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interviewed. Results of the analysis of this data indicated that students
performed as well or better than students in other interpersonal
communication classes. Findings suggest that the results need to be
interpreted with caution, given the small sample and unusual conditions of
the course. (Contains 3 tables of data and 26 references; sample forms and
test results are appended.) (Author)

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING MEDIA
TO TEACH INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION:
A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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RUNNING HEAD: EFFECTIVENESS OF USING MEDIA

2

Abstract

Using media in communication courses often is recommended; yet, almost no data exists regarding its efficacy in achieving course objectives. This study provides a preliminary assessment of the effectiveness of using media as the primary pedagogical technique in two accelerated interpersonal communication courses taught at a large state university. Students watched seven full-length feature films, two television programs, and clips from six other films; they participated in group discussions about interpersonal concepts and completed homework assignments for each film. Two objective exams were administered to the students (to assess comprehension), as well as pre-tests/post-tests on interpersonal concepts and communication apprehension. When the course was completed, selected students were interviewed. Results of the analysis of this data indicated that students performed as well or better than students in other interpersonal communication classes. However, the results need to be interpreted with caution, given the small sample and unusual conditions of the course.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING MEDIA TO TEACH INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

Many have argued that the use of media, especially film and television programs, in the communication classroom can be key to the understanding of many current theoretical concepts (e.g. Shields and Kidds, 1973; Jensen, 1981; Haefner and Metts, 1990; Proctor and Adler, 1991; Vande Berg, 1991; Winegarden, Fuss-Reineck and Charron, 1993). As Proctor and Adler observe, recent research "suggests that film use is popular and probably extensive in the communication classroom, particularly in classes focused on interpersonal communication, an area of study well-matched for feature film storylines and characterizations" (p. 393). They argue that interpersonal communication courses "can be enriched through the incorporation of several full-length feature films" (p. 398). According to Haefner and Metts, effectiveness of media in the classroom is due to the relationship which exists between interpersonal communication and media. They refer to both television and film when asserting that "media provide(s) unique opportunities to observe otherwise inaccessible relational phenomena" (p. 14). Haefner and Metts argue that the interactions in media between people "are, at the very least, prototypes of interaction episodes enacted in real life, and as such, are reasonable domains of investigation for communication scholars" (p. 17).

This view is supported by Gumpert and Cathcart (1986) in their book Inter/Media: Interpersonal Communication in a Media World, where they state "it is misleading to study interpersonal communication and pretend that media do not influence the nature of the phenomenon" (p. v). They assert that they began exploring the impact of media "with the belief that the acceleration of media (technological innovation) has had an impact on all our relationships . . . media have affected what we know, who and what we talk about, who talks to us, and who listens" (pp. 9-10). In The Chronicle of Higher Education, Thomas J. DeLoughry (1994) discusses a seminar sponsored by C-SPAN in January

of this year that focused on the use of video to improve the way teachers teach across disciplines. In this article, John Splaine, a professor of education communications at the University of Maryland states "we need to help [the students] learn to think critically about [the media] in the same way we teach them to think critically about language .... we need to teach young people the language of visuals" (cited in DeLoughry p. A25). The importance of electronic media also is indicated by Meyrowitz, who argues that such media "not only affect the way people behave, but they eventually affect the way people feel they should behave . . . further breaking down distinctions between private and public information systems" (p. 175; see also Fredin, 1983).

Although this connection between media and interpersonal communication is assumed, data regarding student outcomes in a course using extensive media to teach interpersonal concepts is unavailable (although some evidence from sociology suggests that students learn as much in classes using films as without; see Smith, 1973 and 1982). We generally believe that such data would be useful, whether it supported or challenged the use of media as an effective teaching tool in communication classrooms. We designed this pilot study to determine some preliminary findings about the effectiveness of media as a major pedagogical strategy, using data collected in two accelerated sections of interpersonal communication taught at a large state university in spring, 1994.[1] We were interested in whether or not students did improve in their understanding and application of relational theory after viewing numerous films (and television programs), as assessed through homework assignments, examination performances, and the administration of a pre-test/post-test on interpersonal concepts. We also were interested in whether or not students perceived improvements in themselves, and if they found such a course useful.

Review of Literature

While numerous communication scholars have advocated the use of mediated examples and discourse as a supplemental teaching tool in varied classroom situations, few have explored the use of media as a primary teaching tool. Further, no communication studies were located which gathered any substantial data from students enrolled in a class actively using media to teach interpersonal concepts. Most often, the effectiveness of using media in the classroom is rationalized on the basis of other factors besides student outcomes, such as student comfortability with media, and the idea that media provide a quasi-realistic illustration of "communication processes in action" (Procter, 1990, p. 4; see also Procter and Adler, 1991). While some have questioned the effectiveness of media portrayals (both film and television programs) in realistically portraying communication concepts, they still have supported limited use of media in the classroom. For example, Ulrich (1986) argued that while films were not accurate portrayals of communication theories, thus could not be used to test hypotheses about such theories, films could be used to "suggest new ways of looking at old problems" (p. 150). Fitzpatrick (1991) concluded that, despite difficulties in matching theory to media examples of marital interactions, students perceive they have gained useful information after examining television programs for a course assignment (p. 218).

Shields and Kidd (1973) looked at the use of The Poseidon Adventure to illustrate small group communication principles. Their article supports the use of media as a teaching tool, since "speech communication theory attempts to explain communication in society, and film attempts artistically to reproduce communication on the screen" (p. 201). They conclude that popular films can be used "to enhance student understanding of communication theory, to stimulate discussion and research questions, and to serve as the basis for a variety of student assignments" (p. 207). Although they discuss the communication concepts in The Poseidon Adventure in depth, and make good suggestions for how the film can be used in the small group communication class, they provide no specific data demonstrating that enhanced understanding by students has, indeed, occurred.

Another early argument for the pedagogical use of media (novels, plays, and films), specifically tied to interpersonal communication, was made by Jensen (1981). His purpose was to "offer examples of theoretical concepts which can be illustrated through literature and popular film" (p. 3). Jensen concludes that "film can help us to better understand and appreciate the intricacies of human communication" (p. 12). Although he makes thoughtful recommendations, he makes no attempt to provide empirical data assessing if literature and popular films do meet such lofty goals.

Proctor (1991) also examined the use of films in small group communication, exploring how Twelve Angry Men and The Breakfast Club illustrate group processes such as persuasion, role emergence, and conflict management. By suggesting the use of discussion questions and critical essays, Proctor demonstrates concretely how media can be effective in obtaining understanding of course concepts. Although brief, his article provides both an application and a rationale for the regular use of film in the communication classroom; however, there is no measurement of student performance after exposure to these films.

