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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the relationship between students' communication apprehension levels and their attitudes toward the use of video recording in a basic speech course. A communication apprehension measure and a questionnaire on perceptions of videotape use in class were completed by 230 undergraduate basic speech students. The findings demonstrated a moderate relationship between communication apprehension level and both willingness to be videotaped and attitude toward class use of videotaping. A majority of students' comments were self-related, focusing, for example, on how students might be viewed by others when videotaped, and indicating a connection between self-concept and degree of communication apprehension. The findings suggest that speech teachers should use videotaping cautiously in beginning courses. Student skills are more likely to be enhanced in advanced elective courses where the levels of communication apprehension are generally lower. (HTH)

COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AND THE USE OF VIDEO-TAPES

by

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COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AND THE USE OF VIDEO-TAPES

The use of video taping in the education field has been in vogue since the early 1950's (McCroskey and Lashbrook, 1970). In fact, one of the early studies of its use (Wooley, 1960) was a report of the "potential utility" of the video-recorder in the classroom. Wooley reports on its use as a feedback device and the attendant "fears" of classroom teachers that they might be replaced within a decade by a "Master" teacher on video-tape. Needless to say, teachers have yet to be replaced. However, Wooley did identify several concepts that still prevail. For instance, he noted that students who viewed themselves on video tape become "more attentive to appearance of themselves, to their facial expressions, movements, gestures, than they were to the sounds of their voices" (p. 138).

Wooley also reported that there was "shock" at the early recordings, some members anticipation and embarrassment due to errors and a general "modesty" more than pride, even when performances were excellent.

In the twenty-odd years since Wooley's report, a number of uses and studies have been reported in the literature concerning the use of the video-recorder in the classroom. Of prime importance has been the effect of the video-recorder on learning. Bradley (1970) found that the use of the video-recorder did not lower scores on tests in the "Fundamentals of Oral Communication" class. However, he also reported that its use did not affect the speaking ability of students or the attitudes of students toward the course. Constant use, however, did increase students' attitudes.

Deihl, Breen and Larson (1970) used the video-recorder to attempt to

eliminate nonfluencies in speaking. They found that the use of the television camera was better than the student self-correction method, but not as successful as the use of the video recording combined with teacher criticism.

Another study of the use of television in the classroom (McCroskey and Lashbrook, 1970) indicates that the use of the video recordings as a teaching aid can make either a positive or a negative difference in meeting the course objectives. They conclude that "showing the student speaker his speech on video-tape works directly counter to the goals of the course and those of many other speech educators" (p. 205). The goals of the courses, as presented in their course syllabus were to "increase the students' insight into the communication process, and to direct his attention to the reactions of his audience and the audience rather than to himself and his delivery" (p. 201). It seems, then, that McCroskey and Lashbrook would agree with Bradley's (1970) observations of student focus in observing video recordings.

In contrast to the previous research are two studies. Porter and King (1972) found that in oral interpretation classes students improved instructor ratings of their oral interpretation performance, as compared to students with no feedback. They attribute their findings in part to the differences to be found in public speaking classes and oral interpretation classes and the aesthetic impact involved with the later.

Mulac (1974) found that students who viewed video tapes were significantly better than students who heard audio tapes, and were absent from class less. In fact, he concluded that the "video tape students improved an average of forty percent more than their counterparts in overall

speaking ability."

A second area of concern in the use of video-tapes has been student attitudes toward the course, the instructor, and the use of video taping. Bradley (1970) found that one-time use of a video recorder made no difference in student attitudes toward the course, but constant use caused them to have a "significantly more favorable attitude toward the Intellectual Atmosphere and the Content Evaluation of the course" (p. 166). Goldhaber and Kline (1972) found that students who viewed themselves had a significantly better attitude toward the use of the video taping and the instructor. They do hasten to explain that a possible explanation for their findings may be "experimenter bias" since the experimenters conducted the classes and may have allowed their enthusiasm to affect the results of the study.

