18.15$, $SD = 0.74$). Participants were mostly homogenous in terms of class rank, with 92.4% identifying as first-year students, 2.9% as sophomores, 0.5% as juniors, 0.8% as seniors, and 0.8% as other. Eight participants (2.1%) identified as sophomores by credit, whereas

two participants (0.5%) identified as transfer students who were not clear regarding their rank or status. Students did not report any other demographic data.

Procedures and Measures

The data reported in this study are derived from an ongoing assessment project of the first course of a two-semester BCCC sequence. Students completed a questionnaire (for course credit) on writing self-efficacy and public speaking self-efficacy through Qualtrics, an online survey engine, during the first two weeks of the semester and again during the final two weeks of the semester. Course instructors included graduate teaching assistants ($n = 5$), part-time lecturers ($n = 1$), and full-time lecturers ($n = 7$); some instructors taught multiple course sections.

Writing self-efficacy was assessed using 7 items related to students' perceived capability for performing certain writing skills. The items were taken from a 9-item writing self-efficacy scale constructed for assessment of the BCCC by a team of both composition and communication faculty (see Housley Gaffney & Kercsmar, 2016; Strawser et al., 2017). Items included statements such as "I can properly cite sources in my writing" and "I can proofread my own writing for errors." Participants responded by moving a slider between 0 (no certainty) and 100 (very certain) to indicate their capability for performing the skill. Alpha reliability was acceptable at the pre-test ($\alpha = .89$; $M = 67.97$, $SD = 16.37$) and the post-test ($\alpha = .91$; $M = 81.34$, $SD = 13.18$).

Public-speaking self-efficacy was assessed using a 19-item scale developed by Warren (2011). Students were presented with specific skills related to public speaking (i.e., "I can grab the audience's attention at the beginning of my speech"; "I can use creative transitions between the main ideas in my speech") to which they responded by moving a slider between 0 (no certainty) and 100 (very certain) to indicate their beliefs regarding their capability for performing the skill. Alpha reliability was strong at the pre-test ($\alpha = .96$; $M = 66.29$, $SD = 15.95$) and the post-test ($\alpha = .96$; $M = 79.94$, $SD = 12.73$).

Writing grades were assessed using the evaluation score given by the respective instructor on an informative essay assignment. Rubrics for the assignment were standardized across all class sections, and instructors were required to use these rubrics for assessment. The assignment asked students to construct an essay in response to one of three topics, each one based in communication theory and requiring outside research. Students received a score ranging from 0 to 150 ($M = 128.66$, $SD = 15.92$), with 15 points separating evaluation scores of "A," "B," "C," and "D," respectively. Participants completed this assignment before the mid-point of the semester.

Public speaking grades were assessed using the evaluation score given by the instructor on an informative speech assignment. Rubrics for the assignment were standardized across all class sections, and instructors were required to use these rubrics for evaluation. All students delivered a research-based four to six-minute speech informing the audience about a topic of their choosing. Students received a score ranging from 0 to 150 ($M = 132.92$, $SD = 10.47$), with 15 points separating evaluation scores of "A," "B," "C," and "D," respectively. Students completed the informative speaking assignment during the last two weeks of the semester.

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables are included in Table 1. The first research question asked whether students experienced greater writing self-efficacy at the end of the semester compared to the beginning of the semester. The results of a paired samples t-test indicated that students' reports of writing self-efficacy at the end of the semester ($M = 81.34$, $SD = 13.18$) were higher than their reports of writing self-efficacy at the beginning of the semester ($M = 67.97$, $SD = 16.37$), $t(379) = 17.53$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.90$.

Table 1

Zero-Order Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Initial Public Speaking Self-Efficacy	0.49**	0.70**	0.34**	−0.66**	−0.47**	−0.01	−0.01
2. Ending Public-Speaking Self-Efficacy		0.42**	0.74**	0.34**	0.19**	0.19**	0.10*
3. Initial Writing Self-Efficacy			0.51**	−0.40**	−0.65**	−0.06	0.06
4. Ending Writing Self-Efficacy				0.27**	0.33**	0.15**	0.22**
5. Public Speaking Self-Efficacy Change (End minus Initial)					0.68**	0.17**	0.09*
6. Writing Self-Efficacy Change (End minus Initial)						0.20**	0.12**
7. Informative Speech Grade							0.46**
8. Informative Essay Grade							—

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

The second research question asked whether students experienced greater public speaking self-efficacy at the end of the semester compared to the beginning of the semester. The results of a paired samples t-test indicated that students' reports of public speaking self-efficacy at the end of the semester ($M = 79.94$, $SD = 12.73$) were higher than their reports of public speaking self-efficacy at the beginning of the semester ($M = 66.29$, $SD = 15.95$), $t(379) = 17.95$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.95$.

The first hypothesis proposed that in a BCCC, mastery experience (i.e., informative essay grade) would be related positively to increases in writing self-efficacy from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester. This hypothesis was supported, $r(378) = .12$, $p < .01$.

The second hypothesis proposed that in a BCCC, mastery experience (i.e., informative speech grade) would be related positively to increases in public speaking self-efficacy from the beginning of the semester to the end of the semester. This hypothesis was supported, $r(378) = .17$, $p < .01$.

Discussion

Using SCT as a framework, the purpose of this assessment was to examine students' writing and public speaking self-efficacy in a BCCC. Specifically, mastery experiences--operationalized as one major writing grade and one major speaking grade--were used to examine students' self-efficacy. The results can be interpreted in terms of two general themes. First, students reported greater self-efficacy for both writing and public speaking at the end of the course. This finding suggests that completing academic tasks within two separate academic domains did not mitigate the development of self-efficacy over time. Because "the relation between beliefs and achievement may become stronger as persons become more proficient" (Shell et al., 1989, p. 97), course directors and instructors can feel confident that students will be better writers and public speakers upon moving into the second course in the sequence (or out of the BCCC altogether).

Second, students who performed well on the two major projects--an essay and a speech--appeared to associate grades with increased feelings of writing or public speaking capability. As mastery experiences, grades represent cumulative opportunities for students to apply their knowledge. These mastery experiences are likely cultivated through instruction that includes interaction and opportunities for reflection (Bandura, 1986; Pajares et al., 2007). Thus, if grades are related to increases in self-efficacy, it is critical that instructors emphasize adaptive reflection as students make progress on major projects. Doing so should help students develop important capability beliefs that can be longitudinally sustained and thus most representative of their writing and public speaking competence.

Implications

This assessment supports the practicality of the BCCC as an effective course design and bolsters the marketability of courses such as the BCCC, which integrate principles of multimodal communication, within larger university contexts. Continued assessment of courses such as the BCCC can reiterate their importance by highlighting the extent to which students are learning essential writing and oral communication skills, and may help Communication Studies emerge as an "essential discipline" (Hess, 2016, p. 11) in the undergraduate curricula.

To sustain the present results, several practical implications are presented. First, it is important to note that to ensure that students are truly gaining mastery experiences, instructors should institute frequent opportunities for reflection throughout the course. In this study, only major project scores were used to operationalize mastery experience; however, it should be noted that these assignments were considered to be the culmination of students' learning experiences throughout the semester, and, thus, most representative of their communication capabilities.

Moreover, ample opportunities for reflection were built into scaffolding assignments and activities leading to these major projects. For example, students completed a small writing assignment early in the semester, with a subsequent revision and reflection video that required them to reflect on their writing and to set goals for their major informative essay. Students also recorded multiple post-speech reflection videos, as well as rough drafts and rehearsals. These assignments simultaneously required students to reflect on their experiences and promoted their writing and public speaking knowledge. Because of the desire for learning outcomes in two

separate academic domains in a BCCC, instructors should strategically allow for reflection between assignments and across communication modes. In other words, while emphasizing that the importance of mastering communication knowledge and skills is critical, simply providing students with opportunities for mastery experiences does not guarantee they will be motivated to enhance their efficacy (Pajares et al., 2007). Without high levels of interaction and reflection, students may not interpret their performances adaptively.

Second, directors and instructors of the BCCC (and other basic or introductory communication courses) should be cognizant of grades functioning as more than just an outcome; as mastery experiences, they also can act as an important part of the learning process. As such, it is important for instructors to ensure accuracy in their rating practices and feedback. Given the implications of grades and mastery experiences for self-efficacy beliefs, providing students with assessments true to their capabilities is particularly necessary. With instructors' tendencies to be overly polite in their feedback (Reynolds, Hunt, Simonds, & Cutbirth, 2004), and potentially too generous in grade distributions, it becomes increasingly necessary for BCCC directors to train instructors to achieve reliability and validity in their assessments of students (Frey, Hooker, & Simonds, 2015). This training is especially true for the BCCC within communication departments, where many graduate teaching assistants and faculty members may not have backgrounds in either teaching or assessing writing. It becomes critical for such programs to introduce methods for assessing both writing and public speaking assignments, many practical strategies for which currently exist both within and outside of communication literature (Krupa, 1982; Stitt, Simonds, & Hunt, 2003).

Third, with the increasing number of grade oriented and academically entitled students entering the college classroom (e.g., Greenberger, Lessard, Chen, & Farruggia, 2008), being able to discuss grades as part of the process instead of the ultimate outcome may be a helpful way for instructors to frame learning within higher education. This discussion is particularly relevant given the impact of grade inflation on students' levels of entitlement (Lippmann, Bulanda, & Wagenaar, 2009), whereby they have come to expect higher grades for minimal effort (Greenberger et al., 2008; Kopp, Zinn, Finney, & Jurich, 2011). As Chowning and Campbell (2009) noted, "instructors can emphasize the student's role in his/her own grade and success" (p. 996), perhaps by explaining that grades in a particular course are earned through a succession of smaller assignments designed to provide opportunities for practice, personal growth, and ultimately, mastery. Students may be taught that mastery involves reflecting on grades and feedback in order to gain confidence in their strengths and overcome remaining weaknesses.

Limitation and Future Research

The results of this study should be interpreted within the scope of three limitations, however. First, the assessment procedures used in this study failed to account for individual instructor and course differences across class sections. Although BCCC instructors receive training prior to the semester and are required to evaluate both major projects using a standardized rubric, grade norming practices are omitted. Second, SCT posits that physiological and affective reactions play a role in the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). In the context of the BCCC, it is possible that students' apprehension toward writing and speaking make it difficult to master. Existing research suggests that most first-year students enrolled in

basic communication courses experience some level of anxiety related to speech presentation (Hunter, Westwick, & Haleta, 2014) and writing apprehension has been linked negatively to writing self-efficacy (Pajares & Johnson, 1994). Perhaps the physiological reaction to apprehension in the BCCC plays an influential role in students' beliefs about their capabilities. Future research is needed to parse out this possibility (Hodis & Hodis, 2013).

Third, the nature of the basic course remains in flux. Today, students can choose from online or hybrid courses, in addition to those courses geared toward specialty areas (e.g., living-learning programs, honors, or discipline-specific sections). Self-efficacy is a context-dependent construct; it is uncertain if differences in other course aspects play a role in developing self-efficacy. This dependence may be especially present in courses where students share the same major, given that Bandura (1986) emphasized the role of peer comparison in the development of self-efficacy. For instance, nursing majors taking a class together who exhibit stronger skills and experience greater achievement may develop greater personal efficacy beliefs. As the basic course continues to change, future analyses should continue evaluating how self-efficacy functions in this environment.

Conclusion

Writing and public speaking skills are two of the most desirable outcomes in general education (Hart Research Associates, 2016), and the present research advocates for a course that allows students to concurrently develop skills relevant to both domains. In addition, Morreale, Valenzano, and Bauer (2017) contended that communication education programs, such as the one examined herein, provide students with opportunities to improve the educational enterprise. If a course can improve students' self-efficacy regarding critical outcomes relevant to the collegiate experience, university systems may be more likely to see the value in offering these courses as introductory platforms to collegiate writing and public speaking.

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Privileged Pedagogy, Vulnerable Voice: Opening Feminist Doors in the Communication Classroom

Danielle M. Stern

Abstract: This interview study analyzes 22 communication scholars' experiences of teaching about feminism. Beyond questioning understandings of feminism in the communication classroom, a theory of privileged vulnerability emerged regarding the privilege of teaching about feminism and the vulnerability we--as self-identified feminist educators--embody via this privilege. Implications include recognizing our privileges and vulnerabilities, as well as how they relate to student interactions, to enact a reflexive, embodied pedagogical praxis.

Ten years. The amount of time at my current institution. Sixteen years. The length of my teaching career since I first stepped into a communication classroom teaching news writing in the Midwest as a second-year master's student. Just one year prior, my thesis advisor introduced me to the works of Friere (2000), Giroux (1994), and hooks (1994), who provided the terminology and examples of a liberatory, critical pedagogy. As a twentysomething woman questioning her sexuality amidst a slow burn of feminist, social justice awakening, I had never felt more vulnerable than I did standing outside that classroom doorway. My heart raced. My throat tightened. My hands shook. I wanted to vomit. Instead, I took a deep breath and gently nudged open the door.

The metaphor of *opening the door* fits the vision of feminist pedagogy, which is informed by a critical approach that opens a line of questioning power dynamics at the structural and interpersonal levels. Following a tradition of social justice-oriented critical pedagogy that transforms "oppressive educational institutions into sites of emancipation and equality" (Allen,

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2011, p. 104), feminism interrupts and intervenes. Fassett and Warren (2007) introduced the concept of critical communication pedagogy (CCP) specifically to interrogate power dynamics within *and* about the communication classroom. The explicit connections of critical communication pedagogy to identity, ideology, and multiple ways of knowing transformed the way scholars of communication education practiced and researched our craft. CCP disrupted the dominant paradigm of studying best practices and effective teaching.

Those of us who infuse feminism that questions structural hierarchies in our institutions and everyday lives into our already critical pedagogy across the communication discipline found a theoretical framework in CCP that informed our existing praxis. According to Warren (2001), research about critical communication pedagogy encourages us "to name the practices that promote effective learning that is centered in critical, embodied, and liberatory theory" (p. 32). For my predecessors, peers, and now my students, many of us likely first read about this lens via the work of bell hooks (1994), who explained that the "privileged act of naming often affords those in power access to modes of communication" (p. 62). The ways in which scholars of feminist pedagogy and communication pedagogy name these pedagogical acts matter. Scholars have continued to produce CCP scholarship, especially in areas of the body and identity (Kahl, 2013; Lindemann, 2011; Rudick, 2017; Stern, 2011; Warren, 2008) that draw from a variety of feminist, queer, race, (dis)ability, and other critical communication frameworks.

A primary area where critical communication pedagogy intersects with feminist principles of voice and empowerment is vulnerability. Scholars (Dannels et al., 2014; Rodriguez, 2010; Warren, 2008) have stressed the need to understand vulnerability as an empowering pedagogical praxis. Vulnerable, feminist CCP leads to storytelling that unites us. Feminism is "something that one does" (Stephenson-Abetz, 2012, p. 103), similar to the way hooks (2000) described feminist movement as organized action rather than as a noun. It is impossible to separate feminism and performance of that identity/movement because the two are linked in a "body that lives feminism" (Stern, 2011, p. 251). Moreover, our feminist pedagogical bodies are sites of knowledge production, both in the classroom and in our spoken or written stories of those experiences. The feminist action of teaching is an embodied process that is enhanced only through our shared stories of feminist pedagogy. As Stern (2015) argued, "The writing process inscribes feminism on both the page and [our] identity" (p. 99). When we name our teaching practices as feminist, we face backlash at all levels of our educational institutions, including from our students, which charges feminist communication and media scholars "to document resistance to feminist pedagogies" (Eaton, 2001, p. 391). In turn, I set out to research how students not only resist feminist pedagogies, but also how students respond favorably to the same praxis. My research was guided by the following question:

RQ: How have experiences of teaching about feminism and gender shaped the pedagogical identity of communication scholars?

Methods

Participants

Participants were 22 communication instructors (18 women and 4 men whose ages ranged from their 20s to their 60s) representing the Communication sub-disciplines of health, identity, intercultural, interpersonal, media, organizational, performance studies, public relations, and rhetoric. They included one adjunct professor, eight tenure-track assistant professors, eight tenured associate professors, four tenured full professors, and one doctoral student. Four participants also were administrators (e.g., program chairs or directors). Participants were primarily white, cisgender American citizens, but also included two women of color (one African American and one Asian American), two international scholars of color from Congo and Turkey, and two queer women and two gay men. Collectively, the participants taught in 13 states across the continental United States.

Procedures

Following approval from my university's Institutional Review Board, participants were recruited via public posts to my personal Facebook account and to various Facebook groups and listservs for national and regional academic organizations. The only inclusion criterion for participation in this study was experience teaching about gender and/or feminism in the communication discipline. From Fall 2016 to Spring 2017, I conducted and audio recorded 16 individual interviews and one group interview of six participants at conference hotels that coincided with annual communication association conventions to maximize the geographic reach of my participants. These interviews consisted of flexible questions that allowed for guided conversations (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) and specifically elicited stories about teaching feminism, including participants' memories of how students responded to specific discussion and activities, as well as how student responses encouraged faculty to change anything in their lessons or course design and the extent to which the word "feminism" was integral to their pedagogy. All interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes, with the average interview lasting one hour. Pseudonyms were assigned to all participants. The audio recordings were transcribed, generating nearly 200 single-spaced pages.

Data Analysis

I coded and analyzed the interview transcripts through a lens of constructivist grounded theory. Grounded theory includes strategies of simultaneous data collection and inductive analysis, memo writing, theoretical sampling, and saturation. Constructivist approaches to grounded theory build upon early, objectivist grounded theory in two ways. First, constructive inquiry relies on the reflexive subjectivity of the researcher who recognizes the incomplete, contextual nature of the data; second, it challenges normative assumptions of the phenomenon under study, including the limits of generalizability beyond specific contexts, with the goal of revealing a "collective analytic story" (Charmaz, 2011, p. 364). In line with the reflexivity subjectivity of the researcher, I kept myself close to the data. For example, when I encountered communication exchanges in the data that resonated with my own experiences, I wrote these reactions to revisit later.

The data were coded using open coding and axial coding. Initial open coding began by reading each interview transcription in its entirety two to three times, with each subsequent read-through prompting additional questions and greater clarity. After each round of interviewing, I compared my notes and categories to those of the previous rounds of interviews. During this open coding process, I identified 105 initial categories around feminist pedagogical identity experiences. I followed this continuous open coding process of constant comparison and asking questions (Gray, 2014), as well as reflecting on the extensive notes taken during the interviews to further focus the analysis and guide interpretation during axial coding. Axial coding "identif[ies] the conditions under which their categories emerge, specif[ies] relationships between these categories, and define [s]the consequences" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 362).

Through the axial coding process, I collapsed the original 105 categories to 48 codes that were related to the emerging thematic contexts of privilege and vulnerability. Finally, during the theoretical sampling phase, which calls for comparing axial codes to the research literature, I returned to the CCP literature and other bodies of knowledge until the data appeared saturated and indicative of meaning that would be helpful to the pedagogical practices of other feminist communication instructors. Revisiting the research literature is a critical element of theoretical sampling to determine whether the data relate to existing theoretical models, paying careful attention to not lose the context in which the axial codes emerged (Gray, 2014). Consequently, theoretical sampling illuminated two primary themes of privilege and vulnerability, as well as a secondary theme of feminist naming experiences consistent with the literature (Ahmed, 2017; Eaton, 2001).

Results

The research question asked how experiences of teaching about feminism and gender shape the pedagogical identity of communication scholars. It was found that the experiences of teaching about feminism and gender encompass two primary themes of privilege and vulnerability, as well as a secondary theme involving feminist naming experiences. That is, the participants' communication classroom experiences produced a pedagogical identity shaped by the privilege of having a space in which to name their feminism, while simultaneously ruminating in the vulnerability that comes with that privilege.

Embodying Privilege

One of the more-salient themes of privilege the participants discussed concerned the physical space of the university for active, reflexive dialogue. The classroom space cultivated a privileged awakening for students. According to Sadie, an assistant professor in the Midwest: "Female students started to see how their mothers didn't have as much power in the family as their fathers." This was not the case for all students, but the connection to personal experience and reflecting on families as a system of gender inequality is an important pedagogical tool. To encourage a discussion of gender dynamics in non-heterosexual families, Sadie screened an HBO documentary that interviewed same-sex couples that she said her students responded favorably to: "A lot of students realize[d] that just because the gender of the parents were the same, the family struggles mirrored the family struggles that they had in their own families." Renee, an associate professor who teaches at a university with a large military and veteran student population where 85% of enrollment is males, said her students benefit from a privileged

space to discuss masculinity and the pressures on men to avoid emotional displays, especially those displays of sorrow or affection for other males, including their fathers. Renee, like many of the other participants shared how her women students value her informal mentorship, which likely would not happen if not for the formal teacher/student relationship sanctioned by the university.

Participants recognized the privilege to introduce concepts, theories, and examples outside of students' typical frame of reference. While this introduction did not always fare well, they still appreciated the privilege of trying new and necessary instructional tools and concepts. For example, Renee shared: "When I taught the mass media current events class I had a whole section on Black feminist thought and I cut that out. My students just don't get that second layer of oppression." Renee said she still layers in connections to race, but more subtly rather than via an entire unit. This example is similar to how many participants talked about subversively weaving in feminism and intersectional identity politics into their pedagogy. "I always sneak a little disability in there," Miriam stated, an educator for more than 20 years who also embodies a disability. Heteronormativity and class privilege also were common topics participants were privileged to subvert in various ways. Charlotte, an associate professor in the Midwest, also spoke of her students' risk of an "erasure of difference" when she taught about intersectional approaches to gender. Hannah, an associate professor in the Midwest, acknowledged the privilege of teaching at a private university built around a mission of social justice, where students of color are the majority enrollment. "We are more progressive in terms of education in a lot of ways . . . and part of the reason I don't get a lot of pushback," Hannah said.

However, some participants readily recalled moments of resistance. A few participants identified some of their women students resisting the label of feminism, which was viewed as productive because they believed their students felt comfortable voicing their differing views. The other moments of resistance participants shared was linked to traditionally masculine, often times athletic, male students. One student athlete dropped Ted's class when he could not, according to Ted, an associate professor in the Midwest, come to terms with disrupting the gender binary. Ted stated, "He was just unwilling to relent on [the idea of] women are this, men are this, and he was treating his classmates in a largely discussion based classroom that were not productive for the rest of the class." Incivility was a common example for using the privileged position of faculty member/instructor to end conversation.

Although the majority of participants did not identify active, vocal resistance to teaching about these concepts, a theme of silent resistance or non-engagement emerged. As Gina, an assistant professor on the West Coast, shared, to "sit in the silence of a response" can be an incredibly privileged space of reflection and learning, where often students will speak and begin a dialogue. However, silence also can leave instructors feeling incredibly vulnerable.

Living Vulnerably

The theme of vulnerability primarily surfaced in lived, bodily experiences. This embodiment included performing feminism and gender in families as well as in classrooms. Elizabeth, an assistant professor on the East Coast, specified the body as the site of struggle and posed the critical questions, "How do you do this concept? How does your body enact the words that you are saying, because we are not just talking hands and bodies?" Elizabeth shared that she

constantly challenges herself to be reflexive in how she embodies her positionality of a feminism that is inclusive and intersectional, specifically regarding trans politics. Alicia, a West Coast professor who has been teaching for more than 30 years, shared a story from about 20 years ago when her young daughter left a sticky note on Alicia's computer that read "Spend more time with [daughter's name]." "It broke my heart, but I am willing to tell my students that." Alicia shared this in juxtaposition with a later story about earlier teaching evaluations in which students criticized her for crying in the classroom. "I learned that I had to control my emotions." She was in her early 20s at the time. Despite this experience, Alicia said, "A good feminist teacher is your willingness to be vulnerable."