A review essay by Winegarden, Fuss-Reineck, and Charron (1993) explores media use in the classroom, specifically focusing on providing a rationale for using television programs, especially Star Trek: The Next Generation, to teach basic communication concepts such as persuasion, family communication, and ethics. They conclude that "the insight and knowledge students receive in class should be directly applicable and relevant to their lives" (p. 187). However, they do not conduct a specific study to measure if Star Trek (or any television program) is perceived as such by their students.

The use of media in the classroom has increased across multiple disciplines. Given the reality that today's students are more visually oriented, it seems odd, however, that few authors recommend or consider the continued and consistent use of media as a primary teaching method. Vande Berg (1991), does look deeper into this possibility, exploring the use of media to teach courses in gender and communication, noting that using television programs in the classroom provide both "equipment for

living" and a versatile teaching tool (p. 106, citing Brummett 1985). Vande Berg argues that such programs "are designed to exnominate yet evoke, activate, reference, and occasionally challenge mainstream social myths, policies, and beliefs," especially as regards issues of diversity (p. 105). In addition to illustrating communication concepts, such programs "may also generate research questions and serve as data bases for student papers, projects, and discussions" (p. 110). Although Vande Berg makes a solid case for extensive application of media in the classroom, providing useful suggestions for how to incorporate various television shows into courses in gender and communication, she does not provide concrete data on how well students understand concepts about communication after viewing these television shows.

In many of these articles, strong points are made about the powerfulness of one or two television shows or movies for a plethora of applications. As Gumpert and Cathcart state

Just the time alone that we devote to media must have a profound effect on our

interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the process is cyclical. The media are dependent

on us to alter our relationships to accommodate the media, and the media in turn present

us with a picture of our altered relationships (p. 15).

In another essay, Cathcart and Gumpert (1983) argue that media both reflects and projects interpersonal behaviors, with individuals dependent upon media for the development of their self-images (p. 268). This view is supported by Bob Clarkson (personal communication, November 11, 1994), a Methodist Youth Fellowship Counselor and Human Resources Training Manager who sees media usage as imperative to the learning process. He states

you gotta give people tools to deal with reality. . . . We know that the people who are

under 30 grew up with T.V. They learned how to speak, some of the ways to act, their

posturing, and how people react to others through [T.V. and film]. . . . In my life

through human resources training management, working with youth and adults, I have

learned that if you use media, younger people will learn quickly and retain more.

Informal observations and assumptions like these appear valid, because they conform to our beliefs about

the pervasive influence of media on contemporary students. We believe, however, that more explicit

indicators of student performance are useful in justifying the extensive use of film and television in

interpersonal communication classes.

Methodology

The genesis of this project occurred when an unique opportunity arose for one of us to teach and

conduct research overseas, with the stipulation that six credit hours of a normal twelve credit hour load

had to be completed prior to the departure date (a period of five weeks). It was decided that the six hours

would be met by teaching two accelerated sections of Interpersonal Communication (a three credit hour

course). Although these two classes could have been structured much like summer semester courses,

meeting for two hours four times a week, two constraints prevented this option. The first was the

concern that the accelerated sections would overlap the regular semester classes, and thus not attract

students. The second was that any variant courses had to be offered in the afternoon or evening. While

weekend sections were considered, it was finally determined to offer the two sections in four-hour long

blocks twice a week, from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Monday/Wednesday and from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday

and Thursday. The courses were to begin January 10, 1994 and end on February 10, 1994.

It was apparent immediately that this unusual situation would lend itself to an experimental

structuring of the class. Clearly, the standard lecture-discussion format of the regular semester-long

interpersonal communication class would be problematic for such long blocks of time. Because several

members of the faculty were interested in using media more frequently in their interpersonal

communication sections, the instructor of record decided to structure the classes so that each period would

center on a media text appropriate to one or more interpersonal concepts. It was believed that such a format would also interest students. However, because the course, Interpersonal Communication, is part of the General Education program at our university, with twelve specific student outcomes required for each section [see Appendix A], concerns were raised about how such extensive use of media texts would achieve those outcomes.[2] To create a rationale for teaching interpersonal communication through media, we researched how others had used media in communication classrooms. We discovered that almost no empirical data existed validating common assumptions that such media use was effective in achieving student outcomes. Therefore, this pilot research project was conceived with the aim of collecting data on whether or not the students in the accelerated sections were achieving the outcomes at a level similar to the regular course sections.

Clearly, the gathering of data for this project had to be informal, since the nature of the course prohibited a direct comparison to interpersonal communication courses taught without media. We designed the project to collect information with both quantitative and qualitative methods. However, we knew from the start that our results would be tentative. We were not aiming for generalizability of results; instead, we merely sought some preliminary indicators as to whether or not extensive media use could enhance student performance.

On the first day of class, we introduced the students to the research project. Forty-six students had enrolled in the two sections, and all agreed to participate in the project (however, one did not grant permission to use information from the homework assignments). One student dropped after three weeks. That left forty-five students; thirty-one were female, and fourteen were male. Several were non-traditional students (over age twenty-five), two were international students, and three were African-American. Majors included Communication (eight students), Biology (seven students), Education (four students), Art (three students), Business (three students), plus various technical majors such as Nursing,

Drafting, Hotel Management, Medical Technology, and Industrial Hygiene. Four students were "Undecided." Most of these students had little or no previous exposure to communication courses.

In addition to filling out permission forms and data sheets, each student at that initial meeting completed three written instruments:

1)   The Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24; McCroskey, 1982; available in DeVito, 1992, pp. 132-133). This instrument, widely recognized as a reliable measure of communication apprehension, is routinely administered in both interpersonal communication and public speaking classes because many students are highly communication apprehensive. The scores on the PRCA-24 range from 6 to 30 in each of four categories (Group, Meeting, Interpersonal, and Public Speaking), with higher scores reflecting higher apprehension levels.

2)   The Texas Social Behavior Inventory (TSBI; see Helmreich and Stapp, 1974; short form available in Spence and Helmreich, 1978, pp. 234-236). This is a sixteen-item instrument "composed of statements designed to assess the individual's self-confidence and competence in social situations" (Spence and Helmreich, p. 38). Items are rated 0-4, with a range of scores 0 to 64. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

3)   The Interpersonal Communication Survey I (Verderber, Berryman-Fink, and Verderber, 1989). This survey is part of a pre-test/post-test competency measure, requiring students to choose the most appropriate response to "twenty hypothetical interpersonal situations" covering "Empathy, Descriptiveness, Owning Thoughts and Feelings, and Self-Disclosure" (pp. 5-7). Four possible options are provided, and scores can range from 20 to 80, with the higher scores indicating greater interpersonal competency.

Students also were given a "Personal Communication Goals" assignment which included completing two self-appraisal inventories, then writing a short paper describing the student's communication style and semester goal(s). Such an assignment is required in all interpersonal communication courses taught at our university [see Appendix A, outcome #12]. Students were introduced to the structure of the remaining class days, and asked to rank order a list of possible films for the semester.

