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ABSTRACT

This volume of an annual collection presents 13 essays relating to instruction in the basic communication course. Six of the essays are on the theme of cultural diversity in the basic course. The essays are: "The Differential Impact of a Basic Public Speaking Course on Perceived Communication Competencies in Class, Work, and Social Contexts" (Michael W. Kramer and J.S. Hinton); "(En)visioning Success: The Anatomy and Functions of Vision in the Basic Course" (Glen Williams); "Students Who Stutter and the Basic Course: Attitudes and Communications Strategies for the College Classroom" (Bryan B. Whaley and Aimee Langlois); "Rethinking the Role of Theory in the Basic Course: Taking a 'Practical' Approach to Communication Education" (Shawn Spano); "Rethinking Our Rethinking Retrospectively: A Rejoinder to Spano" (Mark Hickson, III); "Should Class Participation Be Required in the Basic Communication Course?" (Jennifer Wood); "The Basic Course: A Means of Protecting the Speech Communication Discipline" (Charlene J. Handford); "Introduction to Cultural Diversity in the Basic Course: Differing Points of View" (Lawrence W. Hugenberg); "Teaching Communication Behaviors/Skills Related to Cultural Diversity in the Basic Course Classroom" (Nancy Rost Goulden); "Cultural Pluralism: Language Proficiency in the Basic Course" (Bayo Oludaja and Connie Honken); "Diversity in the Public Speaking Course: Beyond Audience Adaptation" (Christine Kelly); "The Speech of Diversity: A Tool to Integrate Cultural Diversity into the Basic Course" (Deanna D. Sellnow and Robert S. Littlefield); and "Meeting the Challenge of Cultural Diversity: Ideas and Issues for the Public Speaking Course" (Kimberly A. Powell). (RS)

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Craig Newburger
Editor

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Craig Newburger

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The Differential Impact of a Basic Public Speaking Course on Perceived Communication Competencies in Class, Work, and Social Contexts

Michael W. Kramer
J.S. Hinton

One of the main goals of basic communication courses is to improve students' communication competencies through study and practice since such competencies are essential for obtaining employment, career success, and effective participation in a democratic society (e.g., Curtis, Winsor, & Stephens, 1989; Educational Policies Board, Speech Communication Association, 1993). Over the last three decades, the basic course has generally followed one of two main formats, either a public speaking course which emphasizes the creation and development of public presentations, or a hybrid course which combines intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and public communication. Recent studies have shown that students' perceptions of their communication competencies generally improve after taking a basic hybrid course (Ford & Wolvin, 1992, 1993). A nationwide, longitudinal program of research has shown that over the last 25 years, the public speaking approach to the basic course has tended to be more common than the hybrid course (Gibson, Hanna, & Huddleston, 1985) and is most likely increasing in popularity (Gibson, Hanna, & Leichty, 1990). In light of these findings, this research examines whether the same positive effects concerning students' perceptions of their communication competencies that were

associated with a hybrid course are also associated with a public speaking course.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Research on the impact of public speaking courses on students' communication competencies has been relatively infrequent of late, although research results from the last half-century point to improved competencies after students have received training in public speaking (e.g., Gilkinson, 1944; Rubin, Welch, & Buerkel, 1995; Thompson, 1967). Recent research on the public speaking course has focused on other aspects of the basic course.

First, considerable research has focused on understanding the course's impact on students' levels of speaker apprehension. In a continuation of earlier research on "stage fright" (for a review, see Thompson, 1967) and reticence (e.g., Philips, 1968; 1986), numerous studies have examined causes and effects of speaker apprehension frequently within the context of a basic course (e.g., Beatty, Dobos, Balfantz & Kuwabara, 1992; for a review, see Daly & McCroskey, 1984). With the availability of audio/video equipment for use in basic courses (e.g., Quigley & Nyquist, 1992), research has demonstrated that the presence of video equipment does not significantly increase levels of anxiety (Bush, Bittner, & Brooks, 1972; Lake & Adams, 1984). Other studies focused on using audio/video equipment to reduce apprehension have indicated that providing taped models of successful and unsuccessful speakers generally increases anxiety levels, especially for high apprehensive speakers (Beatty, 1988; Newburger & Hemphill, 1992), that viewing video-tapes of ones own speeches during class sessions fails to reduce apprehension (Newburger, Brannon, & Daniel, 1994), but that self-directed video-taped instruction about speaker apprehension generally decreases apprehension levels (J. Ayres, F.E. Ayres, Baker,

Colby, De Blasi, Dimke, Docken, Grubb, Hopf, Mueller, Sharp, & Wilcox, 1993). While reducing apprehension levels is an important goal of the basic course, improved communication competencies is probably a more essential outcome, particularly given the common understanding that certain levels of apprehension may actually improve presentation skills (Newburger & Hemphill, 1992).

Another area of basic course research has attempted to determine whether basic courses meet the needs of students by comparing course content to concerns of employees in various occupations (for a review see Weitzel & Gaske, 1984). For example, nearly all graduates felt that communication courses should be required and that communication skills are necessary for career success (Sorenson & Pearson, 1981). However, graduates and current students seem to prefer the hybrid course content over the public speaking course apparently due to the inclusion of interpersonal and informal communication skills (Pearson, Nelson, & Sorenson, 1981). Recent graduates emphasized that skills taught in hybrid courses, such as building interpersonal relationships and listening, are more important to career success than giving oral presentations (DiSalvo & Larsen, 1987) and employees even indicated that written communication skills may be as important as oral communication skills (Roebuck, Sightler, & Brush, 1995). In focusing on oral communication skills, graduates indicated that they do more presentational speaking, entertaining speaking, handling of questions and answers, and small group interaction than is emphasized in most basic courses (Johnson & Szczupakiewicz, 1987) and they speak from manuscripts or memorized texts more often than is taught in most basic courses (Bendtschneider & Trank, 1990). Such research suggests the need to reconsider the focus of a basic communication course. Although knowing whether basic courses are addressing students' post-graduation needs is important, it is critical to know if students enrolled in basic courses gain communication

competencies by taking the basic course, particularly since few receive addition communication training once they graduate (Sorenson & Pearson, 1981).

Recent research has examined the impact of a basic *hybrid* course on students' perceptions of their competencies. Initially, Ford and Wolvin (1992) found that students' general perceptions of their competencies improve after completing a hybrid course. In a second study, Ford and Wolvin (1993) found that not only do students' perceptions of their classroom competencies improve significantly, but these perceptions are translated into improved perceptions of communication competencies in work settings and social situations. They also found differential effects in the various settings. Students showed the largest improvements in perceptions in the class context compared to work and social settings for public speaking, interviewing, and self-confidence competencies. No difference was found across contexts for perceptions of improved listening skills.

Implicit in the Ford and Wolvin studies is the notion that a hybrid course, such as they used in their study, is perhaps more appropriate for improving students' general communication competencies. Along these lines, Pearson and West (1991) argue that the hybrid course is better suited to adapting to changing cultural values and needs than a public speaking course. Research indicates that alumni favor a hybrid course (Pearson et al., 1981) due to its focus on a broader range of communication skills than a typical public speaking course. However, descriptions of a typical hybrid course (e.g., Wolvin & Wolvin, 1992) and a typical public speaking course (e.g., Lederman, 1992) make it apparent that there are far more similarities than differences between hybrid courses and public speaking courses. For example, both courses examine listening, persuasion, and group communication. Less obvious are other apparent similarities. For example, Wolvin and Wolvin (1992) mention examining inductive and deductive reasoning as intrapersonal communi-

cation topics while public speaking courses typically include these types of reasoning while studying persuasion.

The gradual convergence of the two course types is suggested in other research, as well. Gibson et al. (1990) found that the ten most frequently covered topics in *both* public speaking courses and hybrid courses included informative speaking, persuasive speaking, listening, delivery, reasoning, audience analysis, communication theory, and speech anxiety. Public speaking courses stressed outlining and support material while hybrid courses featured interpersonal communication and group discussion.

In order to further examine the overlap of these two approaches to basic course content, we compared two texts, one used in our public speaking course (Beebe & Beebe, 1994) and the current edition of the text used in the Ford and Wolvin studies (Berko, Wolvin, & Wolvin, 1992). Results showed that most of the same topics were covered in the two texts. For example, both included complete chapters on listening, language, presentations skills, informative speaking, persuasive speaking, and small group communication. Both included chapter sections on the communication process, logic and reasoning, ethics, and communication apprehension. The public speaking text included chapters on audience analysis, research, developing ideas, organizing, outlining, visual aids, and introductions and conclusions while the hybrid course devoted sections of chapters to these topics. The hybrid text had complete chapters on communication and careers, nonverbal communication, and interviewing while the public speaking text only had sections on those topics. The only topics exclusively discussed in the basic speech text were rhetorical history and special occasion speaking. The only topics exclusively discussed in the hybrid text were self-concept and interpersonal theory/skills. This suggests a gradual broadening of the skills taught in both basic courses. Topics like listening and group communication, once only taught in hybrid courses, have gradually found their way into

many public speaking texts and courses. Similarly, logic and reasoning, audience analysis, and organization are now included in many hybrid courses.

While these comparisons of the two courses suggest a tremendous overlap, they do not suggest that the courses are identical. Gibson et al. (1990) found that the rankings of the frequencies that these topics were covered differed between the two courses. For example, delivery and reasoning were ranked 3 and 4 in public speaking courses and 7 and 9 in hybrid courses. The comparisons of the texts above clearly shows that the emphasis, as suggested by the amount of space dedicated to each topic, differs significantly in the two courses. Similarly, the assignments which put these concepts and principles into practice also differ. For example, Wolvin and Wolvin (1992) require one or more interviews as part of their hybrid course. Public speaking courses tend to teach about interviewing as a research tool rather than as an interpersonal skill, and typically, do not require students to complete an interview. Thus, while the tremendous amount of overlap between the two approaches suggests that a public speaking course could have similar impact on students' perceptions of their communication competencies in a variety of settings, the particular skills in which the most gain would occur might be different than in a hybrid course.

In summary, research on the basic communication course has frequently focused on its impact on communication apprehension and matching course content to student needs. Comparisons of syllabi, research on common topics, and typical textbooks indicate that the two most common approaches to a basic course, hybrid and public speaking, have gradually become quite similar although the two courses place different emphasis on the various topics. Recent studies have shown that a hybrid basic communication course impacts students' perceptions of their competencies, but these same competencies have not been examined in relationship to a basic public speaking courses. In light of the similarities

between the two basic courses, the following hypothesis was tested:

> H1: Students in a basic public speaking course will perceive improvements in their communication competencies in class, at work, and in social settings.

METHOD

Respondents

Since the purpose of this study was to produce results comparable to the Ford and Wolvin studies (1992, 1993), the method used was essentially the same. Respondents were 145 students enrolled in the 10 sections of a basic public speaking course at a large midwestern public university during the 1995 summer semester. The respondents consisted of 2.8% Freshman, 13.1% Sophomores, 42.8% Juniors, 37.9% Seniors, and 3.4% graduate students. Their average age was 21.4 (sd=3.2). There were more females (56.6%) than males (43.4%). The majority had no previous speech courses in high school (67.6%) or college (86.9%). Business (15.2%), education (11.7%), biological sciences (9.0%), and human resource management (6.9%) were the most common of the 30 majors that were listed. Most (89.7%) took the course as a degree requirement.

Course

The course was a public speaking course with the emphasis on developing understanding and skills related to public presentations. All sections were taught from a common syllabus with standardized tests and assignments across sections. Topics covered in the course included listening, research (including interviewing), informative and persuasive speaking, and communicating in groups. The text for the course was *Public Speaking: An Audience-Centered Approach* (Beebe & Beebe, 1994). Major presentations included a speech of self-introduction, a process speech, a problem-proposal speech, a persuasive speech, and a group presentation. Two multiple choice examinations were given on the course content. The typical enrollment was 20 students per section for the summer session.

Procedure

A pretest-posttest design was used in order to assess changes in students' perceptions of their communication competencies. During the first week of class (prior to their first presentations), students completed the pretest questionnaires, and on the last day of class (after completing all of their presentations), students completed the posttest questionnaires. In an introductory statement, the questionnaire was presented as a part of an ongoing effort to assess the quality of the course content. It was clearly stated that the questionnaire had no bearing on course grades and that instructors would receive only summary data concerning the results. In order to match pretest and posttest results, students were asked to provide the last four digits of their social security numbers. Since student numbers (7-digit numbers) are typically used for grading, requesting four digits

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of social security numbers emphasized the confidentiality of their responses.

As Ford and Wolvin (1993) convincingly argue, the possibility of demand characteristics of this procedure impacting the results seems limited. First, in order to impress the researchers, who were not identified, students would have had to deliberately lower their pretest scores and then inflate their posttest scores. The timing of the questionnaires makes this seem unlikely. Further, the questionnaire asked students about their competencies in the classroom, at work, and in social settings. Since the course objectives do not make it clear in which settings the improvements are expected, there was no clear demand for differential improvement according to the contexts. So, while the possibility of inflated posttest ratings does exist, the possibility of differential inflation of ratings seems unlikely, making the procedure a relatively fair test of the research question.

Measurement

The present study used the instrument developed by Ford and Wolvin (1992, 1993). The instrument contains 24 items representing various skills including public speaking, interpersonal communication, group communication, interviewing, listening, and self-confidence. Students responded to each of the items three times, once for "in class situations," a second time for "at work," and finally, for "in social/family settings." Students who did not currently work were told to skip the "at work" section.

Students indicated the degree to which they felt competent in each area on a Likert-type scale ranging from 0 (none at this time) to 7 (nearly all the time). This slight modification of the high end of the scale (from great to nearly all the time) was based on concerns raised by Ford and Wolvin that "the uppermost scale anchor ("great") may not

have reflected extreme scores on the positive side and perhaps may have led to respondents' tendency to select very high scores" (1993, p. 222). Following the pattern of the previous research, respondents read each of the 24 items once and then rated their abilities in the three different contexts in three separate columns after the item. This was designed to reduce fatigue and to encourage students to contrast their abilities in the different contexts.

RESULTS

Mean scores for each item for the pretest and posttest for each context are reported in Table I. Higher scores indicate higher perceptions of competencies. Following the example of Ford and Wolvin (1993), three separate analyses were conducted to determine if students' perceptions of their competencies changed over the course of the semester. The first set of analyses compared pretest and posttest scores for each individual item in each context. The second set of analyses compared composite scores for each context. Finally, based on six content factors identified by Ford and Wolvin (1993), the final set of analyses compared composite scores for each competency factor across contexts.

Individual Items

A series of one-tailed t-tests were performed to determine if the changes for the individual items showed significant improvements. Results (See Table I) generally indicated significant improvements in the class setting, with fewer significant improvements in the work and social contexts. Scores for a few items actually decreased slightly from the pretest to the posttest. However, these decreases did not indicate significant changes except for two items. There were

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significant decreases in perceived competence for Item 11 (preparing for an interview) for both class and work settings, and for item 16 (listening in small group situations) in social settings. Overall, these analyses suggest that students' perceptions of their specific competencies generally improved in each context.

Context Scales

Following the pattern of Ford and Wolvin (1993), a second way to determine if there were significant increases in general competencies was to create composite scores for each context by averaging the scores for the items within each context. These 24 item scales showed high reliabilities for pretest and posttest results in all three contexts, class (α=.90, .91), work (α=.87, .92), and social (α=.86, .90). A series of repeated measures ANOVAs indicate that there were significant increases in perceived competence in all three contexts. In class settings, the mean increased significantly from the pretest (m=5.06) to the posttest (m=5.68), $F(1,132)=86.20$, $\text{eta}^2=.40$, $p<.001$. In work settings, the mean from the pretest (m=5.35) to the posttest (m=5.67) also increased significantly, $F(1,113)=21.85$, $\text{eta}^2=.16$, $p<.001$. Finally, in social settings, the mean from the pretest (m=5.65) to the posttest (m=5.95) also significantly increased, $F(1,125)=20.72$, $\text{eta}^2=.14$, $p<.001$. These results indicate that students' perceptions of their general communication competencies within each context improved.

In order to determine if the changes over time varied according to the context, a repeated measures MANOVA (3 contexts by 2 times) was computed. The results were significant for the context by time interaction, $F(2,370)=7.53$, $\text{eta}^2=.04$, $p<.001$. Examination of the cell means (reported above) indicates that this significant interaction effect was due to larger increases in the classroom context (change of

Table I
Changes in Perceived Communication Competencies

		Class		Work		Social	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
1.	Feeling confident about yourself	5.14	5.67*	5.76	5.69	5.75	5.96*
2.	Feeling comfortable with others' perceptions of you	5.62	5.82*	5.71	5.79	5.48	5.78*
3.	Reasoning with people	5.33	5.57*	5.45	5.62*	6.02	5.97
4.	Using language appropriately	5.09	5.54*	5.43	5.72*	5.98	6.01
5.	Understanding nonverbal messages	4.85	5.34*	5.22	5.29	5.52	5.69
6.	Communicating in personal relationships	4.90	5.36*	5.37	5.44	5.65	5.76
7.	Managing conflict in personal relationships	4.77	5.49*	4.92	5.39*	4.84	5.22*
8.	Asserting yourself (without becoming aggressive)	4.23	5.35*	4.55	5.22*	4.63	5.29*
9.	Listening to others in personal relationships	5.78	5.90	6.15	5.97	5.84	5.97
10.	Feeling comfortable communicating in personal relationships	5.68	5.89*	6.03	5.97	6.06	6.12
11.	Preparing questions and materials for an interview	6.29	6.07*	6.32	6.02*	6.19	6.14
12.	Conducting an interview	4.24	5.81*	3.97	5.45*	4.30	5.59*

13.	Feeling comfortable when conducting an interview	3.84	5.73*	3.95	5.18*	4.31	5.46*
14.	Completing tasks in a small group situation	5.75	6.08*	5.57	5.86*	5.57	5.87*
15.	Interacting with others in a small group situation	4.77	5.43*	5.39	5.55*	5.88	5.75
16.	Listening to others in a small group situation	5.73	6.06*	5.93	6.04	6.43	6.23*
17.	Feeling comfortable communicating in a small group situation	4.88	5.61*	5.45	5.75*	5.90	6.12*
18.	Preparing and organizing speeches	5.98	6.08	6.16	6.13	6.15	6.27
19.	Presenting speeches in front of an audience	4.95	5.54*	5.53	5.63*	6.15	6.21
20.	Listening to speeches	4.69	5.21*	5.28	5.48*	6.01	5.97
21.	Feeling comfortable when delivering speeches	5.17	5.63*	5.49	5.73*	6.08	6.10
22.	Persuading people	4.53	5.31*	4.71	5.32*	5.29	5.72*
23.	Your overall ability speaking to others in different situations	5.48	5.89*	5.85	5.91	6.21	6.14
24.	Your overall ability listening to others in different situations	3.56	5.16*	4.21	5.19*	4.98	5.79*

*indicates significant changes ($p<.05$) from pretest to posttest based on t-test results

.62) compared to the smaller changes in the work (.32) or social (.30) contexts. In addition to the significant interaction effect, there were main effects for time, $F(1,370)=113.54$, $eta^2=.23$, $p<.001$, indicating students' self-ratings increase over time; and main effects for context, $F(2,370)=15.60$, $eta^2=.08$, $p<.001$, indicating students' reported different amounts of competency in different contexts.