Other participants shared similar stories of controlling emotions, especially early in their careers. Emotional authenticity, while a vulnerable stance, might work in those educators favor who have certain privileges of gender, sexuality, or tenure. For example, Jack fully acknowledged his privilege to express anger or frustration and discuss feminism and gender with an abandon not characteristic of his women colleagues at his university in the South.

Disciplinary practices carried over into bodily appearance, specifically of gendered expectations of masculine and feminine dress. Ellen, an assistant professor who teaches at a private university, shared an incredibly vulnerable position of women faculty visibly aging in front of students:

> Markers of age come into question, like a little bit of weight gain, grey hair, or things like that. I haven't had the chance to fully research it, probably because I personally don't want to, but I just have this sense in my body that I got a lot of positive response and attention from students in part because of being a young and attractive person . . . She's not Hillary Clinton. She's not scowling. She's not shrill because she's young and virile and attractive . . . I'm aging and pre-tenure [and] suddenly feeling fear.

This cultivation of space to explore feminism also extends to acknowledging the vulnerability of others' bodies. Denise, an associate professor and administrator in the Midwest, shared that in the media examples she uses in class to demonstrate course concepts, she is mindful to avoid examples of individuals failing who are members of non-dominant identities as "I try not to have the person giving the bad speech be a minority because I think it reinforces stereotypes." She joked that she picked on the "white man" frequently because that identity category represents a privileged position. Some participants shared similar sentiments in that they have faced more scrutiny for illuminating white male privilege.

At time, the vulnerabilities participants confronted were not their own, but their students. Denise further shared a story about a unit on gendered violence in her interpersonal class where she assigned Olson's (2004) groundbreaking autoethnography about domestic violence. "One of my more participatory students wasn't really participating . . . She came up to me afterward, shaking, and told me, 'This is me,' and then just started to cry." Denise walked over to the office of support services with her student and made sure she was safe going home that night. Denise cried as she described the interaction of hugging her student and receiving a thank you card from the student's mother.

Naming Feminism

Perhaps the most viscerally identified vulnerability the participants shared is the practice of overtly identifying as feminist in the classroom. However, participants recognized the privileged space of their classrooms for this naming practice. Feminist self-identification was contingent on a number of factors, primarily course topic or level of job security. Courses or lessons specifically about gender communication, critical rhetoric, or media criticism led to more feminist identification from participants. Tenured professors and male faculty were more likely to identify as feminists publicly in the space of the classroom more so than non-tenured women faculty. According to Jack, "I am fine with feminism. I label myself as one. I see a lot of people making calls for humanism, but to me that' just like saying, 'well, all lives matter' . . . Embracing and defending feminism is important."

Most participants aligned with this coalitional politics of uniting around the term and movement of feminism, but recognizing that discussing feminist movement in courses as problematic along lines of privilege and marginality at various points of history. Participants also were in agreement that the traditional wave metaphor was helpful for beginning a conversation about the history of feminist movement, but that the conversation needed to be expanded to be less United States- and Euro-centric. Many participants specifically identified the need to include more nuanced discussions of masculinity and trans-politics for feminism to stay viable as movement, praxis, and theory. Ted established that a new word is not needed for feminism because "sexism and oppression are *not* new phenomenon. They are old phenomena that we continue to adapt in new contexts."

Mary, an African American communication professor in the South who also teaches in her university's African American Studies program, claimed feminism as an important label for political movement as a way to remind her students to reclaim those women's voices that have historically been excluded from Black political theorizing. She highlighted instances of men in the African American community interrogating feminism, stating that "The notion of this feminism, particular for women of color, sometimes gets framed as a betrayal to black men, but one doesn't have to choose one or the other. You are not turning your back on somebody, just because you are turning some light on you." This notion of illuminating ideas left in the shadows or not written into history surfaced repeatedly. Similarly, participants identified examples of feeling proud of their pedagogical acts when this illumination process happened for students outside of the classroom space. According to Yvonne, an associate professor at a Midwestern university, "I feel like I have done my job in terms of being a feminist scholar when I have students who are applying what they have learned in the class to critique arguments, and I didn't have to do or say anything. They did it for me."

Many participants used a version of the metaphor of "creating space" to articulate a critical feminist pedagogy that disrupts long-held power dynamics inherent in knowledge (re)production. They collectively spoke of the importance of continuing a feminist pedagogical practice rooted in critical communication concepts of language and power. For example, they implicated vocabulary terms such as "community," "conversation," "dialogue," and other instructional tools of shared spaces and conversations as feminist pedagogical values. Participants often cited celebrities such as Emma Watson, Beyonce, Amy Schumer, Lady Gaga,

and Joss Whedon in helping to increase the visibility of feminism as a necessary movement about identity politics.

Sometimes the facilitation of space and language move beyond the obvious popular culture references to more ambiguous feminist labeling practices. As Yvonne shared, "I don't feel like [I have to] come out as a feminist on the first day of class and say, 'I'm a feminist' to practice feminism." She said she enjoyed the "reveal" later in the semester due to some of her students voicing surprise at her challenging longheld feminist stereotypes. Brian, a gay professor at a private university, also enjoyed playing with assumptions about feminist labels. He offered a story about how a non-traditional, older female student told him on the first night of their gender communication class that she was glad to be taking the class with him because it would not have gone well if she took the course with a feminist. "I was like," Brian told her, "this is gonna be a bumpy ride, because I am a big old feminist, and we are going to *go* there."

Many of the participants acknowledged a widespread stigmatization and demonization of the word feminism, not just by mainstream culture, but also by students. An identity of "I am not a feminist, but . . . " emerged in participants' classrooms. For example, Yvonne said that one of her students stated, "I am a feminist, but I'd like to be married with kids," during a class discussion about feminism. Some participants shared that their students acknowledged to them that a feminist identity slowly emerged during the course of a class where faculty had assigned readings about gender, power, masculinity, femininity, and similar concepts. Participants said their students also admitted to not realizing that the term *feminist* had been framed with such derision in the popular press. According to Charlotte, "I approach [teaching feminism] with the assumption that most people are feminist in their beliefs even if they don't name it as such." Like many participants, Yvonne articulated feminism as a "working definition" that accounted for an individual to develop a continuum of feminist ideals and praxis even while not self-identifying as a feminist. According to all participants, the facilitation of this definitional process within individual students reverts to the themes of privilege and vulnerability in that feminist faculty must be willing not only to take on the vulnerable position of sharing personal stories of how they come to feminism, but also use their privileged status to expose structural oppression.

In sum, of the 22 participants, only two participants suggested a naming revision might help the feminist pedagogical cause. However, participants who valued the feminist/feminism label stressed that the structural, systemic history of feminist movement cannot be lost; otherwise, the risk of losing political capital increases. As Ellen shared, "I try to take the critical feminist approach from the 'get go' and say that every pedagogical act is a political act." Marcus, a queer international scholar at a private university shared his approach: "Lately, I am defining feminism as this ideological standpoint that constructs, reconstructs, interrogates, and re-interrogates the idea of identity and how much of identity is political, social, cultural, and economically driven."

Discussion

The themes that emerged contribute to a theory of *privileged vulnerability* that questions and then demands that instructors interrogate power and dominance in our communication artifacts, interactions, and institutions. The political act of being simultaneously vulnerable and privileged in our positions as educators in one of the oldest disciplines—Communication—

cannot be downplayed. Moreover, the participants' discussion of feminist identification practices indicates a theoretical understanding of the naming of feminist pedagogy as an inherently political CCP praxis. The emergent feminist definitions of this study orient feminism as an ongoing process that is never complete, much like Foucault's (1977) discourse, McGee's (1990) fragments, or hooks's (2001) movement in action.

Implications

In this section, I offer three implications for how to use our privileged feminist pedagogical platforms to give voice to our vulnerabilities within the classroom. First, privileged vulnerability compels us to disrupt our understandings of feminism in the communication discipline. My interviews with the 22 participants not only provides a shared narrative of feminist perception in the communication classroom, but also reflects the work we have ahead of us to challenge perceptions--our students *and* our own. We must continue to take a critical lens to our definitions and practices of feminism and feminist pedagogy. Despite participants' solidarity to the historic specificity of collective feminist movement, they accept the privileged opportunity to be vulnerable and open to change if the intentions behind the movement reaches more students. Can rethinking connections to a particular label, in this case feminism, coexist with a commitment to the historical, structural specificity of feminist movement? Although the shared narrative is not reflective of all feminist communication pedagogical praxis, the overwhelming repetition and salience of the themes of privilege and vulnerability points to the need for future research around these concepts, especially as they relate to our students.

We also must be reflexive about how students might engage with our embodied feminist praxis. Are we walking the walk? Are we teaching about and citing scholars of color, trans scholars, and immigrant scholars? Are we inclusive and intersectional in practice, or just in theory? I keep these questions in mind due to several recent interactions in which students have messaged me to ask about the feminist scholarship I have been reading lately, an office visit during which a student inquired whether I could read a critical media paper to see if it fits a particular graduate program's focus, or the Instagram post from a former student encouraging me to read his public call to Trump to stop being racist and transphobic.

Second, privileged vulnerability reminds us to examine our own privilege. Following an accident that fractured her pelvis, Ahmed (2017) explained the embodied connections of privilege as a mode of energy saving:

> I began to think more about my able-bodied privilege, which is not to say that I have thought about it enough. I have not. It is easy for me to forget to think about it, which is what makes a privilege a privilege: the experiences you are protected from having; the thoughts you do not have to think (Ahmed, 2017, p. 181).

Reading about Ahmed's embodied awakening resonated with my own belated awakening to privilege. For example, many participants discussed subversive teaching practices as integral to weaving in intersectionality and critiques of privilege into their pedagogy. Not until working on this project did I realize the privileged opportunity of subversive teaching, especially those instructors with white privilege.

As a queer woman who strategically mixes my use of the words "partner" and "husband"

to identify my spouse, I recognize I benefit both from heterosexual and white privilege. However, I had not taken the time to reflect on how that privilege intersected with my pedagogical identity and performance until recently. I spent much of my previous research output focused on the vulnerability side of the equation, examining how my gender, queerness, and working-class background were sutured into my pedagogy. However, laced throughout these markers of being "othered" I lost sight of the immense privilege I occupy, both as an educator and now as a member of the white middle-class.

After completing the interviews during the middle of my sabbatical term, I spent the majority of my time reading scholarship from Black feminists, queer scholars, scholars of color, activist scholarship, and disability scholarship. I carved out as much time as I could to engage with this privileged space of time away from the usual semester demands from students and administrators. I value immeasurably the release time and the faculty development funds that my privileged position in the university afforded me to do this work. I recognize that colleagues in many states are facing budget cuts, furloughs, and even threats to closing entire communication departments, which makes it even more imperative for those of us whose institutions provide grants and leave time to apply for those privileges. Furthermore, we must commit to creating space for intersectional feminist communication pedagogy via these privileges.

Third, privileged vulnerability encourages us to be more vulnerable educators. Although popular trade press titles about gender and feminism continue to find bookshelf space, thanks in part to the success of Roxane Gay's 2014 edited collection, *Bad Feminist*, as well as many women celebrities proclaiming themselves as feminists in interviews about their work, the accessibility and popular press coverage of feminism have not necessarily made it easier to teach about the dreaded "F" word or position communication topics around intersectional issues of class, race, and sexuality. In fact, when discussion of gender appeared to be at a crescendo during the 2016 presidential campaign, my professor friends and I continued to struggle with how to discuss gender and feminism in innovative, approachable ways, as well as *live* feminism as models of activism and advocacy for our students.

Allen (2011) noted that critical pedagogy encourages educators to live social activism and transform our teaching lenses and practices by facilitating classrooms that are sites of "resistance and empowerment, where students acquire (and faculty hone) critical perspectives and skills that can not only reform the classroom and higher education, but also translate into other contexts" (p. 110).

Just as a few of my participants shared, I, too, want to be better at my job. By this, I mean *I want to do the work*. I want to feel compassion, while also feeling motivated to let any feelings of anger or fear filter into my activism. I'm reminded of the week following the 2016 presidential election, when some of my students, mostly from minority communities along intersections of race, religion, sexuality, and class, contacted me to express fear and sadness. They eventually organized a peaceful classroom walkout and brought together student and community leaders to the front steps of our grandest academic building to claim a space of acceptance and love on our campus. I felt emboldened by their actions and agreed to speak at the student organized gathering. I also worked with colleagues to write a public letter addressing our students, letting them know that we support them. A theory of privileged vulnerability

encourages us to open the door to vulnerability in order to find space for activism and social justice in our classrooms and our mentoring.

Conclusion

In *Living a Feminist Life*, Ahmed (2017) wrote, "Feminist work is memory work" (p. 22). Although I did not read Ahmed's words until months after I completed the 22 interviews, they no less informed my interpretation of my fellow feminist communication educators' memories as they meshed with my own. Of course, these memories are partial and imperfect. Future research might enhance, or interrogate, a working theory of privileged vulnerability by investigating the pedagogical memories of more educators—or perhaps students—but the privileged, vulnerable, embodied memories shared here are important to the CCP canon. "To share a memory is to put a body into words" (Ahmed, p. 23). With each interview, every transcript, the participants' stories resonated to my core. Their vulnerabilities became mine. My privilege as a feminist researcher became part of the fabric of their collective voice. This collective analytical story of privileged vulnerability compels us to keep opening doors to and creating space for discussions of privilege, vulnerability, and feminist activism in our communication pedagogy.

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Relational Storytelling and Critical Reflections on Difference

Laura Russell

Abstract: This essay explores unique practices for teaching relational ethics through storytelling. Drawing from my experiences teaching an advanced undergraduate Narrative Ethics seminar, I explain how my students responded to a storytelling unit through which they examined their values and storytelling ethics. I interweave observations from my teaching with insights gathered from my students' in-class discussions and written reflections to demonstrate the pedagogical aims, outcomes, and challenges encountered when engaging this material. I focus particularly on offering suggestions for encouraging students to (a) embrace limits to their understandings of others and (b) recognize how listening for, and expressing, difference plays a fundamental role in their personal, relational, and ethical growth.

> *Storytelling mediates relations with experiences and identities that extend beyond us as individuals. In our installation, as storytellers we cross, breach, and blur boundaries that demarcate crucial political and ethical spaces in our everyday lives as we work with student listeners to create a world to which we all belong.* (Adair, Brown, Clark, Perez-Cotrich, & Stanfield, 2007, p. 140)

The Communication Studies discipline offers a rich foundation for educating learners about the complexities of storytelling. A process co-constructed through social interaction, storytelling provides a powerful means for building human relationships (Lannamann & McNamee, 2011). Over the past five years, I have taught a Narrative Ethics seminar, which is an upper-level undergraduate course centered on the ethical practices and dilemmas encountered when communicating stories with others. I designed this course with expectations of challenging students to reflect critically on their daily, ethical engagements, particularly when communicating about their own and others' values in conversation. In this reflection essay, I explain further why I recognized a need for students to dig deeply into their dispositions as communicators, especially when communicating with others about their beliefs through storytelling. After describing how my students respond to an interpersonal storytelling unit, I

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outline specific approaches to class discussion that challenge them to recognize how narrative can strengthen their capacity to communicate ethically about their own and others' personal values. Such approaches may be applied to a broad range of courses focusing on relational communication.

Context and Rationale

My interest in developing this course stemmed from my observations of various social problems affecting my campus community. At Denison University (a fully residential liberal arts institution), students are tight-knit, interacting with one another frequently both in and outside of the classroom. Through serving a number of campus initiatives, such as the "Committee for Residential Life" and the "Restorative Justice Program," I learn first-hand about students' concerns over a "fragmented" and "judgmental" social culture. Some students report that parties are "screened" by door monitors who admit select individuals and reject others; in other instances, verbal attacks are expressed against student groups and organizations, especially those that are particular to minorities. And, given the frequency with which students encounter one another, they report having heightened anxieties over how their identities are perceived. As a result, they censor what they say and do to protect their image, even if it requires withholding their beliefs.

These instances, among several others, certainly affect how students enact and embody their daily interactions in ways not immediately observable in the classroom setting. As a professor of relational communication, I recognized a need to develop academic courses that respond to issues affecting my students' immediate social context. Therefore, drawing from my observations of the campus culture, I use my Narrative Ethics course as an opportunity to engage students in communication practices necessary for speaking authentically about their experiences and values. In this course, I situate narrative ethics as a dynamic, relational process, one through which persons strive for genuine dialogue. My definition draws from Frank's (2013) theoretical framework, in which:

> Storytelling is for an other just as much as it is for oneself. In the reciprocity that is storytelling, the teller offers herself as [a] guide to the other's self-formation. The other's receipt of that guidance not only recognizes but values the teller. The moral genius of storytelling is that each, teller and listener, enters the space of the story for the other. (p. 18)

The ethics at play in dialogue concern matters of listening openly, seeking understanding, and recognizing individuals' abilities and limitations to apprehending others' experiences. As Ellis (2007) noted, these behind-the-scenes ethics play a pivotal role in how people co-construct meanings of themselves and others through conversation. Moreover, these ethical practices are essential when discussing values and beliefs tied to any lived experience. Storytelling provides a vernacular for conveying underlying reasons for why persons believe what they do (Frank, 2013). Hence, it is through narrative that individuals acquire a deeper glimpse into the persons with whom they speak, thus enabling them to recognize the uniqueness of their own and others' dispositions.

Drawing from this literature, I shape my courses to compel students to acknowledge their often unspoken values tied to intimate stories inscribing their belief systems. Specifically, I construct assignments intended for my students to anticipate and listen for implicit meanings

ensuing from their own *and* others' storytelling. Throughout a six-week storytelling unit, my students (a) write self-reflections on personal experiences that impact their value systems, (b) discuss the anticipated challenges of sharing such personal stories with others, (c) engage in paired storytelling with a classmate, and (d) reflect critically on their storytelling experiences to identify and explain the ethical practices they enact when communicating with their partners. Upon receiving IRB approval from my respective institution, I examined my students' experiences of, and responses, to these implementations.

Students' Responses to the Storytelling Unit

Having concrete storytelling experiences to reflect on helps my students focus more intentionally on their speaking and listening practices. Many students draw attention to their vulnerability, realizing that storytelling about personal values occurs only when both teller and listener gesture openness. Meanwhile, my students capitalize on the value of sharing their similarities, suggesting that their commonalities allow them to feel connected and trusted. For instance, in their written reflections students explained that "even though I went into this conversation assuming that [my partner] and I would not connect and would hide aspects of our stories, I was proven wrong by how much we had in common and our ability to fully interpret each other's experiences" and "In my experience with [my partner] we found common ground. We had both had the same very significant life experience. And while these looked very different for each of us, the fundamental basis of sharing past adventures in common helped us to feel as though we knew each other in a way that we certainly did not before."

At first glance, I grow excited when witnessing my students building bridges to connect with one another. These comments suggest that they perceive themselves capable of *fully* understanding others by way of identifying their commonalities. There is nothing wrong with recognizing the similarities they share with others. For my students, being reminded of their own experiences while simultaneously hearing similar accounts revealed through the stories shared by their peers makes their conversations feel mutually affirming. Frank (2013) validated these experiences when stating that testimony rests on a demand for stories that create possibilities for others to imagine more fully their own realities. Furthermore, to dissolve discomforts associated with newly forming relationships, storytellers often seek common ground values as a means to identify with their listeners. Yet, such inclinations to ease tension and settle discomfort may limit students from questioning further their meaningful differences.

These tendencies--to avoid conflict--are not limited to my classroom experiences. They occur in everyday conversations when people strive to maintain harmony and avoid asking tough questions or expressing differences. For instance, when observing the social climate on campus, I witness students gravitating towards others similar to their selves. And in classroom discussions, they often avoid expressing values that would potentially incite disagreement. Thus, through this storytelling unit, I want my students to recognize their differences while realizing their limits to understanding others' unique dispositions. When this outcome does not manifest, I question my teaching. Because I often encourage students to respond to one another's vulnerability by creating open, receptive speaking situations, my emphasis on comfort likely steers them away from questioning one another further about how their value systems differ in ways that might provoke discomfort. Therefore, I propose a debriefing session during which I raise critical questions for my students to discuss in lieu of their findings from the storytelling unit.

Debriefing the Storytelling Unit

I approach this debriefing session with the goal of getting my students to consider how acknowledging both similarities and differences is necessary when relating ethically with others. I first ask them to compare and contrast how similarities and differences play significant roles in the relationships they develop. When responding to this question, my students express the tensions they experience with relating to others' personal meanings when storytelling. We discuss how sharing commonalities with others strengthens our senses of belonging. Meanwhile, we also acknowledge our need for others to question the particularities of our experiences to reveal uniqueness and points yet to be considered. Through this process, my students consider how their relationships, forged through sharing similarities, may sometimes inhibit them from experiencing differences necessary for expanding their personal development and relational depths. Furthermore, when relating these observations to their campus culture, my students recognize more vividly how the fragmented nature of their social climate is due largely to their peers' reluctance to encounter difference. Drawing this connection makes the learning in the classroom "real," such that my students recognize the need to learn narrative practices vital for broaching social differences.

Encouraging students to apprehend the importance of listening to others' points of view about their beliefs gives rise to deeper issues underlying the ways they communicate with others about their differences. Thus, I then ask my students to consider (a) what transpires when relationships are deprived of space for acknowledging and discussing unsettling differences (such as those differences encountered when realizing that each other's moral beliefs conflict) and (b) how may stories assist in communicating ethically about such differences? These questions often perplex my students, such that it can be hard to gain traction for discussing these ideas in class. In response, I assign Todd's (2004) essay, which provides a vocabulary for articulating the value of explicitly acknowledging their differences. Todd underscored that:

> Commonality, equality, and shared responsibility can only ever be derived from the presence of difference within community, a difference that constantly threatens to break in upon and dissolve the communal bond. Yet, equally paradoxically, it is precisely in attending to their difference, to others as others, that enables formations of community, formations that take seriously the burden of justice, that is, the burden of making decisions, evaluations, comparisons, and judgments. (p. 342)

Storytelling provides a means of communication for apprehending others' experiences and seeing how differences in persons' values arise. Through discussing this essay, my students learn that communicating ethically is not merely about creating understanding, but also about recognizing the limits to understanding.

In response to Todd's essay, I ask my students how they could put "thinking with ignorance" into practice. Encouraging my students to embrace this frame of mind proves challenging. It helps to be reminded that for years students are taught to be knowers. Teaching them to inhabit a place of *not knowing* may seem antithetical. Therefore, it is necessary for me to discuss with my students the need for *unlearning* habits ensuing from their needs to know and be certain. I do so by probing their connotative understandings of the concept "ignorance." While often conceived in negative terms, ignorance plays a vital role in enriching our understandings.

Pagano (1991) explained that ignorance is not an absence of understanding, but rather a powerful realization that opens doors for further inquiry and exploration: "An investigation of ignorance creates a new condition for knowledge" (p. 201).

Discussing ignorance openly as a class and reframing it in positive terms empowers my students to more readily embrace the limits of their understandings while also encouraging them to develop further questions for viewing their knowledge from different angles. They begin questioning how their assumed similarities with other individuals are always laden with experiential and situational differences, many of which are overlooked. Concluding from our class discussions, my students express that it is better to become aware of what we do not know rather than assume we are capable of fully understanding others. With this value in mind, we must always question others and ourselves when exchanging stories to avoid making counterproductive assumptions.