A third concern of video-taping student presentations is the affect it has on the student's self-concept. Giffin and Gilham (1971) indicate that "the self-confident speaker is one who is willing to rely upon his speech ability in a communication situation; speech anxiety is shown by a person's unwillingness or reluctance to rely upon himself in a communication situation. His self concept is at stake. . ." (p. 70). Henrikson (1943) determined that speech training (a speech class) gives students more self-confidence. If, however, the speaking situation is combined with the use of video tape, what is the result? Dieker, Crane and Brown (1971) found that students who viewed themselves on video-tape increased significantly less in their actual self-ratings than did non-viewers, but they also reported that self-viewing produces a more realistic self-concept.

Roberts (1972) goes a step further. He reports an interaction between

"success" in the speaking situation and self-image. As the self-concept decreases, the ability to communicate effectively also decreases. Each time the student with a low self-concept "fails" he reinforces his low self-esteem.

In addition, Hirschfeld (1968) and Frandsen, Larson and Knapp (1968) found that viewing oneself on videotape can alter the self-concept. Given the operational definitions of self-concept and Communication Apprehension it would seem that the two are inextricably intertwined, and highly correlated. The person with a low self-concept has high Communication Apprehension. We already know that Communication Apprehension negatively impacts learning (McCroskey, 1977) in that the student with high Communication Apprehension will avoid class, if possible, and that his high apprehension interferes with the successful completion of assignments, McCroskey further reports that students who are highly apprehensive score significantly lower on the ACT and SAT. They also have lower grade point average and score lower on objective tests and teacher evaluated written projects than do less apprehensive students.

So far, only one study reports the effects of the use of video taping and Communication Apprehension. Bush, Bittner and Brooks (1972) found that there was no difference in the levels of anxiety and the use of a video-recorder for subjects speaking before an audience.

Personal experience with the use of video-recordings both confirms and disconfirms the previous research. I have used the video-recorder with both high school and college students in classroom situations and in coaching forensics. My observations of students in these situations is that the initial response of students is a reaction of the negative aspects

of their self-concepts and a raising of the Communication Apprehension level. Repeated use with low communication apprehensives tends to lessen the level of apprehension, and results in positive changes, while the high communication apprehensives tend to maintain or confirm their low self-concept and do not improve in speech skills.

I was most surprised two years ago with a forensics student who had been to the national tournament two years and at the time was the anchor on the local TV station, I assumed that she would have no apprehension of video-taping, however, she was as vocal as any other student trying to persuade me that she didn't need to be video-taped. Her response to my surprised reaction was that on TV she didn't have to look at herself.

It seems, then, that a number of potential factors are involved in the use of videotape as a teaching tool. From previous research, it seems that we can possibly increase student skill levels or waste our time in using the videorecorder with our students. It is my contention that the use of video recorders will enhance the skill levels of students who have high self-concepts or who are low communication apprehensives. On the other hand, we may do no more for a student with a low self-concept or high communication apprehension than confirm that already poor image s/he has. If this is true, then as speech teachers we need to be very cautious in our use of the video recorder in the speech class.

This research is a preliminary study undertaken to investigate the relationship between students' Communication Apprehension levels and their attitudes toward the use of video recording in the basic speech course. This group was chosen because it is the largest one available, and because it should have a wide range of communication apprehension

levels. At this time no formal hypotheses were formed, however, it was expected that there would be a high, positive relationship between the communication apprehension scores and students' attitudes toward the use of video recorders with them in the basic speech class.

PROCEDURE

At the beginning of the fall term 1983, 268 students in 15 sections of the Fundamentals of Speech course taught by 7 instructors at East Central Oklahoma University completed the PRCA, McCroskey's (1970) instrument for measuring Communication Apprehension. During the class session preceeding the first speech in the class, instructors administered the second instrument (Appendix A), on which students responded to how they felt about the use of videotape in their Fundamentals of Speech class.

Because of students who had dropped the class before the first speech, students absent on that day, plus five instruments that were not complete, only 230 students completed both instruments are are included in this study. Students were representative of all levels of undergraduate classes: 117 were Freshmen; 74 were Sophomores; 25 were Juniors; and 14 were Seniors. In addition, 133 were females and 97 were males.