Deciding what films or television programs to show to students is always difficult. Although initially we had thought we might show several television shows (especially soap operas and situation comedies), we decided to emphasize feature films for several reasons. One was the fact that four-hour class sessions seemed ideal to test the usefulness of films, most of which range in length from ninety minutes to over three hours. Next, films were easily available through the university library or local video-rental outlets (as well as from our own collections). Finally, we had concerns over violation of copyright. It seemed using film would best meet the test of "fair use" outlined in the copyright code, since, as Winegarden, Fuss-Reineck, and Charron point out, "it is illegal to record programs off the air and continue to use them in the classroom without getting permission to do so in a reasonable amount of time" (p. 180; see also Procter and Adler, p. 398). However, using current popular films creates other problems. Procter and Adler warn that since "feature films are entertaining, students may at times lose sight of the educational agenda" (p. 395). Yet, while classic films can be useful, "students generally respond more positively to contemporary, widely-distributed movies" (p. 395). Maynard (1971) also observes that popular films may not be viewed as educational. He suggests that films should be chosen which "have some basic relationship to the students' own experiences, to give them some basic something with which to identify" (p. 214).

After much discussion about which films we might use, we generated a list of fifty feature films, which were divided into seven units (corresponding to the remaining class days): Perception/Cultural Differences, Emotions/Self-Awareness/Esteem, Self-disclosure/Listening, Relational

Development/Attraction, Friendship, Love/Dysfunctional Romance, and Family/Conflict [see Appendix B]. We wanted student input into the selection of the films, but clearly stated that we would make the final choice based on this input (and availability). We wound up showing seven full-length films to correspond with the units listed above: The Color Purple, Fried Green Tomatoes, The Breakfast Club, When Harry Met Sally, Stand By Me, Sleeping With the Enemy, and The War of the Roses. In addition, we showed clips from several other films, part of a PBS documentary on how films are made (to accompany a lecture on "how to watch films critically"), an current episode of "Home Improvement" (ABC) to illustrate axioms of communication, and a segment from "20/20" (ABC) describing research which predicts marital discord and dissolution.

For each class period, we assigned relevant chapters in DeVito, The Interpersonal Communication Book, 6th Edition (1992); students were quizzed daily on the material from these chapters, for a total of seven quizzes, with the two lowest scores dropped (each quiz was worth 10 points, or 50 points total). Eight written assignments were created to enhance student performance, each worth up to 25 points, for a final total of 200 points (approximately 35% of the final grade). For each film, we developed a set of five questions, corresponding to the concepts from the chapters and lectures [see samples, Appendix C].

Students wrote responses which were submitted the next class period. Because some of the films were quite long (e.g. The Color Purple), class discussion often was limited. However, we were able to place the students in small groups to discuss The Breakfast Club, Stand By Me, and Sleeping With the Enemy. In addition, students participated in four structured in-class experiential activities--a perceptual processes exercise (DeVito, 1990, p.8); a quiz on active listening skills; a dyadic interaction, using a rating scale adapted from Hurt-Spitzberg (1984) to assess the quality of the interaction between self and other (required in each section of interpersonal communication); and a conflict strategies quiz (DeVito, 1992, pp. 345-346). Students also wrote a short homework assignment analyzing a personal relationship in their lives, and completed a written self-assessment of their progress toward the goal(s) set at the start

of the class. We also permitted 10 extra points to be earned by completing one of the experiential vehicles in DeVito (1992). Finally, two objective examinations on course concepts were administered, one at midterm, and the other on the last day of class. Both exams consisted of twenty-five true-false items and fifty multiple-choice items, and counted for 50% of the final grade. These exams were constructed with a combination of new items, which specifically applied course concepts to the films, and previously used items (at least twenty items per exam were tested through 400 or more students) [see Appendix D for sample exam items].
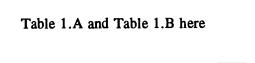
On the final course day, students were retested on the PRCA-24 and the "Interpersonal Communication Survey I" (although a "Survey II" was available, we chose to keep the questions identical for ease of scoring). Through an oversight, we did not readminister the TSBI; hence we did not include those scores in the results section. Students also completed a course evaluation. After the final grades were determined, approximately 20 of the students were interviewed. Some of these interviews were tape-recorded, then transcribed. Eight months later, follow-up interviews were given to five students (four females and one male) [see Appendix E for questions].

Analysis of Results

Quantitative Data

Pre-test/Post-test Results

Because this study is preliminary, statistical procedures were not run on the numerical data collected (though that option remains a future possibility for some of the data). Instead, we have arranged the numerical data from the PRCA-24 and "Interpersonal Communication Survey I" into Tables 1.A and 1.B.

Table 1.A and Table 1.B here

The first surprise we received was in tabulating the results of the PRCA-24 scores. Thirteen students in Class #1 and eight students in Class #2 expressed more apprehension at the end of the course than at the start in the Interpersonal dimension. Five students in Class #1 and three students in Class #2 stayed the same for Interpersonal apprehension, while four students in Class #1 and eight students in Class #2 went down in Interpersonal apprehension. These results may be explained in part by the rushed nature of the course, which perhaps led to student overload by the end of the course (which occurred about the same time first examinations and papers might come due in other classes). In addition, students in both classes completed the instrument before receiving the final examination for the course. Test-anxiety could have spilled over into the categories of the PRCA-24.
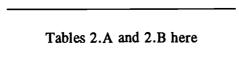
Results on the "Interpersonal Communication Survey I" were more encouraging; in nearly every case student scores improved. Some scores raised significantly. For example, in class #2, student #1 raised from 53 to 71 (a gain of 18 points), while student #7 raised from 35 to 59 (a gain of 24 points). Other students, such as #4, #13, #17, and #19, all raised their scores by at least 13 points. Student #2 decreased from 60 to 15 (a 15 point drop) while student #18 decreased from 68 to 66 (a 2 point drop). Eleven students achieved scores over 70 points in the post-test, compared to only one such score in the pre-test (80 points is the maximum). In class #1, student #7 raised from 50 to 73 (a gain of 23 points), while student #24 went from 56 to 70 and student #2 went from 50 to 64 (both gaining 14 points) . Other students, such as #3 and #20, raised their scores by at least 11 points. Only one student (#11) had a decreased score, and that was only one point (from 63 to 62); two others (#13 and #22) had scores which stayed the same. Eleven students achieved scores over 70 in the post-test, compared to only four such scores in the pre-test. It seems clear from these results that the students were improving in the four dimensions-- "Empathy, Descriptiveness, Owning Thoughts and Feelings, and Self-disclosure"--tested by the Verderber, Berryman-Fink, Verderber instrument.