At the conclusion of our discussion, I ask my students to write a synthesis reflection, taking into account what we discussed in relationship to their peer-to-peer storytelling experience. To guide this reflection, I urge them to consider what they could do differently: What questions might they ask of their peer that they did not initially? What assumptions might they have made about their perceived understandings? In what ways might they be limited in understanding their partner? I also have them consider how teachings from the storytelling unit and class discussion can be used to address problems they observe of their campus social culture. This step encourages my students to think seriously about the applied implications of their learning. Such awareness primes them to contemplate new approaches for reflecting critically on their social environments in ways that enable them to challenge dominant narratives promoting routine communication habits. That is, my students apply their inquiries about difference to broader contexts warranting critical interrogation.

Conclusion

Involving students in active storytelling invites them to embody and enact ethical practices for discovering value in their personal lives and peer relationships. Meanwhile, instructors must attend to the ways students form connections through such communication. The approaches condoned throughout this reflection encourage students to examine their personal values while also taking into consideration their relationships with others. Thus, these observations are suited well for relational communication courses wherein listening carefully to others and engaging in democratic practices are necessary. By recognizing storytelling as a powerful means for elevating human connection, instructors too should reflect on their pedagogical practices: How might we develop more innovative practices for involving students in discussing their differences? How might we explore creative techniques for helping students recognize limits to their understandings that summon further questions--leaving stories with and about others open-ended for future discovery? These questions mark beginnings for journeys ahead as we continue developing personal, relational, and/or pedagogical practices for cultivating an ethical awareness through storytelling.

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Creating a Speech Choir: The Bounty of Authentic Audience Experience for Students

Susan Redding Emel

Abstract: For most students at my university, classroom experience alone was the choice for formally developing speaking skills. My idea was to provide students with recurring authentic audience experience, attending to the audience dimension outlined by Derryberry (1989) as a critical requirement of public speaking pedagogy. Through research, a new idea was proposed: Create a Speech Choir, combining talents of the students in one performance. Though it has elements of forensics, reader's theater, choral reading, public speaking and more, it is not identical to any of these. As the team evolved, more pedagogical elements were added including service learning, attention to feedback intervention, and limited social activism in an atmosphere of collaboration and creativity. Quite unexpectedly, however, Speech Choir managed to attract both students with performance confidence and those professing high communication apprehension.

After many years of teaching the basic course, an advanced public speaking course, and sponsoring a forensics team, I had become increasingly aware of the limitations of laboratory-based public speaking education. Classroom audiences were largely unappreciative and unresponsive to student efforts. Genuine opportunities for audience analysis and, thus, tailoring of presentations to specific audience exigencies, were minimal. At forensics tournaments, the realities of the competitive environment precluded most of the "real life" audience instruction opportunities I sought. Knowing the gap between real and laboratory audiences from my own speaking experiences, I found it difficult to fully explain to students how their training in these settings would translate into their own real-world lives. I thought, "It's the best that can be done, given the available resources."

Looking into disciplinary research for possible answers, I found that facilitating genuine audience experiences for students on an ongoing basis was all but entirely unaddressed. While researchers have identified the value of authentic audience experiences for students (Derryberry,

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To view the program discussed in this article, use this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkHcrZvKk0g

1989), the effects of audience-based practice and preparation time on grades (Menzel & Carrell, 1994; Smith & Frymier, 2006), and the idea of brief repeated exposure to audiences as a means of addressing public speaking state anxiety (Finn, Sawyer, & Schrodt, 2009), little research has examined the effects of regular authentic audience exposure on student speaking skills and anxiety-reduction as compared to classroom-only instruction. Moreover, a lack of models for structuring such an educational effort, much less how-to-implement advice, exists.

Over the next several years of my teaching career, I discovered a model that provides exactly this regularly recurring genuine audience experience for students. This model—which I have labeled "Speech Choir"—has proved to be sustainable on limited resources and, according to students' self-reports, has evolved into far more benefits for students than I had imagined.

The "Speech Choir" has defied easy description. Though it has elements of forensics, reader's theater, choral reading, and public speaking, it is not identical to any of these activities. Nevertheless, this "Speech Choir"—which is now a one-credit-hour, repeatable course that typically enrolls 25-40 students, is offered each semester, and serves as an audience-experience credit for the Communication Studies major—has superseded my university's forensics team, more than quintupling the number of students participating in such an activity on my campus. This reflection essay will describe its creation, evolution, and relationship to recent communication pedagogical research while explicating the pursuit of providing ongoing access to public spaces for student speaking. It will conclude with samples of student perceptions of the impact of participating in the activity.

What is a Speech Choir?

During a sabbatical intended for other projects, I interviewed a nationally-known retired professor of preaching from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. I discussed with him how an undergraduate program might better prepare students for seminary training. During our conversation, he suggested I try creating a Speech Choir to offer singular group performances at university events, highlighting talents of students while providing service to the community. The Speech Choir concept, he asserted, allowed audiences to better grasp some forms of literature such as Biblical texts or abstract prose and poetry by breaking the readings into multiple voices (F. B. Craddock, personal communication, October 3, 2003). I was intrigued enough to give it a try.

The first presentation was a scripture reading at the university's regular chapel service, with the existing forensics team serving as the student participants. The text, selected by the chaplain, was typed into a "script," assigning various phrases or verses to different speakers. Strategic choices enhanced meanings and clarified ideas. Sentences and partial sentences were assigned to speakers based on tone and confidence level, employing multiple voices or striking voice contrasts to emphasize key points. Dialogue was separated from narration using different voices. Lengthy or awkward passages were broken into ideational "bites." Scripts were assembled for each performer into black notebooks with page covers for easy page turns. The presentation was rehearsed, with minimal blocking added to provide focus for the audience.

By all accounts, the performance brought the text to life. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with audience members responding directly to the students. Community appreciation subsequently produced invitations for more performances. In the first year, requests for our

presentations were made for the campus Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observance, Women's History Month, five more scripture readings, a reception honoring a visiting distinguished professor of biology, and the annual alumni reunion luncheon. Since then, the range of event invitations has become astoundingly broad. Performances have included memorial services, a wedding, art history and state history academic conferences, a local high school honoring a military hero, and a church's stewardship campaign. Professors in other academic disciplines extended invitations to present topics otherwise challenging for the students in their classes to engage (e.g., the Holocaust, abortion) and honor societies and athletic teams requested the group entertain at their annual banquets. With each new performance, Speech Choir members are required to adapt to new audiences, occasions, and settings.

Generating Impetus

Derryberry (1989) articulated the value of real audience interaction for students by noting that "speaking and interpreting before a variety of public audiences ranging from literature classes, political science seminars, service clubs, and religious organizations clearly elicit adjustment to a variety of listeners" (p. 10). Furthermore, he asserted that "a variety of audience settings avoids supporting the idea that a special audience situation is required for a student to speak" (p. 10). Arguing that students limited to classroom or tournament settings will develop distorted views of what it means to give a speech, Derryberry noted that genuine and varied audience interaction "generates far more impetus than merely scheduling another practice session" (p. 11).

As the Speech Choir evolved, invitations beyond scripture readings required the development of original materials around a theme. Coaching students to find literary and relevant informational sources on assigned themes encouraged them to enhance their resource evaluation skills. Becoming more aware and curious about credible and aesthetically-pleasing criteria for performance materials, this task required them to assess potential script components for appropriateness and adaptability to unique events. Presentations were composed of different genres and perspectives woven creatively together.

Internally, a culture of collaboration formed among the students enrolled in the Speech Choir course. Pressure to produce group presentations that represented the whole activity well (and the university) set the tone for students to contribute critiques that improved performances. With some guidance from me about constructive critiques focused on the task (King, 2016), and encouragement for developing empathic relationships (Dannels, Housley Gaffney, & Martin, 2011), students created a feedback environment where risky ideas were valued, even if not implemented as proposed. The event preparation climate invited thoughtful listening to the suggestions made by all students. There is a significant openness to trying ideas about which they are skeptical, and they are able to make corporate choices they can all be proud to present. Shared responsibility for successful performances has fostered this community and creativity (Dannels et al., 2014). What, in any other course, would have been understood as "group projects" and summarily devalued for perceived offenses such assignments often impose on student well-being, were transformed into common goals. Performers and critics are invested in, and appreciated for, contributing their varied perspectives and talents.

Early on, it was apparent that service learning and some communication activism were being addressed through this activity. Student organizations asked the Speech Choir to promote

their issues and charities (e.g., childhood cancer, eating disorders, the National Day of Silence, domestic violence, human trafficking), opening the door to communication activism and serving as an avenue for "building blocks for civic action" (Harnett, 2017, p. 383). Additionally, the Speech Choir has marked milestones of university life (e.g., the inauguration of a new president, tributes to retiring faculty members, my campus response to a student suicide) and is regularly featured at Admissions recruiting events. These performances embody the "skill-set practice and reflexivity" of service learning as described by Britt (2012, p. 82) as students reflect afterwards on each performance to enhance learning for future presentations. Genuine audience events are the engine for the primary pedagogical features of this model.

Eliciting Adjustments

Student response to the activity is evidenced through a self-evaluation paper. Each semester students are asked to intentionally reflect on their progress, or lack thereof, in the development of their communication skills. Since I started the Speech Choir, a majority of the students have mentioned the gain of heightened levels of confidence in their public speaking. (My university's Institutional Review Board approved the use of student quotations taken from these papers in this essay.) For example, one student's not-uncommon comparison involved experiences in high school and several semesters of participating in Speech Choir:

> I was Salutatorian for my graduating class in high school. THIS WAS MY WORST NIGHTMARE COMING TO LIFE. . . . I was beside myself with anxiety. . . . I couldn't focus on writing the speech because I was so terrified to deliver it. I DESPERATELY wanted to be better. . . . My first day at Speech Choir I knew I was way out of my league watching some of the [other students] perform. I wanted to be like them. . . . I wanted to be that confident. [The last semester of my senior year,] I really felt like I had made it. I felt confident and comfortable giving my presentation. I finally felt like I had power over my fear. I was able to give a presentation I was proud of . . . Now with my newfound confidence, I plan on being a teaching assistant in my grad program . . . I feel as though that transition was due to the skills that were instilled in me from being in Speech Choir.

One might think students with self-professed high levels of communication apprehension would be performance-avoidant and would not seek participation in a non-required activity like Speech Choir. However, though their skepticism is palpable when they join the group, in most cases, their peers have convinced them that the experience is beneficial. For some students, their public speaking anxiety is matched by a determination to overcome it. In any case, the authentic performances drive their courage by requiring them to represent well, to support their peers, and to serve the needs of audiences, occasions, and venues. And with genuine audience appreciation, their confidence increases.

Another frequent student observation is the impact Speech Choir has had on their ability to give and receive constructive feedback. With critiques focused intently on the task at hand, students often remark on their awareness of feedback intervention and its usefulness. For example, one student remarked on the transferability of his sense of competency:

> [T]he most important thing that I have learned from Speech Choir is how to give constructive criticism and do so effectively. Most people have no idea how to give constructive criticism and it is a skill that takes a while to perfect. This skill is something that I use in multiple settings … I am able to communicate what they need to improve without destroying their confidence and

discrediting the work they have accomplished.

Students overwhelmingly imply that constructive feedback is something largely unfamiliar to them in other educational experiences. But when managing multiple performances which have little-to-no flexibility in scheduling, there is literally no time for bickering and sniping in the preparation process, with much less time to spend on the meta-task concerns that can lower feedback efficacy (King, 2016). Conversely, creativity and innovation are crucial. To minimize the negative and maximize the positive, constructive criticism is indispensable. Students not only adjust heartily and readily to the standard, but also they claim to use the skill in other arenas.

Less overt in most cases, yet hovering in student awareness, are the values that the group process provides. Showing appreciation for the collaborative dynamics of the performance development process, one student said,

> The performance[s have] developed my skills . . . working with a team. With seven or eight people in a script . . . , there are many different ideas with how [we] should proceed, and it is important to know how to resolve conflicts [about] the direction of the script. Through observation . . . I have learned that often the best way to reconcile the ideas is to give . . . equal recognition and try them [all] out.

Once students learn the demands of authentic audiences, they are better able to critique brainstormed suggestions. They recognize the needs of those audiences, knowing the multiple ways they vary, and can critique the next presentation preparations from that strength, rather than positing themselves or the instructor as the sole reference point. This critique fosters the collaboration with team members-- a recognition that "every utterance [they] make when working with others either moves toward or away from [the Speech Choir and the audience] communit[ies]" (Dannels et al., 2014, p. 378).

Conclusion

This Speech Choir incorporates audience authenticity by requiring external invitations to propel the work of the class. Creativity and adaptability to rhetorical exigencies powers the visibility of the group, generating more invitations and giving impetus to productive collaboration. Service learning and social activism have proven to be rich sources for negotiating these public spaces. Student self-reports of increased confidence in public presentation dominate the feedback, but this is by no means the only advantage. For me, the Speech Choir program has met and exceeded all original expectations.

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REFLECTION ESSAY

Using Freewriting in Public Speaking Courses to Remedy Student Apathy: An Unconventional Solution to a Common Problem

Flora Keshishian

Abstract: Student apathy—a lack of motivation or mental presence in the classroom—is common in many academic institutions and courses of study. In Public Speaking courses, speech anxiety can be a factor that contributes to student apathy. To solve this problem, I suggest implementing an unconventional approach—in-class unguided longhand freewriting— that requires students to write nonstop about anything that comes to mind, without censoring or editing, during the first five minutes of each class session. I base this recommendation on my own observations of the students' body language during the freewriting period, as well as my qualitative analysis of 95 students' written feedback regarding the effect of freewriting on them. I found that this practice helps reduce student apathy through increased self-reflexivity, decreased anxiety, and improved presence.

Public Speaking (PS) is one course I have taught for the past two decades. One of the problems I have encountered repeatedly in this course is student apathy. According to Marshall (2012), "apathy in learning is an expression of indifference, lethargy, and/or disengagement in the classroom environment" (p. 275). Apathetic students are bored, checked-out, and show neutrality toward higher education (Hassel & Lourey, 2005). Student apathy, which has been blamed on factors such as ineffective teaching and student failure to study, has posed stark challenges for classroom instruction (Becker, 2010; O'Brien, 2010; Turner, 2016). While apathy may occur for several reasons and can be present in any course of study (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004), this essay focuses on apathy in the PS course as a unique context—a core course that nearly all college students, including mine, are required to take during their first year.

However, many students take the course unwillingly: they want to avoid the stress that is almost synonymous with PS. They are not alone as Dwyer and Davidson (2012) noted that

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"people fear public speaking more than death" (p. 99). This great fear--or speech anxiety--often is experienced through physical sensations (e.g., upset stomach) before and during a speech; psychological responses (e.g., loss of memory) during a speech; and emotional responses (e.g., loss of control), before, during, and after a speech (Fujishin, 2015). Based on my experience, on speech days, some students are too anxious to sit still, while other students skip class altogether because they "got sick." During their speeches, many students display behaviors that signal anxiety, such as drawing a blank, coughing nervously, trembling, or using verbal fillers (e.g., "like," "you know").

During classroom discussion, apathy is apparent in that students generally appear disengaged, indifferent, fatigued, and emotionally absent as their minds are too preoccupied with speech anxiety, if not other distractions, to be fully present during class. Because anxiety is linked positively to apathy (Sashittal, Jassawalla, & Markulis, 2012), it is possible that student apathy in PS classes is a cover for anxiety. The pedagogy challenge in this course, then, is to use an approach that can help students release their anxiety and unpack their preoccupied minds.

Solution: Unguided Longhand Freewriting

Scholars have offered numerous teaching techniques to remedy student apathy, or to motivate and engage students (Barkley, 2009). One such technique is the use of freewriting, defined as writing minus "the normal constraints involved in writing" (Belanoff, Elbow, & Fontaine, 1991, p. xiii). Freewriting, which can be guided or unguided, is a kind of writing where students "never stop to look back, to cross something out, to wonder how to spell something, to wonder what word or thought to use, or to think about what [they] are doing" (Elbow, 1998, p. 3). Students who engage in freewriting are able to cleanse their minds (Keshishian, 2009), improve their academic writing skills (Somerville & Crème, 2005), and overcome writing anxiety, especially among English language learners (Scullin & Baron, 2013). Freewriting is commonly used in composition courses as well as sometimes in courses such as performance, archeology, and engineering to help generate ideas (Somerville & Crème, 2005). Defining freewriting as "unformed exploratory talk and writing," Palmerton (1992) suggested using freewriting in PS classes as a tool to "facilitate the process of formulating thought" (p. 338).

My Own Experience with Freewriting

I discovered the power of freewriting years ago, when I was having difficulty finishing my doctoral dissertation. A friend suggested that I read Cameron's (1992/2002) *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. The book helped me realize that I was unable to write because my mind was preoccupied with so many other things (e.g., school work, finances, homesickness). To release this preoccupation, Cameron urged, "Get it on the page" (p. 11). Every morning, I wrote about these things for 20 minutes and noticed its positive impact on me almost immediately. It helped me overcome my writer's block, as well as helped me become more present, focused, decisive, and productive as well as less afraid to write.

Despite my conviction about the power of freewriting, however, I hesitated to use it in my teaching, believing that writing would be unpopular among students, especially Millennial students, a generation that grew up surrounded by high-speed Internet, touch media, Wi-Fi, iPads, iPods, and MacBook's in an educational environment that has embraced information

communication technology (ICT). Imposing an archaic process such as longhand freewriting on them, therefore, did not seem to be a good idea. I was aware, however, that students who write their notes have a different type of cognitive processing and outperform those students who take notes on a computer (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). This awareness suggested freewriting might still be useful. Moreover, freewriting has been identified as a technique that helps students form a concrete self-concept, which Fontaine (1991) defined as "a sense of who [students] are, what they value, and the bases on which they determine these values" (p. 13). This insight again made it seem that freewriting was worth investigating.

I also presumed, based on my experience as a student, that my students' minds were preoccupied with their own issues and that their state of mind itself was contributing to their apathy, because it is difficult for students to concentrate when preoccupied and that they, too, might be stressed, albeit for different reasons (Pierceall & Keim, 2007). In fact, one of the biggest stressors students face is speech anxiety connected to their PS course (Dwyer & Davidson, 2012). Thus, freewriting's potential [e.g., its therapeutic value and its capacity to free the mind (Cameron, 1992/2002; Pennebaker, 1997)] made it seem the assignment was a good match for the unique context of the PS course.

As such, I decided to implement in-class unguided longhand freewriting as a solution to student apathy in my PS courses during the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 semester. In my course syllabi, I explained to students that (a) they would need a notebook and a pen so that they could handwrite nonstop about anything that came to mind, without editing or censoring, during the first five minutes of each class session; (b) the freewrite assignment would be worth 5% of their total grade in the course, though class participation would not be mandatory if they were willing to forego five points; and (c) I would not read their freewriting but would keep a record instead of their participation during class. My reason for including freewriting in the course, I told them, was that not only had I personally benefited from it and wanted the same for them, but also that I was curious to learn in what ways, if any, the assignment would affect them. The project was approved by the University Institutional Review Board (IRB).

My Observations

During each class session, I observed students' body language before, during, and after freewriting to form an idea of their disposition towards the assignment. In the beginning, I made several observations: a few students were late to class or took a long time to start writing or kept checking the time to stop writing exactly when the time was up, possibly indicating a lack of interest in the assignment; some students who, in the middle of writing, put their pens down to massage their hands, perhaps to literally develop "freewriting muscles" (Elbow, 1998); and several students who wished they could write for just a bit longer. I also noticed that after a few sessions, almost all of my students seemed to appreciate the assignment: some students came to class early and ready to freewrite, some students began freewriting before the class started, and all students wrote without checking the time.

Student Feedback

Having obtained approval from my university's IRB, during the freewriting period of the last class sessions in both semesters, I asked students to provide me with anonymous written

feedback on the assignment by responding to the following question: "What impact, if any, did the in-class freewriting have on you?" I told them that their feedback would help me determine whether I should continue using the assignment in future semesters. To determine their holistic views about the assignment (Pope, Van Royan & Baker, 2002), I qualitatively analyzed their responses.

Of the 95 respondents, seven students found the assignment neither helpful nor harmful. A few other students wrote that they were skeptical about the assignment at first, but liked it later. The other students wrote comments that reflected their gratitude for the writing period, with many of them noting that they (a) wished they could do the same in other classes, (b) would continue freewriting on their own, and (c) would recommend freewriting to other students; they also recommended that I should continue using freewriting in my future classes as "writing for 5 minutes is healthy food for the brain" and "Good way to start class."

Furthermore, three themes emerged from the students' responses. The first theme was increased self-reflexivity. Concurring with previous research (Pennebaker, 1997), students' responses pointed to the therapeutic value of freewriting. They considered it cathartic and soothing in that it gave them a chance to open up and self-reflect and, in so doing, to better organize and understand their emotions. Two examples of student comments are "The writing acted as a therapy session. . . . This is something I would have never expected to learn about in this type of writing" and "It's as if a burden is lifted when we free-write whatever is going through our heads at the time."

The second theme was decreased anxiety. As previous research has not examined the impact of freewriting on speech anxiety, this possible effect did not cross my mind when I created the assignment. In fact, assuming that the students' minds would be too focused on their speeches to want to freewrite on a speech day, I asked students if they wanted to skip the assignment. Their collective and decisive "no" response made me wonder if I had stumbled onto something important. Based on their feedback, freewriting had a noticeable impact on them as several comments pointed to freewriting as a way to relieve stress and as a relaxing mechanism that helped them become calm. The majority of the comments, however, centered on speech anxiety in that students asserted that freewriting cleared their minds and reduced their speech anxiety, or the stress they felt, particularly on speech days or moments before their speech presentations. Two examples of student comments are "Public speaking makes me very nervous so writing down anything that could go wrong helped the most" and "Freewriting helped me walk into my speech better prepared mentally."

The third theme was improved presence in that students pointed to freewriting's capacity to help them clear their minds and thus be more attentive during class. Writing their thoughts before class helped them concentrate and be more present, focused, and participative during class. It also helped them be more positive and organized. Two examples of student comments are "The fact that the writing is called 'freewriting' makes a lot of sense as well because it helps free my mind" and "It helps me focus on what's going on around me and be 'in' the class and not anywhere else."

Conclusion

Through this reflection essay, I suggested implementing in-class unguided longhand freewriting as a possible solution to student apathy. My observations of the students' body language indicated that they learned to like this solution, which helped reduce their apathy through improved self-reflexivity, decreased anxiety, and improved presence. Unguided freewriting helped free students' minds to self-reflect, which in turn allowed them to commit to paper what was preoccupying their minds (e.g., anxiety) and, in so doing, become more focused and present during class. The assignment also gave students a chance to distance themselves from ICT, reflect, and contemplate things other than the latest twitter feed as they quietly practiced the lost art of handwriting.

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Classroom Ideas for Promoting Social Justice: Encouraging Student Activism in Intercultural and Gender Communication Courses

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Abstract: Communication courses (e.g., intercultural communication and gender communication) dedicated to the promotion of social justice often result in students' raised consciousness regarding privilege and the oppression of people who have been marginalized historically. Affected students, however, often are at a loss about what to do with the newly acquired knowledge; consequently, they may experience anger and frustration that causes them to feel overwhelmed and leaves them with a sense of hopelessness. This essay provides 10 suggestions to help communication pedagogues guide students from anger and hopelessness to action and empowerment. Tips offered center on classroom discourse, curriculum choices, and potential assignments.