Together, these results suggest that students' perceptions of their general competencies improved over time in all three contexts, but improved the most in the class setting.

Content Scales

A final approach to examining change over time was to divide the scale into six competencies as suggested by Ford and Wolvin's (1993) factor analysis results. Their six scales were public speaking (items 18, 19, 21, 22, & 23), interpersonal communication (items 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, & 10), group communication (items 14, 15, 16, & 17), interviewing (items 11, 12, & 13), listening (items 9, 16, 20, & 24), and self-confidence (items 1, 2, & 8). Composite scores were computed by averaging the scores for each content competency. Then, a repeated measures MANOVA (6 competencies by 3 contexts by 2 times) was computed to determine if there were significant changes across contexts for the different competencies.

INTERACTION EFFECTS

The results indicate a significant overall multivariate effect for context by time, $F(12,730)$, $eta^2=.04$, $p<.01$. This indicates that while the changes over time were significant, there were significant differences in the changes in the competencies (e.g., public speaking, interpersonal, etc.) according to the specific contexts (e.g., class, work, social). The

univariate interaction results, reported in Table II, show that there were significant context by time interaction effects for all competencies except interviewing. While effect sizes were quite small, results indicate that the largest gains in perceived competencies were in the classroom compared to smaller gains in the work or social settings for public speaking, interpersonal, group, listening, and self-confidence. However, the gains in perceived competencies for interviewing changed at approximately the same rate across contexts.

Table II
Changes in Six Perceived Communication Competencies for Class, Work, and Social Contexts

	Pre-to-Post Change:			Interaction Effect Tests:		
	Class	Work	Social	*F*	(df)	eta^2
Public Speaking	.48	.22	.12	6.80**	2,370	.04
Interpersonal Communication	.39	.16	.17	4.31*	2,370	.02
Group Communication	.50	.24	.04	6.66**	2,370	.03
Interviewing	1.07	.89	.87	1.21	2,370	.01
Listening	.65	.28	.20	9.44**	2,370	.05
Self-Confidence	.62	.23	.39	3.77*	2,370	.02

*$p<.05$

**$p<.001$

MAIN EFFECTS

In addition to the interaction effects, the multivariate results indicated that there were significant changes over time, $F(6,365)=28.05$, $eta^2=.32$, $p<.001$. The univariate (changes in means reported in Table 2) results showed that this was due to significant improvements over time for all six competencies with an average effect size of $eta^2=.14$. This indicates students perceived significant improvements in all six competencies over time.

Overall, these results indicate that students perceived their competencies to have increased in each of the six general competencies, but that they improved the most in the class setting.

DISCUSSION

This study examined whether students' perceptions of their communication competencies in class, at work, and in social settings increased after taking a public speaking course, rather than a hybrid course as was used in previous research. Pretest/posttest results from students enrolled in a public speaking course indicated that their perceptions of their communication competencies improved in public speaking, interpersonal communication, group communication, interviewing, listening, and self-confidence in all three contexts. However, the improvements were the largest for the class context and smaller for work and social settings.

The results are comparable to Ford and Wolvin (1993) in a number of areas. Both studies found that students' perceptions of their competencies improved in all six general areas of competence and in all three contexts. Both studies found that students' perceptions increased the most for the class setting. Ford and Wolvin (1993) suggest that this is due to students

generally reporting the lowest pretest scores in the class setting, such that they have the most room for improvement in the classroom. In this study, students also reported the lowest pretest scores for the class setting. However, an alternative explanation of the results would be that the transfer of the communication skills is somewhat limited by the end of the semester. Because the practice of the skills occurs in the classroom context, the most improvement also occurs in the classroom. The realization that these skills may have transferred to other contexts may take time. As students have opportunity to enact the skills used in class in other contexts, their perceptions of their competencies in those contexts will likely increase, as well. However, they may not have had the opportunity to try, for example, their new public speaking skills at work in their current part-time jobs.

While Ford and Wolvin (1993) found improvements on all the individual items in all three contexts, these results indicate that students' perceptions did not improve on all individual items. In particular, students' perceptions of their ability to prepare questions and materials for an interview decreased significantly in class and work settings in this study. We believe that this is an indication of an increased awareness of the importance of communication skills, rather than a decrease in their skill level. During the course of the semester, students became aware that they had not practiced designing interview questions and were more cognizant of their weaknesses in this area compared to other areas in which they had opportunities to practice their skills. Also, the difference in results between the two studies is not surprising. While the public speaking course discusses using interviews for research without requiring an actual interview, the hybrid course typically requires one or more interviews.

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Limitations

The use of a single group pretest-posttest design with no control group has certain limitations. It is possible that some of the improvements in the perceptions of communication competencies may have been due to knowledge and experience gained from other courses or other life experiences such as working part-time jobs. However, given the average improvement for a group of individuals with quite varied experiences outside of class, it would be difficult to attribute the varied levels of improvements in the assorted competencies in different contexts to these alternative sources. However, additional research needs to explore the impact of various educational and work experiences on students' perceived competencies.

Another limitation to this study, like the Ford and Wolvin study (1993), was its reliance on self-report perceptions of communication competencies rather than measures of actual communication behaviors. As noted some time ago, "questionnaire responses may reflect varying degrees of enthusiasm for speech instruction among students, but they have doubtful value as evidence of actual improvement" (Gilkinson, 1944, p. 97). However, minimally, self-perceptions of communication competence are indicative of people's willingness to engage in communication behaviors (McCroskey, 1994). Further, the improvements reported here in self-perceptions of competencies are quite similar to improvements reported for behavioral measures of improvement after a semester of speech instruction (Rubin et al., 1995), suggesting that these changes in perceptions indicate actual behavioral improvements. Further, there is evidence from a meta-analysis that self-ratings of performance are moderately associated with observer ratings in other areas of social science research (Harris & Schaubroeck, 1988). Research specifically suggests that individuals' perceptions and

observed communication behaviors are moderately correlated (Thompson, 1967). Nonetheless, future research should attempt to gather unobtrusive behavioral data as evidence of improvement.

Future Research

Future research should examine the merits of offering a variety of configurations of the basic course at a college or university. Stacks and Stone (1984) found that three different approaches to the basic course (interpersonal, group, and public speaking) all had a positive impact on students' reported levels of speaker apprehension. The result of the current research suggest that different configurations of the basic course have a similar impact on students' perceptions of their communication competencies. Offering a selection of basic courses, instead of requiring a specific one, may benefit the students the most since they are more likely to be motivated in courses that they believe meets their needs.

An important contribution of the study is that it provides some insight into both the similarities and differences in hybrid versus public speaking basic courses. The content of the two courses shows tremendous overlap as is indicated in both course syllabi and textbook contents. While the impact of both courses is similarly quite positive, it appears to differ in some ways. For example, students enrolled in the public speaking course do not appear to gain as much skill in interviewing as those enrolled in hybrid courses. This makes it an important issue to determine which skills are most meaningful to teach in a basic course. Alumni opinions suggest the importance of different skills than those taught in either type of basic course. Alumni report speaking from memory and manuscripts, as well as answering questions as far more common and important than communication faculty members (Johnson & Szczupakiewicz, 1987). Therefore, in

addition to examining the impact of a variety of courses on students' communication competencies in diverse contexts, as recommended by Ford & Wolvin (1993), there needs to be further examination of the competencies that should be taught in a basic course.

Research also needs to examine the effect of basic course content on two different sets of students, those for whom it is their only course within the communication discipline, and those for whom it is the introductory course for the communication major. It is often the case that students take only one course, the basic course, in communication (Pearson & West, 1991). Given the various configurations of the basic course, the introductory course content may need to be different for non-majors than for those who take several courses or who major in communication. Research could focus on which configurations of the basic course meet the post-graduation needs of majors and non-majors.

In addition, research needs to move beyond competencies learned in the basic courses to examine those taught in more advanced courses. As has been pointed out, "If we tell accrediting agencies, administrators in higher education, state legislatures, and/or the general public that students are competent communicators when they "pass" one communication course; we are doomed to failure" (Hugenberg, 1994, p. 4). Only a few communication programs have attempted to identify the major competencies of an entire communication program and to identify in which courses each competency is emphasized (e.g., Aitken & Neer, 1992). Research examining both the short term and long term improvements in students skills in basic and advanced courses will help to acknowledge the value of communication courses throughout the college curriculum.

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[En]visioning Success: The Anatomy and Functions of Vision in the Basic Course

Glen Williams

When our curriculum and pedagogy came under fire from one in our discipline (Michael Burgoon) who insisted upon "divorcing dame speech" (1989, p. 303), Rod Hart (1993) answered with a written version of a keynote he had delivered to the Western States' Convention, proclaiming our endeavors "the ultimate people-making discipline" (p. 101). Hart championed our offerings, noting that "those who teach interpersonal communication . . . teach that lovers can better love and families can become more familiar if they are sensitive to what they say. Those who teach public address and media studies teach that social power can be shifted and public visions exalted if people learn to think well and speak well. Those who teach performance studies teach that even the most cold-blooded text can be thawed out by the warmth of a human voice" (p. 102) With regard to public speaking, Hart emphasized that such instruction was vital to our political well-being, empowering us to influence others as well as to equip us with "the mental agility to listen between others' lines when they speak and to remember her or his own bottom line when responding to them" (p. 103). For these reasons, Hart contended: "Communication will be the most important subject taught in the latter part of the twentieth century" (p. 101).

Jo Sprague (1993) also answered Michael Burgoon's diatribe, particularly his claims that "theory and research in communication" had "far outstripped what is presently being taught in speech," and that "[the typical teacher of] SPEECH

does not embrace . . . a commitment to scholarship" and, moreover, exhibits "active resistance" to the scholarship that would inform instructional efforts (1989, p. 303). Sprague acknowledged the "gap between our theory and pedagogy," noting that Burgoon was not the first to call it to our attention (p. 109). Sprague also noted that the problem (in part) centered upon communication education having been marginalized, constituting an instance of what Ernest Boyer (1991a) critiqued as the misguided and unethical practice within higher education to privilege "one kind of scholarship over all other forms" (p. 109).

Sprague offered a corrective: "To reunite theory and pedagogy requires that virtually every member of the discipline consider communication education as a second or third area of professional commitment." She envisioned the results: "How enriched both our teaching and theorizing would be if all scholars agreed to contribute to the literature of this area from time to time, to read it often and to respond to it critically as they would to work in their own areas of specialization, and regularly to engage in intellectual discussions of teaching with their own colleagues and graduate students" (p. 114). In the final pages of the article, Sprague paves the way for such a discussion by noting a few ways in which our "pedagogical knowledge and curricular knowledge" could better reflect "the content knowledge of our discipline" (p. 115).

Both Hart and Sprague provide elements of a vision that values speech and that effectively answers concerns such as those importuned by Michael Burgoon and challenges his competing vision of speech as a "dame" whom scholars of communication should abandon. Hart eloquently reminds teachers of the basic course of their value and their mission. Sprague perceptively notes our trials but impresses upon us our responsibility, and she reminds the academic community, in general, of its accountability. Sprague envisions how well we, as a united discipline, can perform.

The exchange between these authors not only illustrates competing visions but also illuminates the various interconnected dimensions of the vision within which the director of the basic course must operate. The view of the course constitutes but one component; at least two other components exist. Directors also operate within a mind-set concerning the training and development of staff as well as within a view of pedagogical research. The director must attend to each of these components while attempting to orchestrate a healthy vision for the course. The overall goal is to facilitate a vision that training and development of the staff facilitates their professional growth and enables quality instruction and that effective training and development depends on scholarship that will inform those efforts.

Prior to discussing a fruitful vision for the basic course, however, this paper first explores the anatomy of a vision — its genesis and its makeup. Next, it probes the functions of vision, illuminating its power. Finally, the paper identifies elements central to a vision for the basic course. Clearly, a healthy vision is central to the success of the basic course, and the success of the course can enhance the standing of a department and ultimately that of the field.

THE ANATOMY OF A VISION

Scholars in speech communication who have contemplated "vision" and what it means naturally gravitate toward studies of management and leadership — which long have explored the role of vision in leadership. While explicating the role of vision in a rhetorical analysis of the 1992 presidential campaign, for example, Ronald F. Wendt and Gail T. Fairhurst (1994) employ models of charisma advanced in studies of organizational leadership to examine contemporary political leadership. These authors define vision as the "management of meaning" and explain that "to manage mean-

ing about future directions is also to create a set of expectations for behavior or action to follow" (p. 181). In scholarship pertaining to directing the basic course, Shelley Schaefer Hinck and Nancy L. Buerkel-Rothfuss (1993) likewise utilize a definition from leadership studies which describes vision as a "'mental image of a possible and desired future state" (p. 124). The authors specify that once the director of the basic course has "identified her [or his] vision of the basic course," the director should then "set out to persuade the department faculty" that the vision is "a viable alternative to the old method" (p. 127).

These ideations are common to the scholarship pertaining to leadership. In a much-cited book on the subject, Burt Nanus (1992) identifies vision as an "articulation of a destination toward which your organization should aim, a future that in important ways is better, more successful, or more desirable for your organization than is present" (p. 8). In this manner, Nanus notes, the articulated vision offers a "realistic, credible, attractive future" which is "so energizing" that it "in effect jump-starts the future by calling forth the skills, talents, and resources to make it happen" (p. 8). Leaders whose effectiveness springs from offering an effective, compelling vision are identified as transformational leaders (Barge, 1994).

The predominant conception of vision as acquired from a compelling image articulated by a leader reflects traditional philosophies of rhetoric. For example, Aristotle (n.d./1991) taught that the speaker could motivate others by articulating images. He emphasized that the speaker would have to attend carefully to word choice, noting that "one word is more proper . . . to making the thing appear 'before the eyes'" (p. 225). Longinus (n.d./1957) also emphasized the power of words to capture the imagination, noting that if selected "brilliantly," language "almost stamps upon the words the very shape" (19) of that which it was describing, thus allowing the audience to "see it" (p. 23-24). Longinus qualified that the images would

need to be grounded in "actuality" and "probability" (p. 26). Cicero (n.d./1942) echoed Longinus, almost verbatim, noting that the "brilliant style" (p. 327) would make an audience feel that they had "actually" seen what was described. Francis Bacon (1605/1990) reflected these earlier views when he specified that rhetoric was "to apply Reason to Imagination for the better moving of the will" (p. 629). Bacon's definition implies that giving ideas vividness would move an audience by the apparent concreteness. George Campbell (1776/1963) held a similar view, writing that "great and noble images, which when in suitable colouring presented to the mind, do, as it were, distend the imagination with some vast conception, and quite ravish the soul" (p. 3). Campbell believed that vivacity, or the liveliness of ideas, was *central* to capturing attention, exciting passion, and compelling belief and action. Like Longinus, Cicero, and Bacon, Campbell was careful to instruct that the images presented would need to bear a "semblance of truth" (p. 33).

Traditional theories of rhetoric suggest that the reception of an idea will depend on eloquence and vividness, as well as whether the idea is plausible. Contemporary theories of rhetoric also direct any who would influence others to present their ideas vividly in conjunction with solid evidence and reasoning. Chaim Perelman (1982), for example, in discussing "presence," noted the power of a rhetor's language to "evoke" (p. 35) certain images in the mind of an audience which could affect both thought and disposition. Alan Monroe (1935) supplemented enduring wisdom with the findings of psychological studies, providing empirical data to support philosophers' observations that human motivation, to a significant degree, *is* affected by verbal visualization.

Both traditional and contemporary theories of rhetoric, then, (coupled with psychological studies) illuminate the anatomy of a vision. They suggest that the course director, as well as anyone who aspires to influence and lead, can make her or his ideas more appealing by providing adequate

support, sound reasoning, and by expressing those ideas with visual images that allow people to imagine how things are and how they can be. In this manner the rhetor helps the audience visualize what is being suggested and behold it as realistic and desirable/attainable or undesirable/preventable.

The Process of Visioning

Studies of leadership and conceptions of rhetoric provide but a partial understanding of vision. Although these studies illuminate the power of language to capture imagination and thereby evoke response, they oversimplify the process of visioning. These conceptions employ a linear model of communication when describing vision as originating with the leader who is able to articulate the vision in a manner that compels support (e.g., Conger, 1989; Fritz, 1986; Garner, 1989; Nanus, 1992). A few authors seem to employ a transactional model of communication (see Barnlund, 1970), implying that a vision is somewhat of a collaboration between leader and subordinates, but they fall short of explaining the process (e.g., Tichy & Devanna, 1986, p. 140; Jaffe, Scott, & Orioli, 1986, p. 97). Certainly, the leader's voice *is* an important voice, but the leader is not the sole author of a vision. Visioning is an intersubjective phenomenon; people do not merely buy into a vision but take a more active role in its genesis and evolution. This process is akin to that Kenneth Burke (1941/1973) explained which transpires with the reading of a poem: "The reader, in participating in the poem, breathes into this anatomic structure a new physiological vitality" (p. 90).

Contemporary studies in communication and rhetorical theory illuminate the dynamics of visioning. Most notably, Ernest G. Bormann provides insight into what comprises a vision and how it comes into being. After more than two decades of study, Bormann (1972, 1982, 1985, 1986; Bormann,

Cragan, & Sheilds, 1994; Bormann, 1995) continues to posit that visioning is a process in which the elements of a vision, articulated by various individuals, will "catch on and chain out" (1972, p. 398) and culminate into an overall vision. Bormann explains that within this process a group will recount positive and negative elements in their history in order to identify an ideal, yet attainable future. Some accounts will be "ignored," but others will "cause a greater or lesser symbolic explosion in the form of a chain reaction" (1995, p. 269).

Although visioning is a group process, leadership remains important. The leader, after all, likely is formally empowered. How she or he employs that power assumes increased importance. Visioning would seem to benefit from *participative leadership,* a style of leadership where the leader shares power by actively involving subordinates in identifying problems, envisioning and formulating solutions, making decisions, and by allowing individual freedom and access to information (Bass, 1990). Leaders can facilitate participation by employing communication that "promotes, sustains, and extends inquiry" (Salazar, 1995, p. 187). This communication can occur formally in meetings and informally through "small talk" (see Duck & Pond, 1989; Duck 1990). Ideally, the leader is adept at visioning both with words and deeds which serves to model, encourage, and inspire others to think critically and creatively and to share their ideas. As Hinck and Buerkel-Rothfuss (1993) note, it will be the task of the director to "coordinate a variety of perspectives" (117) into a "shared vision" of the course, and doing so will allow the course to be run more effectively and efficiently.

The process of visioning is ongoing and recursive. The vision will continue to evolve as members share and reflect upon information, and as they form, consider, and test new ideas. In addition, they will foresee and encounter challenges posed by external forces, such as the administration, technology, or demographics. Visioning, then, is a lively industry

with many elements to address and many forces and factors at work. To ensure their success a group must be attentive, imaginative, reflective, and enterprising.