<u>Examination Results</u>

Student performance on the two examinations was comparable to other sections of Interpersonal Communication taught by the instructor of record. Examination items were chosen to be a mix of difficulty levels (easy, moderate, and hard) and outcomes tested (knowledge, comprehension, and application). Both the midterm and the final examinations consisted of seventy-five total items (twenty-five true-false and fifty multiple-choice), each worth two points. Twenty-five of these items were new or revised, designed to apply course concepts to specific films (see Appendix D). Fifty of these items were from previous interpersonal communication examinations. On the midterm examination, twenty-four of these fifty were items that had been tested through 418 students (in nineteen different sections), included to assist in making preliminary comparisons across sections. The midterm examination results from students in the variant course sections as compared to prior performances are listed in Table 2.A.

Although several of these items received lower scores, six of them were either the same or improved. Improvement was more dramatic in the final examination. Twenty-two of the items were selected from prior examinations (tested through 418 students in nineteen different sections). The results of this examination, as compared to prior performances, are listed in Table 2.B. Thirteen of these twenty-two items reflect identical or improved scores; items #37 and #41 show the most improvement (22% and 26% respectively).

Tables 2.A and 2.B here

Although every effort was made to create a similar examination to the ones given in regular sections of interpersonal communication, comparisons with regular interpersonal communication courses are difficult, in part because the variant section was accelerated into five weeks (in a regular fifteen week semester, students in interpersonal communication are administered three exams of fifty items each). Some

improvement in scores might be due to the type of student who might select an accelerated class, combined with its intensity. However, overall student results in the variant sections were similar to a summer interpersonal communication class taught in six weeks. Summer classes also attract highly motivated students, and are equally intense. As noted in Table 3, the midterm examination mean and median scores for the variant section--76% and 77% respectively--are nearly identical to midterm mean and median scores for the summer, 1993 section (75% and 74% respectively). High scores and low scores similarly compare. In the variant section, the final examination mean and median scores--82% and 84% respectively--compare favorably to the final mean and median scores for the summer, 1993 section (80% and 84% respectively). While high scores are nearly identical, the low score in the variant section is much better than the low score in the summer, 1993 section (65% versus 48%).

_____

Table 3 here

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When the final grades were determined, the variant sections showed significant gains when compared to the summer, 1993 class (an average 3.24 GPA versus an average 2.74 GPA). However, such an average must be interpreted with caution, since the other assignments for the course were different in nature from those normally given in Interpersonal Communication. In addition, the quick grading required for the variant sections might have led to inflated scores for some of the homework (although some early assignments were double graded, we found ourselves unable to continue that practice for the later assignments). With these cautions in mind, this study provides some empirical support for the effectiveness of using media to teach interpersonal communication concepts, as measured in student performance.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was obtained through examination of homework assignments, and from feedback obtained during interviews with students, both immediately after the course was completed, and then eight months later.

Homework Assignments

A cross-section of the homework assignments was obtained from fifteen students (ten females, five males), representing work done at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester. In looking at the student's assignments over time, we found that the later assignments showed considerably more depth overall through the analysis of the movies and media texts. While some progress can obviously be attributed to a greater understanding of basic media concepts over the course of the class, much of the progress made by students in their written work clearly indicated greater understanding of interpersonal concepts, with the films serving as catalysts for that understanding, reflected in their often vivid examples and analogies.

From the first assignment, the students were informed that fifteen of the twenty-five points to be earned on the assignment were based on completeness and depth of answers. Therefore, as early as the second written assignment we saw students struggling to make connections to interpersonal concepts, as demonstrated by the following excerpt from a student's paper which explains complementary and symmetrical relationships, using the film The Color Purple as an illustration:

The relationship between Celie and Shug was at first very much complementary. One way that I say how they were different was in their behaviors and personalities. Celie was very modest and quiet and Shug was very loud. I think they developed more of a symmetrical relationship as the movie progressed.

Though this example may not be as complex as one we could have developed, it certainly illustrates how students began making linkages from the films to the basic concepts. This same student, in the fourth assignment about the film The Breakfast Club, showed a greater understanding of the concepts, through the use of examples and the friend/foe factor:

> Two of the obstacles to effective listening that really applied in this movie were preoccupation with self and friend or foe factor. Preoccupation with yourself is probably the most damaging. This is when you focus on your own performance in the interaction and or whether you're communication the right image. The friend or foe factor often makes us distort messages because of our attitudes toward another person. Claire really stood out to me. It seemed like all she cared about was herself and to me I didn't feel she was able to listen in an effective way . I thought all she wanted to do was talk about herself. Claire also fell under the friend or foe factor along with John Bender. Claire thought that Bender was just a hoodlum off the street and though he was nothing but a big show-off. He, on the other hand, thought she was nothing but a rich daddy's girl. Because they both had certain images and attitudes toward each other, I felt that they were not able to communicate or listen effectively.

Even students with poor writing skills and a bad track record for class participation and commitment made connections between concepts and examples in the film from the start of the class, as illustrated by the following example from a D-average student's discussion of The Color Purple:

> Celie used self-fulfilling prophecy with her sister and the Mister. When she said everything Mister would do would fail until the wrong's [sic] he did her were made right.

Another student's response to <u>Fried Green Tomatoes</u> focused on the development of self-concept from interaction with others:

>Evelyn does not think much of herself at the beginning. She hardly expresses herself and is always crying and eating junk food. Evelyn starts talking to Ninny at the nursing home. Ninny enjoys telling the stories as much as Evelyn enjoys listening to her stories. Evelyn used ideas from the stories and related them to her own life. An example was when she tore out the wall and pretended to be the wild Amazon woman she heard about in the stories.

Similar results were apparent as the students progressed through the assignments, demonstrating increased application of interpersonal concepts to the films. This is evident in a student's description of the various friendship functions as applied to the film <u>Stand By Me</u>:

>Gordy got his affirmation value met when they all wanted him to tell them one of his stories around the campfire. He gets ego support from Chris when he's crying to Chris, telling him that he feels he's no good and Chris keeps telling him that's not true . . . . Chris tries to encourage him and tell him that the reason his dad tells him he's no good is because [his dad] doesn't know him. . . . He gets security from Chris because he's able to open up to him and Chris doesn't make fun of him.

Another student shows similar understanding and integration in her second assignment when describing the idea of complementary and symmetrical relationships as applied to the film <u>The Color Purple</u>:

>In the case of Celie and her sister I believe that their relationship is both symmetrical and complementary. At times Celie's sister acted as a sort of teacher to her, she acted superior although she was younger. She was a sort of parental figure to Celie, she comforted and loved her more than anyone else in the world. At other times they seemed as if they were very much alike.

This same student shows noticeable progress in her later assignments where she brings in examples, quotations, and definitions from the DeVito textbook (1993) to clearly integrate incidences in the films as illustrations of important communication concepts. For example, in discussing the film Stand By Me, this student observed:

> These boys wrestled around and called each other names. They told disgusting stories
>
> and talked about women and their breasts. These are all stereotypical masculine
>
> characteristics. DeVito states "men's friendships are often based around shared activities
>
> . . . . " That is exactly what these boys do throughout the film . . . . Each boy cried at
>
> some point in the movie, this violates gender expectations.