Results of the surveys were submitted to a Pearson Correlation analysis to determine the correlation between the PRCA scores and the students' reactions to the use of videotaping in their classroom. The first three questions were to test their immediate reactions to the use of videotaping with them, and the semantic differential scales were used to assess the students' generalized reactions to the use of videotaping in the Fundamentals of Speech course.

RESULTS

Results of the data analyses show a moderate correlation between students' responses to questions A, B, and C on the survey, plus their generalized attitude toward the use of video recording in their speech classes. Table 1 lists means and standard deviations for all variables; Table 2 shows the Pearson Correlation Coefficients. Tests of significance were significant beyond the .001 level. Results supported the expectations of the researcher, but were not as high as were anticipated.

The seven-item semantic differential scale appears to be a unidemensional scale as all correlations were between .3427 and .4607 (see table 3), very close to the overall correlation of the seven items. However, a Factor Analysis was not computed to determine that.

Responses to question D on the survey indicated six general areas of responses for all students. The largest category was "videotaping would make me more nervous," which 65 students indicated. Another 53 responses showed that the students were bothered by other people viewing them on the videotape. Another 34 students indicated that it was something new and different, and that was what bothered them, while 33 responded that they were bothered by having to view themselves on the videotape and what they might look like, and 28 indicated that they might not be prepared quite enough and make some mistakes that would be kept and looked at forever by others. The smallest category was the "I don't know" or "I haven't got a reason" category, to which 11 responded. There were 26 students who did not respond to this question, as per instructions. The total of responses is 250, more than the number of students in the study because some students made responses that fit more than one category.

DISCUSSION

This study was a preliminary investigation of the relationships between videotaping and communication apprehension in the classroom. First, the level of Communication Apprehension was assessed by using the PRCA, and then students were asked to respond to a survey which asked for their perceptions about the use of videotaping in the fundamentals of speech class. The findings demonstrated a moderate relationship between the communication apprehension level and a student's willingness to be videotaped and the student's attitude toward the use of videotaping in his/her basic speech class.

While these findings are not earth-shattering, they do tend to suggest that as speech teachers we ought to be cautious in our use of videotaping with students until we can find more substantive knowledge regarding the results. We can help some students with their speech skills, it seems, while doing little more than confirming negative self-concepts in others. The likelihood of enhancing students' skills lies more in advanced courses where most of the students select the course and the levels of communication apprehension are generally lower. This may, in part, help explain why Porter and King (1972) found that videotaping helped improve students skills while Deihl, et al. (1970), Bradley (1970) and others found not significant improvement in students' skills. It may also account for the reasoning given by Woolley that students become overly couscious of their appearances and how they look, and not pay too much attintion to their voices(1960). It also helps explain why students on my Forensics teams may not want to be videotaped, but seem to improve significantly after seeing their presentations.

In looking more closely at the statements of the students, we find that a majority of the statements deal with the self and how they may be viewed by others. Some are personal statements like, "I don't take good pictures." and "I may not like the way I look on tape." Others are statements that may be interpretated as being self-related, like "I may screw up and then it would be on tape for everyone to see, and who knows how long or who might see it." The statements about others seeing the tape plus the statements about making mistakes, and the statements about not wanting to see oneself on video all seem to be related to the self-concept. It may be a good bet that the statements about being more nervous are also feelings closely related to the self-concept; these people just haven't been as open, or don't know why they are more nervous.

Let us not hastily make the assumption that high communication apprehension causes students to not learn from videotaping in our classes. There appears to be a relationship between communication apprehension and students' attitudes toward the use of videotaping with them, however, much more research is needed before we draw too many conclusions and begin making suggestions for its use or non-use with our basic speech courses.