In sum, traditional and contemporary theories of rhetoric, coupled with studies of leadership, yield a fuller understanding of both the anatomy of a vision and the process of visioning. Traditional accounts emphasize the role of language but limit the vision to one source. Studies in leadership likewise typically present a linear model. Clearly, the director must be proactive in crafting a vision. At the same time, though, contemporary theories of rhetoric suggest that ultimately a vision is authored by multiple voices and, hence, any formally designated leader should employ a participative style of leadership so to promote the process of visioning. Any member potentially can contribute an idea that will "catch on." An idea that is stated eloquently, persuasively, and vividly will gain better currency.

The Makeup of a Vision

Bormann affords us a more accurate definition of vision, though his explanation may require some revision. Bormann (1995) restricts messages within this process to "somewhere and/or sometime other than the here-and-now" (269). In contrast, Aristotle (n.d./1991) taught that what is envisioned "should be seen as being done rather than as in the future" (245). Burke (1950/1969b) echoes Aristotle when he observes that people influence others chiefly by identifying their "ways" (p. 55) with another, communicating similar images, attitudes, and ideas. Taken together, these views provide a broader understanding; vision is not bound by time but addresses both the past and future as well as the here-and-now.

Hence, much of what may be a compelling vision addresses what the group is about and are doing, not merely

what they have done or where they are going — a link Monroe (1935) made in describing the "visualization step." To have a vision is to visualize how things are and how they can be; it illuminates what is being done well, what needs to be done better, and what remains to be done. In other words, vision is not just for a future but for a state of being: what one should enact, i.e., attempt to "be" now. For example, with regard to the basic course, a statement pertaining to the here-and-now might be: "We're professionals providing quality exposure and experience in a course that is central to students' education."

The vision addresses not only the group but also the individual member. In terms of the individual, the vision could suggest the aspiration to be a good teacher, an active, contributing member of the staff, a good citizen in the department, and a scholar who enjoys the respect of students and colleagues alike. Vision, then, pertains to past, present, and future, and it also pertains to the group as a whole, as well as the individual member.

THE FUNCTIONS OF A VISION

The panoramic content of a vision illuminates its functions and its potential. Brown's (1990) discussion of the roles stories play in an organizational setting provides an analogue to the functions of a vision. A vision's constituent parts, like stories, clarify and familiarize. They promote bonding, inclusion, and identification that engenders group consciousness. They also provide direction, empower, and motivate, helping the group to excel. Although the functions of stories are roughly analogous to the functions of a vision, some noteworthy differences also exist. This section explores both.

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Group Consciousness

As Bormann (1972) notes, a vision will "serve to sustain the members' sense of community" (398). The participative style of leadership inherent to the process of visioning will engender group consciousness. Leadership becomes "distributed leadership" (Huey, 1994, p. 42), with each member of the group expected to contribute to the enterprise and to own responsibility. As noted in studies of transformational leadership, such inclusion and participation should strengthen the cohesiveness of the group (Barge, 1994, pp. 55-56). In addition, since members participate in the process they are likely better able to explain, elaborate upon, and justify the vision. Furthermore, studies in leadership reveal that active involvement can enhance understanding, motivate compliance, and bolster morale (Hersey & Stinson, 1980).

To foster participation, the director will need to promote the success of every individual on the staff, show them respect and trust, and help them learn and grow so that they can contribute to the vision and achieve what is envisioned (see Nanus, 1992, p. 15). The director likely will need to assist those with less experience and less confidence (see Williams, 1995.) At the same time, each person — newcomers and veterans alike — will need to sense that he or she is part of the team and can make valuable contributions that will help the group excel.

A unique and positive identity for the group can set it apart, projecting an image, for example, of active professionals operating on the cutting edge. Concurrently, this distinction of uniqueness may function to associate the group with other top performers in the field. Such an identity can instill a healthy pride and sense of responsibility that will motivate performance (see Nanus, 1992, p. 49).

Group consciousness should extend beyond the instructors of the course. A director likely will benefit from inviting the

participation of the department. Devising a vision with the department participating in its creation will allow the department as a whole to be more familiar with the operation of the course, its high goals, and the dedication of the director to achieve those high goals. Their involvement will assure them that the director welcomes their participation in refining the course and mentoring the staff. Likewise, the staff will feel more valuable and included; they will be able to view themselves as an integral part of the department's mission. Inclusion may be especially helpful for adjunct faculty who may feel isolated (see Arden, 1995).

On Track for Excellence

In addition to group consciousness and collegiality, a vision helps a group to excel. A vision allows the group to identify its mission(s) and the goals involved and to begin to devise and execute strategies for accomplishing specific goals (see Nanus, 1992, p. 54). As goals and strategies are identified, ambiguity decreases, allowing the "abilities" and "skills" (Salazar, 1995, p. 179) of a group's members to come more fully into play. Equipped with such a keen sense of direction, the group may surprise even itself with a more than optimum performance (see Salazar, 1995).

As such, the vision and its various components enable participants to perform well and with the confidence that they are contributing significantly to the enterprise and that their contributions will be recognized and appreciated (see Nanus, 1992, pp. 17-19). This sense of accomplishment is both satisfying and motivational. In this manner, the vision will "impel" group members "strongly to action" (Bormann, 1972, p. 398).

The process of visioning not only provides initial direction but it also provides redirection when needed. As Nanus (1992) observes: "Vision plays an important role not only in the start-up phase of an organization but throughout the organization's

entire life cycle" (p. 9). Visioning becomes an ongoing public forum where participants air their concerns and voice their views and ideas. They are actively involved and "colleagues" in the truest sense of the word, helping to define the principles, standards and values which will direct specific behaviors and overall performance. Ideally, the vision will constantly undergo scrutiny and examination, with the staff actively involved. When fundamental change is needed, visioning is the process for detecting strengths and deficiencies and establishing a new direction or a transformation.

Public Relations Function

Whereas stories often are exchanged internally and thus are insulated from the outside (Brown, 1990), a vision may be very visible — and desirably so. As Nanus (1992) observes, a vision's power is "its ability to grab the attention of those both inside and outside the organization" (p. 16). The group is a rhetorical community whose discourse gets noticed for its eloquent, compelling ideas and the vivid images as to who they are, what they are about, and where they are going. Just as a vision provides clarity for its members it can function likewise for outsiders.

The vision can enhance the integrity of the course as well as the reputation of the department. The vision should be discernible in the course description and the stated goals of the course, apparent to students and to anyone who would peruse the syllabus. Members of the university community — administrators as well as other departments — who become aware of the goals of the course should appreciate the commitment to education that it displays. In addition, the vision likely will motivate student appreciation and performance. Granted, students still may not derive great pleasure or excitement from assignments or grading criteria, but it is more likely that they will "take them seriously, find them

meaningful and worthwhile, and try to get the intended benefit from them" (Brophy, 1983, p. 200). Upon completion of the course, the vision that has been imparted should provide students with a sense of closure as well as enable them to better assess what they have gained, and it may even motivate them to enroll in other departmental courses (see Yoder, 1993).

In sum, a vision is story-like in function, but whereas a story is specific to a single value or strategy or some other aspect, a vision offers an all-encompassing view of the enterprise. It provides a context for interpreting stories and any other information, and it also provides a link back to the whole. The vision functions, as do stories, to provide proof of the group's uniqueness and the value of its contribution (see Brown, 1990, p. 178), but it broadcasts these images externally as well, in a public relations capacity. Given its pervasiveness, it is little wonder that Nanus (1992) views the vision as central to success, contending: "When it comes to leading an organization, there is nothing so necessary as the right vision, widely shared" (p. 22).

ORCHESTRATING A HEALTHY VISION

As one takes on the role of course director, he or she inherits a vision for the course, whether it be deliberate or latent/unimagined, productive or counterproductive, fuzzy or well-defined. As the director works to influence an "improved" vision, he or she can utilize the eloquence and credibility of others to present various, potentially attractive ideas. A survey of others' visions (as shown in the introduction to this paper) can provide invaluable insight. As Bormann et. al. (1994) note, "a rhetorical vision can be artistically stitched together from several strong but competing visions" (p. 277). Many of the best ideas, though, likely will come from within as the group contemplates its specific program and its partic-

ular opportunities and constraints. In addition to ongoing dialogue, a steady survey of relevant literature and regular interaction with other, interested colleagues likely will supply new ideas that a group may incorporate into their vision.

Since a vision is multi-faceted and interconnected, the group will contemplate a number of elements and their relationships. At minimum, a vision for the basic course includes images of the group, the director, and the individual member of the staff, as well as images of the course, and images of what will assist the group's endeavors and bolster their performance. The vision also features a nonverbal component: an incarnation or enactment of what is envisioned.

Images of Those Involved

As noted, identity of the group and the individual comprises one element within a vision. Identity would constitute what Burke (1945/1969a) terms "agent," to designate *who* performs the act and what kind of person or people they are. Attributes for those involved might include "professional," "ambitious," and "interdependent." "Professional" suggests that the member/group meets responsibilities competently and in a manner that is fair, courteous, and often exceeding the call of duty. "Ambitious" suggests a commitment to excellence and to ongoing development. "Interdependency" emphasizes the importance of teamwork and cooperation (see Covey, 1989, p. 50); the individual will have accountability to the group that he or she will contribute actively, will appreciate others' contributions, and will safeguard the integrity of the enterprise.

Interdependency has implications for the director, as well, suggesting that the director will involve the staff actively in a diagnosis of the course and decisions pertaining to curriculum, policy, and design. In addition to conferring with the staff to gain their assessment, interdependency suggests that

the director will survey the relevant literature regarding curriculum and methods of instruction and also will enlist the expertise of colleagues outside of the group, emphasizing to them the desirability of their involvement.

The concept of interdependency prompts the director and others who wish to influence to actively seek out information that will yield well-grounded ideas. A vision, as Nanus (1992) notes, is a realistic dream, "built upon information and knowledge" (p. 34). In the process of visioning (as discussed above), an informed voice likely will be better able to influence perceptions and attitudes about the course as well as to successfully advocate items for the agenda or to successfully advocate a particular action or policy. Furthermore, by soliciting input the director will spark the process of visioning by actively involving others and encouraging their participation.

Images of the Course

Images of the course are akin to what Burke (1945/1969a) labels "act," referring to *what* takes place. This aspect of the vision might include what is done for the student in the course, what is done for the instructor of the course, and what is done for the department, the institution, and society. Images of the course would also include what Burke identifies as "purpose," that is, explanations as to *why* the act is performed.

Notions about the course reside at the center of the vision: The course must be valued if it is to be appreciated and supported. In nurturing a positive image for the course the group will be constrained by the department's notions of the course and — as with any rhetor — must operate within those constraints as well as recognize the opportunities. For example, the department ideally values the course and its place in the curriculum. Ideally, too, the department recognizes its visibility on campus and has concerns for its integrity. Such

factors suggest a vision of the course as important and making a solid contribution that others will appreciate. These notions would provide opportunities for the director to suggest changes that would align more closely with the vision. If this alignment was not immediately obvious, the director would have to explain the fit. If the existent vision is less than ideal or short-sighted and, as a result, provides little opportunity to suggest change, the director will have to negotiate modifications to the vision by offering up a fresh, compelling view with which others can agree, appreciate, and assist in developing (Conger, 1989).

In articulating the value of the course and its contribution to the curriculum, the group can supplement their descriptions with the eloquence and ethos of others. For example, when reflecting upon how the course is central to students' education and nurtures more than presentational skills, Stephen Lucas (1996) observes that "item after item of what we demand [from students in the basic course]" equals a "checklist for critical thinking." Lucas insists that the thinking and writing demanded in the composition of speeches and critiques [and other papers] make our course the "moral and intellectual equivalent of a composition course." He notes that the course enjoys such esteem at the University of Wisconsin; students there may take the basic course in public speaking to fulfill their composition requirement.

Michael Osborn (1996) offers a similar conception of the basic course along with additional insights. Osborn holds that a course in public speaking "nourishes — or ought to nourish — creativity in students" because it "encourages originality of language, thought, and expression as students explore themselves and their worlds in classroom speeches." Furthermore, Osborn notes, we provide our students with "the gift of a sense of form." Osborn underscores the importance of form, contending: "Understanding the orderly development of ideas is . . . central to that awareness that we call higher education." Osborn also observes that when we teach students to

"weave evidence into proofs, and proofs into compelling arguments" they not only are learning the various elements of proof but are "also learning how to appeal to the very essence of what it means to be human."

In addition to envisioning what we do for our students, our vision can note the centrality of our course in serving society. The public speaking classroom constitutes a public forum where we can contemplate some of the most pressing issues of our time — including many that never make the headlines! The classroom becomes a place where we exchange and evaluate information and ideas. And as we discuss communication and its role in creating and sustaining society, we promote a greater appreciation for communication and involvement. When communicating with their peers, students assume the roles of advocate and consumer, and if we can enhance their ability to wield influence and to listen critically we may instill in them the confidence and sense of responsibility and duty to become more engaged, at home, at work, and in the community. And we may also help them to view others (even those who are "different") as able to contribute and worthy of our best efforts to listen to them and to empathize with their point of view. In short, we are helping to prepare an active, watchful, caring and able citizenry who have a strong sense of ethics, duty, and accountability.

To visualize the course in this manner and to approach it with a true reverence for these outcomes is to increase the likelihood of success. Surely TAs, adjuncts, lecturers, and professors — whoever teaches the course — can respect and respond to such a vision. Rather than view the teaching assignment as having been saddled with a lowly or undesirable task, we can view it as an opportunity to assist students' development and to make a significant and very honorable and important contribution. Animated by reverence and pride, we can excel. And no doubt our vision and enthusiasm will motivate our students and inspire/amaze others who look on.

We might also heed the philosopher's words that "where there is no vision, the people perish" (see Proverbs 29:9). As individual departments and as a field it may prove fruitful to recognize the centrality of the basic course in the undergraduate curriculum. As Osborn (1996) observes, if we confine our vision of the basic course to "superficial skills," that kind of orientation "can trivialize all that we do . . . and make us vulnerable when the pressure to cut programs arises. In this sense idealistic goals may not only be ethically attractive — they may also be quite practical." Jim Chesebro (1996) offers, more emphatically, that such a vision may determine "our survival" (p. 2).

In addition to envisioning and emphasizing the virtues of the course, the vision can encourage a healthy perspective for undergraduate students and their education. McMillan and Cheney (1996) caution against a view of the student as "consumer," noting how that view — among other things — "inappropriately compartmentalizes the educational experience as a product rather than a process" (p. 7) and "reinforces individualism at the expense of community" (p. 9). A better mindset, they suggest, is that of "critical engagement" (p.12) where the student is conceived of as a "stakeholder" in the educational experience. Sprague and Nyquist (1991) observe similarly, finding that the "most effective teachers are highly engaged with their students as individuals and are emotionally involved in their success or failures" (p. 309); these instructors have "internalized the notion of 'client' and will talk about students in terms of student needs and the impact of instruction." To engage this perspective, they note, instructors will need to "transcend or set aside their own ego needs and defensiveness" and recognize each student as unique and deserving of good faith and optimism coupled with high expectations.

The vision could also impart how teaching the basic course is valuable to graduate students. In this view teaching does not detract from a TA's study but is an arena for growth.

Teaching the course will sharpen and test their own command of the concepts they encounter in their studies. They will be developing a deeper understanding of those individual concepts as well as how they fit into a larger scheme and manifest themselves in common experience. With this advanced understanding will come a greater ability to converse with other scholars in the field as well as relate this knowledge to the layperson — something the teacher must be able to do. As Nyquist and Sprague (1992) have explained, the "postsocialized" scholar is "able to translate and communicate even the most specialized knowledge to others outside the field and make complex concepts clear to learners new to the discipline" (p. 109).

The director could challenge the staff to envision how teaching the course can complement their studies as well as equip them for success. For example, they will have experience to enter on their vita as well as the opportunity to establish a solid track record that will enable their supervisor to write a solid recommendation that points to specific, desirable qualities they have developed, their success as an instructor, and the various contributions they have made.

As Nanus (1992) observes, the "right vision attracts commitment and energizes people. People seem to need and want something they can commit to, a significant challenge worthy of their best efforts" (1992, p. 16). In the case of TAs, they already are challenged by graduate school and have a vision of success. The vision of the basic course can be a part of that *same* vision. It can be shown to fit into the overall scheme of their education and development. The skills and experiences they have developed and refined as teachers will transfer to other contexts (e.g., leadership) and will comprise an important part of their graduate experience and education.

For adjuncts and other instructors, the course must challenge them as well. In addition to involving them by having them "assist in the development of common examinations and assignments" (Hugenberg, 1993, p. 170), the direc-

tor could actively challenge them to continuously envision and build a better course and one that will be more efficient for all involved. They must know that their ideas and experiences are needed and valued and will help to improve the course. They must see that they are a part of something "big" and very worthwhile.

A new perspective may also be in order for junior and senior faculty in the department. The "bread and butter" metaphor that has long-ruled many departments is not the most healthy conception, suggesting a purely economic motive for offering the basic course. A more productive view is that the basic course is a place where ideas are tested and where the next generation of scholars receive an introduction to the field (as undergraduates) and gain competence (as graduates). In this manner, as Sprague (1992) suggests, departments could envision the basic course as a laboratory for testing theories and ideas, and as a place that could benefit from the expertise, insight, and involvement of all of the faculty.

Images of What Will Assist

Images of what will assist the staff involves what Burke (1945/1969a) describes as the "scene," pertaining to the context, and "agency," referring to what means and methods are conducive to success. In terms of the scene, a context that promotes success is one in which training and ongoing development are appreciated, supported, & valued. Departmental support is essential for success. In a study of training programs for TAs; Susan Ambrose (1991) found that *ineffective* programs exhibited "two clearly recognizable problems" (p. 166), both of which involved apparent apathy by the faculty.

In order to facilitate healthy notions regarding training within the overall vision for the basic course, the director may need to be proactive, acquainting colleagues with the theory

and scholarship that points to the *necessity* of ongoing training, its various components, and its demands (see Williams, 1995). The director might emphasize the value of ongoing training — how it assists mastery, confidence and professionalism and how it helps TAs to discern their value and how it instills an enduring commitment to ongoing development. The director might also note how providing a context for a continuing dialogue can improve performance as well as relations. Perhaps most compelling, though, are the findings that, when surveyed, teaching assistants recognized the need and benefits of training and requested such support (see Buerkel-Rothfuss & Gray, 1990; also see Kaufman-Everett & Backlund, 1981).

Clearly, the department that values the course will likely be more prone to support efforts to improve instruction; the relationship is obvious. Less obvious is what comprises an effective regimen for training and development. In other words, what means, methods, and conditions foster success?