This student continued on to make connections between the behavior between the boys in the film and her best friend, linking it up to the friendship value of stimulation. Such exciting progress was apparent in many of the students work as the course continued. In the seventh written assignment, based on the film Sleeping With The Enemy, many students showed an increased depth of understanding through examples and references to interpersonal concepts, as in the following student's paper:

> The triangular theory that describes their early relationship is infatuation. They seem to
>
> be quite passionate . . . . This changes over time with the amount of physical and mental
>
> abuse. It turns into empty love--just commitment. Martin starts out with partly an eros
>
> and partly a manic style of love. He's obsessed with Laura--a "princess"--that's why he's
>
> so controlling. She's not even "allowed" to get a real job. She would have her attention
>
> focused at home. Laura seems a little manic and alot agapic. She will do anything for
>
> him. She dresses and cleans and cooks the way he wants these things done.

By the end of the semester, students noticeably began making comments on their perceptions of the movies and how they fit in to the learning experience, expressing the view that almost any film would fit as an illustrator of interpersonal concepts, since such concepts are basic to the communication process.

One student, after using vivid examples from <u>Sleeping With the Enemy</u> to describe DeVito's (1993) five stages of relationship development, ends her paper with a comment reflecting how our perception has a great influence on how we use this information in the learning experience:

> I'm not sure if these sequences are even possible or if any of us really understand the
>
> concepts in relation to our own lives, it all depends on the situation or in this case how
>
> we perceive the movie.

From this we might conclude that although the students are obviously making connections from the films to the course concepts, they may not be understanding the real application of these concepts to their own lives. Our time constraints prevented us from initiating enough discussion with the students regarding integrating the media examples and course material with their own experiences.

Interview Results

Issues such as the pace of the course became apparent in our interviews with numerous selected students conducted both immediately following the course, and then eight months later [see Appendix E]. The interviews helped us gain a better understanding of why the students may have progressed in the way they did. It was obvious that students made an increasing number of connections between the films and course concepts as the course continued, because their homework and discussion answers appeared to be more insightful and thorough over time. However, in the initial follow-up interviews, several students expressed frustration with the time constraints (even though "the shortness of the class" was one reason why students enrolled). One student mentioned specifically that "five weeks is just not enough time to put interpersonal communication goals into practice" (relating to the Personal Goals Assignment, which included a written self-assessment of how well students were able to achieve an interpersonal goal set early in the semester). Other student complaints centered around how the homework was "too time consuming" and complex, taking up too much study time. One student thought the questions focused too much on the films, and not enough on concepts. Another stressed that it was "difficult to answer the way

I actually felt." Some students stated that there was not enough time provided in class to discuss how each film applied to the homework questions. In general, questions about the in-class discussions generated mixed responses, with several noting that "some small groups were better than others," and that there needed to be "more emphasis ... on actual IPC techniques." Yet the discussions were also viewed as helpful, not only with answering the homework questions, but also with "[getting] to know the other students better," and that it was "interesting to hear what others noticed."

More positively, many students expressed excitement over the integration of the media used and the concepts they were learning about. A student commented that one of the things they liked the best was the "strong relationship between the book material and the movie[s]." Another student mentioned that the homework assignments "urged you to look for symbolism," while others stressed how the course "provoked deeper thought" and "critical awareness" about the effects of movies on their lives. Many students claimed that the use of media allowed them to see basic concepts in a different light, noting that the media used "showed real relational interactions" which could be applied to their own relationships. One student thought the "movies worked great in the night class, made classes seem quicker," while another claimed to have "learned a lot for just five weeks."

This gain in knowledge was reconfirmed by the five students selected for the interviews done eight months after the completion of the course. We were interested in asking questions about the long-term impact of the course, especially the retention and application of interpersonal concepts. We hoped to gain a more "objective" view of the effectiveness of media use in the classroom. These five students retained positive memories of the course, with almost no change in their opinions about the usefulness of the course. Four out of the five clearly stated that they had noticed a significant difference in how they relate or interact with others as a result of the information they received from the course. In responding to the question concerning retention of specific concepts from the course, they were quick to

pull out concepts which demonstrated some obvious application of the course concepts to their lives. One student commented that "I view my relationship differently now and take responsibility for my part and I have an easier time now recognizing another person's lacking of interpersonal communication skills--I can reposition myself based on the techniques I learned." After being questioned about the composition and direction of the course, another student stated that the movies especially were helpful, stating that "to learn the stuff you have to analyze the relationships you can see and relate to, and, so you don't have to talk about yourself openly with others, you can use the characters in the films and television programs."

<div align="center">Conclusions and Recommendations</div>

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

Obviously there were many gains for the students enrolled in these interpersonal communication courses. Their performances lend credence to the assumption that using media to teach communication concepts is an effective way to help students understand and apply those concepts. In one of the follow-up interviews, a student observed that she not only had she "retained information," but also "my roommate has [interpersonal communication] now and she doesn't know as much as me now." Many of the students thought that the course was useful and beneficial. Another student contacted eight months later said that the "use of media is incredibly important [because] it gives real life situations. I found that very valuable to the learning process because I could see actual examples." Several students noted that they have recommended the course to others.

However, we want to stress that the results of this study are preliminary. There are other factors to be considered. While comprehension of concepts is certainly a very important part of any course, application of those concepts to one's life is also key. In order for this application to occur, the student must gather the appropriate tools from the course to succeed. These tools include an appropriate amount of class discussion, effective homework assignments, and clear integration of the topics through teaching

methodology just to name a few. Due to time constraints and lack of experience teaching a course using media as the primary teaching tool, it was difficult for us to address all of these needs thoroughly. Time constraints and course format probably had a significant impact on the application and integration of certain course concepts into student's lives.

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

Teaching Considerations

The main issue that arose in the course was the five-week format; over and over the students told us that the course would be much better if it were at least eight weeks long. However, trying to incorporate extensive films and television programs into a regular semester class would be difficult. Part of the advantages of the long class periods was the ability to show a film completely in one sitting; in addition, there was enough time to stop the videos from time to time to make pertinent points (or draw such points from the students). We suggest trying to teach such a class at night, or in the summer. Weekend courses are also a possibility.

Deciding to choose films partly on the basis of student rankings turned out to have mixed results. In later interviews, some students felt the "movies were good examples of the concepts," and that "if you had already seen the movie before, you could answer questions better, more analytical." However, others felt that "already seen movies may have led to prejudgments," or agreed with one student who stated that the instructor of record "should have used her best judgments about which movies she thought were best." Others wanted more television programs. In retrospect, the listing of films was too heavily slanted toward our preferences, which constrained choices. In the future, we will select films in advance. Several films could be added (such as Ordinary People, Best Friends, Rainman, etc.), while others could be deleted (in particular, students felt Sleeping With the Enemy was somewhat sensationalized and unrealistic).