Some of the next questions we need to answer are: (1) what makes the students nervous? (2) Is it communication apprehension or is it self-concept that prevents some students from using the videotapes to improve their skills? Or is it a combination of the two? (3) Can we reasonably expect students in all of our upper-level courses to benefit more from the use of videotaping than students in the basic speech course? (4) Does videotaping make students more apprehensive? Does its continued

use reduce the amount of apprehension? While this list is not exhaustive, it does provide a beginning for more research that should lead us to better conclusions about the use of videotape with our students.

The preliminary study has been an initial attempt to establish a relationship between communication apprehension and the use of videotape with speech classes. The findings suggest a moderate relationship between apprehension levels and students' willingness to be videotaped and their attitudes toward videotaping in their basic speech classes. The findings also suggest a number of directions for research with videotaping and communication apprehension. Indeed, more depth must be accomplished with actual videotaping being a part of the research with both high and low communication apprehensives in both basic courses and uppper-level classes.

In some respects, this study raises more questions than it answers with respect to communication apprehension and videotaping. This is as exploratory research should be--to find out initial directions for future research and to raise questions that need responses. If this study serves as the impetus for other researchers to begin addressing these questions, and we need to soon because this is the age of "video", it has served its purpose well.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations

	X	Std. Dav.
PRCA	75.409	15.227
A	3.035	1.276
B	2.648	1.176
C	2.704	1.171
Attitude	18.896	9.394

Table 2. Pearson Correlation Coefficients

	A	B	C	Attitude
PRCA	.4044	.4446	.5627	.4337
	s=.000	s=.000	s=.000	s=.000

Table 3. Individual correlations of Semantic Differential Scale

Good-Bad	Wise-Foolish	Beneficial-Harmful	Right-Wrong
.4607	.4484	.4386	.3427

Negative-Positive	Useful-Useless	Valuable-Worthless
.3681	.4606	.4337

Significance level on all correlations is .000

Appendix A

NAME_____ ID#_____

Instructor_____ Class hour/day_____

The members of the speech department are always working to update teaching techniques and methods of feedback. In an effort to help us, we are seeking some volunteers from several instructor's classes who will allow us to video-tape their speeches. Please complete the information below by circling the number that most appropriately refelects your opinions and feelings at this time. Your participation or desire not to, in no way will be reflected in the grade you receive in this class.

A. Would you agree to be video-taped during your next speech?

1. Definitely, I would like to do it.
2. I could, but I would rather not.
3. Maybe, it depends on how it turns out.
4. I don't want to be video-taped.
5. No Way! I don't want to be video-taped.

B. Would you agree to be video-taped later in the semester?

1. Definitely, I would like to do it.
2. I could, but I would rather not.
3. Maybe, it depends on how it turns out.
4. I don't want to be video-taped.
5. No Way! I don't want to be video-taped.

C. Would video-taping bother you?

1. Not at all
2. A little
3. Somewhat
4. Quite a bit
5. Very much

D. If you circled 2, 3, 4, or 5 in question C explain briefly what bothers you about video-taping.

E. Circle the number on the scales below that most nearly reflect your feelings about the use of video recordings in this class.

Good	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Bad
Wise	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Foolish
Beneficial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Harmful
Right	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Wrong
Positive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Negative
Useful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Useless
Valuable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Worthless

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FACTOR ANALYSIS RESULTS

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Good-Bad	.84935	.22684
Wise-foolish	.86835	.09014
Benefical-Harmful	.87708	-.20727
Right-Wrong	.82132	.28602
Positive-Negative	.87036	.09350
Useful-Useless	.89410	-.27890
Valuable-Worthless	.90035	-.17335

Factor	Eigenvalue	Pct of Var
1	5.28685	94.6
2	.30092	5.4

A Factor analysis was performed and added at the last minute. Data are included here and presented at the SCA convention.

Correlation Coefficients

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.00000						
.76625	1.00000					
.70701	.75391	1.00000				
.76042	.73350	.65334	1.00000			
.75247	.76358	.73122	.75051	1.00000		
.68541	.75347	.83804	.65550	.76339	1.00000	
.72865	.75101	.82947	.69575	.76856	.85442	1.00000