A successful regimen employs both formal and informal means. For example, departments often provide a formal orientation for incoming TAs to help them assume their roles with a higher degree of competence and confidence. Many programs have found that a follow-up class for new TAs makes it realistic to assign reading and assignments that will facilitate reflection. Current practices are many and varied (see Lambert & Tice, 1993); the director has to work within the constraints and opportunities present in the department and at the institution. Some programs might allow a one hour class whereas others support a three hour class. The class might be confined to the first semester, or it might span two or more. Other departments creatively devise an unofficial class if they face constraints that prohibit or make problematic an official offering. Whatever the director is able to do, he or she might promote departmental involvement and support by having the department head or curriculum committee to

critique a proposed syllabus. Once the syllabus has been constructed, the director might circulate it for all to see.

In addition to orientation and a class for new TAs, other formal means of training typically pursued include observations of teaching and a follow-up conference with the instructor as well as meetings with the entire staff to diagnose the current state of affairs (see Andrews, 1983). Informal means often entail such practices as "small talk" (described above), an "open door" policy, and social gatherings to promote groupness and collegiality.

In order to devise a successful context for training and development, directors may have to articulate the obvious: A successful regimen must be informed. The director can underscore the importance of scholarship and how it is integral to success as a director. The director can emphasize that just as any professor can enhance instruction via researching and writing, so can the course director improve his or her knowledge and expertise. Part of the vision, then, for the basic course includes a statement pertaining to the director's own need to be informed so that she or he can perform well and can assist the performance of others. Furthermore, as an active scholar the director can help inform others similarly engaged, making a valuable contribution to the discipline and perhaps even to interdisciplinary efforts to improve TA training and development. To do so requires the support and encouragement of the department and the institution with the understanding that they will recognize those endeavors as scholarly. This type of evaluation would constitute a return to a paradigm of scholarship that includes pedagogical research, a move that Boyer (1991a) has urged. The academy might also recognize that quality textbooks and responsible reviews likewise are vital to the health and reputation of a field, not only for educating the masses and acquainting them with the merits of a discipline, but also for providing a solid foundation for those who will pursue graduate study.

When contemplating such matters, John Rodden (1993) does not equivocate: "I have a dream of a field that values equally the different contributions teaching and scholarship make to life; that values equally the different contributions teachers and scholars make to lives; that respects research in whatever form it may take, from the innovative new course to the well-crafted lecture to the stimulating journal article" (p. 134).

A Voice and Embodiment

To negotiate and perpetuate a healthy vision, the director (and others within the rhetorical community) must personify the vision (Conger, 1989). Traditional wisdom tells us that "talk is cheap" and "actions speak louder than words." What we know intuitively is borne out in studies; generally speaking, people *do* rely more frequently on nonverbal codes than on verbal messages (Burgoon, J., 1985, pp. 346-47). Hence the director must be one of deeds as well as words. The director "passionately 'lives the vision'" (Nanus, 1992, p. 14) and works diligently (alone and with others) to establish a knowledge base that will inform efforts to ever-build a better course and one that incorporates and reflects the latest findings regarding the subject, methods of instruction, and ways to train and nurture the development of staff.

The director might personify a vision through research, perhaps contributing to the literature to enhance collective understanding. The director's example likely will engender the respect of students, staff, and department, and it should make more compelling the vision the director would put forward. Similarly, the director can personify via active involvement and association with like-minded individuals and with groups both at his or her respective institution as well as with regional and national affiliations.

Through words and deeds the director and the group can impart a compelling vision (see Nanus, p. 15). Likewise, the department can, through its actions, convey the vision. The department assists with the creation of a positive vision by supporting the director and group and also by modeling camaraderie and serving as mentors. Departmental support of the director's endeavors to train and to facilitate ongoing development will validate the director's efforts and likely will predispose the staff to active involvement, as well as enhance their commitment to their role and to continuing professional development. In short, the department (as with any participant) must, to some degree, personify the vision.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness and efficiency of the basic course depends, in large measure, upon a vision for the course and for the staff — a commonly shared mind-set pertaining to what the group is about and where it is going. A vision surfaces in the group's words and deeds as they continually define and redefine their purpose, direction, and goals, and as they evaluate their performance. The anatomy of a vision helps to explain its power and appeal; people participate in its creation and enact what they have created; they are a rhetorical community within which the course director is one voice but may occupy a first-author type status. The vision and the process of visioning helps to forge group consciousness and dedication to the enterprise, reflecting the current practice/emphasis upon participative leadership (see Huey, 1994). A vision also helps to clarify tasks, enabling peak performance, and it acquaints outsiders with the group and its endeavors in a manner likely to foster respect and appreciation.

Studies in leadership, communication and rhetoric each contribute to an understanding of vision — how it is formed

and its various functions. Visions occur naturally, but certain conditions must exist for a healthy vision to emerge and operate. The leader will need engage, in part at least, a participative style of leadership and have an ability to encourage and facilitate involvement and visioning. It also will help if the leader is one whom others recognize as credible, well-intended, and capable (see Conger, 1989, p. 94). Widespread, active participation and creativity by the staff likewise is essential. In addition, the director and group will benefit from departmental support and involvement.

In part, too, the group is dependent upon the academic community. Colleagues and administrators must recognize their interdependency with those who oversee the basic course and how that scholarship can improve instruction in the basic course as well as efforts to train and develop staff. If academe marginalizes education, it risks prompting students to devalue education, perceiving of a college degree as merely a hoop or hurdle — a formality prerequisite to a job. To meet accountability to students would be to again be inspired by what Ernest Boyer (1991b) has identified as the "colonial college tradition" which "emphasized the student, general education, . . . and the centrality of teaching" (p. 4). This mind-set might strengthen the academy's commitment to equipping those who provide the instruction and recognizing and rewarding the endeavors and scholarship of those charged with the duty.

Vision plays a central role in the basic course, helping to determine its degree of success and the support it will receive from the department and institution. A fruitful vision enhances perceptions of the course and engenders the support necessary for the training and development of instructors and the scholarship that will assist those endeavors as well as enhance instruction. A healthy vision, coupled with superior performance, will help the basic course to become so respected and so valued that it ensures the prestige of the course within

the department, on campus, and ultimately in the field, across disciplines, and in the community at large.

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Students Who Stutter and the Basic Course: Attitudes and Communicative Strategies for the College Classroom

Bryan B. Whaley
Aimée Langlois

INTRODUCTION

Many lectures in public speaking or basic courses may make reference to Demosthenes and his practice of putting pebbles in his mouth to overcome stuttering. Instructors often use this example to demonstrate to students the relevance of fluent or clear speech patterns. Often, however, instructors may not recognize the persistent social and communicative implications for persons who continually exhibit dysfluent speech and, hence, leave them unaddressed.

Stuttering is a communicative behavior that has been the focus of social ridicule and intellectual intrigue for centuries (Peters & Guitar, 1991). Such negative stereotyping results from the fact that in spite of years of speculation, debate, and conflicting research results, the cause of stuttering remains elusive. However, its definition as a "disturbance in the normal fluency and time patterning of speech" (Nicolosi, Harryman, & Kresheck, 1996, p. 251) is generally accepted. In addition, a reliable finding in the literature is that fluent speakers attribute negative traits to those who stutter (Lass, Ruscello, Schmitt, Pannbacker, Orlando, Dean, Ruziska, &

Bradshaw, 1992; Yeakle & Cooper, 1986).[1] This negative attitude toward those who stutter follows them from grammar school (Lass et al., 1992) to the workplace (M.I. Hurst & Cooper, 1983). Fluent students and professors, as well, are known to hold this uninformed and harmful view of those who stutter in college classrooms (Ruscello, Lass, & Brown, 1988; Ruscello, Lass, Schmitt, Pannbacker, Hoffmann, Miley, & Robison, 1991).

Approximately three million Americans stutter. Because this problem affects only 1% of the population and is usually seen as the province of another discipline (i.e., speech pathology), understanding stuttering may be seen as less pragmatic than focusing on more frequently occurring difficulties that affect communication (e.g., communication apprehension, foreign accents, and regional dialects). The problem nonetheless bears attention for several reasons. First, there is a void in the communication instruction literature regarding students who stutter and the negative reactions their manner of speaking elicits from peers and instructors alike. Second, because communicators who are fluent seem to have an unrelenting intolerance for those who are not, individuals who stutter may be a most harshly discriminated against and disregarded minority (Love, 1981). This may lead them to drop out of college, some believe, because they fear required communication courses, speaking in class, and the treatment they receive from fluent interactants (J. Ahlbach, National Stuttering Project, personal communication, June 16, 1994). Third, legislation mandates adapting the college classroom for those who have special educational needs. Because stuttering is considered a disability, instructors are required by law to assess the classroom experience of those who stutter and to make reasonable accommodations (Americans with Dis-

[1] Many "stutterers" prefer to be called "those who stutter." Stuttering is a communicative pattern those who stutter DO rather than something they ARE.

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abilities Act, 1990; Newburger, 1994). Instructors who have even a cursory understanding of stuttering are, therefore, better able to meet the educational needs of their dysfluent students and thus adhere to the law. This seems especially critical in the college classroom where students receive their communication education. Thus, communication instructors who have a basic knowledge of stuttering can play a paramount role not only in ensuring the quality of education of those who stutter but in their lives as well.

The problem is that very few communication instructors have this advantage. In an effort to fill a void in the communication instruction literature, this article provides information regarding three areas: the nature of stuttering, the attitudes of peers and instructors toward those who stutter, and strategies that college instructors can use to facilitate communication with students who stutter in the classroom.[2]

STUTTERING

To understand what instructors can do to enhance interactions with their students who stutter, it is necessary to address two aspects of stuttering: its specific nature; and the differing attitudes held about stuttering by fluent speakers, on one hand, and those who stutter on the other. This discussion will provide a rationale for the practical strategies that will follow.

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[2] There have been articles published in speech communication journals concerning those who stutter (e.g., Aimdon, 1958; Barbara, 1956; Knudson, 1940). However, research in the last 30 years, published in speech pathology journals, has provided new and more accurate insight into the nature of stuttering and more effectively interacting with those who stutter.

Nature of Stuttering

Stuttering can be defined as an involuntary disruption in the forward flow of speech (Perkins, 1990). While all speakers experience momentary disruptions in speech fluency at one time or other, what differentiates stuttering from these types of interruptions are their frequency and intensity and their impact on both speaker and listener. According to Perkins (1990), this can become frightening to the individual who stutters.

Many scholars have identified kernel features or core behaviors of stuttering: involuntary *repetitions*, *prolongations*, and *blocks* that disrupt the flow of speech (Peters & Guitar, 1991). Whereas *repetitions* entail the simple iteration of sounds, syllables and single-syllable words, *prolongations* occur when the motor activity of the articulators stops for a period that can last from half a second to several minutes. *Blocks* result when both the flow of air from the lungs and the movement of the articulators are inappropriately stopped. These core behaviors are often associated with an increase in the muscular tension of the entire speech mechanism.

In attempts to control their involuntary repetitions, prolongations, and/or blocks, individuals who stutter often develop secondary characteristics that help them either avoid or, when that fails, get out of stuttering episodes as quickly as possible (Peters & Guitar, 1991). For example, substituting words and pausing help avoid or postpone stuttering, while jerking the head or blinking can help terminate a stuttering episode.

As one's speaking style is unique to that individual, so is one's stuttering pattern. Every person who stutters develops through childhood and adolescence core behaviors and secondary characteristics that are typical of that individual and are stabilized by the end of adolescence. People who stutter are, therefore, a heterogeneous group whose dysfluent

speech ranges from the barely noticeable to a pattern which makes verbal communication almost impossible. As with fluent speakers, some conditions improve fluency while others precipitate dysfluent episodes. The former include situations such as singing, choral speaking, talking to a baby or an animal, and speaking with a close friend; the latter occur during job interviews, speaking to a superior, talking in front of a group or asking/answering a question in class (Silverman, 1992). Thus, the basic communication course creates peak conditions for triggering dysfluent episodes.

The variety of stuttering behaviors and their persistence into adulthood has been the subject of a vast body of research on both the physiological and psychological characteristics of persons who stutter. While speculations about the cause of stuttering continue to generate much debate, what is certain about stuttering can be summarized as follows. Physiologically, persons who stutter function no differently than their fluently speaking peers except during moments of stuttering when increased muscular tension, elevated heart rates, as well as breathing irregularities, are noted (Silverman, 1992; Starkweather, 1987). The literature on the psychological composition of individuals who stutter reveals no support for the contention that stuttering is symptomatic of emotional problems (Silverman, 1992). Furthermore, "while there has been considerable speculation . . . about the personality traits common to persons who stutter, their presence has not been tested empirically. There is no personality trait that almost all persons who stutter possess" (Silverman, 1992, p. 80). However, because individuals who stutter have been and are often teased, treated differently, and reacted to negatively, some tend to avoid situations where they would have to do a lot of talking (ordering by phone, making reservations, being interviewed for jobs, teaching), while others may experience depression related to coping with stuttering, and/or anxiety about speaking (Silverman, 1992).

Attitudes Toward Those Who Stutter

In spite of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, there is a persistent perception by the public that individuals who stutter are different in other ways. Their way of speaking is thought to betray mental illness, maladjustment, or extreme shyness and insecurity.

A series of studies has shown, for instance, that fluent speakers, regardless of age, gender, or education level perceive those who stutter in a negative light (e.g., Crowe & Walton, 1981; Lass et al., 1992; McKinnon, Hess, & Landry, 1986; Ruscello, Lass & Brown, 1988; Ruscello, et al., 1991: Silverman, 1982; Turnbaugh, Guitar, & Hoffman, 1981, Williams & Woods, 1976; Yeakle & Cooper, 1986). Of particular interest, here, is the fact that elementary and secondary school teachers, school children, college students, and college professors possess unfounded beliefs about the personality characteristics of those who stutter in their classrooms. For example, when asked to list as many adjectives as they could think of to describe individuals who stutter, respondents from the groups listed above focused overwhelmingly on the personality of people who stutter to the exclusion of their appearance, intelligence, particular talents, or speech characteristics. Furthermore, reported personality traits were typically negative and stereotypical; people who stutter were perceived by the majority as shy, nervous, tense, anxious, guarded, fearful, introverted, embarrassed, and frustrated (Bebout & Arthur, 1992; Lass et al., 1992; Ruscello, Lass, & Brown, 1988; Ruscello et al., 1991; Turnbaugh, Guitar, & Hoffman, 1981; Yeakle & Cooper, 1986).

Those who stutter who seek employment after high school or college are likely to be viewed in a similarly negative light by prospective employers (Neal & White, 1965). For instance, M. I. Hurst and Cooper (1983) found that while employers believe that stuttering does not interfere with job performance, they (85% of 644 employers queried) see stuttering as

a factor in decreasing opportunities for employment and hindering promotion. According to Hurst and Cooper (1983) approximately 60% of bosses are uncomfortable when interacting with those who stutter, a factor which may contribute to the dysfluent speakers' employability predicament. Furthermore, if persons who stutter seek vocational rehabilitation services to search for a position, they can also expect counselors in these agencies to view them as having not only psychological problems but undesirable personality traits as well (M. A. Hurst & Cooper, 1983).

Given the aforementioned findings, researchers have suggested that the fluent public views those who stutter as possessing a "characteristic stuttering personality" (Collins & Blood, 1990; White & Collins, 1984). These authors suggest that because all fluent speakers have dysfluencies at one time or another under stressful conditions, they may attribute the feelings or responses they themselves experience during these circumstances (e.g., nervousness, tension, embarrassment) to those who stutter during their dysfluent bouts. Fluent speakers' unflattering perception of those who stutter could also be related to their uncertainty about how to interact with nonfluent persons and the discomfort that is associated with this uncertainty (Collins & Blood, 1990), a condition that is likely to occur in the college classroom.

In addition to the negative personality stereotypes that are attributed to nonfluent speakers, fluent listeners often exhibit specific reactions to stuttering, such as impatience, amusement, and minor indications of repulsion, pity, sympathy, curiosity, surprise and embarrassment (McDonald & Frick, 1954). Moreover, fluent listeners may attempt to avoid or limit conversation with stuttering partners (Rosenberg & Curtiss, 1954; Hubbard, 1965; Woods & Williams, 1976), and want more social distance between themselves and those who stutter (McKinnon, Hess, & Landry, 1986).

Self-Perceptions of Those Who Stutter

In contrast to the lay public's perceptions of dysfluent speakers, individuals who stutter have very different attitudes about themselves and how they speak. Kalinowski, Lerman, and Watt (1987) found that dysfluent speakers did not differ significantly from a group of their fluent counterparts when rating themselves on an inventory of 21 personal characteristics. Subjects who stuttered perceived themselves just as "open," "secure," "talkative," and "friendly" as their more fluent peers' self-ratings. However, those who stutter rated fluent speakers higher on such characteristics as "calm," "friendly," and "secure." Conversely, fluent subjects gave lower ratings to dysfluent speakers on the same traits (Kalinowski, Lerman, & Watt, 1987).

When people who stutter evaluate how others perceive them on the basis of the severity of their dysfluencies, several findings also emerge (Leith, Mahr, & Miller, 1993). Those who rate their stuttering as moderate or severe consider themselves as more "friendly" and "attentive" than their peers who stutter mildly. Individuals who stutter moderately also view themselves as better at leaving a good impression after social interaction than those who have a mild stuttering difficulty. Finally, those who identify themselves as stuttering severely are significantly less accepting of their dysfluency than their moderate and mild stuttering colleagues (Leith, Mahr, & Miller, 1993). It therefore appears that, in spite of common experiences with fluent speakers, individuals who stutter do not consider themselves as belonging to a homogeneous group. According to Fransella (1968), one who stutters is likely to state, "Yes, of course I stutter, but I am not like the general run of stutterers, as an individual I am unique" (p. 1533).

Recommended Communicative Strategies

In an attempt to enhance interaction, lay persons have employed various unsuccessful, if not harmful, tactics when speaking with those who stutter. Research concerning the appropriate strategies to employ when conversing with one who stutters, although sparse, provides the basis for enhancing interaction with students who stutter.

STRATEGIES TO AVOID

Although fluent speakers are motivated with the best intentions to "help" those who stutter, this has been found to only exacerbate the frequently and severity of dysfluencies (Krohn & Perez, 1989). For instance, the classic admonitions to "slow down," " take deep breaths," "think before speaking," "whisper," "stop and start over," or "practice" have proven to be temporarily beneficial at best. Other strategies such as suggesting the use of distraction techniques (i.e., finger snapping, foot stomping), filling in or supplying a blocked word, and invoking the use of will power also fail to result in any noted improvement in fluency. These suggestions typically infuriate those who stutter, often aggravating the dysfluencies because of increased tension between the interactants. College instructors would therefore be well advised to avoid any of the aforementioned "techniques."

STRATEGIES TO EMPLOY

Research suggests that teachers with an accurate understanding of the nature of stuttering have more realistic attitudes about and expectations of their students who stutter (Crowe & Walton, 1981; Yeakle & Cooper, 1986). College

communication instructors are therefore encouraged to make a concerted effort to view stuttering only and simply as a lack of coordination of the movements that support fluent speech and not as a manifestation of less than desirable personality traits. Instructors are also urged to explore what beliefs they have about those who stutter and re-evaluate these perceptions in light of the information provided in this paper. Simply viewing students who stutter no differently than other students is the first step to making a rewarding experience for all. However, some specific strategies are likely to be helpful as well.