The use of homework assignments worked well; however, we recommend that more time be spent in discussing the questions posed. When we had such discussions, written performances improved, as students helped each other see linkages between the films, the concepts, and their own lives. Next time we would simplify the questions asked, as not all generated the types of responses we had hoped to get.

Research Considerations

This study has its flaws, but we believe it provides information as yet unavailable regarding the effectiveness of using media as a primary pedagogical tool in communication classes. We believe additional work is necessary, to confirm or disconfirm the results we obtained. One such study could compare two classes, using one class as a type of "control group" (taught in a more traditional way), while the other would be the "experimental group" (taught using media). More rigorous design should be used to provide statistical evidence to either support or reject the assumption that using media enhances learning in a communication classroom.

Another study might focus more extensively on the gathering of qualitative data, using journals from students which could be critically assessed. Interviews could be longer and include more open-ended questions. In-class discussion about the films and television programs could be videotaped, then analyzed for evidence of student achievement. Such research would add significantly to our pedagogical wisdom, thus helping us become better teachers of interpersonal communication.

Notes

1. This course was proposed as a variant section of interpersonal communication; it primarily was taught by the instructor of record, an assistant professor who had previously taught 23 sections of IPC at this particular state university. Three graduate students assisted with both the course and the research project, as part of a "Special Projects" course. The students helped create the research design; helped prepare the list of films to be shown; administered and scored the daily quizzes; obtained permission forms from the students in the classes; obtained clearance for the study from the university's Human Subjects Committee; gathered additional research; helped grade the homework assignments; compiled numerical data from the pre-tests and post-tests; presented one lecture apiece; and conducted follow-up interviews with the students while the instructor of record was teaching overseas. One of these students also co-wrote this report.

2. In the regularly offered sections of interpersonal communication taught by the instructor of record, students meet these outcomes through extensive in-class activities; a dyadic interaction paper (assessing an interaction with another student), a "Personal Goals" paper (describing their communication style, setting a goal for the semester, then later assessing that goal), a paper analyzing a personal relationship in their lives), weekly quizzes, and three objective examinations. We attempted to keep these assignments as consistent as possible in the variant course. However, certain changes were necessary: 1) the three written papers became seven written homework assignments and one in-class activity; 2) only two exams were administered; and 3) far fewer structured in-class activities were assigned.

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Table 1.A   <u>PRE AND POST TEST RESULTS (CLASS #1)</u>

Number	PRCA-24 Pretest G.M.I.P*	PRCA-24 Posttest G.M.I.P*	IPC Pretest	IPC Posttest
1	16.22.23.23	21.25.23.26	71	73
2	15.19.16.24	18.23.16.25	50	64
3	10.11.11.21	N/A	60	71
4	9.10.6.30	10.16.6.30	46	55
5	17.23.18.27	23.25.20.24	57	66
6	13.15.12.17	14.15.14.18	60	62
7	14.13.6.21	13.17.10.17	50	73
8	10.12.10.12	10.12.11.13	62	70
9	14.23.20.24	23.26.18.25	51	60
10	10.22.17.23	N/A	59	66
11	16.22.17.26	14.15.14.21	63	62
12	14.12.18.24	22.24.24.26	74	79
13	19.17.22.19	23.21.23.19	48	48
14	12.24.14.30	N/A	62	66
15	15.15.15.22	19.19.19.18	70	78
16	15.21.17.20	12.14.17.16	60	69
17	8.10.12.17	12.12.9.17	62	65
18	8.11.8.12	7.7.12.9	66	67
19	19.13.6.18	16.16.12.18	66	73
20	16.19.13.28	18.22.18.23	59	70
21	22.12.12.23	N/A	74	71
22	20.24.24.30	12.17.24.28	64	64
23	16.19.20.19	11.23.15.26	66	71
24	20.22.13.22	22.24.14.27	56	70
25	6.8.6.6	12.20.16.12	63	68

*G = Group; M = Meeting; I = Interpersonal; P = Public Speaking Apprehension Scores

Table 1.B   PRE AND POST TEST RESULTS (CLASS #2)

Number	PRCA-24 Pretest G.M.I.P.*	PRCA-24 Posttest G.M.I.P.*	IPC Pretest	IPC Posttest
1	17.14.14.25	14.15.13.21	53	71
2	19.17.16.12	22.16.16.20	60	55
3	20.18.19.16	14.14.13.22	58	63
4	16.22.15.17	11.18.13.16	61	76
5	7.9.11.24	7.14.14.19	64	71
6	6.16.12.9	12.14.13.12	61	70
7	14.18.12.9	10.13.11.10	35	59
8	6.9.6.14	15.10.10.13	67	70
9	13.20.14.16	10.14.9.29	60	68
10	6.6.6.7	6.11.6.9	65	64
11	10.16.10.30	20.27.14.30	70	77
12	21.30.16.12	17.19.16.17	66	78
13	17.24.15.14	14.21.17.15	56	74
14	14.21.15.23	18.30.18.24	67	78
15	7.11.12.20	11.10.9.18	55	66
16	18.15.19.25	18.9.16.24	64	67
17	18.22.16.27	19.20.19.21	57	71
18	13.14.11.21	29.15.14.15	68	66
19	19.22.19.27	20.25.18.18	50	73
20	N/A	10.16.15.19	N/A	N/A

*G = Group; M = Meeting; I = Interpersonal; P = Public Speaking Apprehension Scores

Table 2.A   <u>MIDTERM EXAMINATION RESULTS (CLASSES #1 & #2)</u>

Selected items from prior exams pre-tested through 19 sections of IPC; N = 418 students
Variant IPC course: 2 sections; N = 45

Test Item Number	Difficulty Level, Prior Exams Reported as % correct	Difficulty Level, Current Exam Reported as % correct
2 (T/F)	90%	90%
5 (T/F)	93%	95%
9 (T/F)	77%	76%
13 (T/F)	86%	83%
14 (T/F)	14%	19%
18 (T/F)	84%	52%
20 (T/F)	82%	83%
26 (M-C)	79%	54%
30 (M-C)	96%	80%
41 (M-C)	76%	54%
43 (M-C)	74%	91%
45 (M-C)	88%	75%
46 (M-C)	85%	82%
47 (M-C)	95%	84%
48 (M-C)	75%	94%
50 (M-C)	96%	96%
60 (M-C)	50%	63%
61 (M-C)	73%	61%
63 (M-C)	78%	51%
64 (M-C)	93%	85%
71 (M-C)	79%	72%
72 (M-C)	95%	82%
74 (M-C)	71%	51%

Table 2.B   FINAL EXAMINATION RESULTS (CLASSES #1 & #2)