My childhood and undergraduate years were experienced in the conservative space of Northeast Oklahoma. Although influenced by strong 1980s television women, such as Murphy Brown and Julia Sugarbaker, I was influenced equally by the sweet and submissive women of my rural community (population 1,600). It was not until I attended graduate school at a large research university outside Oklahoma (enrollment of 30,000) in my mid-20s that I was exposed to a diverse range of races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, social classes, abilities, and religions. In my hometown, everybody was White or variations of White and Cherokee, poor, and evangelical. If a person was anything but cisgender and heterosexual, they kept it a secret for fear of being put on a prayer list. Diversity meant having a Methodist church *and* a Church of Christ, as well as the better attended First Baptist and Assembly of God Churches.

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After experiencing three years of the eye-opening cultures of a large university city, I accepted a teaching position in higher education back in Northeast Oklahoma, determined to commit my pedagogy to raising the social justice consciousness of rural students. Frey, Pearce, Pollock, Artz, and Murphy (1996) encouraged communication scholars to expand and transform communication theories, methods, and pedagogical practices to promote *social justice*, which they define as "the engagement with and advocacy for those in our society who are economically, socially, politically and/or culturally underresourced" (p. 110). My familiarity with students' lived experiences made it relatively easy to open their eyes metaphorically to injustices in the world. Their reactions, however, took me by surprise; in short, they were angry. They were angry at society for marginalizing folks, angry at Hollywood for stereotyped character portrayals, angry at their high school teachers for not giving them access to alternative voices, angry at their relatives for being racist and sexist, and they were angry *at me* for teaching them things they could not unlearn. Students simply did not know what to do with their new knowledge. I expected them to turn their anger into activism, but it did not happen, and I wanted to know why.

A few years ago, I published results from a series of qualitative interviews conducted with university students in the lower Midwestern region of the United States about their relationships with the terms "activism" and "feminism" (Sanford, 2014). Students could not own those labels, even when, technically, they met the definitions. They discussed barriers to activism, including family ideology, lack of leadership, and fear of confrontation, which were similar to barriers identified many years earlier by McAdam (1990) and Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson (1980). Based on those students' interviews, below I offer 10 best practices for encouraging student activism. Not all suggestions will be achievable in all communication courses that promote social justice, but ideas can be chosen from the list to encourage students to move from inaction and confusion to action and empowerment.

Best Practice #1: Own the Vocabulary

There are many important words for budding social justice activists to know and understand, including patriarchy, heteronormativity, ethnocentricism, marginalization, microaggression, intersectionality, and privilege. However, among the most misunderstood terms that require attention, time, and clarification are "feminism" and "activism." Unlike the aforementioned words, students tend to arrive with some knowledge and negative histories tied to "feminism" and "activism" and, consequently, they reject the labels based upon what they have heard from their families or the media. While there are many definitions for both terms, I borrow from Baumgardner and Richards (2005) to define feminism as "the movement toward full political, economic, and social equality for men and women . . . . [It] implies having enough access to information to make informed choices about one's life" (p. 20) and define activism as the "deliberate act or actions of like-minded individuals working together to change the status quo in a way that satisfies the activists" (Sanford, 2014, p. 204). "Feminist" and "activist" should be used constantly in social justice classrooms, and both instructors and students should own those labels or justify and articulate clearly their preferences for different terminology. For example, once students are educated about feminism, they may agree with critics like Crenshaw (qtd. in Vasquez, 2016) who warned that feminism is a monist approach that is "partial and exclusionary." The students may instead choose to call themselves "womanist" or "queer" or reject labels altogether, but they will own their vocabulary.

Best Practice #2: Study Local Community Activists

When students think of activists, they are likely to think of high-profile activists, such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Gloria Steinem, Harriet Tubman, Delores Huerta, Mother Teresa, or Mahatma Gandhi—well-known legends who risked their safety and commanded national, and, sometimes, international attention. If these are the only activists studied in communication courses, social justice activism will appear unattainable. Many people do not want to risk their lives or their safety, especially when they are new to activist work. Thus, it is imperative that students also learn about local activists and activism that is not life threatening. This goal can be achieved through inviting local guest speakers and by examining media platforms, with an assignment asking students to look for and share with their classmates examples of local activism.

Best Practice #3: Dialogue through Disagreement

Tough topics should be embraced in classroom discussions (Keating, 2007), and communication courses are ideal for modeling open, respectful dialogue. Too many times, students expect that disagreement will be handled the way that they see it portrayed on television, where discourse is quick-witted, cynical, and has only one winner at the end who shames verbally the other interactant(s). Instead, students need to learn that dialogue is a synergetic experience that requires reflective deliberation, compassion, and a willingness to change (Arnett & Arneson, 1999; Cissna & Anderson, 1994; Mallin & Anderson, 2000). Early readings or lectures should center on invitational rhetoric (Foss & Griffin, 1995) or something similar, because models of civil discourse tend to be favored within the communication discipline. Criticisms of these models should also be addressed; additional topics could include historical trauma, vulnerability, and respectability politics. Through the discussions of these early readings and lectures, the students will begin to model an ongoing dialogue. For more advice regarding classroom dialogues, see Sanford and Emami (2017).

Best Practice #4: Identify Students' Passions

There are many worthwhile activist causes that students can confront such as the environment, homelessness, violence against women, immigration, ableism, racism, and bullying. Indeed, there are so many potential causes that the choices can be overwhelming, particularly to those who are new to activist work. Students benefit from instructors who help them to identify and focus on no more than three (preferably, less) passions or causes at a time. A classroom assignment is to have students compose personal mission statements and identify one to three causes that match their missions. Furthermore, some students may welcome guidance from instructors to identify specific problems that are associated with social justice causes. It is not sufficient for students simply to identify immigration as a cause; they need to identify a specific problem, such as the proposed wall on the northern border of Mexico or policies regarding undocumented children within the United States.

Best Practice #5: Encourage Action

Identifying problems does not make people activists; finding solutions and taking action is necessary. Students need a good understanding of what "counts" as activism, including

writing letters to media editors, attending public meetings and inviting others through social media posts, creating art, boycotting businesses and their products, starting social justice activist-oriented clubs, and participating in marches. There are two areas of caution, however, when it comes to encouraging students to take action: (a) social justice is not charity work and (b) allies do not speak for those who are oppressed. Those individuals engaged in social justice must be willing to get to the root of a social injustice and transform social structures (Frey et al., 1996) as simply donating money, having a book drive, or performing some other charitable action does not challenge systemic oppression. Additionally, instructors should encourage conversations about what it means to be an ally with groups in which students are not members. For example, nonimmigrants may seek to aid the struggles of those who are immigrants, but those allies need to be reminded that they do not speak for others; they need to listen to people who are immigrants and assist when asked. Alcoff (1991) warned that one must interrogate carefully the initial impulse to teach rather than to listen to a less privileged speaker.

Best Practice #6: Discuss Barriers and Naysayers

Students often face many personal barriers and confront naysayers (both perceived and real) regarding their participation in activism. Personal barriers identified in my communication research included financial and family responsibilities, lack of movement leaders or organizers, no similar-minded cohorts, a dislike of politics, fear of verbal confrontations by naysayers, and family ideology. McAdam (1990) found that a quarter of the people who registered but did not show for Freedom Summer in 1964 stayed home because their parents opposed Black people's right to vote. Communication pedagogues should take time in their social justice courses to discuss students' perceived barriers to activism and their interactions with relevant naysayers. Many of those barriers can be addressed via course readings (e.g., Baumgardner & Richards, 2005; Kahn, 2010) or assignments. For example, a lack of leadership in social movements can be addressed by teaching students how to collaborate and plan events. Additionally, students can learn to deal with important naysayers, including family members, by engaging them in thoughtful dialogues about social justice.

Best Practice #7: Promote Collaboration

In one of the first studies about college students' activism, Snow et al. (1980) interviewed 115 would-be student political activists and found that 73 of them (63%) did not get involved in political activism because they did not know anyone else involved. Thus, it is important to encourage students to collaborate with each other, such as in the event-planning assignment in Tip #8, but also they need to understand that organizations are potential collaborators. For example, students interested in immigration should contact local refugee and immigration centers to inquire about how they can be partners and advocates.

Best Practice #8: Assign Event Planning

Many communication educators recognize that students, particularly communication majors, should have the ability to plan and execute events for the public. For example, it is not uncommon for students in a group communication course to hold public forums or panel discussions and being assessed on their ability to work together as a group, market the event, conduct valid research, and demonstrate effective public speaking skills. Event planning should

take place in social justice courses to encourage students to take action when they see a need within their communities. The assignment can be fairly open, such that participants decide what event (e.g., forum, march, meeting, fundraiser, movie screening, or book club) works best for the social justice cause(s) and problem(s) they have identified.

For example, eight years after I returned to Northeast Oklahoma, to fulfill an event-planning requirement in the intercultural communication course, four students proposed the organization of the state's first SlutWalk. SlutWalks began in 2011 after a Toronto police officer told a crowd of women that to avoid sexual assault, they should not dress as sluts. The students' localized proposal was accepted, and although the term "slut" caused some concern on campus and in the community, the march was well attended and ultimately raised community members' consciousness regarding sexual assault and victim/survivor blaming.

Best Practice #9: Plan for Crises

Crisis communication should be addressed in courses that promote social justice, especially if students plan public events. Student organizers should answer the following questions regarding public events that they plan: What will be done in the case of bad weather? What will be the reaction to counterprotestors? What if more people show up than expected? Have proper permits been filed? Have campus or local police been notified? Who are the spokespersons and what will they say if members of the media ask questions about the event? Students who planned the Slut Walk, for instance, collaborated with campus police and with the university's Division of Student Affairs to develop a crisis plan. There were counterprotests, but organizers had formulated a plan with campus police about how to best ignore them.

Best Practice #10: Debrief

After an event or other activist undertakings, instructors and learners need to debrief, both through self-reflection (e.g., journaling, meditation, and art) and in a group. The classroom should be a safe place to conduct group reflection among sympathetic, informed peers. If relevant and appropriate, stakeholders outside of the course also should be consulted, either through a talk-back session (used after theatre performances for actors to explain their actions and to answer audience members' questions) or via a survey questionnaire or other written communication. Student organizers need to understand what went well with events and what can be improved. For example, upon reflection, coordinators of the SlutWalk discovered that the staff and board members from the local women's shelter were hurt that they were not consulted about the event or asked to join the march. Organizers corrected for their oversight and involved the shelter when they organized two more Slut Walks over the next two years.

Conclusion

Many of these best practices will benefit students long after college graduation. Having the ability to identify social justice problems, dialogue with other individuals about those problems, and take action to affect those problems will provide opportunities for students to empower themselves throughout their lives. These skills, ultimately, will make them better communicators, community members, and activists.

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Life is a Lab: Developing a Communication Research Lab for Undergraduate and Graduate Education

Autumn P. Edwards, Chad Edwards, and Patric R. Spence

Abstract: Tips offered center on classroom discourse, curriculum choices, and potential assignments. In this article, we present tips for creating a thriving undergraduate and graduate communication research lab. Based on our experiences developing and co-directing the Communication and Social Robotics Labs (CSRLs), we offer 10 best practices for acquiring resources and recognition, building a strong lab community, and attaining faculty and student goals for scholarship and beyond. Our overarching approach is framed by Dewey's (1916) pragmatist educational metaphysic, which stresses student- and subject-centered learning, enlarging experiences, and the co-construction of meaning and knowledge. Although our labs are focused on human-machine communication (HMC), the strategies we present can be applied to any number of research contexts for both undergraduate and graduate education.

John Dewey (1916) argued that an education is a "reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience" (p. 76). This "reorganization" can take the form of many different teaching and learning techniques and strategies. As one way to add to the educational experience, we have implemented a lab method to foster greater community and scholarly engagement. Central to our philosophy is the notion that in important ways *life is a lab*, which means that the skills, experiences, and sensibilities gained through involvement with a formal lab are broadly transferable to our larger, life-long pursuits of determining what questions to ask, how to answer them, and how best to live and work with others. Our labs, the Communication and Social Robotics Labs (CSRLs; www.combotlabs.org), are a product of our desires to build a cross-institutional collaboration that enhances graduate, undergraduate, and faculty learning in the form of a lab community. The CSRLs are located at Western Michigan University and the University of Central Florida and are autonomous, but function in similar ways. The labs include

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both undergraduate and graduate student researchers who assist with faculty research and conduct their own research projects.

Broadly, our research focuses on the emergent context of human-machine communication (HMC; Edwards & Edwards, 2017; Edwards, Edwards, Spence, & Westerman, 2016; Spence, Westerman, Edwards, & Edwards, 2014). More specifically, our labs focus on the theory and practice of interpersonal interactions with digital interlocutors including artificially intelligent agents (e.g., spoken-dialogue systems, chat bots), embodied machine communicators (e.g., social robots), and technologically-augmented persons, as well as interpersonal communication in the context of virtual and augmented spaces. Our recent scholarship has examined people's expectations for, and communication behavior in, initial interactions with social robots, their information processing of machine-generated risk and crisis messages, and their perceptions of, and learning from, robot pedagogical agents.

Through engagement with the research process, students are encouraged to (a) participate in producing knowledge of the personal, relational, and social implications of communication between humans and machines, in historical, present-day, and anticipatory contexts and (b) develop competencies in communicating with and about machine partners. In this article, we offer 10 best practices on creating a student-centered research lab that provides experiential learning. Although our labs are focused on HMC and human-robot interaction (HRI), we believe these tips can be applied to any number of research contexts for both undergraduate and graduate education, including (but not limited to) family communication, health communication, organizational communication, new media, political communication, argumentation and advocacy.

Best Practice # 1: Develop Your Mission

Developing a mission for your lab will set the tone and guide your educational outcomes to be achieved. The CSRLs seek to advance the knowledge and practice of HMC, whereas other labs might instead be focused on communication privacy management, positive communication, leadership communication, communication culture and diversity, or a host of other research concentrations reflecting current faculty expertise, student interest, and institutional priorities. To advance our mission, our labs created the motto "Connect, Discover, and Create." We first want students to connect with not only each other in the lab, but also with students and faculty, alumni in related fields, and interested community members. We encourage students to invite visitors to the lab, to identify events in which the lab might participate, and to accept invitations to share our research results and practical applications with interested stakeholders. Doing so affords students with networking opportunities for careers and support structures. For instance, an undergraduate student representing the lab at a WMU recruiting event met the owner of a local virtual reality arcade and has subsequently been hired as manager.

Discovery occurs when students engage in the research process. Both undergraduate and graduate students help conduct experiments, read the latest published research articles, and develop questions and hypotheses to test in the lab. Critical to the mission of the lab is the ability for each student to create. Creation can take many forms, but we believe that students should be active in making something. Previous creative works have included designing a virtual reality demonstration, scripting and choreographing performances for a robot, coding a message task for the lab's A.I., and developing a children's coloring page about robot communicators. For

graduate students, creation more often takes the form of authoring or co-authoring research papers, crafting poster presentations, or making documentaries or films. The creation portion of the mission is tailored to the needs and talents of the students working in the lab at the time.

Although we tether the three directives of creation, discovery, and connection to our specific focus on HMC research, articulating a small set of general imperatives could work well in many research contexts to help prioritize certain activities that are at the heart of the knowledge-production enterprise. A lab mission will be most successful when it also aligns with the mission of the host institution. For example, WMU strives to be "discovery driven, learner centered, and globally engaged." The ability to readily link our motto and mission to overarching university objectives has proven useful for garnering administrative support and for helping students understand how their efforts to realize the lab's mission also contribute to realizing the overall mission of their institution. Whatever your mission for your lab, it is important to have all students understand how they play a vital role in bringing it to life.

Best Practice # 2: Build a Democratic Spirit

Because we believe in Dewey's (1916) pragmatist educational philosophy, we encourage and seek to build a democratic community in the lab. Dewey envisioned the educational context as a simplified version of democratic society, or a training ground for "a mode of associated living" based on "conjoint communicated experience" (p. 99). Modeling democratic forms of life can occur in many ways. Often, local community groups will ask the labs to conduct demonstrations of virtual reality and social robotics. These demonstrations can be time-consuming and utilize resources. Lab members discuss which groups to present to (and why) and build consensus on how to conduct the demonstrations. If there needs to be a policy change in the lab, we use a democratic spirit to guide these decisions (e.g., we use online polling systems to gather wide input and gauge the collective will). Because our lab is entirely voluntary, we want members to have a voice in how the lab functions and in the choices the lab makes. Relinquishing some control does not mean that faculty do not direct the lab, but that students have leadership in the day-to-day operation of their learning experiences. In this way, the aims of education belong to both student and faculty members.

Of course, not all decision making and operations can emerge as a function of group deliberation. Often, student lab members are enrolled in independent study credit as part of their lab experience and so they must commit to working a certain number of hours per week, completing a series of research-related tasks, and delivering a final product. Likewise, when surveys or experiments are in session, members must be focused on their administration, sometimes to the exclusion of other lab activities. Furthermore, when conference or publication deadlines are approaching, teams must concentrate their efforts on meeting their targets for writing and submission. And, because academic research can sometimes span semesters or years, lab members may "inherit" some involvement with ongoing projects. Although the direction must be more top-down in these situations, we give weight to student priorities at all points when there is some flexibility in operations. Undergraduate students' opinions carry equal (often greater) weight in our labs because of the learner-centered approach we favor.

Best Practice # 3: Embrace Experimentation

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1909) journaled that "All life is an experiment. The more experiments you make the better" (November 11, 1842). Our ways of doing things in the lab have changed a lot since we began in 2014, and this change is to be expected and welcomed. Many of our research projects employ experimental designs to answer questions about how people respond to the social machines that increasingly stand in for other people in communication contexts. We also have extended an orientation of experimentation--of choosing purposeful action and observing the consequences--to the everyday functioning of the lab. Many new processes and procedures have resulted from student-initiated experiments. For instance, a student interested in the science of motivation and achievement developed a "gamification" system to recognize and reward members' efforts to connect, discover, and create. Another student implemented a lab intranet (Slack) to digitize and streamline research teams' communication. Each year, we select a new "vision word" to guide our efforts and define our successes (in 2017, the vision word was "fearless"), and we later reflect together on how our priorities, outcomes, and achievements were shaped by that focus. The ability to pose significant questions, systematically test solutions, and form views and practices on the basis of empirical evidence will serve students well in professional, personal, and civic life. Thus, we follow Dewey (1916) in suggesting that "the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education--or that the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth" (p. 117).

Best Practice # 4: Utilize Role Differentiation

Although your lab will most likely be focused on a particular context for research, there are many roles that students can fulfill to be part of the lab environment. Whereas all students in the CSRLs perform some tasks in common—completing ethics training for human subjects research, learning the research process, reviewing relevant literature, constructing experimental stimulus materials and surveys, handling research participants, and leading tours and technical demos [see boyd's (2017) commentary on the importance of the latter]—they also take on specialized roles fitting their passions, talents, and skill-development goals. Role differentiation provides a chance for students to learn project-management skills and organizational concepts. We have students who are responsible for social media, film and photography, web development, technical writing, equipment operation, and development and alumni relations. A veteran student may serve as a lab supervisor who maintains equipment, handles scheduling, performs technical training, and answers questions. There are graduate project leaders who collaborate with and mentor more junior students on select projects and post-graduate fellows who continue to participate in lab activities after graduating from our programs. Creating a structure in the lab has allowed students in a variety of academic majors to participate and gain experience that will help them later in both school and careers, regardless of whether they focus on HMC. We have found that creating differentiated roles has allowed us to concentrate on the overall mission while building an experience that helps foster learning for many students.

Best Practice # 5: Learn to Find and Ask for Resources

When we started the CSRLs, we had a budget of zero dollars, so we learned quickly to find resources in ways that could support the lab mission. In fact, we paid for the first two robots with our own money. In our experience, students have been an incredible resource to find means

of obtaining equipment. In the beginning, we did not have a humanoid robot suitable for research studies. One of our students took it upon herself to remedy this situation. She posted to a robotics development community asking if anyone would be willing to donate an expensive robot to our lab. Four months later, because of her efforts, a gently-used humanoid robot arrived at the lab free of charge. Another student with interests in communication development and grant-writing made a project of identifying and compiling a list of all the funding opportunities and deadlines internal to our university. Your lab may be funded generously from the beginning, or it may start with little to no budget. However, we have found that this resource issue has not made much of a difference (and we work with expensive equipment). Fortunately, we now have funding for many of the projects we do in the labs. Demonstrating to both administration and donors that your lab can do good work and help students with limited resources shows your lab as a worthy recipient of any future funding.

Do not be scared to conduct initial fundraising on your own as many deans and department chairs fundraise to support the needs of the college and units. Before doing so, it is important to check with various offices and understand the policies at your own university, but know that with each success in publication or community event, alumni are more likely to become enthusiastic and supportive. Ensure that you are able to articulate the mission to potential donors and even consider naming rights to your lab spaces. One of our lab alumni received a grant from a local area Chamber of Commerce to purchase a robot. Again, with more success will come increased opportunities and other types of external funding opportunities will manifest. Navigating donor interactions, funder expectations, and legal and ethical obligations associated with fundraising and accepting gifts can be made smoother by developing and maintaining strong relationships with your university's alumni and development officers.

Best Practice # 6: Collaborate Deeply and Broadly

For many communication scholars, research and education are inherently collaborative endeavors. The work-life and social landscapes awaiting college graduates also emphasize and reward cooperation and teamwork (Beaton, 2017). As co-directors of the CSRL, the three of us frequently design, conduct, present, and publish our research together. CSRL faculty affiliates at other institutions—Ken Lachlan (University of Connecticut), Tim Sellnow (University of Central Florida), and David Westerman (North Dakota State University)—also regularly collaborate on projects of mutual interest. Many of these research projects also include one or more student authors. This collaboration gives all of our lab students access to talented scholars and research opportunities they would not otherwise have at their home universities. Many students develop connections that will later prove useful for graduate education or employment opportunities in the field. For example, recent graduates have continued their communication study under the direction of faculty affiliates at other institutions. Cross-institution collaborations also allow smaller, more modestly-funded labs to build their intellectual capital and reputations.

We also have learned the value of collaborating across academic disciplines. At WMU, for instance, we partnered with University Libraries to deploy and test a telepresence robot librarian, with Extended University Programming (EUP) to build an artificially intelligent pedagogical agent (an AI teaching assistant) and with the Bronson School of Nursing to explore ways to integrate virtual reality applications into nurse education. Currently, we are working with the University of Illinois Chicago's Engineering Design Team to build a social robot. Each

of these partnerships allowed students with specialized interests to be part of projects they found meaningful and to develop skills highly beneficial to their career goals. Some of these collaborations (and others like them) have resulted in student employment opportunities. For instance, both the EUP and University Libraries extended paid positions to undergraduate lab members to continue related work. These projects also brought visibility and recognition to the lab by disseminating research to different scholarly communities.