For instance, research has shown that when people with disabilities acknowledge or talk about their disability with non-disabled interactants, the parties involved feel more comfortable; furthermore, the individual with a disability is seen as a more acceptable communication partner (Thompson, 1982). This strategy also works for stuttering. Collins and Blood (1990) found that when given a choice, fluent speakers prefer to interact with individuals who acknowledge their stuttering rather than with those who make no mention of it. Collins and Blood also found that fluent speakers rate the intelligence, personality, and appearance of those who stutter more positively when dysfluencies are acknowledged than when they are ignored. According to Van Riper (1987) disclosure strategies help both dysfluent speakers and fluent listeners in that the attitude of the latter is partly determined by that of the former. In other words, "if the stutterer appears to accept his speaking disability without emotional stress, the odds are that the listener will, too" (p. 237).

In light of these data, it is suggested that communication instructors encourage students who stutter to talk about their stuttering. This has the dual advantage of helping alter instructors' perceptions of these students and of enhancing their interactions with them. However, self disclosure can be a sensitive issue — it should first be approached in the privacy of the instructor's office. If acceptable to the student,

the issue can then be addressed in the classroom, thus helping to modify fluent classmates' perceptions of the peer who stutters. If, however, the student prefers not to acknowledge his/her stuttering with classmates, instructors can simply ask how they can help and act accordingly.

In addition, instructors can use specific strategies when they interact with students who stutter (Krohn & Perez, 1989). For instance, they should maintain continuous eye contact with those who stutter during periods of blocking or dysfluencies and avoid facial grimaces. Essential to accomplishing this is patience. Instructors can set the example for their students by behaving objectively toward pupils who stutter and by encouraging acceptance, both of stuttering as a speech pattern, and of the person who stutters. Instructors should also give students who stutter the same amount of praise for successful speaking as that given fluent students, using effective transmission of information, rather than speaking without stuttering as criterion for success.

It should be noted that there is disagreement as to whether a student who stutters should be given extra written assignments in place of required oral presentations. This issue will probably depend on college or university and communication department policies. Moreover, the strategies offered above should be used following consultation with a speech-language pathologist if at all possible. An easy and effective avenue both to help those who stutter learn more about their stuttering and to increase fluent speakers' knowledge of this disorder is to contact the National Stuttering Project or Stuttering Foundation of America.[3]

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[3] National Stuttering Project is located at 5100 E. La Palma Ave., Suite 208, Anaheim Hills, CA 92807. Stuttering Foundation of America's address is 3100 Walnut Grove Road, Suite 603, Box 11749, Memphis, TN 38111.

CONCLUSION

A glimpse of the vast literature on stuttering reveals that the public perceives those who stutter in a rather negative fashion in spite of the fact that they differ significantly from fluent speakers in *only* one aspect — communicative pattern. This information should help communication instructors understand their own perceptions of students who stutter, debunk the myths about these students, and also determine useful strategies for interacting with them in the classroom.

There is a central issue concerning students who stutter and the classroom that future communication instructors, administrators, and those who stutter should consider. Specifically, the suggestion of allowing students who stutter to take a course in interpersonal communication rather than public speaking requires serious consideration. This practice may serve to perpetuate the myth that those who stutter cannot articulate a coherent message, or cannot do so without embarrassment and pain for all parties involved. Moreover, this course substitution may serve provide those who stutter an out from addressing their fluency skills in the public speaking setting. As noted, however, this is a serious concern for all involved and should be resolved on an individual basis with input from all parties.

Finally, much more research is needed concerning interactive strategies that enhance communicative satisfaction between those whose stutter and those who do not. Specifically, understanding what communicative behaviors those who stutter prefer (and least prefer) their fluent interactants employ when interacting would bolster the literature and greatly enhance communication satisfaction. In doing so, communication and education may be just a bit more inviting for all involved.

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Rethinking the Role of Theory in the Basic Course: Taking a "Practical" Approach to Communication Education

Shawn Spano

The separation of communication theory from communication practice is one of those false dichotomies that have plagued our field since the rise of logical positivism and behavioral science. There were, of course, a number of good reasons why the early practitioners of communication science sought to dislodge case study accounts of situated communication practice from their theoretical formulas and experimental procedures. As Delia (1985) notes in his history of the communication field, the move toward positivism was predicated on the assumption that the communication field could achieve scientific status and political credibility within both the academy and society at large by discovering universal principles and invariant laws of human behavior.

While this might very well have been a worthy goal at the time, it was one that was based on an erroneous conception of human communication and a misguided account of theory. In trying to "force" the communication process to fit within the prescribed structures of covering laws, theories and experimental methods, the move toward logical positivism distorted conceptualizations of communication, effectively limiting understanding of its multiple meanings and influence. To employ an analogy, it is a little like a young man or women who approaches love purely in terms of lust, and whose excessive preoccupation with lust blinds him or her to the variety of splendors and sorrows that love provides. Aspects of

communication are certainly amenable to laws and experimental methods, just as romantic love surely involves a healthy dose of lust. But positivism blinds us to the multiplicity of communication, much in the same way that an obsession with lust prevents us from experiencing the multiplicity of love.

The narrow and constrictive view of human communication which attends the logical positivist agenda continues to influence communication inquiry today, more often than not with damaging residual effects. Clearly, the separation of theory and practice is one of those effects left to us by positivism. In the positivist approach, theory is a set of abstract principles expressed in the form of propositions. These propositions, which stand apart from practice, provide the essential ingredients for explaining practice. There is a fundamental duality in this system. Theory transcends practice and in the process is thought to achieve invariant, universal, even pristine qualities. Practice, on the other hand, is contingent, local, and forever mired in the ambiguous, messy, and paradoxical world of ongoing human affairs. In order to translate communication practice into the framework of positivist theory it is necessary to change the essential form of the practice itself. How else can an inherently open-ended process like communication be made to conform to an explanatory system that demands closure and certainty?

The separation of theory from practice in the positivist approach creates a tension of opposites that is solved at the expense of practice, not theory. Put differently, when concrete practices are pitted against abstract theory it is a practice which is sacrificed at the alter of theoretical rigor, prediction, and control. In order to conform to the structure of positivist theory, situated communication practices must endure the inevitable process of reification. And in doing so, they must give up their own embodied form and richly textured performance characteristics. Communication practices lose their

ontological status when abstracted from the contexts in which they originate.

Practice, of course, enters back into the research equation once theory has been codified into a set abstract, hierarchically ordered propositions. Here the communication scientist tests theoretical predictions against observed behavior to determine the validity of the theory. So subjects are asked to complete Likert scales on self-report questionnaires as a way to measure their perceptions, traits, or communication predispositions. These assumed "communication" behaviors used in hypothesis testing, however, are really nothing more than shadows, pale imitations of the real thing. The rich detail of the original communication performance is certainly not incorporated back into the research process. Those characteristics, the situated and embodied nature of communication, are lost in the maze of abstract propositions. The view of human communication given to us by positivist theory comes in the form of a fleeting glimpse. There might be something there, but without a firm grounding in the concrete world of context, self, and other, it is difficult to know if the thinly veiled image of communication shown to us bears any resemblance to our lived social experiences.

The problem of integrating positivist theory with communication practice extends to the basic course and influences speech education in some unfortunate ways. Is it really the case that abstract theoretical principles alone can assist us in teaching our students how to participate in ongoing communication action? Can a positivist based theory of communication competence provide our students with the abilities to be competent in the real world of social interaction? While my answer to both these questions is no, does it then follow, as some would suggest, that theory simply does not belong in the basic course? I disagree with this conclusion as well.

The problem, as I see it, is not that the communication practices of our students resist theoretical insight. Rather, the

problem is that the positivist approach to communication theory is not equipped to adequately deal with the situated communication practices that we expect our students to perform in the basic course. I believe that communication theory can be integrated into communication practice, but the integration must proceed from a very different view of theory from the one traditionally assumed.

The purpose of this essay is to advance the notion of "practical communication theory" and demonstrate how it might be used in the basic public speaking course to teach oral communication competencies. In this way the essay is not only an attempt to break down the theory-practice dichotomy, it also seeks to develop a form of communication theory which is responsive to the practical needs of our students, our discipline, and the societies in which we live.

The argument advanced in this essay rests on the assumption that the principles and concepts used in the basic course must be worked out in situated communication practices involving teachers and students. The move to locate theory in patterns of pedagogical discourse has implications not only in terms of the kinds of theories we teach, but how we teach them. In the first two sections of the paper I outline the assumptions guiding practical theory, especially as they relate to speech education. From this discussion it will become clear that practical theory involves a complex arrangement of communicative practices that are more than a system of teaching techniques, tips, or guidelines. In the final section I provide an extended example of how practical theory can be used to teach students to give oral criticism. This is just one example among many that could be used to show how practical theory works in the basic public speaking course.

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WHAT IS THE BASIS OF THE THEORY-PRACTICE DICHOTOMY?

While the distinction between theory and practice has its contemporary origins in twentieth-century positivist philosophy and the rise of modem social science, its historical roots actually date back to the pre-modem, classical period. Positivism, like all other intellectual moves, arose within a social-historical context that was itself shaped and molded by prior social-historical developments. This legacy is important to our understanding of the present dilemma because any attempt to reconcile theory with practice is doomed to failure as long as we adopt the traditional positivist approach to theory and the classical views on which it is based. Importantly, classical writings not only provide negative evidence for the present theory-practice problem, they also offer clues for working out a satisfactory solution to the problem.

Social scientists within the positivist tradition situate human communication within the domain of what Aristotle called *theoria* (Bernstein, 1983; Pearce, 1994). In the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle wrote that *theoria* describes that part of the world that is immutable and unchanging — things cannot be other than what they are. The method or goal of *theoria* is *episteme,* which is factual knowledge and the capacity to demonstrate truth logically. Given this account, it is difficult to see how communication can be comprehended within the domain of *theoria* by way of *episteme,* but this is apparently the approach favored by communication scientists trained in the positivist tradition.

Aristotle maintained that scientific disciplines, as opposed to practical ones, belong to the realm of *theoria* (Craig & Tracy, 1995). The status normally given to scientific disciplines and the elevated position of *episteme* in Western

culture might help account for why communication scientists were quick to embrace the tenants of logical positivism.

It would seem that communication scientists have either lost track of or ignored Aristotle's discussion of *praxis*. Aristotle believed that particular domains of the world are not immutable but contingent — things can be other than what they are (Bernstein, 1985; Pearce, 1994). This contingency defines the world of *praxis,* where the observer is intimately engaged in the products of observation and where human affairs depend on what people do when they act together. *Praxis* applies to disciplines which are essentially pragmatic in the sense that they are concerned with particular kinds of processes and outcomes that result from various forms of human action. I am totally convinced that Speech Communication is a practical discipline (if Aristotle were around today I am sure he would agree). Unlike the positivist obsession to move the study of communication into the domain of *theoria,* we should reclaim the central focus of our discipline around the concerns of *praxis*. Nowhere is the reclamation of *praxis* more central than in the area of speech education.

The kind of knowledge that fits the domain of *praxis* is *phronesis,* which is practical wisdom or the capacity to use good judgment in situations that require choice and deliberation. *Phronesis* involves a kind of flexibility that can only be carried out in particular situations depending on the myriad of contingencies that the situation and the people involved in the situation must respond to. Because *phronesis* is concerned with the practical, here-and-now of communication action, and because there are an infinite range of contingencies surrounding such action, there are no general principles — no positivist theories — that can fully account for *phronesis*.

This does not imply that general principles cannot be used to teach *phronesis*. The key is to ensure that general principles always remain responsive to situated practices. According to Leff (1994), the goal is "to encourage a fluid

interaction between precept and practice in which the precepts take on life only as they come into contact with and are altered by practices" (p. 12). Notice the difference between the practical approach favored by Leff (1994) and the one favored by positivist approaches to theory building. Instead of altering the nature of communication practice so that it fits the demands of theory, it is the educator's/researcher's responsibility to bring theory down from its lofty perch of abstraction to meet the concrete needs of communication practice.

WHAT IS PRACTICAL THEORY?

A practical, social constructionist approach to communication theory offers a way out of the false theory-practice dichotomy perpetuated by positivist, communication science (Cronen, 1995; Craig & Tracy, 1995). It does so by situating speech communication within the domain of *praxis* rather than *theoria,* and by focusing speech education on the teaching of *phronesis* rather than *episteme.* It is important to recognize that the use of the term "theory" in the descriptive label "practical theory" does not refer to either Aristotle's conception of *theoria* or the positivist notion of abstract theory. While it is possible to simply dispense with the term "theory" altogether to avoid confusion and the intellectual baggage the term conjures up, I am satisfied that the use of the term "practical" sufficiently modifies the term "theory" beyond its traditional scientific meanings.

The Reflexive Orientation of Practical Theory

Using the above framework as a general introduction, we can now seek to clarify in greater detail the particular focus of practical theory. The first issue to note is that practical theory

was developed as a complement to the social constructionist perspective on human communication. Given its social constructionist roots, practical theory necessarily embraces reflexivity as a fundamental feature of communication, communication research, and communication pedagogy. Reflexivity, as Steier (1995) notes, is a robust concept that has the potential to enrich communication inquiry at many different levels. Practical theory shares this view.

Extending Steier's optimistic assessment, I want to suggest that the reflexive orientation of practical theory is ideally suited to the integration of theory and practice. The use of reflexivity suggests that practical theory is concerned with working out the implications for developing theoretical principles that inform communication practice while simultaneously using practice to inform communication theory. The theoretical principles developed can never stray beyond the grounded, practical concerns of situated communication action because they will cease to be a guide to subsequent practice. It is my belief that all theory is reflexive in the sense that the products of the theory enter back into the act of theorizing. Aristotle's *theoria* and positivist conceptions of theory, however, fail to recognize their own reflexivity, choosing instead to assume an "ignorance is bliss" research posture. By contrast, practical theory is aware of its reflexivity; it embraces it, celebrates it, and seeks to exploit its liberating qualities.

Another facet to consider is that the practitioner of practical theory is reflexively involved in the act of theorizing such that he or she becomes part of the research process. There is no place for the objective bystander in a practical approach to theory. This means that theorists must relinquish the quaint but fictitious notion that they can remain comfortably insulated as spectators on the sidelines. The question for practical theory, then, is not whether theorists influence the research process, but rather how they are going to influence it. It is critical that theorists attend to ethical and pragmatic implica-

tions when entering the field to participate with their subjects. This is an especially important point to consider when we move practical theory into the basic course and recognize speech teachers as practical theorists.

Practical Theory and Speech Education

Cronen (1995) has recently identified five features of a practical communication theory. In what follows I list each of the five features with a running commentary about how these features apply to speech education and the basic course. I am not aware of any research that has applied practical theory to this area of communication.

1. "PRACTICAL THEORY IS CONCERNED WITH THE WAY EMBODIED PERSONS IN A REAL WORLD ACT TOGETHER TO CREATE PATTERNS OF PRACTICE THAT CONSTITUTE THEIR FORMS OF LIFE" (P. 231).

Applied to the basic course, practical theory deals with the situated performance of both students and teachers. This situated classroom performance constitutes a "real world" of interaction, and should not be misconstrued as an experimental lab or workshop situation. This sense of "real worldness" has implications because the "patterns of practice" conducted in the classroom have entailments in terms of creating "forms of life." While the communication practices we promote in the basic course might be awkward and difficult to negotiate at the outset, it is important that they become integrated as a normal part of the students' communication practices both in and out of the classroom. Developing new communication practices in the classroom holds out the possibility that we can create with our students different forms of life, different ways of experiencing the world beyond the classroom.

Another implication of focusing on embodied communication practices in the basic course concerns how we teach students and evaluate their learning. Teaching speech and assessments of student learning must be conducted primarily in terms of performed communication interaction, not written texts such as exams, papers, and the like. While these latter methods might be useful in some situations for some tasks, we should always privilege embodied forms of communication, both in terms of how we teach speech and the kinds of practices we engage in with our students.

2. "A PRACTICAL THEORY PROVIDES AN EVOLVING GRAMMAR FOR A FAMILY OF DISCURSIVE AND CONVERSATIONAL PRACTICES. THE GRAMMAR OF PRACTICAL THEORY SHOULD BE INTERNALLY CONSISTENT AND DEFENSIBLE IN LIGHT OF DATA" (P. 231).

The term "grammar" in practical theory is attributed to the later Wittgenstein (1953) and his notion that language is a rule-governed activity. Applied to the speech education and the basic course, it suggests that the rules which constitute a given grammatical practice in the classroom emerge within ongoing discursive and conversational practices. In order to participate in "educational" communication practices, one must have the ability to use a grammar and the ability to join with others so that they can learn the grammar.

Bringing practical theory into the classroom essentially entails bringing in a "family" of communication practices that enable participants to create patterns of coherent interaction. The simple test of whether a practice works or not is whether it allows students and teachers in a public speaking class, for example, to talk about socially significant issues in ways that make sense, in ways that are coherent.

The grammatical practices employed in the classroom emerge in use; they can be continued, altered, substituted or stopped at any time. The distinction between "discursive" and "conversational" practices is intended to show that some practices are formalized and instantiated (discourse), while others are more fluid and open to change (conversation). The focus on internal consistency indicates that not all grammatical practices are equal. For example, some practices are more useful than others for teaching students how to offer substantive oral criticism to their peers or how to use evidence and reasoning in their presentations. Practical theorists should be able to offer reasons why a particular practice or method for teaching communication is more useful than another.

3. "THESE PRACTICES CONSTITUTE A FAMILY OF METHODS FOR THE STUDY OF SITUATED SOCIAL ACTION WHEREIN PROFESSIONALS JOIN WITH PARTICIPANTS AND CLIENTS. AS SUCH, PRACTICAL THEORY RESPECTS THE CENTRALITY OF THE GRAMMATICAL ABILITIES OF PERSONS IN CONJOINT ACTION" (P. 231).

Communication practices take a variety of different forms. As noted above, some of the practices might be formal and structured while others can be more open-ended. It seems reasonable to assume further that some of the communication practices used in the basic course will employ conventional grammars, while others will be more unique to a particular instructor or educational approach.

It is interesting to note how these practices are developed by teachers depending on their level of experience. The first few times they teach the basic course, instructors generally stay close to the conventional practices and, in fact, spend considerable energy learning the grammar of these practices from textbooks, instructors' manuals, conversations with

teaching mentors, other instructors, and the like. This is a natural and necessary part of teacher training. Graduate student Teaching Associates and other new speech instructors must at some point learn basic principles of oral communication (i.e. organization, evidence, reasoning, etc.) and some standard instructional practices for teaching these principles. Having mastered these practices, however, most teachers then experiment with less formal and less conventional forms as they expand their grammatical abilities.