Selected items from prior exams pre-tested through 19 sections; N = 418 students
Variant IPC course: 2 sections; 45 students

Test Item Number	Difficulty Level, Prior Exams Reported as % correct	Difficulty Level, Current Exam Reported as % correct
1 (T/F)	89%	86%
8 (T/F)	92%	93%
16 (T/F)	64%	67%
17 (T/F)	93%	92%
26 (M-C)	97%	100%
28 (M-C)	74%	87%
29 (M-C)	87%	87%
32 (M-C)	90%	84%
37 (M-C)	52%	74%
40 (M-C)	86%	83%
41 (M-C)	59%	85%
45 (M-C)	54%	56%
55 (M-C)	81%	77%
57 (M-C)	72%	70%
62 (M-C)	90%	65%
63 (M-C)	74%	93%
65 (M-C)	88%	96%
66 (M-C)	99%	98%
68 (M-C)	83%	90%
69 (M-C)	91%	76%
73 (M-C)	64%	76%

Table 3   <u>SPRING 1994 EXAMINATION SCORES (CLASSES #1 & #2)</u>
                 <u>COMPARED WITH EXAMINATION SCORES SUMMER 1993</u>

<u>Midterm (150 pts.)</u>   <u>Summer 1993 Midterm (100 pts.)</u>

N = 45   N = 30

Mean: 114 (76%)   Mean: 75
Median: 115 (77%)   Median: 74
High: 138 (92%)   High: 98
Low: 86 (57%)   Low: 52

Standard Deviation: N/A   Standard Deviation: 6.30

<u>Final (150 pts.)</u>   <u>Summer 1993 Final (100 pts.)</u>

N = 45   N = 30

Mean: 123 (82%)   Mean: 80
Median: 126 (84%)   Median: 84
High: 144 (96%)   High: 100
Low: 98 (65%)   Low: 48

Standard Deviation: 6.18   Standard Deviation: 6.48

Appendix A

Student Outcomes for Interpersonal Communication

1.   Recognize barriers which distort perception in interpersonal communication.

2.   Become aware of the functions of symbolic interaction.

3.   Increase awareness of nonverbal communication and alternative behavioral responses.

4.   Improve listening for understanding, critical listening, and active/empathic listening skills.

5.   Understand cognitive, affective, and psychomotor responses that limit positive, realistic self-concept development for self and other.

6.   Understand how changes in level of openness with others can help achieve an appropriate balance between privacy and self-disclosure in various relationships.

7.   Understand effects of biological changes, including physical and sexual changes, upon initiating and developing relationships.

8.   Become aware of gender and cultural differences and their impacts upon communication and relationship development.

9.   Understand conflict management skills and how to improve interpersonal relationships.

10.   Integrate dialogic components in interpersonal communication.

11.   Understand interpersonal skills in multiple contexts to help develop productive professional relationships.

12.   Become involved in a behavioral modification contract and/or self-assessment project(s) to improve interpersonal skills.

APPENDIX   B

SPCM 3000 VARIANT COURSE, SPRING 1994   LIST OF POSSIBLE FILMS

For the following, please note by marking <u>yes</u> or <u>no</u> if you have seen the film, and if you'd like to see it, either again or for the first time (if not sure, then mark <u>maybe</u>). Then <u>rank order</u> the films in each category, with #1 your top preference (please rank all the films even if you have not seen them). Note: some films appear more than once, depending on category. Your rankings may change from category to category. There will be one to two films selected per category. Every effort will be made to select films that are highly ranked by a majority of students; however, for consistency between sections, that may not be possible. In addition, not all films may be easily available.

I. PERCEPTION/NONVERBAL COMM./CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Film title	Have seen	Would like to see	Rank
Rashomon			
The Color Purple			
Daughters of the Dust			
The Gods Must Be Crazy			
Witness			
Do The Right Thing			
Not Without My Daughter			
Mississipi Masala			
My Beautiful Launderette			

II. EMOTIONS/SELF-AWARENESS/SELF-ESTEEM

Film title	Have seen	Would like to see	Rank
Big			
The Color Purple			
Fried Green Tomatoes			
Housesitter			
An Unmarried Woman			
City Slickers			
My Fair Lady			
Breaking Away			
Rain Man			

III. SELF-DISCLOSURE/LISTENING

Film title	Have seen	Would like to see	Rank
Diner			
Sleepless in Seattle			
On Golden Pond			
The Four Seasons			
City Slickers			
The Big Chill			
My Dinner With Andre			

IV. RELATIONAL DEVELOPMENT/ATTRACTION

Film title	Have seen	Would like to see	Rank

Annie Hall
When Harry Met Sally
The Sure Thing
It Happened One Night
Sixteen Candles
Continental Divide
An Officer & A Gentleman
Housesitter

V. RELATIONSHIP TYPES: FRIENDSHIP

Film title	Have seen	Would like to see	Rank

Stand By Me
City Slickers
Fried Green Tomatoes
The Breakfast Club
Rain Man
Beaches
Thelma and Louise
Steel Magnolias

VI. RELATIONSHIP TYPES: LOVE/DYSFUNCTIONAL ROMANCE

Film title	Have seen	Would like to see	Rank

Pretty Woman
The French Lt.'s Woman
Fatal Attraction
Sleeping With the Enemy
Mississippi Masala
Best Friends
Splendour in the Grass

VII. RELATIONSHIP TYPES: FAMILY/CONFLICT

Film title	Have seen	Would like to see	Rank

Ordinary People
On Golden Pond
A River Runs Through It
Mr. & Mrs. Bridge
War of the Roses
Who's Afraid of Virginia
        Woolf?
Kramer Vs. Kramer

APPENDIX C

SPCM 3000   DAILY ASSIGNMENT #3: <u>FRIED GREEN TOMATOES</u>

DUE: January 24/25

INSTRUCTIONS:

After watching and discussing the film, <u>Fried Green Tomatoes</u>, answer the following questions:

1.   Describe the type of relationship which exists between Evelyn Crouch and her husband using the criteria of <u>either</u> the humanistic model <u>or</u> the pragmatic model of interpersonal effectiveness. In other words, how well does this relationship meet either of these? How does it change with the passage of time? Does it become more or less effective? How so?

2.   Why do you think Ninny Threadgood initially self-discloses to Evelyn Crouch? What factors are influencing her behavior? What influencing factors continue to affect the self-disclosure between the two women? Describe at least two, with examples.

3.   How has Idgie's growing up affected her interpersonal communication with others, especially Ruth and Ruth's husband? Note specific events which affect the development of Idgie and Ruth's relationship.

4.   What type of self-concept does Evelyn Crouch have at the start of <u>Fried Green Tomatoes</u>? How do you know? What occurs to change her self-image and self-esteem? In particular, how does the interpersonal communication between Evelyn and Ninny, and the stories about Idgie and Ruth, influence Evelyn's attitudes about herself and others? Provide examples from the film.