Best Practice # 7: Promote on Social Media and to the University Community

It often is against faculty nature to promote their work or lab. We often struggle with this, too. However, promoting the lab has had payoffs that we could never have imagined. Our labs post HMC-related articles on both Facebook and Twitter. We share lab members' scholarly publications and those publications emerging from similar labs. These posts have led to many research opportunities. Within the university community, promotion has been an important element for helping our students build connections. For example, our development offices have arranged meetings with alumni that often result in students obtaining internships or employment. Other faculty and administration have learned of the labs' research and have sought collaboration and advice. We have discovered that promoting the work of the labs and that of the students has led to more opportunities for research and education. Additionally, if you create a social media management position for students within your lab, they will be able to use this work experience to build their career skills.

Other simple ways to promote the lab include providing the website and a graphic in the signature of e-mails, sponsoring academic and community events, and making a practice of including the lab in biographical statements. We also sponsor events as the CSRL with other organizations. For example, we have co-sponsored a pre-conference and a post-conference at the 2016, 2017, and 2018 annual meetings of the International Communication Association. In sponsoring these events, students are given more administrative and collaborative experience along with opportunities to network, which they may not have had otherwise. Students have been placed in graduate programs due in part to their involvement in activities sponsored or co-sponsored by the lab. The lab also has sponsored events for children to learn computer programming skills, and for educational events at retirement homes and local schools. Although engaging in promotional activities may at first feel self-congratulatory, we have found that the student members are the primary beneficiaries of these efforts. When alumni of the lab list their experiences and affiliation on resumes, vitas, or in interviews, evaluators often appreciate a healthy digital presence that demonstrates the lab's legitimacy, focus, and vitality.

Best Practice # 8: Enjoy Diversity

The lab is a place where students from different backgrounds and different universities work together towards a goal. We say "enjoy diversity" rather than "embrace diversity" because we really believe that the diverse perspectives, positionalities, and backgrounds of individuals associated with the lab are something to enjoy. We seek to develop a lab community that includes and reflects the diverse complexion of the larger communities of which we are part in terms of sex, gender, race and ethnicity, (dis)ability, sexual orientation, and internationalism. The standpoints and voices of underrepresented groups have been particularly important for problematizing aspects of machine design, message scripting, norms of use, and accessibility that

have important personal and social implications for human-machine communication. Excellent discussions among diverse lab members have resulted in a focus on culture, race, or gender in several of our recent research projects. In fact, research conceptualization, design, and interpretation is where such diversity is most useful and provides our strongest outcomes.

We also encourage and celebrate diversity in terms of lab members' strengths and expertise. Part of this encouragement and celebration relates to members' varying levels of education (e.g., undergraduate, graduate, or faculty) and their academic field backgrounds (e.g., communication, marketing, computer science, engineering), but we also celebrate differences in personal talents and resources. At the beginning of each semester, new students complete a strengths finder assessment to identify areas in which they excel and find joy. Whereas some students may be brilliant strategists, others are gifted networkers, natural organizers, or voracious learners. Students share their results with one another and talk together about the kinds of contributions each person is most able and eager to offer the lab. As directors, we consult students' (and our own) top five strengths when assigning projects and when deciding who might be added to each team to promote the best function of the whole. In this way, understanding and appreciating diversity in members' strengths has been especially useful in creating differentiated roles.

Best Practice # 9: Let Students Take Initiative

Much of the work in which we allow students to participate relates directly to courses in their undergraduate or graduate curriculum, such as communication research methods. After a student has been involved in administering one or two studies in the lab, much of what they learned in their research methods courses seems less abstract and more practical. Following several months observing and assisting with others' ongoing projects, students begin to put the pieces of the scientific method together and engage in higher-order questioning. This time is perfect to engage students about communication phenomena they believe should be investigated and communication questions they would like to try to answer. A great way we begin this conversation is by asking students to find gaps in the literature, or to create their own questions that then can be answered as part of a current study. Then, we encourage students to write support for their proposed questions and articulate for the team how their research aims fit into a larger investigation. We ask them to integrate things they learned from previous courses (e.g., theories of communication, scholarly writing conventions, and principles of communication research design) into their project proposals.

After the first draft, we provide feedback and together discuss the best ways to integrate relevant measures into an ongoing research design, reach the desired population, maximize validity, and comply with principles of ethical research conduct. It is through this guided process that we begin to encourage students to take initiative to be a larger part of the scholarly endeavor. We have found that after students have taken a larger role in a study, they often start to propose their own research and ask permission to use the lab resources to conduct their own experiments. Through this process, we try to capture Dewey's principle of growth through "ordered richness," or the idea that the most educational of experiences emerge from the affective, cognitive, and imaginative capabilities developed in shared, self-directed activities (Eldridge, 1998). When students demonstrate initiative for knowledge production, not only is it encouraging and rewarding, but also it results in student-authored papers and student-created installations that

allow administrators and community members to see immediate and practical value in supporting the lab as an instructional resource.

Best Practice # 10: Think About and Plan for the Future

Students either self-select to work in the lab (meaning they approach us) or we recruit them based on interaction and their course performance. In the first conversation before students are formally invited to become lab members, we encourage them to share with us their goals (not only employment goals, but also what kind of life they want to lead and what kind of personal abilities they want to develop). This conversation of sharing is different for students at first because many simply see college as a tool for obtaining a career, but working in the lab can provide skills that benefit them beyond employment. We carefully consider how best to craft a lab experience that serves students' larger personal development aims by aligning their specific areas of responsibility with their learning objectives. We also talk often about our hopes and plans for the future of the lab: the kind of scholarly contributions we hope to make, the resources and structures we will need to achieve our goals, the potential "vision words" that will meaningfully shape the next year's experiences, and the developments in human-machine communication that will demand our attention.

Conclusion

Although many scientific, artistic, and technical academic disciplines have long employed laboratory methods to enrich student education, there are relatively few communication programs that have structured student learning in this way. We believe communication labs are an excellent way to provide students with close collaboration opportunities and hands-on experience, especially in the areas of communication study involving technological knowledge and practice. These past few years spent growing and developing the labs have been among the most fun and rewarding of our professional lives. We often say that we learn as much from our students as they do from us. They are true partners in inquiry and we wish to thank them all—graduate and undergraduate, past and present—for being a part of this wonderful experiment.

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From the Classroom to the Community: Best Practices in Service-Learning

Donna R. Pawlowski

Abstract: As a pedagogy, service-learning connects students with the community while focusing on course outcomes. The community becomes a live text for reflection and enriches students' experiences they otherwise would not have in the classroom. This article provides tips and strategies for implementing service-learning in the classroom. These tips and strategies include developing the structure of the course, linking service-learning to outcomes, creating partnerships, working through logistics with partners, communicating with community partners, setting logistics, preparing students, creating reflections, handling challenging issues, giving credit for the learning, and assessing service-learning.

An essential core mission of many institutions of higher learning is service. One way that service is integrated into university life is through service-learning, which is considered to be a form of experiential education that provides students with an intentional and structured opportunity to apply what they are learning in the classroom to a particular community partner. With deliberate course planning, faculty members help students make meaningful connections between the course content and theory and their community experiences through guided reflective writing and classroom discussion.

Service-learning is different from volunteerism or community service in that there is no specific connection of the volunteer work or the service to particular course content or academic activity (Flecky, 2009; Furco, 1996). In such instances, students are engaged in community service "for" the community. Conversely, academic service-learning occurs when faculty create purposeful opportunities for students, typically in a credit-bearing course, that include creating reciprocal relationships with community partners and developing intentional reflection (Crews, 2002; Jacoby, 2015; Heffernan 2001a). As such, service-learning simply does not simply provide service opportunities for students; rather, it is a collaborative venture that exists among faculty, students, and community partners working "with" each other to meet the needs of all parties and

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empower the community (Furco, 1996; Howard, 2001). It is a purposeful pedagogy that enriches and connects students' experiences in and out of the classroom, enhances community relationships, and meets community needs.

Advocates (Furco, 2001; Pawlowski, Bruess, & Dickmeyer, 2010; Zlotkowski, 1998) generally agree that not only does academic service-learning encourage students to become more civic-minded, but also that well-designed service-learning opportunities invite students to remain active community members throughout their lives. While various models exist for implementing service-learning into any academic setting (Campus Compact, 2018; Jacoby, 2015; Heffernan, 2001b), this article provides 10 best practices for implementing service-learning in sophomore/junior level face-to-face academic classrooms.

Best Practice #1: Develop the Structure of the Service-Learning Opportunity in Your Course

Regardless of whether you are creating a new course or revising an existing course, begin with its feasibility for becoming a service-learning course. How might service-learning enhance student learning in this particular course? What assignments could be accomplished through a service-learning opportunity? What community opportunities might help students apply course concepts to examine community needs? One way to develop the structure of a particular service-learning opportunity is one that that can be implemented in a face-to-face discipline-based course. In a discipline-based course, "students are expected to have a presence in the community throughout the semester and reflect on their experiences on a regular basis throughout the semester using course content as a basis for their analysis and understanding" (Heffernan, 2001b, p. 3). Many service-learning proponents (Heffernan, 2001b; Jacoby, 2015; Pawlowski et al., 2010; Sandy & Holland, 2016) believe that such ongoing semester-long projects with repeated opportunities for engagement with community partners and continued reflection provide the richest experience for students.

It also is important to consider the number of hours needed for students to complete the service-learning experience as well as the number of sites needed for the course. Time spent in the community should be substantive enough to meet learning outcomes and be as meaningful as possible for students and their partners. With a semester-long project, students may average 2-4 hours per week spent at the partner site or a total of approximately 20-40 hours throughout the semester. Although there is no set guideline for establishing a required number of hours, Sandy and Holland (2016) discovered that many partners wanted longer time commitments from students (i.e., more than 20 hours) in order to both provide quality education for students and short- and long-term benefits for the community partner. Sites should be selected based on their proximity and accessibility to students. In a given semester, the number of sites may depend on whether students work individually, in pairs, or in groups (Crews, 2002). From an instructor's perspective, students working in groups at fewer sites can provide additional benefits that include sharing rides, collaborating efforts on projects, and reducing the number of partner sites to visit during the course.

Best Practice #2: Link the Service-Learning Opportunity to Course Learning Outcomes

Service-learning works best when integrated carefully into the fabric of course content to fulfill learning outcomes. As with any course, service-learning outcomes must specifically reflect academic and civic learning (Crews, 2002; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Howard, 2001) and students easily can link their community experiences with course content through reflections, journals, and written assignments to meet the service-learning outcomes.

It works best as a required course assignment (rather than an optional assignment) and it is ideal for all students to engage in the service-learning project so that all students share similar experiences for reflection and critical discussion of course content and theory while understanding their community experiences (Jacoby, 2015). And just as students are expected to spend time reading course textbooks, writing papers, or preparing presentations, they also should also be expected to spend time fulfilling a service-learning assignment by spending time with community partners. Sometimes students view service-learning as outside additional work and do not see the direct connections with the course as a whole. Students should be reminded that the community, in essence, is a living text for learning and spending time with the community is necessary for completing assignments and fulfilling course learning outcomes. Thus, explicitly linking service-learning opportunities to course outcomes legitimizes the pedagogy, enhances the academic rigor of the experiences, and creates specific links to course and programmatic assessment.

Best Practice # 3: Create Community Partnerships before the Start of the Semester

Community partners must be selected carefully in that they not only reflect the service-learning outcomes of the course, but also so that they act as placements that can provide meaningful experiences for students. As (Whitfield, 2005) noted, "although the community should be the focus of our service-learning projects, they often become an afterthought in the decision-making process" (p. 248), which includes partner selection. Therefore, making personal connections with community partners before the start of the semester is important for creating a genuine partnership. Partners should be involved in the process from the beginning: They should be reminded about the difference between service-learning and community service, educated about the course, and made a co-educator in the educational process (Cress, Collier, Reitenauer, & Associates, 2013). Working together, both parties then can create a project that addresses the course learning outcomes and meets the community needs within the timeline of the course. These details should be confirmed in writing so that both parties understand the expectations of the project. Moreover, during this initial selection process, it is important to determine together how and to what extent students will receive guidance and leadership from the partner while completing their service-learning project.

Best Practice #4: Work through Logistics with Community Partners

Creating a relationship with a community partner is important, but the practical logistics that involve this partner must also be considered. Heffernan (2001a) and Pawlowski et al. (2010) identified several questions that should be posed to any partner, which include whether (a) students

will need background checks, (b) students must complete training session, (c) students can work independently or will require supervision, and (d) any policies exists regarding liability issues (e.g., accidents at the site). Addressing these questions in advance will make a more productive working relationship. Additionally, institutions may have existing policies governing students working off-campus, which should be consulted.

Other incidental issues beyond the confines of the classroom may occur during the semester that could affect the outcome of the project. These issues include health problems students or partners encounter, changes in site supervisors, or weather-related incidents. Logistics with partners should be thought through as best as possible, but flexibility is key when such issues arise; these issues can be used as teachable moments with students because, after all, service-learning takes place in the "real" world.

Best Practice # 5: Keep Communication Open with Partners During and After the Service-Learning Experience

Once the service-learning project is underway, communication with partners should be continued by visiting the sites on occasion to observe what students are doing in the community or with the organization. During the semester, it is important to maintain contact with the community site supervisors and seek their feedback to determine whether students are accomplishing the task at hand or if any changes need to be made to the project (Cress et al., 2013). Because it is difficult to assess or grade a project if the nuances of the sites or the specific work students are doing in the community are unfamiliar, visiting the site first-hand provides context for grading reflections and assignments associated with the service-learning project. Site supervisors also can be engaged in conversations to assess the proficiency of student work.

At the end of the semester, community partners should be invited to campus to celebrate the service-learning project and share in the achievement of the project. Upon completion of the project, a post-assessment with the community site supervisor should be conducted to uncover the successes and challenges of the project (Whitfield, 2005). Because community partners often want more communication with instructors and feel left out of the feedback process (Steimel, 2013), this post-assessment can center on questions such as: What went well? What changes could be made to create a stronger experience in the future? Were students sufficiently trained? To what degree did the students conduct themselves professionally when interaction with community partners? How well did students fulfill the community partner's objective for the project? Does the community partner want to continue the relationship with future projects? Community partners are genuinely interested in, and are dedicated to, educating college students (Sandy & Holland, 2006); therefore, soliciting feedback from partners can help student development, strengthen partnerships, and guide course development.

Best Practice #6: Prepare Students for the Service-Learning Experience

Students in service-learning courses are unfamiliar with service-learning as a pedagogy. In writing (e.g., syllabus) and through class discussion, students can be prepared for this unique experience by offering an explanation of (a) the difference between community service and service-learning and (b) how the service project will enhance their academic and civic learning. As

with any assignment, explicit expectations and project criteria, as well as the benefits of participating in such projects, must be identified (Crews, 2002; Jacoby, 2015).

In addition, students should attend an orientation session that introduces them to the partner as a way to understand the place of service and their responsibilities in visiting their partners' communities. The director or supervisor of the community site should be invited to visit with students regarding the site, the mission of the organization, and the population with which students will be working. It should not be assumed that students are readily equipped with organizational-appropriate behaviors, so during this orientation, students should be informed about respectful behaviors of conduct (which include the use of appropriate verbal and nonverbal communicative behaviors and dress code for the community site), the importance of their accountability to the partner, and a reminder that they are representing the course and the institution.

Best Practice #7: Create Purposeful Reflection Assignments That Address Learning Outcomes

Reflection is the intentional, structured, and systematic process created by instructors to facilitate student learning and critical thinking; it often is referred to as the hyphen in service-learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Reflection helps students achieve course learning outcomes, acts as the mechanism of organizing the messiness of service-learning, and allows students to "deepen their understanding of the academic content they are studying and the social issue they are addressing" (Furco, 2001, p. 26) through demonstrations of competencies of discipline-specific connections, exploration of personal values, and critiques of social systems and social justice issues (Zlotkowski, 1998). Some common methods of reflection include written work (e.g., journals, papers, narratives, blogs, discussion boards, newsletters), artistic and creative projects (e.g., paintings, music, dance, poetry, scrapbooks, billboards, photo books), and oral discussion (e.g., open sharing, small group work, presentations).

When preparing students for reflection, they should be guided to connect and apply the material by asking them to analyze, think about implications, and make conclusions as well as to identify how their boundaries have been changed and how they can act as change agents for others (Eyler, 2002). Eyler and Giles (1999) posited that critical reflection needs to be continuous, connected, challenging, and contextualized. *Continual reflection* should be ongoing, and utilized before, during, and after the service-learning experience; *connected reflection* directly links service experience to the learning objectives of the course and allows students to synthesize "action and thought" (p. 18); *challenged reflection* moves students from surface learning to deeper, critical thinking and pushes them "to think in new ways, to develop alternative explanations for experiences and observations, and to question their original perception of events and issues" (p. 19); and *contextualized reflection* is most effective when content, topics, and reflective activities are appropriate for the setting, and meaningful for the students. These reflections challenge students' assumptions about social issues and provides a mechanism for making sense of what they are learning with what they are experiencing in the community.

Best Practice #8: Handle Challenging Issues through Open Dialogue

Because students are asked to challenge their critical thinking and work through social justice issues from their community experiences, they may personally struggle with the dichotomy that exists between their assumptions about the world and what they are witnessing in the community. According to the Carolina Center for Public Service (2018), "social justice teachers ask students to critique the status quo, examine underlying assumptions and values, and explore their own roles in relation to social issues" (p. 5). Issues such as cultural diversity, social injustice, privilege, racism, poverty, and prejudices may arise throughout the service-learning project that can make students uncomfortable. Apprehension from students also arises when they do not fully understand the population.

To begin a dialogue, instructors should engage students in perspective taking into their community partners' lives as a way to appreciate the demographic, economic, historical, cultural, and social time frame in which some community members were raised (Carolina Center for Public Service, 2018; Pawlowski et al., 2010). They should be encouraged to identify how community partners are both similar to and different from themselves, the opportunities that are available to them as students (e.g., how they are privileged), the opportunities community members have, and the structures already in place that may hinder opportunities for community members. This dialogue, whether public or private should be cultivated throughout the project via continued reflection exercises (Cress et al. 2013; Jacoby, 2015). It is important that students feel they are in a safe and mutually respected atmosphere to freely express their opinions, ideas, and thoughts.

Best Practice #9: Give Credit for the Learning, Not the Service

Grading reflections and service-learning assignments can be challenging as it sometimes is difficult to grade reflections while remaining sensitive to students' expressed feelings or perceptions about the service-learning experience. One suggestion is to treat reflection assignments as any other graded, course-related assignment and evaluate students on whether they can demonstrate, integrate, and apply their learning (Jacoby, 2015). Prior to evaluating these reflection assignments, students should be provided with rubrics that will enable them to understand the difference between surface level of ideas (e.g., stating what they did or how they felt) and the competency and depth of reflective output (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gelmon, Holland, Driscoll, Spring, & Kerrigan, 2001). These rubrics should focus on how well students critically link the service-learning experience with the course content (i.e., make explicit connections between community experience and classroom theoretical concepts) and center specifically on how well course concepts are explained in light of the community experience, the integration of course concepts into the community experience, the ability of students to identify a personal sense of community gleaned from the experience, and the extent to which students able to connect community experiences to larger social issues. Regardless of the method of evaluation, however, the focus of evaluation should be on students' demonstration of learning and fulfillment of course learning outcomes, not whether they completed a set number of hours.

Best Practice #10: Assess Service-Learning for Academic, Personal, and Professional Outcomes

At the end of the semester, it is important to assess the overall service-learning experiences of students, instructors, and community partners. While assessment of learning outcomes is important, assessment of students should also include personal and professional outcomes regarding their overall community involvement, sensitivity to diversity, commitment to service, career development, and self-awareness (Conville & Weintraub, 2001; Gelmon et al., 2001). Students' perceptions of the project and the course as a whole should be ascertained (e.g., service-learning as an effective pedagogy, evaluation of hands-on learning, satisfaction of working in the community or with group partners, concerns/logistics about the service site, ability to perform community service, what they enjoyed about the project, suggestions for enhancing the service-learning experiences) as a way to improve future service-learning experiences.

Instructors also should engage in self-reflection of the service-learning project. Questions that instructors can ask for personal and professional assessment include: What have you learned from adding a service-learning experience in your class? How does the quality of learning (and your teaching) with the community service compare to traditional classrooms? From your perspective, how did you and your students benefit from the service-learning experience? How has teaching service-learning changed your teaching philosophy? How has service-learning changed your perspective of community engagement? What would you change to improve your service-learning project? What lessons did you learn? How can service-learning contribute to your scholarly endeavors? Aside from these questions, specific qualitative and quantitative assessment measures that assess service learning can be obtained from Campus Compact (2018), Conville and Weintraub (2001), Gelmon et al. (2001), and Seifer and Connors (2007).

Conclusion

In this article, I have provided 10 best practices that can be consulted when developing, implementing, and assessing service-learning in a discipline-based classroom. Service-learning is an intellectually challenging and worthwhile academic endeavor (Cress et al., 2013) on the part of instructors, students, and community partners. While service-learning may not be a journey that all instructors and students want to take, for those who do, it is an exciting journey that can leave a life-long impression.

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Best Practices for Training New Communication Graduate Teaching Assistants

Melissa A. Broeckelman-Post and Kristina Ruiz-Mesa

Abstract: Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are often the first college instructors who new students meet when they arrive for their first day of class, and as instructors and as students, GTAs are the future of the discipline. As such, GTAs need to receive comprehensive training in a variety of pedagogical, procedural, and professional areas to help graduate students continue to develop as instructors and, eventually, into full-time faculty. To assist basic course directors, department chairs, and faculty in creating and supporting a comprehensive and ongoing GTA training program, this article provides 10 best practices for training new GTAs who will be teaching introductory communication courses.

Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) training not only serves to prepare future faculty in the Communication Studies discipline, but also to ensure that undergraduate students receive a quality classroom experience. GTAs and other first-year course instructors often are some of the most influential campus members in regard to student choice of major and retention in a particular major (Chambliss & Takacs, 2014); those GTAs who complete quality training programs have higher levels of self-efficacy in classroom management, student engagement, and instructional strategies (Young & Bippus, 2008). High quality GTA training is a solid investment in the quality of undergraduate education, in the quality of faculty teaching done, and in the future sustainability of the discipline.

Communication departments should provide substantial training for new graduate student instructors before they begin teaching for the first time as well as ongoing training and feedback to help these students continue to develop as instructors and, eventually into, full-time faculty. This article will provide 10 best practices for training new GTAs who will be teaching introductory communication courses.

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Best Practice #1: Provide a Strong Foundation in Pedagogy Before and During the First Semester of Teaching

GTA training should include a strong foundation in communication pedagogy, both before teaching for the first time (i.e., pre-semester) and throughout the first semester of teaching. As GTAs grow developmentally from senior learners to colleagues in training to junior colleagues (Sprague & Nyquist, 1991), they will have different teaching concerns. Pedagogical training must reflect this developmental process by addressing basic survival and teaching skills in the earliest stages of training, and then move on to deeper theoretical training and reflective practice as GTAs gain experience.

By the end of the pre-semester training, instructors should have a basic understanding of theories and research about how students learn, be able to apply Bloom's taxonomy to develop scaffolded learning experiences, and use in-class activities and assignments as formative assessment practices. Pre-semester training also should include training on deciding which type of instructional strategy (e.g., presenting content, leading discussion, facilitating activities) will be most effective at a particular moment, as well as how to successfully implement multiple instructional strategies in each class session. After this introduction to pedagogy in the pre-semester training, new GTAs should gain a deeper understanding of communication pedagogy, assessment, and instructional practice through a graduate seminar course in communication education and instructional communication.