The constellation of practices together comprise a family of methods, or a methodology. These methods constitute the teacher's tools, what she or he brings to the classroom to promote and encourage learning. In order to avoid the "law of the hammer," teachers should have a repertoire of methods — communication practices — that can be adapted to the different situations and problems they encounter. Just as a practical theorist uses a variety of communication practices or methods to study situated action, so too does the speech teacher use a variety of practices or methods that enable students to learn how to communicate.

This implies that *teachers in the basic course not only employ practical theory, but they also are engaged practical theorists themselves.* The teacher as practical theorist, as opposed to the traditional positivist use of theory in the classroom, joins with his or her students in order to "play out" the theory. There is simply no other way that practitioners can use a practical theory except in situated communication practices with others. And this is exactly what is required of the teacher as practical theorist: the ability to enter into communication with students so as to change, alter, and enlarge their communication abilities.

Respecting the grammatical abilities of our students, of course, does not mean that we are satisfied with their abilities. It does mean that we should understand and honor the abilities students bring to the classroom. Moreover, teachers can tailor their practices and methods to fit the unique abili-

ties of individual students. In order to open a space in which learning can occur, the teacher as practical theorist must find ways of talking with students in a grammar that makes sense to them.

4. "PRACTICAL THEORIES ARE ASSESSED BY THEIR CONSEQUENCES. THEY ARE DEVELOPED IN ORDER TO MAKE HUMAN LIFE BETTER. THEY PROVIDE WAYS OF JOINING IN SOCIAL ACTION SO AS TO PROMOTE (A) SOCIALLY USEFUL DESCRIPTION, EXPLANATION, CRITIQUE, AND CHANGE IN SITUATED HUMAN ACTION; AND (B) EMERGENCE OF NEW ABILITIES FOR ALL PARTIES INVOLVED" (P. 231).

In keeping with the tradition of American pragmatist philosophy, practical theory is not so much concerned with Truth (with a capital 'T') as it is with consequences. Moreover, practical theory is focused on broad social, cultural, and political consequences instead of isolated, short-term consequences. My sense is that those of us in the basic communication course are in an excellent position to promote the kinds of social action that will help to make human life better. For example, elsewhere I have recently speculated on how the basic public speaking and argumentation courses in my department at San Jose State University operate as a kind of microcosm of larger cultural issues involved in the transformation of democracy within an ethnically diverse society. It is possible to attend to this issue more closely by assessing how the use of practical theory in the basic course can help to bring about positive social change in a multicultural environment.

The recognition that practical theory leads to the "emergence of new abilities for an parties involved" is important for rounding out my discussion of the teacher as practical theo-

rist. While recognizing that teachers must join the grammar of their students in order to enlarge their students' communication abilities, I have failed to mention how the communication abilities of the teachers emerge in concert with the abilities of the students. Whenever a teacher explores ways of adapting to the grammars of their students they necessarily assume the position of learner. Viewed from this perspective, communication abilities have an emergent quality which cross back and forth between teacher and student as each opens a learning space for the other. This way of "doing" practical theory implies that the communication practices used in the classroom emerge through a dialogical process.

5. "A PRACTICAL THEORY COEVOLVES WITH BOTH THE ABILITIES OF ITS PRACTITIONERS AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS USE, THUS FORMING A TRADITION OF PRACTICE" (P. 232).

A practical theory must evolve if it is to stay grounded in situated communication interaction. Indeed, a practical theory that does not change in response to the consequences of its use will eventually loose it vitality and ability to negotiate social change. Here again we can note how practical theory differs from the traditional ideal of theory. In the positivist approach, any theoretical change comes in response to empirical validation efforts carried out through hypothesis-testing procedures. Internal validity is the criterion of choice. In the practical approach, evolution of the theory is gauged in terms of how well it allows the practitioner to join social practices. While tempting, we must be careful here about using external validity as the criterion for theoretical change. To claim that a theory has external validity is essentially to say that, "the theory over here provides an accurate representation of the practice over there." There is no separa-

tion of this sort in practical theory because the theory is itself a practice and can be assessed only in terms of its uses and consequences.

The evolution of practical theory in the basic course is intimately connected to the communication abilities of both teachers and students. Teachers as practical theorists must embrace *praxis* and employ *phronesis* as a way of teaching their students how to act competently in a contingent world. The ability to act competently in contingent situations, of course, is also a manifestation of *phronesis*. As noted, the requirements for demonstrating *phronesis,* for both teacher and student, cannot be captured in a formal set of abstract principles because the situations in which it applies are infinitely various. *Phronesis* must be demonstrated in concrete situations and the consequences of its use can only be assessed within the confines of that actual situation. How a practical theory is to evolve depends on how teachers and students are able to use the theory in classroom communication practices. The theory is useful to the extent that the practices lead to better teaching and learning.

HOW CAN PRACTICAL THEORY BE INTEGRATED INTO THE BASIC COURSE?

It would seem that practical theory is ideally suited to the basic communication course. It dispenses with the theory-practice dichotomy and seeks to develop discursive and conversational practices that enhance the communication abilities of both teachers and students. In this section I discuss a model for practical theory developed by Craig and Tracy (1995) and illustrate how it can be used in the basic course.

Craig and Tracy (1995) define practical theory as "a *rational reconstruction* of practice," and state that the "ultimate test" of a practical theory is "its usefulness for practice and

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reflection" (p. 252). "We propose, then, to conceive of grounded practical theory as a rational reconstruction of situated practices for the purpose of informing further practice and reflection" (p. 264).

While there are some minor differences between Cronen's (1995) and Craig and Tracy's (1995) characterization of practical theory, the two appear to me to address essentially the same issues in roughly the same ways. One difference is the uses to which the two approaches are put. Cronen (1995) uses a practical coordinated management of meaning theory in therapeutic intervention settings involving family or organizational social groups. Craig and Tracy (1995) appear to be more mainstream by comparison. They investigate a specific academic discourse community and the kinds of practices that attend "intellectual discussions" such as colloquia, research seminars, and symposia.

The "problem-centered model" developed by Craig and Tracy (1995) identifies three interrelated theoretical levels through which a practice can be reconstructed: the technical level, problem level, and philosophical level.

At the *technical level* "a practice can be reconstructed as a repertory of specific communicative strategies and techniques that are routinely available to be employed within the practice" (p. 253). This is the most concrete level. It is the level at which speech acts are made and procedures are followed in order to produce particular outcomes. Reconstructing practices at this level, of course, does not mean that the strategies or techniques are successful. It simply highlights the fact that the production of practices result from strategic action.

In the basic course, this is often the level that commands the most attention. Indeed, it is common for instructors to introduce the basic course by telling students that the goal is to "learn how to develop and present speeches to an audience." This way of framing the course addresses the fundamental question asked at the technical level: how do I do it? While this is certainly a central objective of the basic course, and one

that students are likely to focus on, it suggests that the course operates solely on the technical level, a feature which is commensurate with a skills approach to learning. As the next level of the model indicates, however, the technical level should follow from the identification and reconstruction of specific problems that students and teachers encounter in the basic course.

At the *problem level* "a practice can be reconstructed as a problem logic or interrelated web of problems that practitioners experience" (p. 253). This is the most important level in the model because it is here where the identification of "real world" problems leads to responses that often result in philosophical reflection (level three) or the development of specific strategies and techniques (level one). It makes sense from a practical point of view to begin with the problem level because it is here where people must respond to contingencies embedded in the social situations they encounter.

Applied to the basic course, there are a number of fundamental communication problems that we and our students face. Experienced teachers recognize familiar patterns of problems, but they also know that every semester is likely to bring some new and different problem that they have never seen before. The point is that there are many communication problems of various types that can give rise to the rational reconstruction of a practice. The basic question that is applicable to the problem level and reflects instruction in the basic course is: What problems do our students experience when learning how to enhance their communication abilities?

It is at the third level, the *philosophical level,* where "a practice can be reconstructed in the form of elaborated normative ideals and overarching principles that provide a rationale for resolution of problems" (p. 253). This is the most abstract level in that it consists of situated ideals, moral imperatives, or philosophical positions. These ideals, imperatives, and positions, like the strategies and techniques at the technical level, come about as a result of reflecting on

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the problems identified at the second problem level. Here the instructor might respond to a reconstructed problem by calling forth a set of moral principles that help students negotiate their way through multiple and competing goals (level two to level three). Applied to the basic course, the basic question asked at this level is: What situated ideals can be developed that will help students resolve or cope with the problem at hand?

In what follows I explore how the problem-centered model can be used to illuminate a particular type of communication practice typically encountered in the basic course. Consider a speech teacher who notices that students in a basic speech class are reluctant to ask questions or offer comments in response to the oral presentations given by their peers. How can this practice be reconstructed in the form of a problem? The instructor might begin by hypothesizing that students in the class have multiple face saving and face threatening goals that become especially acute in public speaking episodes. This initial hypothesis could be generated through interviews with students, conversations with other instructors, reading research literature, or direct observation conducted by the instructor. In any case, the initial hypothesis should be construed as an informal assessment, not a formal prediction to be tested and verified.

Within this face-saving hypothesis, students are viewed as reluctant to ask questions because they do not want to threaten the self-presentations of others. Their silence is thus seen as a strategy performed so that they can avoid threatening the self-presentations of other students in the class. The teacher might also think that the strategy is enacted to serve other goals as well; namely, to secure their own opportunity for a non-threatening episode when it is their turn to speak. Not surprisingly, the problem logic at play here serves to reconstruct an episode in which oral criticism is avoided so as to ensure a non-threatening classroom environment.

If this is the rational reconstruction (practical theory) at the problem level, one way for the instructor to go forward is to develop specific communication techniques that require the students to practice giving and receiving oral criticism in ways that are constructive but not personally threatening. This is a move from the problem level to the technical level. In order to accomplish this, the teacher might introduce the techniques to the class, perhaps through modeling initially but after that the techniques could be performed by other people in other ways. Notice that the technique was offered as a response to a real problem exhibited in the classroom, not as an end in itself. Moreover, the success of the technique can only be gauged in communication practice. That is, by how well students can perform the actions of giving and receiving constructive criticism, and by how well the teacher can enlist students in practices that lead to this outcome.

Another way of addressing the problem is to incorporate reconstructions at the philosophical level. Here the instructor might move to level three by eliciting a "democratic ideal of constructive criticism." One way to do this is by developing an assignment that requires students to explore, perhaps through historical, contemporary, or personal exemplars, actual situations in which criticism was encouraged and/or censored. For example, students might read case study accounts of the discourse surrounding Joseph McCarthy and how failure to criticize his communist subversion propaganda ruined careers and created unfounded paranoia. Through this kind of investigation students are encouraged to assess the various affects — both good and bad — of open and closed criticism on ethics, decision making, and policy formation in a democratic society.

From this assignment, the class might then develop its own set of ethical principles that establish the situated ideals associated with giving and receiving criticism in the classroom. These ideals serve as philosophical responses (they can be moral or political ideals) to a practical communication

problem. It is necessary to recognize, of course, that the philosophical ideals must still find their way into the communication practices of the class. Thus the actual implementation of level three reconstructions will eventually involve techniques and strategies at level one. Ultimately, the test is whether students are able to integrate these ideals into their communication practices so that they are able to engage in productive oral criticism.

When introduced into the basic course, the problem-centered model of practical theory highlights how technical and philosophical dimensions respond to practical problems and how these problems are negotiated in the ongoing communication practices of students and teachers.

CONCLUSION

In discussing the uses of practical theory in the basic communication course it is clear that what I am advocating is both new and old. It is new in the sense that it pushes directly against the grain of positivist thinking and the traditional social scientific paradigm that has influenced communication instruction for the last 25 or so years. It is old because it continues the classical tradition of *praxis* and calls for the teaching of *phronesis* in communication education. Aristotle clearly recognized that rhetoric and public speaking belong to the domain of *praxis* and that *phronesis* is the proper form of knowledge for demonstrating competence in these practical arts. A similar argument could be made in terms of tracing strands of practical theory and the social constructionist perspective back to the Sophistic tradition (Pearce & Foss, 1990).

Whether we turn to Aristotle's notion of *praxis* or the teaching of the Sophists, the outcome is clear: speech communication discarded its classical roots as a practical discipline and jumped on the positivist bandwagon in an

attempt to pursue theoretical rigor and scientific respectability.

The irony of this move has not gone unnoticed, nor have some of its negative consequences. During the past few decades there has been growing recognition in the humanities and social sciences that positivism is limited when applied to the realm of human action and, conversely, that the theory-practice dichotomy must be reexamined. Many influential writers outside our field are now turning to the domain of *praxis* and issues of speech communication — the same domain and the same issues that the field relinquished in the rush to embrace positivism — to fashion a renewed pragmatist philosophy (Bernstein, 1983).

To be fair, many in the field, particularly in speech education and classical rhetorical studies, never ceased working with communication as a practical art. Instead of following their practice (no pun intended), these renegades were instead ushered off to the margins of the discipline (Sprague, 1993). "Had we stuck to our business of teaching communication as a practical art," writes Leff (1994), "we might have understood the legacy we inherited from past teachers of the art, and we might have led the way in correcting the theoretical psychosis of the modern academy" (p. 14). If speech communication is to emerge as a discipline capable of healing the "theoretical psychosis of the modern academy," as Leff suggests, we must return to our roots in communication education and begin working with more practical forms of communication theory.

I am optimistic that the alternative voices among us are prevailing and that we are finally recognizing how our future is inexorably tied to our practical past. Within a practical approach to theory there is an explicit awareness of this reflexive shift to move both backward and forward at the same time; a movement that seems to always circle back around *praxis*. The development of practical theory seems to me to be a step in the right direction, perhaps made easier knowing that we are following in the footsteps of others.

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Rethinking Our Rethinking Retrospectively: A Rejoinder to Spano

Mark Hickson, III

After reading Spano's (1996) essay several times, I was struck by the title of the work in opposition to its substance. When I read "practical" approach in the title, I first thought that the discussion would progress (or regress) into the work of Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (1967) and their "pragmatics," or perhaps even further back to the pragmatic philosophy of Peirce (Houser & Kloesel, 1992). However, nowhere in the paper did I find these works mentioned. As I reread the paper, I detected a vocabulary that was more reminiscent of phenomenology than pragmatism: "here-and-now," "situated communication action," "embodied persons," and "situated performance," among others. Obviously, there is nothing inherently "wrong" or "disparate" about phenomenological language, but pragmatic *(praxis;* practical) constructs are different.

The opening of the paper provides a targeted attack on the work of "positivists" in our discipline (though none is identified), an attack not far removed from similar phenomenological assaults on positivism found in the works of Denzin & Lincoln (1994), Bruyn (1966), or Lincoln & Guba (1985). The differences, however, are that the above listed writers have provided examples of the problems with logical positivistic approaches to human studies. In addition, none of them focused on communication studies.

Certainly I do not disagree, in part, with Delia's (1985) notion that "positivism" in our discipline was utilized in an

attempt to emulate seemingly more credible, scientific disciplines to raise our own credibility. I disagree, however, that credibility raising was the sole or central concern. In fact, our discipline was going nowhere; thus, I believe that it was an attempt to find direction. Of course, the emulation was NOT a scientific surrogate resembling physics or mathematics or chemistry. Instead, it was a modest attempt to adopt the views of what many considered a similar humanistic study, the discipline of psychology. Of course one can argue that behavioral, Skinnerian psychology *may* have been a poor substitute. Clinical psychology may have been a more effective choice. And certainly the sub-discipline of interpersonal communication has, at various times, incorporated both psychologies, as well as anthropology and sociology. But the empirical, "laboratory" studies of the late 1940s, the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, grew to fill a void, not to generate communication laws. In fact, the very notion of *level of significance* is much more supportive of a Protagorian construct based on *probabilities* than either an intuitive, idealistic view of Plato or any view portrayed by Aristotle. It would seem that such a probabilistic account would be consistent with, rather than inconsistent with, a practical view.

Overall, I have found a disagreement with the assumption of some theory/praxis dichotomy, which supposedly exists in our literature. Second, I believe that the approach espoused by Spano (1996) is in fact "trial-and-error theory." Third, I agree with some contentions of the previous paper, but I use different terminology to explain what I mean.

THE THEORY-PRACTICE DICHOTOMY

What I have described as a "filling of the void," the so-called logical positivistic view, in the discipline of communication studies was neither theory- nor practice-driven in its early days. While there is little doubt that theory was the

basis of the empirical studies, in many cases, the theory was approximately 2000 years old. There is little difference between ethos being described as character, intelligence, and goodwill or ethos as trustworthiness and competence. In some ways, the difference is similar to that found between a witch doctor saying one's illness is caused by the devil and a contemporary physician calling it a virus. The difference is that character, intelligence, and good will were not *measurable.* Trustworthiness and competence were.

Let us take these simple notions to alleviate the supposed discrepancy between theory and practice. First of all, some authors (Stacks, Hickson, & Hill, 1991) describe the interaction of teaching, practice, observation, research, and theory as a *web* (p. 289). That is, no one is relegated to being first, or second, or third. They interact with one another. Nevertheless, one would not want to teach students something that was contrary to the other four. That is, we would not want to teach public speaking students that being trustworthy is unimportant.

Perhaps Spano's (1996) criticism is directed more toward Burgoon's (1989) attempt to divorce communication theory from speech practice. Burgoon's notion, however, was directed more toward attempting to enhance the credibility of a department at a particular university more so than it was a theoretical-practice dichotomy. He was concerned that the discipline was achieving a bad reputation as a result of teaching performance courses as core courses. Such a position as Burgoon's (1989), however, is not related to the historical role of positivism in *research.*

In fact, the history is that there was a dichotomy between *research* and *theory.* The term, "variable testing," was assigned to such works which essentially randomly pitted one variable against another, with little or no theoretical insight. It was not until almost 15 years after the publication of Kuhn's (1962) book that Jesse Delia and James C. McCroskey posed the arguments for deontology and empiricism in the

discipline at a Speech Communication Association Convention in Houston, Texas. Delia suggested that McCroskey would really like to put all of the variables in a pot to see what would result. McCroskey, not denying the allegation, said that Delia would prefer to sit on a pot and "think about it."

The results over the past few years, however, have been somewhere in between. Theory, contemporary theory, has become much more prominent in the discipline. Simple variable testing, without underlying theory, is less likely to be published today than it was 15 years ago.

Thus, Spano's (1996) statements: "Clearly, the separation of theory and practice is one of those effects left us by positivism. In the positivist approach, theory is a set of abstract principles expressed in the form of propositions" (p.75) cause some problems. Other than those relatively few studies (research, not theory) which re-tested Aristotle and Cicero's works, there never was a theoretical connection prior to the "positivists." In fact, Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero theorized based on observation and intuition. Clearly, there may have been a division between research and theory — but not theory and practice.

Pedagogically what happened was that many teachers simply took the results of the theories and re-taught the intuitions. Which brings us back to trustworthiness. A recent political poll indicated that most voters do not "trust" President Clinton, but they intend to vote for him anyway. Now this sounds like something that needs retesting. Or, maybe we never have trusted politicians.

Looking at the *web* of instruction, practice, observation, theory, and research, it would appear that we need to have some bases for what we say to students in our classes. If we leave theory out of the web, it appears that we move back to where the positivists were 20 years ago — variable testing. I do not believe that Spano (1996) can simply say that theory, especially something resembling law-like theory, can be thrown out; we need to look further.