5.   Are there any examples of racist or sexist communication in <u>Fried Green Tomatoes</u>? If so, what (be specific in describing one example)? Does any other communication misunderstandings occur which could be traced to inter/intracultural differences? If so, what (again be specific in describing one example)?

FORMAT: Same as for assignments #1 and #2

GRADING: Same as for assignments #1 and #2

APPENDIX C

SPCM 3000   DAILY ASSIGNMENT #6: <u>STAND BY ME</u>

DUE: Feb. 2/3

INSTRUCTIONS:

After watching and discussing the film, <u>Stand By Me</u>, and reading the chapters assigned, answer the following questions:

1. In looking at the friendships between the main characters in <u>Stand By Me</u> (Gordie, Chris, Teddy, and Vern), what <u>type</u>(s) of friendship and what <u>stage</u>(s) of friendship would you say exists between the four of them? Why?

2. How does the breadth and depth of communication change between any two characters in <u>Stand By Me</u> as the film continues? To answer, draw two Altman-Taylor wheels for the relationship between the two characters--the first to show breadth and depth at the start, and then to show breadth and depth at the end of the film.

3. Describe the five values (or functions) that we place on friendship identified by Wright (utility, affirmation, ego-support, stimulation, and security). Note how the four main characters in the film <u>Stand By Me</u> meet these values, with specific examples.

4. List the six friendship rules described by Argyle and Henderson, noting how each of these rules is met by the main characters in the film <u>Stand By Me</u>.

5. What characteristics of masculine friendship are present in the film <u>Stand By Me</u>? What are the messages about masculinity that are reinforced by the film? Did any aspect of the friendship violate or challenge gender expectations? If so, what? Think about a friendship in your own life with someone of the same sex. Describe it, noting how it is similar to and different from the friendships in this film.

FORMAT AND GRADING: Same as earlier assignments

Appendix D

Sample Examination Items

New Items (illustrating application to films):

1. In The Breakfast Club, John Bender (the "criminal") tells Andrew Carter (the "athlete") that he wants to be just like him, using a sarcastic tone. John is using non-verbal communication to complement the verbal message. [52% of the students answered this item correctly]

2. At the end of When Harry Met Sally, when Harry tells Sally that he likes her for the way her forehead wrinkles, and how long it takes her to order food, this illustrates the friendship characteristic of acceptance. [94% of the students answered this item correctly]

3. In The War of the Roses, the intensity with which Barbara and Oliver argue over who gets the house suggests that their conflict is more about relational issues than it is about content. [85% of the students answered this item correctly]

4. In Fried Green Tomatoes, Evelyn Couch most likely responds so warmly to Ninny Threadgood because that relationship meets all of the following needs from Maslow's hierarchy EXCEPT

    a. self-actualization   b. physical safety   c. self-esteem   d. belonging
    [77% of the students answered this item correctly]

5. In The Breakfast Club, when John (the "criminal") calls Clair (the "prom queen") a tease, she responds by calling him a hypocrite. Her reaction suggests what type of obstacle to listening?

    a. pseudo-listening   d. sharpening
    b. defensive listening   e. mind-reading
    c. stagehogging
    [86% of the students answered this item correctly]

6. In Sleeping With the Enemy, when Ben (the drama teacher) invited Sarah (Laura) over to his house for dinner, after bringing her the apples she had dumped on the ground, he was

    a. examining the qualifiers   d. establishing a second meeting
    b. opening the encounter   e. creating a favorable impression
    c. selecting an integrating topic
    [69% of the students answered this item correctly]

7. In "Home Improvement," Tim is unhappy with the way his wife borrows his tools without asking. Instead of confronting her, he complains to his neighbor: "If I tell Jill that she's doing something I don't like, she pouts for two days. It's just better to avoid the whole thing." Tim's behavior illustrates the non-productive conflict strategy of

    a. minimization   b. avoidance   c. accommodation   d. beltlining
    [67% of the students answered this item correctly]

Items From Prior Exams*:

1. The act of producing messages (e.g. speaking) is called <u>encoding</u>.
    [Prior students achieved an average of 90% correct on this item; 90% of the students in the variant sections answered this item correctly]

2. People who adapt their talk to different people and situations, while also affirming their own ideas, are known as <u>rhetorical reflectors</u>.
    [Prior students achieved an average of 22% on this item; 44% of the students in the variant sections answered this item correctly]

3. According to DeVito, we make the initial decision to pursue a relationship at the <u>involvement</u> stage.
    [Prior students achieved an average of 89% correct on this item; 86% of the students in the variant sections answered this item correctly]

4. Research on male-female couples suggests that among the highly educated and/or higher economic classes, <u>traditional roles</u> (husband as breadwinner, wife as housekeeper) are the norm.
    [Prior students achieved an average of 64% correct on this item; 67% of the students in the variant sections answered this item correctly]

5. A brother and sister side together in order to get their parents to agree to go to Disney World instead of the Grand Canyon for the family vacation. These two sibling's behavior illustrates

    a. primacy effect   b. dyadic effect   c. dyadic coalition   d. dyadic primacy
    [Prior students achieved an average of 96% correct on this item; 80% of the students in the variant sections answered this item correctly]

6. In the Johari Window model of self-disclosure, keeping the hidden area large involves

    a. an active process of keeping secrets   c. an active process of revealing secrets
    b. a passive process of keeping secrets   d. a passive process of revealing secrets
    [Prior students achieved an average of 80% correct on this item; 83% of the students in the variant sections answered this item correctly]

7. Danny and Rhea each accord each other a similar degree of credibility; they engage in self-disclosure on a more or less equal basis, and play similar (if not identical) roles in communication interactions. Their behavior most likely represents what <u>pattern of communication</u>?

    a. unbalanced split   b. balanced split   c. equality   d. monopoly
    [Prior students achieved an average of 72% correct on this item; 70% of the students in the variant sections answered this item correctly]

*All of these items were tested through at least 19 sections of IPC; N = 418 students

Appendix E

Follow-up Interview Questions

1. What initially interested you about taking this section of the course?

2. On the average, how much time went into preparation for class (homework, reading, papers, etc.).

3. What did you like and/or dislike about the homework assignments?

4. What were some of your thoughts about the discussion periods (either full class or smaller group)?

5. What did you like and dislike about the movies used in class?

6. What did you like and dislike about the format of the class?

8 Month Interview Questions

1. Are your opinions about the course now the same as they were eight months ago when the course ended? Why or why not?

2. Have you noticed a significant difference in how you relate or interact with others as a result of the information you received from the course?

3. Name some specific concepts that stuck with you, if any.

4. Would you recommend this course to others? Why or why not?

5. What was done differently in the direction and/or composition of this course that you found particularly helpful or satisfying?

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