Such a course can provide much-needed ongoing instructional training by helping GTAs develop a deeper understanding of pedagogical theory, assisting GTAs in developing the knowledge and skills needed to independently design a course, allowing GTAs to create a teaching philosophy and portfolio of teaching materials, and preparing GTAs to teach upper-division communication courses when the opportunity arises. GTAs should continue to receive ongoing training, mentoring, and developmental opportunities throughout their graduate school experience.

Best Practice #2: Create a Strong Peer Mentoring Program for Instructors

Most graduate student instructor teams will include a blend of returning instructors who have been teaching for at least one year and new instructors who will be teaching for the first time. Involving returning graduate instructors in a training and mentoring program can help to build relationships among team members, create opportunities for experienced instructors to take on leadership roles and share teaching ideas and resources with new instructors, and provide an initial go-to person for new instructors to ask questions in situations when they might not yet be comfortable asking the course director or other faculty. This mentoring network also can create a context that allows instructors to seek advice and share recommendations about coursework, campus resources, matriculating through the degree program, preparing for conferences, and a range of other topics that are important elements of informal professional development (Hendrix, 2000).

A strong mentoring network can also open opportunities for conversations about the instructor classroom experience and challenges that might arise related to the social identities of

the individual instructors in relationship with their peer instructors, and with the student demographics at the type of institution in which they are teaching. To support mentoring relationships and encourage dialogue within the GTA team, resources about diverse teachers and teaching experiences in the classroom should be provided.

Mentoring programs can be developed in a variety of ways and should include both formal training elements and informal partnered elements. During the pre-semester training, returning instructors can lead training sessions and model teaching practices for the entire team. For the informal partnered element, a basic course director might select a small group of returning instructors who have demonstrated strong teaching and leadership skills to serve as mentors and then pair several new instructors with each selected mentor. Another option is to pair each returning instructor with a new instructor so that all members of a teaching team are involved in the mentoring network. A third option is to allow mentoring relationships to emerge naturally among instructors.

Above all else, mentoring programs should be flexible and be adapted to meet the needs of each instructor and program. It can be helpful to provide some guidelines and opportunities for initial interactions, such as asking mentors to send welcome e-mail messages to their mentees, setting aside time for conversations during instructor training, and providing specific tasks for mentors to assist with during training sessions (e.g., setting up the Learning Management System, leading campus tours to learn about helpful resources, and sharing ideas for classroom activities during lesson planning sessions).

Best Practice #3: Role-play Difficult Classroom Situations before Instructors Encounter Them

All instructors will face some classroom management challenges, and these challenges can be somewhat intimidating and sometimes more frequent for novice instructors. While it is natural for individuals to respond to classroom challenges, conflict, or disruptive behavior with a flight, fight, or freeze response, instructors need to be prepared to take on a leadership role and respond immediately and appropriately when difficult classroom situations arise. Including a session on classroom management in the pre-semester GTA training can reduce the occurrence of student misbehaviors and can help instructors to feel more confident in their ability to handle student misbehaviors (Meyer et al., 2008).

Classroom management training should include discussion about strategies for creating a supportive classroom environment, techniques for keeping students on-task so that they are engaged without being disruptive, and methods for handling common classroom challenges. Asking instructors to role-play student scenarios that they have observed or experienced in the classroom while other instructors practice managing difficult classroom situations can help instructors think through potential responses and manage their anxiety about confronting classroom challenges before they face such challenges in their own classroom (Young & Bippus, 2008). These role-play scenarios also allow course directors to gently guide instructor responses so that GTAs adhere to campus policies (e.g., Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, or FERPA; and Title IX) and work toward maintaining a supportive, inclusive classroom environment. Additionally, classroom management training should include information about

available campus resources that can be used to respond to some of the most serious types of misbehavior. While these resources vary by campus, some of these resources might include the academic integrity office, the Title IX office, university judiciaries, the dean of students, and campus police.

Best Practice #4: Take Time for Grade Norming and Feedback Training

In multi-section courses where student performance is one type of course assessment used to measure general education outcomes, course directors must develop evaluation processes that can be used consistently across all sections and must include grading and feedback training in GTA training (Frey, Hooker, & Simonds, 2015). To establish clear evaluation processes, course directors need to develop rubrics that measure the skills that the course is designed to build and assess and contain clear behavioral indicators for each level of quality. During GTA training, course directors need to explain the rubric design, the underlying assumptions and frameworks for evaluation, and describe in detail the behaviors associated with each level of quality on the rubric criteria. They then should practice grading several sample speeches or other assignments together, taking time between speeches to talk about how the speech should have been graded using those criteria, until the entire instructor team is grading each speech with an acceptable level of consistency.

While there is no existing standard for how consistent instructor grading should be by the end of a grade-norming session, we recommend that all instructor grades for the same performance should fall within a 5-10% range. This guideline ensures that the same speech would be given a score within a band that is the equivalent of half to one letter grade, which is consistent with the most rigorous expectation that intercoder reliability for content analysis be .90 or greater (Neuendorf, 2002) so that speech grades can be used as a type of assessment and research data.

In addition to ensuring that the grading is consistent, instructors need to learn how to provide high-quality feedback comments on student performances. The most effective forms of feedback are positive descriptive comments—which describe in detail what the student did well and why it was effective—and constructive comments—which identify areas for improvement and provide specific recommendations for how to improve (Simonds, Meyer, Hunt, & Simonds, 2009). Instructors should practice providing feedback comments on sample assignments during training and should receive feedback on those comments.

Best Practice #5: Balance Consistency across Sections with Instructor Freedom

GTAs in Communication Studies typically are teaching multi-section introductory courses that meet general education requirements. Because all sections of these courses must meet the same outcomes, course directors must ensure that there is consistency across all sections. Having consistency across sections has been cited as a leading problem and concern for basic communication course directors (Morreale, Worley, & Hugenberg, 2010). The syllabus, assignments, grading rubrics and procedures, exams, and other elements of the course infrastructure should be the same in every section of the course. Additionally, course policies should be clearly communicated in the syllabus and should be the same from one section to the

next section, including late work policies, attendance policies, and appeals procedures (Fassett & Warren, 2012). However, this consistency needs to be balanced with giving instructors the freedom to develop their own lesson plans, try new activities in the classroom, adapt to the needs of a particular community of students in the classroom, and build the skills that will be needed to independently develop future courses (Fassett & Warren, 2008).

Best Practice #6: Establish and Communicate Clear Procedures and Policies

Every campus has several mandated training sessions for all instructors, along with several other types of strongly recommended training sessions, such as FERPA, Sexual Harassment Prevention/Title IX Training, and Active Shooter, among others. Incorporating these campus policy training sessions into instructor training can help to ensure that not only are all instructors are aware of their obligations and responsibilities, but also they are prepared in case of a classroom emergency. Additionally, training should include information about expectations for working with the Office of Accessibility Services to make appropriate accommodations, institutional expectations for submitting grades (e.g., midterm grades, final grades, athletic grade reporting), and any other campus reporting procedures for students. Course directors also should establish and communicate clear procedures and policies within the course (Fassett & Warren, 2012) about department-specific expectations, some of which might include finding a substitute should instructors need to miss class to attend a conference, identifying the procedures that must be followed when reporting student problems to offices outside of the department (e.g., plagiarism cases, student threats), or making a decision about whether class will be held online if campus is closed.

Best Practice #7: Share Information about Support Services and Resources

Instructor teams and student populations are more diverse than ever, which means that most college campuses have a range of services and resources available to help meet student needs. Some of these services include disability support services, writing and communication centers, tutoring services, and mental health services; some of these resources include food pantries, offices of diversity and inclusion, advising offices, and campus care teams. Training should include information about these services and resources, details about how to access or refer students to these services or resources, and opportunities to practice having sensitive and empathetic conversations about these resources.

Many new instructors teach introductory courses where the majority of students are in their first year of college, and these students are sometimes struggling with being away from home and on their own for the first time. Because communication courses often have a lot of opportunities for self-disclosure and relationship building, it is especially important that instructors be trained to watch for symptoms that students might be struggling as well as to gently refer students to campus mental health resources when needed. At the same time, graduate students are one of the most vulnerable populations for mental health struggles (Evans, Bira, Beltran-Gastelum, Weiss & Vanderford, 2017). Including a unit on Mental Health First Aid in the pre-semester GTA training is an important step in helping to ensure that new instructors are prepared for the mental health conversations that they likely will have with some of their students.

Best Practice #8: Provide Feedback to Instructors about Their Teaching

GTAs should receive feedback about their teaching throughout their development as faculty. Although this feedback can take many forms, it should be done early and often and include multiple types of both formative and summative assessment such as classroom observations, student evaluations, discussions, and small group instructional diagnoses (Fassett & Warren, 2012) as well as some type of annual review process in which GTAs' teaching observations, teaching philosophy, student evaluations, and a short reflective statement are reviewed by the course director.

It is recommended that all instructors participate in a teaching demonstration and receive feedback during pre-semester GTA training, which provides an added benefit of allowing all instructors to see most of the semester's content taught at once. Course directors or department teaching effectiveness committees should observe all instructors teaching one of their courses at least once per year; course directors also might want to consider having graduate student instructors observe and provide peer feedback to one another. Programs may want to develop a rubric to help ensure that instructors are given feedback on a variety of important teaching skills, particularly when several faculty are helping to conduct the classroom observations. Each classroom observation should be followed by written feedback as well as an in-person conversation with the GTA about their classroom performance.

Course directors should publicly praise instructors when they see instructors doing something well and should advocate for, and broadly share, instructor successes within the department and with campus stakeholders such as deans, provosts, and general education committees. However, these critiques are best delivered privately and always should be accompanied by discussions that center on identifying and implementing strategies for improvement.

Best Practice #9: Openly Discuss and Model Boundary-setting and Time Management Techniques

The habits that GTAs learn as new instructors tend to become patterns that persist through their entire careers as faculty. Emotional exhaustion, stress, and burnout are high for faculty as a whole and even more so for young instructors (Watts & Robertson, 2011), so concerns and preventative strategies for addressing exhaustion, stress, and burnout should be discussed in GTA training. To make the GTA experience sustainable and fulfilling, along with the full-time faculty experiences that will follow for many of them, GTA training needs to include discussions about time management and self-care that take Boice's (2000) advice about working with constancy, moderation, and mindfulness into account. These discussions should include honest conversations about workload and expectations regarding outside employment, the importance of taking breaks and engaging in self-care activities, and tools GTAs can use to help manage task lists and calendars (including planners and digital applications that others have found useful). Clear guidelines also should be provided for how frequently instructors are expected to check e-mail messages as well as how instructors should (or more accurately, should not) engage with their students via personal social media channels and off-campus social activities.

Simply talking about boundary setting and managing time, however, is not enough. Course directors need to be especially intentional about modeling these practices so that GTAs do not receive mixed signals about these techniques.

Best Practice # 10: Be transparent about—and Involve GTAs in—Curriculum Design Decisions

Course directors must be transparent about why the curriculum is designed the way that it is. The course curriculum should have strong learning outcomes and use integrated backward course design. Assignments should assess whether students have achieved the learning outcomes, and the content should support learning throughout the course (Fink, 2013). Once instructors understand the underlying goals, the teaching team can be invited to provide feedback and collaborate on ongoing course revisions as the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of students and institutions. One way to involve instructors is to work with them to turn revision ideas into pilot studies to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum innovations. Another option is to invite instructors to work on course assessments and co-author research studies about these assessments. Working with instructors allows course directors to gain input from their entire teaching team and develop a course design that is inclusive of more perspectives. It also allows the instructor team to have a greater investment in and ownership of the course by providing GTAs with opportunities to conduct pedagogical research and gain experience using assessment results to conduct evidence-based revision of courses.

Conclusion

As both instructors and graduate students, GTAs are the future of the Communication Studies discipline. The 10 best practices included in this article provide a guide to assist basic course directors, faculty mentors, and department chairs in facilitating the development of GTAs. Comprehensive GTA training must include training in a variety of pedagogical, procedural, and professional development areas that prepare GTAs for all aspects of the graduate student and faculty experience. By providing comprehensive training, course directors can facilitate a positive first teaching experience for new GTAs, ensure a quality educational experience for undergraduate students, and guarantee the future of the discipline by preparing the next generation of communication faculty.

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Best Practices

Taking Interest in Students' Disinterest: Best Practices for Mitigating Amotivation in the Basic Course

Eletra Gilchrist-Petty

Abstract: As a general education requirement, basic communication course instructors are afforded the unique opportunity to reach a variety of students. Because many students often are enrolled in the basic communication course out of necessity, student amotivation can transform what should be a dynamic and interactive classroom experience into a daunting challenge that stifles the pedagogical process. To assist in engaging students, 10 best practices for mitigating amotivation in the basic course are presented. By following these best practices, instructors can help cultivate a more engaged and interactive classroom experience for both themselves and their students.

As a student, I was always conscientious and invested in the learning process. However, when I first began teaching the basic communication course as a graduate teaching assistant nearly two decades ago, I quickly learned that not all students have a passion for learning. While I was more than happy to teach the majority of my students who was eager to learn, I was quite troubled by that certain percentage of students who seemed to be apathetic or amotivated. From a lay perspective, *apathy* is generally perceived as not having concern or interest about a particular phenomenon. From a scholarly perspective, apathy is related to *amotivation*, which means "without motivation" and refers to "a state of motivational apathy in which students harbor little to no reason to engage in classroom learning activities; it is a motivational deficit that is strongly associated with maladaptive functioning" (Cheon & Reeve, 2015, p. 99). Amotivated students, subsequently, are characterized by exerting nominal or no effort to learn or engage in classroom instruction, and their behavior might be illustrated by sitting passively, sleeping during class, skipping class, or simply going through the motions of learning (Cheon & Reeve, 2015). To prevent amotivation from impeding the classroom atmosphere for both teachers and students (Boice, 1996; Gilchrist-Petty, 2018), these 10 best practices are offered.

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Best Practice #1: Incorporate Diverse Teaching Strategies

Traditional collegiate education was once defined by instructors standing before the class and lecturing. These lectures were at times accompanied by chalk or dry erase markers and boards, transparencies, or film clips projected from analog video cassette players (Gilchrist-Petty, 2018), but for the most part, the instructor was considered the main source of knowledge who deposited knowledge into students, known as Freire's (2005) "banking" concept of education. This "banking" concept is defined by one-way communication that considers students as empty receptacles who are filled by instructors depositing knowledge into them. Because this concept stifles critical consciousness and student engagement, basic course instructors should utilize strategies that can ignite student engagement through activities that span behavioral modeling, games, journaling, experiments, peer exchanges, service learning, case studies, authentic projects, and independent work sessions (Educause, 2005). The use of these strategies suggests that basic course instructors have an arsenal of available resources that not only complement the traditional lecture-style classroom environment, but also can reach students across various disciplines and create a more invigorated learning experience. Rattenborg, Simonds, and Hunt (2005) argued that "it is time for communication scholars to develop, test, and share strategies to aid and encourage students to take a more active role in the classroom" (p. 95). The researchers then noted that learning strategies, such as discussions, reading objectives, and participation sheets that require student self-assessment, are prime strategies that promote student engagement.

Best Practice #2: Appeal to Different Learning Styles

Nearly 40 years ago, Barbe, Swassing, and Milone (1979) proposed the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic/tactile learning modalities, suggesting that people vary with their preferred receiving style that is used to stimulate learning. As educators, we often teach the way we prefer to learn, while neglecting to appeal to those students who represent a counter learning modality. As a visual learner, my pedagogy in the basic course always is accentuated with pictures, colorful media presentations, and bulleted lists. However, as I recognize that many of my students are auditory learners, I am mindful of giving detailed verbal instructions, providing chants or rhythmic phrases as memory cues, and being amenable to students' requests to audio record lectures. Likewise, to appeal to students who have a kinesthetic/tactile learning preference, I provide opportunities for students to take detailed written or typed notes, physically distribute paper audience analysis surveys to the class, incorporate presentation aids in their speeches that they can touch, and physically model or demonstrate various points in a speech. By making the basic course an environment that is sensitive to diverse learning styles, instructors communicate to students that they matter, which subsequently, allows all learners the opportunity to become involved in the educational experience, regardless of their preferred learning style (Barbe et al., 1979).

Best Practice #3: Incorporate Student Interests

When I first started teaching, it was relatively easy for me to relate to students' interests because I was close to their ages. Now, as I fast forward, I realize that I am essentially two decades older than many of my college students, and some of the things that interest me do not necessarily interest them. To combat this somewhat generational gap, I seize opportunities

before, during, and after class to discover what makes this current college-age population tick. Students reveal quite a bit about their interests through their anecdotal in-class comments, selection of speech topics, and casual conversations with peers before and after class. Solomon (2014) identified five key interests that Millennial students share: technology, socialization, community collaboration and cooperation, adventure, and civic values. Based on information I have acquired indirectly regarding my students' interests, I use many examples in the basic course that are based on sports, social media, celebrities, traveling, technology, and political activism. When instructors incorporate students' interests into the basic course pedagogy, they communicate that the content is relevant to them, regardless of whether they desire to pursue the communication discipline further. As emphasized by TeacherPop (2015), making content relevant to students is essential to holding their attention.

Best Practice #4: Give Students Ownership in the Classroom Experience

Steele and Fullagar (2009) concluded that students who perceive that their professors support autonomy in the teaching and learning process are more engaged in academic work. This research finding, when coupled with the theories of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and Cognitive Evaluation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), stresses the importance of autonomy and self-determination, and, therefore, suggests that basic course instructors should give students opportunities to either work independently or in small groups to not only learn, but also to teach course content to each other. More than exam scores or arguments penned in research papers, I can always tell that my students have truly learned particular course content when they are able to clearly articulate that information to their peers. Hence, along with a number of required speeches, I readily assign students in the basic course the roles of discussion leader, content presenter, and peer reviewer. By playing these roles, students are afforded the privilege of having autonomous ownership in the classroom experience, and I have found that when students feel that they are at least partly responsible for the lesson's successful transmission and comprehension, they are more engaged, work harder, and have a heightened investment in the collective pedagogical process. Perhaps Rattenborg et al. (2005) summed it best: "It is only when students engage with the material through preparation and participation that they will become more competent communicators and fully understand the learning process" (p. 124).

Best Practice #5: Celebrate Student Successes

More than 70 years ago, Maslow (1943) posited via his hierarchy of needs that individuals have an innate need for self-esteem, whereby individuals acquire and maintain a sense of value and worth when others praise, appreciate, and acknowledge them. Maslow's position has endured over the years and offer segue to understanding how to minimize student amotivation. Holistically speaking, students generally participate in a myriad of academic and nonacademic activities. Whenever I learn that one of my students has excelled in any area, I purposefully "shout out" their accomplishments in class. Throughout my tenure in academia, I have recognized a wide span of student successes, including marriages, homecoming king/queen elections, athletic championships, campus leadership positions, publications, and community awards, just to name a few. Many times after I took a brief moment to celebrate these milestones, students have said that they appreciate me acknowledging their accomplishments. Some students have even mentioned that I was the only professor in that semester who took an interest in their involvement and success, suggesting that acknowledging even small successes may be a big deal

for students (TeacherPop, 2015). The basic course is an ideal learning space to recognize student accomplishments because it introduces students to the activities of other students from various degree programs. Furthermore, when basic course instructors recognize student achievement, they communicate a vested interest in *all* students. Titsworth (2000) confirmed that students in the basic course reported significantly higher levels of motivation and affect when they were praised by their instructor, which speaks to the importance of celebrating student success and subsequent course engagement.

Best Practice #6: Require Participation Grades

According to Vallade, Martin, and Weber (2014), many students feel "grades should be the primary focus of higher education" (p. 512). Given that students tend to be consumed with earning grades, basic course instructors would be prudent to require course participation grades that assess students' active and voluntary pedagogical engagement. Traditional means of assessing participation include course attendance and the quantity and quality of content-related comments made in class. However, basic course instructors should be mindful of calculating participation grades through a mix of measures, including those that do not require oral contributions. As argued by Meyer (2009), silence is an active form of communication that underlies an understanding of communication. Thus, classroom communication consists of both oral and silent behaviors, and student engagement should, therefore, be regarded as "encompassing a continuum of participation behaviors ranging from silent to oral forms of expression" (p. 278).

Li Li (2005) stated that the "absence of speaking can be invaluable to facilitate reflections of human communication" (p. 74). Hence, basic course instructors should assess participation through students' reflection papers of course content or readings. Students could also attend a campus or community speech and connect the speaker's main points to course content. Other options that would work to the advantage of reticent students include written speech evaluations, homework assignments (e.g., outlining speeches), and group involvement during small group activities. When basic course instructors provide a variety of opportunities for students to earn participation grades, a clear message is sent to students that their lack of interest will be penalized with a lower grade, but their meaningful contributions will be rewarded with a higher grade as corroborated by Christensen, Curley, Marquez, and Menzel (1995), who found that students are more willing to engage in course content when participation grades were used.

Best Practice #7: Promote Experiential Teaching and Learning

Experiential learning is defined as hands-on learning or learning by doing. Basic course instructors can motivate students to actively engage in the course content by applying academic learning to the real world. As argued by Gray (1991), "experiential activities seem especially appropriate in a communication class in which a focus is on developing communication competence, because becoming a better communicator involves active practice and evaluation" (p. 1). Hence, experiential learning must be at the forefront of basic course pedagogy, so that students can make clear connections between what they learn in the classroom and the transference of that scholastic knowledge to the workplace. To do so, basic course instructors can invite former students to come and share how they are using the speaking skills they learned in the basic course on the job or assist students with obtaining internships where they can

immediately apply their communication competencies to the workforce. Students can even participate in communication labs that provide opportunities for one-on-one interactions or small group sessions where a peer facilitator works with students to help enhance their understanding of communication (Bran-Barrett & Rolls, 2004).

Regardless of the strategies used, an experiential approach to teaching and learning is essential to unearthing the long-term applicability of basic course content. As argued by Wallace and Yoder (2007), "The teacher needs to emphasize the necessity of good communication skills . . . until students believe that the classroom experience is important to them *personally,* motivation will not improve" (p. 3). Additionally, researchers have found that college students experience optimal academic engagement from experiential learning initiatives, which assist in promoting lifelong learning (Sibthorp, Schumann, Gookin, Baynes, Paisley, & Rathunde, 2011).

Best Practice #8: Cultivate Diversity and Inclusion

Today's typical basic communication course reflects a sea of diversity, with students representing not only various majors and professional aspirations, but a mix of identity markers that vary widely based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, and nationality. Despite this sea of diversity, higher education curricula have been largely homogenous and reflective of mainstream cultural ideologies shaped by colonialism and whiteness (Hussain, 2015). When basic course instructors incorporate readings, theories, and examples into the learning environment that only reflect the hegemonic mainstream experience, systemic oppression is reinforced and traditional domination is allowed to prevail. To cultivate diversity and inclusion, basic course instructors should select required and supplemental readings written *by* and *about* diverse populations, give students opportunities to share unique lived experiences during class discussions, and encourage students to select speech topics that examine macro and micro cultural aspects. Furthermore, instructors should require (if applicable) a mix of domestic and international students when forming and working in groups, as the assimilation and academic adjustment of international students is enhanced greatly through cross-cultural communication opportunities (Young & Schartner, 2014). hooks (1994) proclaimed that "the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy;" thus, instructors must "teach to transgress" (p. 12). By transgressing the basic course into a haven that celebrates diversity and inclusion, instructors communicate to students that all perspectives matter and are worthy of academic exploration.