TRIAL-AND-ERROR

Taking the position that empirical research and theory are to be separated from practice may take us even further — backwards. Looking at another area of communication, nonverbal communication, Birdwhistell (1970) has emphasized the very point that Spano (1996) appears to be trying to make. That is, nonverbal communication is *contextual.* Birdwhistell emphasizes that interpreting a nonverbal message must involve seeking out the norms of cultures, subcultures, and micro-cultures. It is also important to have a baseline. For example, is one's excessive leg and foot movement an indicator of deception, or is it simply the normal nervous gesture of the observed?

Rules theory is inherently *practical,* but even among the rules theorists, there is no attempt to "start from scratch" every time a new communication situation approaches. Reading Birdwhistell's (1970) "cigarette scene" (pp. 227-250) can be an invaluable exercise for students. Similar invaluable learning can come from reading Goffman's (1971) "remedial interchanges" (pp. 95-187).

Spano (1996), however, appears to suggest that the students can learn such information only from *experiencing* it. Once again, however, there is nothing new about this pedagogical approach. When Spano (1996) writes that "it is the educator's/researcher's responsibility to bring theory down from its lofty perch of abstraction to meet the concrete needs of communication practice" (p. 80), he seems to be asking the student to start all over again.

If we take this approach to everything, then we would have to pull out a map each time we drive to work. We would have to go to the Library of Congress to re-investigate what we already know about history. We would have to re-test each scientific theory. Reasoned skepticism is all right, but would it not be a better method to "test" some of those studies

("theories") which have not been replicated? Perhaps, too, it would be advantageous to investigate a few of the dialectical formats below.

RETHINKING OUR RETHINKING

Some of the notions mentioned by Spano (1996) make a great deal of sense. However, I believe that there is a hodge-podge of notions in this work. Pedagogically, Spano seems to oppose "top-down, monologue" from the instructor. Philosophically, he seems to believe that reflexivity is a better "measure" of validity and reliability than are statistical norms. Theoretically, he seems to be disgusted with a law-like approach.

In the pedagogical approach, we are essentially talking about monologue versus dialogue. This issue is as new as Plato. Where the issue evolves, however, is how much do students "know" about the communication process before they enter the communication classroom? They certainly know what they have said and what the practical consequences have been, in a number of contexts. So, they do not know about theory. They do not know the terms, the researchers, the propositions. Why would they need to know these things? Primarily, they would need to know so that every communication experience for them is not a trial-and-error event. *Knowledge is cumulative.* The student experiences can be useful as a "jumping off" point, but to change, to observe others requires education.

Philosophically, there is nothing impertinent or irrelevant about investigating reflexively. Perhaps we can make this point through another notion of theory. Psychologist Frans de Waal (1996) has suggested that there are a number of universals among humans. Many of these universals involve humans in the process of communication. These elements include sympathy, rank and order, and quid pro quo.

While sympathy is not an element of communication that has been studied often by communication researchers, certainly it can be associated with empathy, audience analysis, definition of the situation, and the like. As one of the primary constructs that we study, this sympathy-empathy-audience analysis-definition of the situation construct should be an important aspect of any communication course. In essence, how do we "get into" the mind of the other? Why do we need to "get into" the mind of the other? How do we adapt to others when we are trying to communicate? When are we trying to persuade? When we are using catharsis?

Rank and order provide a basis for the previous construct. For example, do I change the nature of my message when I am upset depending upon whether the other is a superior or a subordinate? The rank and order construct is found in such diverse theoretical works as Burke (1966) and Mehrabian (1972). Unfortunately, this is an area where little research is found *across contexts* in the communication discipline. Therefore, it may be exactly the kind of construct that one may wish to "experiment" or "experience" in a basic course. What is the role of rank-and-order in the college classroom? How does this differ from the high school classroom? How does it affect marital interaction? How does rank-and-order affect personality (Schutz, 1966)? Then, students could investigate how Schutz' notions of abdicrat, democrat, autocrat relate to Mehrabian's or Burke's concepts. The point is that virtually every *theory* of communication includes some aspect of rank-and-order (power, status). Again the point may be to find such universal constructs.

A third such construct is quid pro quo. Such reciprocity is essential to uncertainty reduction theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) as well as exchange theory (Homans, 1961). Such reciprocal altruism is also a major ingredient of Aristotle's good will component of ethos. Once again, students may read about each of these theoretical components and compare and contrast them. Berger and Calabrese's (1975)

uncertainty reduction also discusses nonverbal affiliative expressive — in essence, the liking-disliking dimension of Mehrabian's (1972) approach.

Such universals should then be discussed and experienced utilizing the dialectic of cultural:acultural That is, which of these constructs are truly universal? How are they implemented differently in different cultures? What is the language (Spano's "grammar") of each of these constructs? How do we let the other know that we sympathize/empathize? How do we let the other know that we understand the rank-and-order hierarchy within that particular context? How do we develop and maintain quid pro quo relationships of an altruistic nature?

Law-like theories are virtually non-existent in communication theory. Syntactical generality is low in almost every theory that we have available. As Spano (1996) suggests, communication is highly context-bound. Thus, we must have "if" this and "if" that. The lack of law-like theory is perhaps a result of some of the variable testing in the past. The direction in which we have gone filled a void but created a new void. That is, what is the communication paradigm (if there is one)? Without such a paradigm, the discipline persists in having a relatively disorganized approach to whatever problem one is attempting to resolve. Is the paradigm, "it depends," sufficient? I wonder, is "it depends" a virus?

SUMMARY

In brief, I certainly believe that Spano's (1996) essay arouses a renewed interest in the philosophical aspects of the basic course. However, it is an important consideration to engage in the exact reflexivity that Spano has recommended. First, it is important to understand the history of the discipline. Second, it is important to sift through various philosophical foundations to determine how they "fit" with one

another. Third, a practical approach involves being specific. Practical approaches typically do not involve phenomenological language, which certainly is more obtuse if not more abstract than positivism. A practical approach means utilizing available information, regardless of the philosophical system under which the results were found. A practical approach means utilizing a language that students understand. A practical approach means defining terms and relating terms to one another. Fourth, a practical approach does mean researching audiences and contexts, but it also means that there may be universals which are adapted rather than dismissed. Hopefully, Spano and I have provided a format under which teachers of the basic course can gain some reflection about the interrelationships among theory, research, observation, practice, and instruction.

Perhaps most importantly, we must address some of these concerns of Spano's and mine. For if we do not, we are recommending to non-majors taking a basic course (public speaking, fundamentals, interpersonal, theory) to continue taking other courses invoking "it depends" as an always, very obtuse, very abstract, very ambiguous, very mundane, very anti-intellectual answer to all communication problems.

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Should Class Participation be Required in the Basic Communication Course?

Jennifer Wood

Class participation, that ubiquitous course requirement appearing on syllabi throughout the university, ironically may be one of the least discussed and explained requirements in a class. Instructors usually take great care in preparing students to complete other course requirements. They hand out and discuss ideas for class projects, spell out how long (or short) papers should be, and cover material in class that will enable students to complete an assignment or study for an exam. When it comes to class participation, however, students often find themselves on their own. At best, they have an instructor's brief definition of class participation which appears on the course syllabus. At worst, students not only have no idea what the instructor means by class participation, they also receive no instruction in how to participate.

Although her focus is on quiet students in the basic college speech course, Kougl (1980) illustrates the problems many students face when they are required to speak in class without being taught how to speak.

> Students often report that they received no training in oral communication skills, although they were frequently graded on how well they spoke. Even when they received a high grade, confidence did not result. Since they were unsure of what they had done to deserve the grade, they feared that they would not be able to repeat. They were left with the impression that good oral communicating is a matter of luck and best avoided when possible. (p. 235)

Lack of instruction about class participation poses several significant problems for students and instructors alike. Students who do not participate in class automatically find themselves at a disadvantage, whether they learn the course material or not. Students may not participate in class for any number of reasons, including not understanding what participation means.[1]

Instructors also must deal with problems about how to evaluate a particular student's participation. Does one count the number of times a student contributes to class discussions? Does one consider the quality of a student's contribution? Does one simply note the students who do and do not speak up in class? Is class participation a way to get students to attend?

Most significantly, these problems raise the question about the purpose of requiring class participation in the first place. If students are not taught how to participate, then what is the purpose of making it a requirement?

This article first explores the purpose of requiring students to participate in class. Here I argue that class participation is an ineffective measurement of a student's abilities or a student's engagement with the course material and should not be used as such. Indeed, the only valid purpose for making participation a requirement in class is to teach students how to participate. Second, for instructors interested in teaching students the skills of class participation, I suggest three general guidelines for developing teaching strategies designed to encourage students comments and questions during class. This section does not present *the* way to teach class participation to students. Rather, I offer goals for instructors to consider when they require students to partici-

[1]See McCroskey (1980) for a thorough discussion of possible reasons that some students remain quiet in a classroom. He notes, "All quiet children have only one thing in common -- they are quiet. Beyond that, they are as different from one another as any other group of human beings." (p. 240)

pate in class. Finally, I argue that the basic communication course provides an excellent framework for teaching participation skills to students.

REQUIRING CLASS PARTICIPATION: WHAT IS THE PURPOSE?

In general, instructors require students to participate in class because they hope the requirement will promote lively discussions. In other words, instructors use class participation as a way to encourage or reward students' contributions in class. Unfortunately, the requirement tends to reward only those students who would be likely to participate anyway. At the same time, it unfairly and automatically places quieter students at a disadvantage to their more talkative classmates. Indeed, rewards might actually discourage some students from making contributions in class. As Tiberius and Billson (1991) explain, reticent students may hesitate to participate precisely because they believe their comments will be evaluated (pp. 70-71).

The class participation requirement might also be used as a measurement of a student's comprehension of or involvement with the course material. The thinking here may be that students who make frequent contributions are more engaged in the learning process and therefore learning more than quieter students. A student's contributions, however, are an ineffective measurement of what a student knows. "By using oral activities to assess students, teachers may actually be missing their intended goal," cautions Daly (1986). He adds,

> There are countless stories of high apprehensive students who fare poorly in classes as diverse as English literature, mathematics, and art history simply because their participation is not up to par. They may know as much as or more than their peers who are low apprehensive, but their

> presentation of that knowledge is confounded by their apprehension. (p. 28)

The amount students participate in class actually gives instructors few clues about students' understanding of the course material. While Kougl (1980) states, "A student who is listening is more likely to be learning than a student who is talking" (p. 234), I am more inclined to argue that a student who listening is *just as* likely to be learning as a student who is talking. In other words, we must get away from the false assumption that the amount one learns is directly connected to the amount one does (or does not) talk.

Many instructors, no doubt, have had experiences with students who talk a great deal in class, but do not know much about the course material or even indicate that they have been listening to what others in the class have said. Likewise, most instructors have probably known at least a few quiet students who, when the time came, handed in exceptional work or stood up to deliver excellent speeches. My point is that what class participation measures is students' class participation skills.

Although class participation is an ineffective measurement of what a student knows, it is nonetheless a very useful skill for students to learn. Adler (1980), for example, cites both social and economic costs related to "the fear of expressing one's thoughts" (p. 215). He explains,

> Apprehensive communicators interact less in small groups and are perceived by other group members to be less extroverted, composed, competent and socially attractive than their more outgoing counterparts.
>
> In the area of employment...highly apprehensive communicators are less likely to receive job interviews, and less likely to receive jobs....Communication apprehensives are also less likely to seek career advancement when that step would require them to communicate more. (pp. 215-216)

Therefore, while the amount a student participates in class provides no effective measure of the amount a student learns, the ability to express one's thoughts orally carries with it some cultural value. The ability to participate effectively can have an impact on an individual's success academically, socially, and economically.

We reach then an important intersection in our understanding of the purpose of requiring students to participate in class. What is abundantly clear is that a class participation requirement neither promotes participation nor does it effectively measure what a student learns in class. Therefore, the only valid purpose of requiring class participation in any course is to teach students how to express their ideas. Class participation, if required, must be treated like any other course requirement. If instructors require class participation from students, this obligates instructors to teach students how to participate.

CLASS PARTICIPATION: TEACHING A SKILL

In their study of question-asking comfort among eighth graders in the classroom, Daly, Kreiser, and Roghaar (1994) note that "question-asking comfort is significantly associated with gender, ethnicity, geographic region, home language background, and perceptions of teachers' responsiveness to students" (p. 27). While Daly and his colleagues caution that "many of the relationships described in this article may be explained by other variables..." (p. 38), they stress that, "(t)he sense that one *lacks the skill* of competently communicating a question in the classroom, or a feeling of insecurity about one's ability to communicate — or a distressing combination of both, affect classroom questioning" (p. 39, emphasis added).

The value of switching from a measurement or reward-based view of participation to a skill-based one is that skills

can be taught and learned. In their discussion of the impact of gender on student questions in the class room, Pearson and West (1991) conclude that what students need is "*instruction* and modeling in effective and appropriate question asking" (p. 29, emphasis added). Indeed, providing opportunities to learn new communication skills is precisely what the basic communication course is all about.

Fortunately, a rich body of research provides interested instructors with a variety of strategies for teaching students the skill of participation (see Adams, 1992; Adler, 1980; Andersen, 1986; Cashin & McKnight, 1986; Collett & Serrano, 1992; Daly, 1986; hooks, 1994; Kougl, 1980; McCroskey, 1980; Phoenix, 1987; Sadker & Sadker, 1992; Schaffer, 1987; Tiberius & Billson, 1991; and Wolf, 1987). Whatever the strategies used, however, instructors should consider three general guidelines when teaching participation in their classes: (1) establish a concrete but flexible definition of participation, (2) provide clear feedback (early and often) to students about their work as classroom participants, and (3) convey a genuine interest in what students have to say.

As mentioned above, I do not intend these guidelines as an exact prescription for teaching class participation skills. This would defeat the purpose of my suggestions. As bell hooks (1994) points out when introducing her concept of "engaged pedagogy," every classroom presents instructors with new teaching experiences that require teachers to develop new strategies and adapt their old ones. Every classroom will have different patterns of participation and students will come to class with a wide range of skills and needs. The following guidelines are designed to provide instructors with a way to begin thinking about how to teach class participation skills in their own classes.

1. A Clear, Flexible Definition

To begin with, when teaching students how to participate, instructors should develop a clear but flexible definition of participation. "It is important," Weinstein, Meyer, and Stone (1994) write, "that we clearly define and explain how each task is expected to contribute to learning so that students can approach the tasks strategically" (p. 361). A clear definition is not sufficient, however, if the definition is so rigid that some students may feel restricted from speaking. "The goal of complete equal opportunity in class may not be attainable," explains Deborah Tannen (1994),

> but realizing that one monolithic classroom-participation structure is not equal opportunity is itself a powerful motivation to find more diverse methods to serve diverse students — and every classroom is diverse. (p. 203)

In defining class participation, instructors should identify a variety of behaviors that qualify as participation and students should be offered a range of different options for participating.

Below is the definition of class participation I developed for the public speaking courses I teach. It is by no means the best or only suitable definition an instructor could use. However, it does represent my attempts to be as specific as possible about class participation goals for students. The definition appears as follows on my course syllabus:

> Class participation includes coming to class prepared with one question or comment from the reading assignment, completing homework assignments, providing verbal and written comments to classmates on speeches delivered during this course, conveying full attention to others in the class while they are speaking, and expressing your ideas verbally with your classmates during small group activities. Class participation is not credit for attendance.

In developing this definition, I try to provide students with clear guidelines for behavior. I also strive to provide them with a variety of options for displaying participation (both oral and written). In addition, this definition enables me to consider a number of different behaviors that count as participation when evaluating students' work. I use these behaviors to provide specific suggestions to students to improve their skills as participants.

As some may note, my definition on the syllabus focuses on specific behaviors rather than the quality of students' contributions in class. This is because I do not want to discourage quieter students from making a comment or asking a question because they worry about the quality of what they have to say. I do, however, use written feedback (discussed below) to encourage students to improve the quality of their contributions.

2. Effective Feedback

Second, in teaching students how to participate, instructors must provide both oral and written feedback to students about their progress as participators. This is much easier said than done. An instructor's responses to students' comments and questions not only model the standards for participation in class, responses can also encourage or discourage student talk.

Instructors teaching class participation must attend to and constantly work against any barriers that might prevent students from expressing their thoughts. As unfair as it is to evaluate students on a skill that the instructor does not define, it is unscrupulous to require students to accomplish something that instructors actually prevent students from achieving. Daly (1986) warns that,

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> Teachers need to exert a good deal of caution when dealing with students' communication activities. There are far too many cases of teachers ridiculing students' attempts at communication, demanding absolute quiet in their classrooms, or indiscriminately punishing talk. Students are close observers of teachers' reactions. When they see a teacher reacting negatively or apathetically to something, they tend to adapt to that teacher. (pp. 28-29)

In their article entitled "Ensuring Equitable Participation in College Classes," Sadker and Sadker (1992) caution that "(f)or all of its benefits, interactive teaching has potential for interjecting subtle bias into the college classroom. Studies analyzing classroom dynamics from grade school through graduate school show that teachers are more likely to interact with white male students" (p. 49). To counter these tendencies they suggest instructors ask a colleague to observe their interactions with students, noting in particular who the instructor interacts with during class and the typical length of "wait time" between the instructor's question and students' responses. "This collection of data," they assert,

> can open up a number of provocative teaching issues. Instructors should consider the following questions: How many interactions are there in the classroom? How many students do not participate in any interactions? Do any students dominate discussions? Does the instructor rely on volunteers or independently decide who will speak? Are there geographical areas of the class that receive considerable instructor attention? Are there other areas that are blind spots, where students receive little or no attention? (p. 53)

Likewise, Condon (1986) offers a series of questions that instructors can use to uncover what he calls "subtle forms of bias in the classroom" (p. 14).

> Who is encouraged to speak, and how is this encouragement shown? Which interruptions are appropriate, and which are not? How much self-disclosure is appropriate in the public setting of a classroom? What conflict and confrontation styles are encouraged, and what styles create discomfort? If a student is corrected or criticized, is this done in front of others or individually? (p. 14)

While seeking answers to these questions may seem like a daunting task, this is precisely my point. By requiring students to participate in class, instructors obligate themselves to attend to these issues and answer these questions.

In addition to verbal responses to students contributions, I provide them with a brief written assessment of their work as participants at three points during the term: just after the first major speech, following the mid-term examination, and the class session prior to the start of the final speech rounds. This provides students with a sense of progress regarding their efforts to participate and encourages them to make adjustments during the course to enhance their participation evaluation.

Additionally, written feedback enables me to work with each individual student on particular goals for participation. I often encourage students who regularly make oral contributions to class discussions to work on the quality of their comments. I might, for example, suggest to a talkative student who usually provides positive comments to classmates' speeches that she or he try offering and supporting constructive criticism instead.