Best Practice #9: Empower Students to Make (Some) Classroom Decisions

Despite a growing trend in higher education to adopt the customer satisfaction paradigm-- which was borrowed from the operating mentality of thriving businesses and assumes that if the academy satisfies students' needs, the students, similar to customers, will have fewer complaints, be less dissatisfied, and will, therefore, be loyal, engaged, and committed patrons to the academy (Oluseye, Tairat, & Emmanuel, 2014)--it is impractical for educational institutions to "operate under the same pretense as retailers who follow the 'customer is always right policy'" (Gilchrist-Petty, 2018, p. 69) because professors are trained to be facilitators, researchers, and sources of knowledge for students, not customer-service representatives (Benton, 2006). A happy medium to minimizing student apathy while maintaining a high level of intellectual integrity in the basic course can be reached through instructors empowering students to make some classroom

decisions.

For example, as long as students do not choose offensive or other instructor-non-approved topics, students should be permitted to select their own speech or project topics. Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, and Turner (2004) further suggested that instructors can encourage student decision making in the classroom through three methods: organizational (e.g., choosing group members), procedural (e.g., permitting the use of different forms of media when presenting speeches), and cognitive (e.g., providing opportunities to debate ideas freely and ask questions). By empowering students to make some classroom decisions, basic course instructors not only minimize apathy and promote student engagement, but also "foster a more enduring psychological investment in deep-level thinking" (Stefanou et al., 2004, p. 97).

Best Practice #10: Accept That No Matter How Hard You Try, You Are Unlikely to Motivate All Students

I was confronted with a painful reality about a decade ago when I had a student in my basic communication course who was clearly intelligent and had much potential; yet, he either neglected to submit assignments or earned a failing score on the assignments that he did complete. After many indirect attempts to motivate him, I finally called him into my office to try a more direct inquisition. During our meeting, I told him that I could tell from our class discussions that he was bright and could potentially do well in the course, but he was not applying himself. When I asked him why this was the case, he replied, "I don't want to be here." I immediately asked him why he was in college since that was not his desire. His response was something that I have never forgotten: "My parents gave me an ultimatum to either go to college (which was free because of state lottery funds) or work at the local factory where my uncle is a supervisor. So, I chose the least of the evils." Per this statement, I knew there was nothing I could do to motivate him to excel. As instructors, we must understand that students have an array of motivations, or lack thereof, for enrolling in the basic course. Often times, they involuntarily enroll in the basic course because it is a necessary prerequisite for higher-level courses or it is simply a general graduation requirement. Under these circumstances, students can be "aflame with indifference" regarding the basic course and its content (Wallace & Yoder, 2007, p. 1). We must accept that despite our best efforts, we are unlikely to achieve 100 percent student motivation in a given basic communication course.

Conclusion

Researchers have long alleged that motivating students is essential to the instructor's role (Bolkan, 2015; Wallace & Yoder, 2007), but apathy can birth a range of pedagogical difficulties, especially in the basic communication course where students with different backgrounds, interests, and career aspirations gather to fulfill general education requirements. Because amotivation can stifle classroom experiences for both students and instructors (Blackburn, Lefebvre, & Richardson, 2013; Gilchrist-Petty, 2018), it is important for basic course instructors to take an interest in students' disinterest. This article has presented 10 best practices for curtailing amotivation and, simultaneously, enhancing motivation in the basic course. Although amotivation is multifaceted and rather complex (Shen, Wingert, Li, Sun, & Rukavina, 2010), these 10 best practices can act as a roadmap for better navigating challenging student behavior.

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Best Practices for Retaining Public Speaking Students

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Abstract: This article draws on existing communication research and praxes to share the best practices for retaining students enrolled in the introductory public speaking course. Among the many important pedagogical practices that communication scholars have documented, this article highlights the value of 10 best practices: instructor use of immediacy and confirmation; instructor inclusion of written prescriptive feedback, peer feedback workshops, low-stakes assignments, applied assignments, and individual speech preparation tools; and instructor participation in out-of-class communication, online office hours, and classroom-connectedness.

Coined as the discipline's "front porch" (Beebe, 2013, p. 3), the public speaking course provides a gateway for students to the communication major. It often is the first communication course a student takes, it can act either as a recruitment tool or as a deterrent in choosing or continuing with the major, and it can play an integral role in college retention because students often reap benefits from the public speaking course (e.g., reduced communication apprehension, increased self-efficacy) that enable their success in other courses and, thereby, encourages their persistence across the entire college or university (Mahmud, 2014). Therefore, a fundamental goal of institutions should be to enroll and retain students in the public speaking course. To assist in attaining this goal, this article identifies 10 best practices for facilitating student persistence in the public speaking course.

Best Practice #1: Engage in Immediacy

Immediacy--the verbal and nonverbal behaviors instructors use to create perceptions of closeness between themselves and their students--provides benefits which are well-documented within the instructional communication field. These benefits include improving student affect toward the subject matter, the instructor, and the course; increasing student interest; and improving student reports of cognitive learning (Richmond, Houser, & Hosek, 2017).

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Essentially, students will listen more, learn more, and enjoy the course more when instructors engage in both verbal and nonverbal immediacy. Public speaking instructors can demonstrate verbal immediacy during lectures, discussions, activities, and student speeches by calling students by name, asking students questions, including personal examples, and using pronouns such as "we" and "us," thus making the course seem warm and inclusive. They can do so nonverbally by making eye contact, smiling, using vocal variety, and moving around the classroom. Instructors should also discuss immediacy with their students and encourage them to practice immediate behavior during classroom activities, speeches, and discussions. Creating an immediate environment will assist students in feeling connected to, and comfortable in, the course.

Best Practice #2: Engage in Confirmation

Students need to know that they are valued and significant individuals in the classroom. This need can be accomplished through instructor confirmation, which consists of (a) responding to student questions and comments (b) showing interest in student learning, and (c) teaching in an interactive manner (Ellis, 2000). When responding to student questions and comments, instructors should listen attentively to their students, provide affirming responses, and answer all questions, whether asked before, during, or after class. Instructors can show interest in students' learning by reinforcing what students do well with positive feedback, such as "Good job! I like how you have improved your eye contact from the last speech!" or "Wow! You really nailed your verbal citations!" stated verbally or written on a notecard and handed to students after they finish giving a speech. Instructors' teaching style can provide confirmation through a variety of methods, including engaging discussion with verbal and nonverbal affirmation, interactive lessons, and incorporation of a variety of techniques that address all learning styles. Instructor confirmation might be especially helpful for public speaking students who are apprehensive, lack self-confidence, or are adjusting to the demands of college as a first-year student. Although it may be quick and easy to identify the issues students may have when giving a speech, instructors must be sure to address the positive issues as students who feel valued by their instructors will want to continue in the course.

Best Practice #3: Provide Written Prescriptive Feedback

Public speaking instructors must provide clear written feedback that describes what (and how) students can do to improve their next speech. Written feedback that is criterion-based, descriptive, and constructive can help improve student learning and performance (Simonds, Meyer, Hunt, & Simonds, 2009). *Criterion-based feedback* stems directly from the requirements outlined on the grading rubric and is designed to help reinforce course expectations while detailing how students are meeting those expectations. *Descriptive feedback* explains what students are doing especially well in their speeches and provides specific positive detail about these actions. *Constructive feedback* documents necessary speech improvements and provides specific recommendations to students about how to improve their speeches. For example, instructors might note that students should provide more eye contact. Comments such as "need more eye contact" or "look up" are not helpful, whereas comments such as "I would like to see more eye contact. I noticed you used ten notecards. Instead, let's try six notecards for the next speech" or "I notice you do not look up much. I need to see eye contact 90% of the time. Try looking at each of your classmates. If that is too scary now, make a friend on each side of the

classroom and look directly at them" provide specific actions towards improvement. Students who receive little feedback may feel hopeless and drop the course, while students who receive constructive feedback on not only what they need to improve--but also how they can improve--will be given the tools to help them succeed in the course.

Best Practice #4: Provide Peer Feedback Workshops

Instructors should consider using peer feedback workshops to help improve students' speech performance. For example, one workshop could focus on showing students how to complete the public speaking process using an exercise created by Broeckelman, Brazeal, and Titsworth (2007). Instructors should ask for five volunteers, who move their desks into the shape of a circle in the middle of the classroom to create a fishbowl. The five volunteers are provided with a slip of paper that describes each person's role in the exercise: (a) speechwriter, (b) bored group member, (c) praising group member, (d) disruptive group member, and (e) helpful group member. The volunteer playing the speechwriter role then simulates a peer feedback exercise by distributing a speech outline to the other four volunteers and asking them for feedback, at which point each volunteer plays the assigned (e.g., bored member, praising member, disruptive member, helpful member) role (see Broeckelman et al. for role descriptions). The group should role-play for about 3-4 minutes while the other students watch. Instructors then end the exercise, debrief it, and lead a discussion about the "dos" and "don'ts" of providing peer feedback. In subsequent peer workshops, students should work in three-member groups to review each other's speech outlines or practice delivering their speech to each other (Broeckelman et al., 2007). During these (or any) workshops, instructors should float between groups to help the students stay on track and provide a debriefing session at the end of the workshop. If taking place outside of class time, instructors should ask for verification from a communication or learning center that the peer reviews occurred. Using workshops can provide students with feedback and connect them with each other, which will aid in their comfort with the course and ideally lead to retention.

Best Practice #5: Provide Low-Stakes Assignments

Low-stakes assignments can help students reduce anxiety and increase confidence (Shields, 2015), which can aid in course retention. One low-stake assignment is an outline exercise, where students bring a personal item to class that is important to them, complete a brief fill-in-the-blank outline (prepared by instructors ahead of time), and write and deliver a speech (based on the outline) to the class. Because students have the same outline and are talking about something they know well, they should feel more confident in writing and delivering their speech. Completing similar types of low-stakes assignments, especially in the beginning of the semester, can help students relax, build confidence, and improve their speaking skills.

Best Practice #6: Provide Applied Assignments

Applied assignments are an important component of any public speaking course because these assignments not only underscore the importance of the course and students' contributions to the course, but also allows students to learn about the different types of public speaking that they may use in their careers. Fedesco, Kentner, and Natt (2017) explained that when students believe that course assignments are relevant, their motivation increases because they feel like

they are more connected to the material and they would be more likely to reuse the information. One way that instructors can make assignments seem relevant is by allowing them to select a "real world" genre in which they have great interest or passion (e.g., sermons, training seminars, closing arguments, political debates, or sales presentations; Docan-Morgan, 2009). Students will research the genre of the speech they pursue, which allows them to identify which details are necessary in the speech, create a rationale for the presentation, identify the audience, select the information that is necessary to include in the presentation, and understand the organization. With this type of applied assignment, Docan-Morgan (2009) suggested that students create the rubric for the presentation in order to allow for a deeper understanding of the expectations and requirements for the presentation type. Engaging students in topics and genres of which they have strong opinions and beliefs may increase their interest in the course, thus encouraging them to remain enrolled in the course.

Best Practice #7: Engage in Out-of-Class Communication

Public speaking instructors should engage in out-of-class communication (OCC) with students. OCC can take place electronically or in person, and such interactions can be initiated by faculty members or students. Instructors can engage in OCC by using e-mail, learning management systems, and early alert systems to check on students who are missing class sessions or not completing course assignments and to provide students with "kudos" or other types of accolades after course milestones such as their first formal speech. Conversely, students might engage in OCC by asking questions before or after class, during office hours, or via e-mail, thus affording instructors additional opportunities to help them succeed. It is best for instructors to create a classroom environment where students feel comfortable self-disclosing and going to their office (Fusani, 1994). Additionally, instructors should hold conferences outside of class time, which provide opportunities for students to meet one-on-one with instructors to discuss their upcoming speech, their course grade, or any other course-related or personal issues that they may have. OCC also offers students a safe space in which they can interact with their instructors.

Best Practice #8: Offer Online Office Hours

Because students often have jobs and families that leave little time for them to be able to meet with their instructors during regular business hours, public speaking instructors should consider offering online office hours--in addition to traditional office hours--as a way to increase student retention. Understandably, students have expressed a growing desire for virtual office hours (Roby, Ashe, Singh, & Clark, 2013). These virtual office hours can be offered using a platform of their choice (e.g., Blackboard Collaborate, Skype, Facetime) during both regular business hours and in the evening, depending on instructor and student schedules. (A quick survey at the beginning of the semester can help determine the best times and venues in which to offer these hours.) Online office hours provide students with an opportunity to ask questions and solicit feedback; they provide professors the opportunity to engage further in teaching behaviors that are positively associated with student retention.

Best Practice #9: Provide Individual Speech Preparation Tools

Of the many individual speech preparation tools that communication scholars have amassed, one tool that instructors can have students use on their own time to help improve their in-class speech performance is imagined interactions (IIs), which within the context of public speaking, involves the process of imagining the speech itself (e.g., performing well on grading criteria, feeling confident) and the outcomes of the speech (e.g., receiving applause, receiving positive feedback) (Choi, Honeycutt, & Bodie, 2015). To do so, instructors must provide a brief four-step, IIs training session. First, instructors give students a handout that asks them to list three goals for improvement (e.g., make more eye contact with classmates). Second, instructors divide the class into four-member groups and provide each member with a brief ready-made speech about a trivial topic (e.g., a brief history of coffee, funniest college mascots). [Instructors can give the same set of four speeches to each group.] After students have had two minutes to read the speech, instructors then give them five minutes to engage in an imagined interaction of their short speech. During this five minutes, students should imagine themselves improving on the three goals they listed. Third, students take turns delivering their speeches in their small group as instructors move around the classroom. Fourth, instructors lead the students in a debriefing, reiterating the benefits of this speech preparation tool (e.g., improved performance), highlighting the importance of out-of-class speech preparation, and encouraging students to use IIs to prepare for their next speech.

Best Practice #10: Cultivate Classroom Connectedness

Public speaking instructors should strive to cultivate classroom connectedness, which is conceptualized as "student-to-student perceptions of a supportive and cooperative communication environment in the classroom" (Dwyer et al., 2004, p. 267). There are many ways to promote classroom connectedness, among which are offering students opportunities to establish common ground with each other, share stories and experiences, and bond as a group (Dwyer et al.). To establish common ground on the first day of the course, instructors might ask students questions such "Who is afraid of tripping on their way up to give a speech?", "Who is afraid of forgetting the words to their speech?", or "Who is afraid of making a mistake in front of the audience?" Asking these types of questions informs students that many of them are experiencing the same feelings or issues. During the first week of class, instructors can allow students the opportunity to share their stories and experiences by providing a low-stakes introductory speech, such as the "Any Old Bag Will Do" speech (Buchanan, 1996). Contained in any other bag that they choose, students bring to class one item that represents their past, one item that represents their present, and one item that represents their future; they then speak for 1-2 minutes about the three items in their bag. This simple experience not only can ease students' transition into public speaking, but also give them the opportunity to get to know each other better, after which instructors can have them participate in additional low-stakes discussions and small group activities.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to share 10 best practices for retaining public speaking students based on existing communication research. These recommendations were selected because they span a variety of methods that can assist students both inside and outside of the

classroom. As such, these tips can help move students from the "front porch" of the discipline to further inside the walls of their college or university.

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Integrating Service-Learning in the Public Speaking Course

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Abstract: This best-practices article endorses incorporating service-learning into the foundational public speaking course. The article explains connections between service-learning and the rhetorical tradition, highlights pedagogical approaches that would benefit from a service-learning component, and discusses the benefits of service-learning for community partners and students. The remainder of the article focuses on how to implement service-learning in a public speaking course, including reflection and assessment recommendations.

Service-learning—broadly defined as the integration of community-based experiential service with a course's learning outcomes—has become a central component of higher education's longstanding mission to cultivate more engaged citizens (Bringle & Steinberg, 2010). In Communication Studies, the foundational public speaking course provides an excellent opportunity to incorporate service-learning because of its unique relationship with civic engagement. From its earliest iterations, public speaking has been connected to community service and citizen building. The sophists, particularly Isocrates, grounded their training in service to the community (Clark, 1996; Jarratt, 1991), and Aristotle understood speech as a means of striving for social change. This connection between public speaking and the speaker's obligation to the community is no better exemplified than by connecting public speaking courses with community service. In what follows, we offer 10 best practices identifying student benefits and logistical considerations for instructors when implementing a service-learning component in the public speaking course.

Best Practice #1: Embrace Service-Learning as a High Impact Practice

Service-learning has been identified as a "life changing," high impact practice that prepares students to actively engage in their community (Kuh, 2008, p. 17), and it has become an increasingly popular pedagogical approach in higher education, with one study reporting service

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rates of over 80% among seniors on some university campuses (National Survey of Student Engagement, 2009; see also Finley, 2011). Indeed, the Association of American Colleges and Universities' (AAC&U's) National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (2012) argues that service-learning is a central component of educational practices that can "open up opportunities to develop each person's full talents, equip graduates to contribute to economic recovery and innovation, and cultivate responsibility to a larger common good" (p. 14). Although employing service-learning in public speaking courses can be challenging and requires an active commitment from instructors, embracing this pedagogy can lead to significant benefits for both students and their community partners (Steimel, 2013). Moreover, integrating service-learning in the public speaking course helps students achieve learning outcomes, including increased student learning (Warren, 2012) and interpersonal development, the ability to understand and later apply knowledge, and an enhanced sense of citizenship (McIntyre & Sellnow, 2014).

Service-learning also can be used to fulfill learning outcomes identified by the National Communication Association's Learning Outcomes in Communication Project (2015), such as utilizing communication to embrace difference and influence public discourse. A service-learning component of a public speaking course may help connect speeches and other assignments to the mission and vision of instructors' and students' home institutions. Instructors and students are encouraged to identify links between their unique speech assignments and the specific learning outcomes that can be achieved through service-learning.

Best Practice #2: Select a Pedagogical Approach to Service-Learning

Choosing a pedagogical approach for the service-learning component in a public speaking class is crucial for guiding students through their service, speeches, and reflection. Britt (2012) suggests three approaches to service-learning pedagogy (i.e., skill-set practice and reflexivity, civic values and critical citizenship, and social justice activism), any of which can be utilized productively in the public speaking course. Service to the community can refine specific skills such as constructing persuasive messages, analyzing audiences in meaningful contexts, or grounding conceptual conversations about citizenship in local communities. By inviting engagement with marginalized populations, service-learning can be used to address inequalities as a project in critical communication pedagogy (Fassett & Warren, 2007). Regardless of which approach instructors choose, each approach is appropriate for the typical public speaking classroom. Nevertheless, given the significance of public life, service, and civic engagement in the rhetorical tradition, a pedagogy committed to civic values and critical citizenship seems particularly relevant when integrating service-learning.

Drawn from the "Aristotelian notion of educating citizens for participation in the *demos*," a service-learning pedagogy centered on civic values treats "service as a way to consider values and commitments not in the abstract but in real interactions in communities and in focused reflection on the negotiation of self, society, and values" (Britt, 2012, p. 84). Adding service-learning to the public speaking course underscores the longstanding relationship between the rhetorical tradition and democracy while providing an opportunity for instructors to encourage the kind of "critical service" envisioned by the earliest practitioners of the oratorical arts (Clark, 1996).

Best Practice #3: Locate Community Partners and Utilize Campus Resources

Finding community partners with whom students can volunteer may seem daunting, but utilizing campus resources can make this endeavor manageable. If an on-campus service-learning office exists, this office may assist in recommending community partners, providing templates for designing service-learning courses, offering a network of faculty within and across disciplines who have experience with service-learning, teaching best practices, and running service-learning trainings and workshops. This office may advise instructors on how to respond to student conflict; it can also provide documentation, such as liability release forms, if such forms are required at a particular institution. Some institutions sponsor programs that offer financial support and training to students who then assist with service-learning courses. In the absence of a formalized program, instructors can appeal to Chairs, Deans, or related offices to seek support for this valuable leadership experience for undergraduate students or graduate assistants.

Additionally, many campuses organize volunteer fairs where students can connect with community partners. These fairs also provide platforms for students to discuss logistical concerns such as transportation, scheduling hours, background checks, and other obstacles that could prevent them from completing service hours later in the term. In smaller communities with a limited number of potential community partners, instructors and students may struggle to locate enough organizations that are able to work with their service-learning course. Instructors can overcome this challenge by grouping students into teams who complete their service together at a single organization, an approach that works especially well when paired with group speech assignments. Team-based service also can benefit community partners by reducing the number of students inquiring about volunteer opportunities. Finally, it is particularly useful to maintain a list of locations where students have successfully volunteered, as this list can be shared with students or withheld for those emergencies when a student cannot identify an organization in need of assistance.

Best Practice #4: Utilize External Service-Learning Resources

Some institutions do not have dedicated service-learning offices. In such cases, there are three ways to access resources to support service-learning in the public speaking classroom. First, instructors can contact the teaching and learning center or any similar campus office that supports faculty. Those centers, which are common at many institutions, are dedicated to supporting faculty on a wide range of pedagogical initiatives, and they can be particularly helpful in the absence of a designated service-learning or volunteer office. Second, instructors can utilize Campus Compact, a national coalition of all types of colleges and universities with resources designed to support students, staff, and faculty in community-based learning. Although Campus Compact requires a membership, instructors at non-member institutions can still use some of the resources available on the Campus Compact website, such as how-to blogs, civic action plans from other institutions, and web links (see https://compact.org). Third, instructors can search for community partners through websites such as volunteermatch.org, which provides a breakdown of service opportunities by cause, enables users to filter results by the population being served (e.g., young children, teens, or seniors), and lists organizations by proximity to zip code. Other helpful websites include www.createthegood.org, www.pointsoflight.org, and www.idealist.org.

Best Practice #5: Explain the Value and Benefits of Service-Learning to Students

Oster-Aaland, Sellnow, Nelson, and Pearson (2007) suggest the quality and effectiveness of any service-learning experience is influenced by how well students are oriented to service-learning before they complete their service, making it essential to foster buy-in early. In the first week of the term, instructors should define service-learning, explain its role in assignments, and discuss how students' volunteering contributes to the community. Furthermore, instructors should address the four benefits associated with service-learning. First, service-learning better prepares students for active participation in democratic life and reinforces the focus on civic engagement that is common in many public speaking courses (Britt, 2012; McIntyre & Sellnow, 2014; Soukup, 2006).

Second, service-learning courses improve students' academic performance (Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011) and cognitive development (Yorio & Ye, 2012). Third, numerous studies suggest that volunteering positively affects physical and psychological health, from increasing life satisfaction and combatting depression, to reducing hypertension and extending life expectancy (Konrath, Fuhrel-Forbis, Lou, & Brown, 2012; Sneed & Cohen, 2013; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). Fourth, service-learning helps students build their résumés, secure internships, and develop leadership and other skills that will help them achieve their career goals (Chang, Chen, Wang, Chen, & Liao, 2014; Moely & Ilustre, 2016). Studies have shown that employers are more likely to hire and promote candidates who have demonstrated a commitment to volunteering, especially in those organizations that value social responsibility (Deloitte, 2016; Lester, Tomkovick, Wells, Flunker, & Kickul, 2005).

Best Practice #6: Introduce the Active Citizen Continuum

Many institutions' mission and vision statements include themes of community engagement. One tool to help students see the connections between their service-learning experiences in the public speaking course and the institution's mission or vision statement is by introducing them to the active citizen continuum (Break Away, 2017). In the active citizen continuum, individuals engaging in service are categorized as members, volunteers, conscientious citizens, or active citizens. *Members* participate in service but ignore their role in social problems, *volunteers* are well-intentioned but still unaware of social concerns, *conscientious citizens* are concerned with finding the root causes of social issues, and *active citizens* are individuals whose priorities and values align with fulfilling community needs (Break Away, 2017).

Introducing the active citizen continuum enables students to locate themselves on the continuum as they begin their service, reflect on their position after serving, and create goals for future service as a student and even after graduation. Discussion surrounding the continuum also helps students understand how completing a service-learning project can fulfill institutional goals surrounding civic engagement and reinforce the connection between oratory and democratic citizenship. When discussing the continuum, it must be emphasized that not everyone can or should be an active citizen in every context. Instead, discussion should foster an appreciation for the importance of having individuals in each category to foster robust civic engagement.

Best Practice #7: Integrate Service-Learning into Course Assignments

Public speaking courses vary greatly from institution to institution and may draw from any number of assignments, including informative, persuasive, and special occasion speeches, as well as speeches to entertain, tribute speeches, and autobiographical presentations. Many instructors also incorporate team debates, small group presentations, and impromptu speeches in their courses. Regardless of the assignment, instructors can encourage meaningful service experiences for students, especially when that service arcs across two or more assignments during the term. For example, in an informative speech assignment, students might develop presentations on topics that address their community partner's mission and outreach efforts, history, upcoming events, or the broader cause or issue to which it is devoted, whereas for persuasive speech assignments, topics might focus on policy proposals regarding the organization's mission or students' personal experiences working with organizations and the communities they serve. Martinez (2004) offers a helpful model for incorporating service experience in an informative speech.

Assignments that require students to present to other audiences outside the immediate classroom setting, while ambitious, also can be invaluable. Informal assignments can be easily incorporated as in-class discussions, small group activities, or "think-pair-share" sessions. Smaller assignments related to the service-learning component of the class help keep students on task and may include (a) asking students to identify potential community partners with whom they might volunteer (e.g., organization name, mission statement, volunteer policy, contact information), (b) verifying when students have established relationships with an organization, (c) requiring a regular service journal where students log and reflect on their experiences, or (d) documenting the completion of volunteer hours with a signed form.

Best Practice #8: Reflect on Service-Learning

One essential component of service-learning is critical reflection, which is "the process of analyzing, reconsidering, and questioning one's experiences within a broad context of issues and content knowledge" (Jacoby, 2015, p. 26). Ideally, critical reflection should take place before, during, and after the completion of service hours and can be accomplished in three ways. First, after selecting a site and before volunteering, students should write about their expectations in an informal journal or writing assignment. Prompts for reflection might include: (1) Describe your previous experiences with community service; (2) What challenges might you face on your way to completing your service hours this semester, and how will you address them? (3) What do you expect or hope to do during your service? or (4) Discuss your initial impressions of your organization and its clients.

Second, during the service experience, students should continue writing journal entries that record observations and draw connections between their experiences and relevant course content. For example, students can reflect on how successfully the organization is meeting community needs or how their experience at the organization reflects its mission and vision statements. Third, at the end of the service experience, students can combine reflections with personal assessments of any course assignment that incorporated their service. For example, we often ask students to offer a self-critique of their last major speech assignment (in our courses, this is typically a persuasive speech) and identify specific course learning outcomes that were

achieved through their service experience. At a minimum, instructors should assign writing assignments or speeches requiring students to reflect on how their service-learning has helped them meet learning outcomes and align with their institution's mission and vision. As Jacoby (2015) notes,

> when we engage students in reflection related to their experiences, they can see the relevance of course content to real-world issues, the interdisciplinary nature of problems and solutions, the complexity of the social fabric, and how they can choose to become part of the solution rather than part of the problem. (p. 11)

The importance of reflection cannot be understated. Although it is not recommended that instructors award points for the simple completion of service hours, it may help encourage students to engage in meaningful reflection if such assignments comprise a modest percentage of their overall course grade (e.g., 5%).

Best Practice #9: Integrate Service-Learning into the Course Calendar

Given the volume of content and number of presentation days required in a typical public speaking course, fitting service-learning into the course calendar may be a difficult task. Mabry (1998) proposes that service-learning courses aim for a goal of 15 service hours for a typical three-credit course. This goal, though reasonable in some contexts, may be challenging for instructors teaching accelerated public speaking courses or at institutions operating on a quarter system. McIntyre and Sellnow (2014) find that students can achieve a number of beneficial learning outcomes with a service obligation as low as two hours, including "personal and interpersonal development, an understanding of basic communication course concept relevance, and a sense of citizenship" (p. 71). Martinez (2004) suggests a slightly larger commitment of five hours; instructors, therefore, are afforded some flexibility depending on their individual course needs.

Given the unique time constraints of the public speaking course, we endorse Jacoby's emphasis (2015) on the importance of integrating service-learning into the course design and assignments rather than focusing exclusively on the amount of service hours. We typically ask students to complete five to six service hours for courses offered during a 15-week semester. In courses where instructors have not already identified specific community partners with whom students must volunteer, it is prudent to encourage students to be proactive and establish a relationship with an organization early in the semester, perhaps as early as the third week of the course. Deadlines by which students must have completed their service hours should be placed strategically in the schedule to allow time for proper reflection and integration with course assignments. For example, we encourage our students to fulfill their volunteer hours no later than the midway point of the course as this allows them to better incorporate the experience into their speech assignments that fall in the final half of the semester.

Best Practice #10: Assess Service-Learning in Public Speaking

Assessing service-learning in the public speaking course requires considering the extent to which outcomes are met for students, communities, faculty, and institutions (Jacoby, 2015). Student outcomes include meeting course objectives, program learning objectives, and personal goals and can be assessed through a combination of students' reflections and more standardized

student evaluations that take place at the conclusion of each course. Through reflection and assessment, students may realize how they benefited from the service-learning experience whether it be professional development, a deeper appreciation for their role as civil servant, or a greater sense of connection to the larger community. Community outcomes should be assessed by community partners. Site supervisors may answer questions designed to assess if students serving in that organization helped meet community partner needs; they also should have the opportunity to discuss the shifting needs of their organization now and in the future while reporting if they think future student volunteers could help meet those needs. If the community partners had a positive experience with student volunteers and want volunteers in the future, this assessment procedure allows them to provide that feedback. If student volunteers are not helping meet community partner needs, however, it is important to have a platform for them to offer constructive criticism.

Faculty are encouraged to reflect on their experience facilitating a service-learning course. Instructors should keep detailed notes throughout the semester with suggestions about how to improve the course for community partners, students, and the faculty members themselves in subsequent semesters. As aforementioned in Best Practice #6, utilizing service-learning in the public speaking course may help fulfill the university's mission and vision statements. Depending on the institution's mission, community partner and student assessment questions might include inquiries about civic engagement, personal responsibility, retention, the desire to take another service-learning course, an awareness of personal biases and prejudices, problem-solving skills, communication skills, clarification of career goals, and active citizenship. Several assessment materials are available through the AAC&U which has a number of Valid Assessment of Learning in Undergraduate Education (VALUE) rubrics available to all instructors, including an assessment rubric focused on Civic Engagement (see https://www.aacu.org/value/rubrics).

Conclusion

As Oster-Aaland et al. (2007) argue, "Communication studies is a disciplinary leader in service learning" (p. 349), with more recent pedagogical scholarship demonstrating how it can be meaningfully integrated into myriad communication courses (De La Mare, 2014; Hinck & Scheffels, 2015). The 10 best practices in this article offer concrete suggestions for how to incorporate service-learning into the foundational public speaking course in such a way as to emphasize the civic inclinations of the rhetorical tradition. McIntyre and Sellnow (2014) suggest that public speaking "is an ideal place to infuse service-learning" (p. 59) because it enables students to meet learning outcomes that promote more engaged and competitive graduates, which then "can invigorate the curriculum and those who teach it" (Weintraub, 2006, p. 123). By following these best practices, instructors can promote civic engagement while helping students' professional, physical, and mental well-being.

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BEST PRACTICES

Best Practices for Facilitating Communication-Centered Professional Development for Non-Communication Faculty

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Abstract: Communication-across-the-curriculum (CxC) programs commonly support non-communication faculty by crafting robust professional development learning experiences. This article presents 10 best practices for facilitating professional development designed to support the teaching and learning of communication competencies in non-communication disciplines. These practices draw on lessons learned from a successful professional development course facilitated by the CxC program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Grounded in a situated communication pedagogy framework, these best practices reflect a communication-centered approach to professional development, thus extending scholarly discourse and practices surrounding CxC programs, communication pedagogy, and professional development of faculty.

Communication-across-the-curriculum (CxC) programs support non-communication faculty in facilitating teaching and learning of communication in the disciplines (see Dannels & Gaffney, 2009 for an overview of CxC scholarship). One common way for CxC programs to provide such support is through designing and delivering professional development opportunities. This article presents 10 best practices for facilitating what I term *communication-centered* professional development for non-communication faculty. These best practices emerged from a successful professional development course created and facilitated by the CxC program at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC) to support non-communication faculty teaching communication intensive courses (also known as oral communication intensive and writing intensive courses) in the disciplines. This course was a six month, blended, intensive

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learning experience with the goal of facilitating a course design and implementation process grounded in Dannels's (2001) situated communication pedagogy framework.

Best Practice #1: Foreground Communication Theory and Praxis

Although foregrounding communication theory and praxis may sound like an obvious best practice when facilitating communication-centered faculty development, it is important to make explicit this foregrounding for non-communication faculty. Faculty who are unfamiliar with CxC activities often ask questions such as "why can't students learn how to communicate in a public speaking course?" or "why can't you just come into my class and do a workshop on speaking or writing?" By designing the professional development course around Dannels's (2001) situated communication pedagogy framework, questions about the value of teaching and learning communication in disciplinary courses are addressed both upfront and throughout the course. Specifically, faculty need explanation of, and engagement with, the four principles of the communication-in-the-disciplines (CID) model: "(1) oral and written genres are sites for disciplinary learning; (2) communication is a situated practice; (3) communication competence is locally negotiated; and (4) learning to communicate is a context driven activity" (p. 147). The explanation of these principles should be provided in the professional development course introduction. Moreover, examples of each principle taken from different disciplines should be incorporated to help faculty understand how the CID model shapes teaching praxis.

Facilitators need to be aware that adopting a situated communication pedagogy is a substantial paradigmatic shift for some faculty. Adequate time, therefore, should be invested early in the professional development course to cultivating a deep understanding of the CID model. Additionally, it is important to emphasize the challenges of teaching communication intensive courses in non-communication disciplines. For CxC facilitators, grounding professional development in a situated communication pedagogy means acknowledging that non-communication faculty are the experts in communicating in their disciplines. The facilitator's role, by contrast, is to provide guidance in, and a structure for, designing learning experiences that allow students to develop communication competencies that are relevant and valued in their discipline.

Best Practice #2: Identify Specific Institutional and Faculty Needs

Identifying specific faculty needs allows for the design of a responsive and locally situated faculty development experience. A Needs-Centered-Model approach is especially applicable to designing professional development for faculty as adult learners (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2013). Conducting needs identification prior to the design of professional development helps orient faculty to the purposes of the learning experience and engages them in the design process (for an example of using needs assessment to establish a campus CxC program, see Morreale, Shockley-Zalabak, & Whitney, 1993). This needs assessment sets the tone for a collaborative and community-based learning environment. In addition, facilitators communicate credibility and establish legitimacy of the professional development experience to participants when their feedback is explicitly incorporated into the professional development.

To implement this best practice, a professional development needs identification survey can be administered to participants or potential participants that (a) identifies specific needs for professional development in incorporating communication instruction in non-communication courses; (b) creates awareness of the CxC program and building anticipation for forthcoming professional development; and (c) gathers information on interest in, and feasibility of, delivery formats (e.g. online, face-to-face, blended). Sample survey questions include

(1) What types of oral communication activities and assignments do you incorporate or are interested in incorporating?

(2) What types of written communication activities and assignments do you incorporate or are interested in incorporating?

(3) What challenges do you face when incorporating communication instruction into your classes (e.g., integrating communication into course objectives, designing assignments, scaffolding learning through activities and assignments, facilitating in-class communication activities, providing students with meaningful formative feedback on communication assignments, and grading and providing summative evaluation of communication assignments)?

(4) Which of the following topics related to incorporating communication into your teaching would you like to explore further (e.g., designing effective, course relevant communication assignments; incorporating brief in-class communication instruction into class activity; grading and evaluating oral and written communication activities; providing useful feedback on drafts and works in progress; developing and incorporating revision activities; organizing effective peer review activities; working with multilingual students; addressing grammar, usage, and mechanics; addressing pronunciation, articulation, dialect, and nonverbal behaviors; incorporating communication instruction in online courses)?

In addition, information about the course, academic department, and teaching experience should be collected.

Best Practice #3: Create a Flexible and Personalized Learning Environment

One obstacle to faculty participaton and engagement in professional development opportunities is lack of time and flexibility in scheduling. Moreover, as Fowler and Bond (2016) established, the traditional "one-size-fits-all" faculty development workshop or institute mirrors the one-size fits all curricular delivery model that has come under much scrutiny in the college classroom. Because communication scholarship has been at the forefront of integrating innovative technology to support meaningful learning, it makes sense, then, that communication-centered professional development make strategic use of technology in working with faculty learners. This best practice was implemented at UNCC by creating a blended learning environment that permitted faculty the flexibility to participate remotely combined with personalized consultation, which allowed for faculty to have some control over the time, place, and pace of the learning (Maxwell, 2016).

The professional development course at UNCC is launched with a face-to-face meeting. Then, over the next four weeks, faculty work through a series of weekly online modules

developed in Canvas. Each module is introduced at the start of the week with a WebEx videoconference that faculty either participate in live or watch recorded. In addition, faculty participate in two individual consultations, either in person or via videoconference. Finally, during the following semester when faculty are teaching their communication intensive course, they participate in two face-to-face group meetings.

Best Practice #4: Start with Course Design

Because a well-designed course is essential to facilitating student learning, the first step is articulating clear, specific, and concrete course learning outcomes. For some non-communication faculty, this involves a radical transformation to adopt backward design principles. For other non-communication faculty, the shift may be less daunting, but the key is to *integrate* communication into the design of communication intensive courses. By contrast, a non-integrated communication intensive course gives primacy to disciplinary content with oral and written assignments added to the course to satisfy the required number of presentations or papers. Helping faculty shift to an integrated approach requires an understanding and adoption of backward design principles and course alignment. Implementing this best practice requires three steps. First, faculty must be introduced to backward design principles and provided with additional resources to explore these principles (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Second, faculty should answer questions about any situational factors that can shape the learning environment (Fink, 2013). These situational factors include (a) learner characteristics (e.g. Who are the students who will be taking the course? What prior learning have they had? What prior experiences with speaking and writing have students had?), (b) instructor characteristics (e.g. What prior experiences, knowledge, skills, and attitudes do you have in terms of the subject of this course? What are your strengths as a teacher and how can you play to those strengths?), and (c) course and subject characteristics (e.g. Is this an existing course? If so, have you taught this course before? What was the feedback from students previously?) Third, facilitators should work closely with faculty in drafting course learning outcomes that are relevant, clear, and specific; can be assessed; and are reflective of the integration of communication and content by providing feedback and consultation, either individually or in small groups, on the draft learning outcomes.

Strong, well-integrated learning outcomes will serve as a foundation as faculty take the next steps in developing speaking and writing assignments. Moreover, covering these bases should mediate, if not eliminate, faculty perceptions that "time spent teaching communication is time not spent teaching content" and cultivate instead an understanding of oral and written communication genres as sites for disciplinary learning.

Best Practice #5: Cultivate a Sense of Community

Creating a community among cross-disciplinary faculty has benefits that extend beyond a single professional development experience. Non-communication faculty teaching communication intensive courses often struggle with similar challenges and can share ideas and teaching strategies that address these challenges. Moreover, facilitating a sense of community among cross-disciplinary faculty can help them realize that "communication competence is locally negotiated" (Dannels, 2001, p. 150) within disciplines. There are many strategies for cultivating community among faculty. As a facilitator, it is imperative to establish an

environment where peer learning can occur, rather than an environment where a communication expert teaches non-communication faculty exclusively. This environment can be accomplished by making learning with, and from, a community of peers an explicit goal of the professional development course and communicating clearly to faculty that the facilitator's role is to learn from them what is important about communicating in their discipline.

In addition, structured opportunities should be provided for faculty to connect and learn from each other throughout the professional development experience. Implementing a peer review and feedback process into the professional development course is an excellent way to do this. For example, sharing draft high stakes communication assignments across disciplines is a constructive way for faculty to note firsthand the similarities and differences in how different disciplines socially construct communication competence, receive valuable feedback from a peer outside the discipline, and, at the same time, gather ideas for their own teaching by providing feedback to others and making connections with faculty across disciplines that they otherwise may not have.

Best Practice #6: Make Reflection Central to Professional Development

This practice may sound obvious to communication scholars, but in truth many faculty development workshops and programs neglect the central role of reflection to learning and growth as a teacher. Reflection plays an especially crucial role for non-communication faculty seeking to expand their abilities to teach disciplinary communication intensive courses. Faculty must first uncover their assumptions about discipline-specific norms, expectations, and relevant genres of communication before they put into practice the principle of communication as a situated practice. Guided reflection prompts help non-communication faculty discover what they and their discipline values about communication and why. This reflection, in turn, can help them understand how to make explicit for students the norms and expectations for communicating as, for example, a biological sciences major. Teaching communication intensive courses in the disciplines is both rewarding and challenging. For many faculty, particularly those developing such a course for the first time, the thought of emphasizing oral and written communication is daunting.

Through guided reflection prompts, faculty are able to acknowledge their strengths, challenges, concerns, and questions about teaching (Dannels, 2015). In a blended learning environment, it is easy to implement this best practice by creating a weekly reflection exercise using short prompts relevant to the week's topic. Personal teaching reflections should remain private unless individuals want to share with peers voluntarily. Facilitators should read and comment on reflections, while keeping in mind that the purpose of practicing reflection is to support individual growth as a teacher. Below is an example reflection prompt:

> Last week you articulated characteristics of communication in your discipline. This week, consider what your students know about those specific characteristics that you listed. Where would they have learned them if at all? Who would have taught them if anyone? How would they have been taught them if at all? How much practice will they have had if any? Then consider, what does this mean for me as an instructor of this course? Given the reality of students' communication backgrounds, what might I need to do as an instructor to help students learn how to communicate in the discipline?

Best Practice #7: Support Faculty through Implementation of Changes in Teaching Practice

There is no doubt that the scope and breadth of faculty development programs at U.S. universities has expanded in recent years (Condon, Iverson, Manduca, Rutz, & Willett, 2016). Contemporary scholarship conducted on faculty professional development demonstrates that single, one-time workshops and instructional content without consultation and coaching are less likely to have a meaningful impact on teaching practices than more in-depth approaches (Condon et al., 2016). The best practice of supporting faculty beyond a single workshop should be a point of distinction for a communication-centered approach to professional development. For facilitators working with non-communication faculty, this can serve multiple purposes. Faculty who are supported through both the design and implementation phases of communication intensive courses are likely to experience an increase in their comfort level with integrating oral and written communication. And, providing support through implementation provides facilitators with invaluable feedback on how a situated communication pedagogy works across various classroom environments.

There are several ways that course implementation support can be accomplished. For example, at UNCC, faculty participate in two informal peer group feedback sessions—one toward the beginning of the semester and one toward the end of the semester—during the semester they are teaching their communication intensive course. The purpose of these sessions is to provide both facilitator and peer support and allow faculty to discuss what is and is not working. In addition, faculty are encouraged to contact the CxC administrators with any questions or challenges they have while teaching the course. In this way, faculty receive ongoing support, advice, and encouragement for their teaching practice. At the same time, the CxC facilitators are able to assess the implementation phase to know what aspects of the professional development course need to be reinforced or revised in the future.

Best Practice #8: Provide Explicit Instruction and Feedback on Communication Assignment Design

For non-communication faculty, creating, planning, and evaluating communication assignments is challenging. Faculty express feeling overwhelmed, especially with providing feedback on, and evaluating, presentations and written assignments. "All that grading!" is a common negative refrain when faculty are assigned to teach communication intensive courses. Many problems emerge when communication assignments are not aligned with the course outcomes and when the criteria for communication assignments are unclear. Similar problems occur when high stakes communication assignments are due at the end of the semester with little to no scaffolding of competency development throughout the semester. Also, in some non-communication fields, it is common to find misperceptions about teaching and learning communication competencies. For example, faculty may believe that effective feedback on speech outlines and paper drafts equates to marking all errors. Dannels, Gaffney, Kedrowicz, and Roth's (2014) model for planning communication assignments is an excellent departure point for guiding faculty through the process of communication assignment design. Faculty should first answer explicit questions on their planned assignments about alignment with course

outcomes; they then identify and map the scaffolding needs for their students to achieve the desired learning outcomes of the assignment.

Based on this map, faculty can sequence a major communication assignment so that students have the opportunity to learn from a draft-feedback-revision process. Faculty then can plan for low stakes assignments that provide learning scaffolds for a major assignment. Finally, facilitators should work with faculty on developing a formative feedback and summative evaluation plan for major assignments. Formative feedback should include a combination of instructor-, peer-, and self-feedback throughout the semester. It is useful to share with faculty examples of how to incorporate these different sources of formative feedback across the development of a major assignment. Having gone through this guided process of communication assignment design, faculty then are able to create robust learning activities that intentionally provide students opportunities to develop communication skills and engage deeply with the content area.

Best Practice #9: Gather Meaningful Feedback

Facilitators should take necessary steps to gather feedback from participants that provides meaningful data on faculty learning and engagement as well as program assessment. The CxC program at UNCC utilizes self-report data from faculty, both immediately following each module and in follow-up sessions during and after the implementation semester. This feedback gathering not only allows for ongoing assessment and minor revision of the development modules while faculty are engaging in them, but also for developing a more holistic understanding of the value of the professional development course in transforming teaching practice. This feedback can be invaluable in presenting arguments for sustaining support of the professional development course specifically and the CxC program generally.

Best Practice #10: Offer Incentives and Champion Faculty Efforts

As stated in the Guiding Principles for CxC (Dannels et al., 2014), faculty should be offered incentives for their participation. Individual stipends for faculty who complete the professional development course are an excellent way to reward work on improving teaching. However, if financial incentives are not possible, there are other ways to celebrate and champion faculty participants. These ways include (a) actively recruiting participants for presentation of their work at local, regional, and national conventions or conferences; (b) sending letters of recognition for all participants to their department chair as well as their college dean; (c) hosting a reception to recognize all faculty participants in which the provost and college deans also are invited; (d) organizing a campus showcase for faculty to share their work in developing communication intensive courses, which can be done in partnership with other campus programs that may host similar events (e.g., Center for Teaching and Learning); (e) featuring faculty participants on the program website and in the program newsletter. Regardless of how participants are celebrated and championed, it is best to shine a spotlight on them in any way possible. By doing so, CxC facilitators can contribute to building a campus culture where teaching and learning excellence is honored and appreciated.

Conclusion

These 10 best practices are derived from experience designing and implementing a professional development course grounded in a situated communication pedagogy framework. Using a communication-centered approach to professional development has a positive impact on individual non-communication faculty participants and increases knowledge about the value and centrality of communication in teaching and learning as a whole. The best practices of facilitating communication-centered professional development are adaptable to CxC programs and initiatives of different size and scale at other campuses.

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