Most students are reluctant to express negative comments about their classmates' speeches. Written feedback can provide students with specific guidance for how to critique constructively, and at the same time model constructive criticism skills for them. For example, one of Grice and Skinner's (1995) nine "key points" for critiquing speeches is "problem solve the negative" (418). They suggest that critics

"first, point out a specific problem, and, second, suggest ways to correct it" (418).

Written feedback on class participation can both explain and demonstrate problem solving to students. To illustrate, an instructor might point out that a student has done an excellent job of providing positive comments on classmates' speeches, and that working on providing constructive criticism will expand the student's class participation skills. Then the instructor can "problem solve" by encouraging the student to specify one problem with a classmate's speech and provide one suggestion for improving the problem. The instructor can also point that this is precisely the format used to critique the student's work on class participation.

For quieter students, written feedback gives me an opportunity to acknowledge their written contributions to our work in class (the quality of their written critiques of classmates' speeches, for example). I also often encourage less talkative students to meet with me to discuss goals for oral class participation. Together we may decide that the student will try to ask one question during a round of speeches or offer one comment from a reading assignment during our class discussions. My experience is that serves as a great motivator for students; most not only meet but exceed their goals.

Written feedback is also an important teaching tool for me when I am in the classroom. I can respond individually to students without taking time during class to redirect more talkative students or unfairly put quieter students on the spot. Moreover, written feedback reminds students that, like their speeches, class participation is an assignment. It is a skill that they are learning, not something that they are expected to know or do automatically.

3. Valuing Students' Ideas

Finally, as important as a flexible definition and effective feedback are to teaching students participation skills, a sincere interest in what students have to say may be the most important method an instructor can use in teaching students how to express their thoughts. Tiberius and Billson (1991) explain that "students respond much more enthusiastically to teachers whom they regard as genuinely interested in them and committed to teaching them" (p. 67). When instructors require class participation, they are obliged to value the contributions students make in their classes. They are obliged to listen, closely and actively, to what students have to say.

According to Wolf (1987), "one important occasion on which students see teachers ask genuine questions is when a teacher tries seriously and persistently to get to the bottom of what a student is after but cannot express or attain" (p. 4). This serious, persistent questioning can demonstrate to students that even when they have trouble expressing their ideas, the instructor values what they have to say.

For quieter students, this strategy could, of course, backfire. Persistent questioning for one student may feel like badgering to another. This is why using a variety of techniques to encourage students' contributions and recognizing multiple forms (written and oral) of participation are so important.

In an interview about teaching students how to ask questions, Schaffer (1987) explains that she asks students to construct a question from their reading assignments. "There are only two rules to observe," she states.

> The first is that the question must *not* be one that can be answered only by looking up a fact from the story...; and second, each person must really care about his or her ques-

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> tion — must, I mean, really be curious to have an answer. (p. 9, emphasis in original)

In adapting this strategy to a particular classroom, instructors might consider asking students to write down and hand in their questions at the beginning of class or alternating between questions expressed orally and in writing. What ever technique is used, what is important is that the instructor model the behaviors being taught. By conveying sincere interest — bringing authentic and genuine curiosity to the classroom regarding what students think and feel — instructors show students how to learn.

Moreover, Kougl (1980) suggests that what instructors do during the first day of class sets the standards for participation for the rest of the term. "The teacher's first task," she states, "is to begin building a supportive, yet interactive environment" (p. 235). Thus, she suggests asking students to talk about themselves during the first class session. "Use the necessity to check the roster as an opportunity to begin a dialogue with students" (p. 236). Again, this demonstrates to students that the instructor values the contributions students make in class.

THE BASIC COMMUNICATION COURSE: A GOOD PLACE TO START

As Adler (1980) and Cohen (1980) emphasize, the content and organization of the basic communication course provide an excellent framework for teaching students participation skills. Learning how to participate effectively is also a fundamental oral communication skill. Therefore, the basic communication course offers a "natural" fit for learning class participation skills.

In the basic communication course, students learn how to: choose and limit a speech topic; organize their ideas; support

their ideas with evidence; adapt their ideas to a particular audience; construct sound, reasonable arguments; listen critically; and deliver their speeches smoothly and confidently.

Class participation requires these same skills. Students must be taught to listen critically to other students' comments in class, taught to organize their comments effectively, taught to support their comments with examples and evidence, and taught to offer reasoned opinions.

Notice how well Grice and Skinner's (1995) guidelines for critiquing classroom speeches translate into advice for helping students improve their class participation skills. They suggest,

> To be helpful, criticism must be balanced between positive and negative aspects of the speech, but should begin and end with positive comments. Critics should reinforce positive aspects of the speech and problem solve the negative. In addition, criticism should be specific, honest but tactful, personalized, organized, and should provide the speaker with a plan of action for future speeches. (p. 419)

In the process of learning how to construct and deliver an effective speech, students can also learn how to construct and deliver constructive criticism and effective comments in class.

It is not enough, however, to assume that students will recognize the similarities between delivering a speech and making a comment. The instructor must make the effort to point this out and teach this to students. As Grice and Skinner (1995) explain, "A critique, just like a speech, is easier to follow if it is well organized" (p. 418). To illustrate, they suggest that students' responses to their classmates' speeches can be organized topically ("content, organization, and delivery"); chronologically ("introduction, body, and conclusion"); divided into "strengths and weaknesses"; or by a combination of these options (p. 418). When students apply what they are learning as public speakers to their efforts as

classroom participants, they are more likely to strengthen both their speaking and participation skills.

CONCLUSION

The arguments presented here should not be read as a call to make class participation a requirement in every course offered at a college or university. If anything, this is a call to stop requiring participation from students in courses where participation is not taught. Instructors should by no means feel obligated to teach participation skills to students if participation is not considered when evaluating their work. Rather, this is a call for instructors to take very seriously the obligations inherent in the requirements they establish in their courses.

Class participation is a valuable skill that, once learned, will serve students well not only during their undergraduate years but also throughout their lives. Because it is such an important skill to learn, it is well worth the time and effort instructors must necessarily devote to teaching it. The bottom line remains, however: if instructors require students to participate in class, then instructors are required to teach students how to participate.

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The Basic Course: A Means of Protecting the Speech Communication Discipline

Charlene J. Handford

Judging by several articles which have recently appeared in *Spectra,* the existence of speech communication in some institutions of higher education is becoming increasingly threatened. Those who teach communication may be wondering just how serious this threat may be and what, if anything, can be done to lessen the danger of their departments being merged with others or totally eliminated.

This article seeks to clarify the dangers now faced by the speech communication discipline in the college/university setting and to offer a two-fold plan of action for its survival.

THE PROBLEM

Evidence that a Problem Exists

During the summer months of 1995, *Spectra* provided its readers with some startling news regarding the security of speech communication as a discipline in institutions of higher education.

Almost as a prelude to bad news to come, the May edition included an announcement from SCA's Second Vice President, Judith S. Trent (1995) of the formation of a Task Force on Discipline Advancement. Its function is to provide help in

establishing plans for those communication programs in need of promotion and protection.

This was followed by the June edition which featured an article by Thomas M. Scheidel (1995) who chronicled the fight for survival on the part of the Department of Speech Communication at the University of Washington. Though scheduled to be cut, a successful campaign was waged and the department was saved, but Scheidel predicted that attacks on various speech communication departments will continue.

In July, *Spectra* provided its readers with a reprint of Thomas S. Frentz's SSCA Presidential Address, delivered in April (1995). Not only did Frentz acknowledge that some communication departments are being threatened, he also warned that not all will survive.

Prior to these articles, the National Office of the Speech Communication Association had published the *Rationale Kit: Information Supporting the Speech Communication Discipline and Its Programs* (Berko & Brooks, 1994). In the form of a booklet, it supplies answers to often-asked questions in regard to speech communication, some of which could be helpful in the defense of a threatened program.

Reason for the Problem

Ironically, in the April edition of *Spectra,* Roy Berko (1995), SCA Associate Director, announced that 79% of those institutions surveyed have one or more communication courses included in their general education or universal requirements.

With this good news, one might wonder if there is a contradiction here. If the communication discipline is so thoroughly entrenched in institutions, why are there reports and predictions of departments under siege? Philip Backlund (1994) may have the answer. During the Speech Communication Association Flagstaff Conference in 1989, he explained

that when oral communication was included in the federal definition of basic skills, SCA and those who taught speech were not prepared to promote their discipline; and, he believes that has not changed. Thus, speech communication is a product in high demand, but its academicians have never been able to formulate universal, workable plans for marketing it at institutions of higher learning.

THE SOLUTION

If communication, one of the basic skills included in federal guidelines, is a threatened discipline on some campuses, a two-fold solution may be the answer: Communication departments should (1) work to establish one specific communication course as the core curriculum requirement in their institutions, and (2) these departments should establish a successful marketing strategy for the discipline.

Rationale

By designating one specific course in the department as a core requirement for fulfilling federal and state guidelines, every student who graduates from that institution will be enrolled, at one time or another, in that course (with the exception of transfer students with prior credit). By offering a core requirement, the department is assured of significant student credit hours.

There are several advantages for a department with high enrollment figures. First, a department with a significant enrollment is more apt to wield greater influence in the political arena of its college and institution. This is especially true if more full-time faculty are hired, because they will serve on various campus committees, vote on academic issues, etc. Then too, most deans are probably inclined to work diligently

to maintain the security of a department with significant enrollment, because numbers also provide greater power to that college/school within the institution.

Second, the remainder of the department can "feed off" of that required course. It is easier to build a case for offering other courses which have significantly lower enrollment if the department can produce an overall total of high numbers in terms of student credit hours. In addition, the required course can be an excellent recruiting tool for majors, in that it provides a way to reach more students who might never consider majoring in communication because of lack of exposure to that discipline. A high number of majors within a department is another important means by which a department can solidify its security, because administrators and boards are reluctant to eliminate such a program.

Dangers to Avoid

While some institutions already designate the communication department as the sole source of any core communication requirement, other departments provide a choice of courses. There are disadvantages to the latter policy.

For one thing, while this may result in a more even spread of enrollment among those courses designated to fulfill that core requirement, it is unlikely that the department will have one strong enrollment-builder. For example, during one term, interpersonal communication may be the enrollment-builder; that might change to public speaking during the next term. One course as the designated requirement makes it easier to estimate enrollment and the necessary number of faculty needed.

Also, if the department permits a choice of communication courses to fulfill that requirement, other departments within and outside that college/school may attempt to have some of

their courses included. The English department, sometimes labeling their discipline as rhetoric, might argue that speech communication is a component in one or more of their courses and should be included as one of the choices. In fact, the April 1996 edition of *Spectra* reports an effort at Thiel College to replace the basic communication course with a combined speaking and writing offering.

Probably more serious competition is apt to come from the colleges/schools of business, usually offering their own communication courses, often under such titles as business communication. Thus, a communications chair might find some difficulty in arguing with the administration that their organizational communication better fits the core requirement as opposed to the business communications course taught in the college/school of business.

Another danger may be communication-across-the-discipline programs. While some view the popularity of these programs as a sign that the communication discipline is regarded as important in the overall educational development of students, others do not. In fact there is a debate within the communication discipline regarding whether its faculty should participate in such programs (Moreale, Shockley-Zalabak, & Whitney, 1993).

The proponents of communication-across-the-curriculum include Davilla, West, and Yoder (1993) who argue that these programs, if highly effective, can be a means for showing non-communication faculty that there is more to teaching speech communication than just common sense. To those critics who fear that faculty in other disciplines might come to believe that anyone can teach communication, Cronin and Glenn (1991) contend that this can be combated by extensive training for non-communication faculty.

Cronin et al. (1991) see communication-across-the-curriculum as an inexpensive alternative to adding basic speech classes. While this may be cost effective from an administrative standpoint, an argument can be raised that

communication-across-the-curriculum should never be substituted for any communications course. Aside from allowing the discipline to be taught by some who may not be academically qualified to do so, such a policy is likely to undermine the enrollment and thereby the stability of the department.

Rationale for the Public Speaking Basic Course as a Core Course

Gregory contends that, "After taking a public speaking course, many students report that their new skills help them as much in talking to one person as in addressing a large audience" (1993, p.3). Pearson and West (1991) argue that there is no proof that public speaking is of greater value than a hybrid course. Though there is probably no point in debating which is more valuable, the public speaking or the hybrid approach, the basic course taught as public speaking may be the most logical choice as the designated communication requirement.

Consider that other disciplines seem to be less apt to offer a course which is solely devoted to public speaking. On the other hand, organizational communication is entrenched in business, and it is not unusual for interpersonal communication to be taught as units in psychology and business. Intercultural communication may be included as a unit in a business course or taught as an entire course in that curriculum. Public speaking, more than any other communication course, appears to remain within the domain of that discipline.

The reason for this may be that other communication courses rely heavily, though not exclusively, upon research from other areas such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc. This, in turn, likely encourages some overlapping of communication and non-communication courses. For example,

on one campus, a course entitled medical sociology is somewhat similar to the health communication course taught in the Department of Communications; and international business communication, essentially an intercultural communications course, is offered in the College of Business.

Such overlapping could result in some non-communication faculty viewing themselves as qualified to teach courses which fulfill their institution's communication requirement. Again, unless across-the-curriculum programs convince them otherwise, non-communication faculty may be less apt to see themselves as qualified to be public speaking instructors.

Suggestions for Implementation

In terms of academic qualifications, accreditation agencies for institutions of higher learning can be a valuable tool for maintaining a distinct line between faculty members from different disciplines. As an example, one such group, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, sets strict rules regarding qualifications for faculty teaching in a baccalaureate program. According to their *Criteria for Accreditation Commission on Colleges,* full-time and part-time teachers of credit courses leading toward the baccalaureate "must have completed at least 18 graduate semester hours in the teaching discipline and hold at least a Master's degree, or hold the minimum of a Master's degree with a major in the teaching discipline" (1992-3, p.37).

This 18 hour rule enables a department to argue that faculty in disciplines unrelated to oral communication are not qualified to teach public speaking. However, that rule may not be as easily applied to such courses as interpersonal communication, organizational communication, etc. which rely heavily upon research in psychology, sociology, and business, because faculty in these disciplines may contend that they meet the 18 hour requirement. However, faculty in

disciplines outside that of communications are less likely to fulfill that 18 hour requirement in public speaking and its related areas.

MARKETING STRATEGY

No strategy makes sense if communications faculty do not believe in the value of their own discipline. Almost without exception, every public speaking, hybrid, interpersonal communication, and organizational communication text begins with an explanation of the practical applications of that area of study. Perhaps those who teach communication courses should read and re-read those sections for their own reinforcement.

Once those in the discipline have been reminded of the significance of what they are teaching, it might be wise to take time during the first day or two of class to discuss this with their students. Though often reminding the business and professional world that training students for employment is not the function of colleges and universities, most who teach in institutions of higher learning will agree that the majority of their students are there because many professions expect or require their practitioners to have a diploma. Truly, those skills taught in public speaking courses are necessary for the survival of a democracy; but, college students are likely more interested in knowing how those skills will help them professionally. It is up to communications faculty to clarify all of the practical applications of the discipline.

Communications faculty should also make sure that their colleagues in other disciplines understand the nature and value of their courses. This is especially important when service courses are involved. The course director, departmental chair, and even individual faculty can maintain a dialogue with those departments they serve in order to ascertain if the needs of their students are being met. Asking for their input

in regard to course syllabi, etc. can be accomplished via formal questionnaires or even informally over coffee or lunch.

Campus politics can be an important factor in academic matters; thus communications faculty should be highly involved in all aspects of their institution's governance. This means attending faculty meetings, participating on faculty committees, maintaining a keen awareness of the faculty council or senate, and being involved in their institution's accreditation process. By holding key positions and keeping a watchful eye on all academic matters, the departmental faculty will be better positioned to influence when necessary. For that reason, a department should strive to maintain as many full-time, tenure-track and tenured faculty as possible. Keep in mind that part-time faculty usually have no vote on academic matters.

Above all, the department should make sure that all of its offerings, especially the core required course, are effectively taught and academically sound. This is the best means by which a department can persuade other disciplines that communication courses are worthy of being required for a college degree.

SUMMARY

This paper highlighted the warnings being issued to the speech communication discipline in institutions of higher education. Advising threatened departments to work toward establishing the basic course as fulfillment for federal and state communication requirements for their institutions and applying effective marketing strategies, specifics were offered in regard to why and how this might be accomplished.

According to Scheidel, "It is better to be active before danger strikes than to react later" (1995, p. 12). This is probably excellent advice for all speech communication departments.

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Introduction to Cultural Diversity in the Basic Course: Differing Points of View

Lawrence W. Hugenberg

There are many areas discussed in the following papers on cultural diversity in the basic communication course. Cultural diversity is important in a changing world. If our basic courses are to be current with student needs of the future, incorporating instruction on effectiveness within multicultural settings is important. There seems to be agreement that diversity in the basic course suggests opening students' minds to appreciate and understand differences between and among people. This approach includes the obvious cultural differences such as international, interracial, and gender communication; as well as multicultural communication between and among people of the same general "American" culture (Thomas, 1994). This orientation holds that within the general "American" culture there are multiple smaller, more specific, cultures (African American, Native American, Hispanic American, Asian American, Caucasian, etc.). Researchers suggest that American society will become increasingly more diverse into the twenty-first century (Hollins 1990; Naisbitt & Aburdene 1990). These authors tell us that communication educators need to vary approaches to meet the multiple needs of more diverse audiences (Thomas, 1990) (**See:** *Sellnow & Littlefield; Oludaja & Honken*). However, reality suggests that Americans are insensitive to other ways of thinking. Even more pressing to the basic

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course is that textbook reviewers do not like different ways of thinking and instructors don't like change.

Two broad topics emerge from a careful reading of the following papers:

(1) integrating diversity in the basic course, and
(2) teaching diversity in the classroom.

The discussion in this introduction revolves around both topics.

INTEGRATING DIVERSITY IN THE BASIC COURSE

Several textbooks designed for use in the basic communication course have attempted to incorporate more information on diversity (**See:** *Goulden*). A popular assignment asks students to develop speeches on a culture different than their own (**See:** *Kelly; Goulden; and Powell*). Expanding student experience beyond European (Western) models of communication is essential if we incorporate cultural diversity as an educational objective in the basic communication course (Brislin & Yoshida, 1994). As a result of this assignment, students think about the characteristics of a culturally different audience and how those differences impact communication. Instructors, then, must evaluate the students' assignments incorporating the cultural characteristics provided by the students. A "good" basic communication course textbook would prepare both student and instructor to examine communication from culturally sensitive perspectives.

Currently, our evaluation forms are often too specific and too "Westernized" to incorporate cultural communication practices. For example, one popular approach to speech eval-

uation incorporates "appropriateness" in each of the following categories:

(1) choosing and narrowing a topic,
(2) communicating the thesis/specific purpose,
(3) providing supporting materials,
(4) using an appropriate organizational pattern,
(5) using appropriate language,
(6) using pitch, rate, and vocal intensity to heighten and maintain interest,
(7) using appropriate pronunciation, grammar and articulation, and
(8) using physical behaviors that support the verbal message (Morreale, et al. 1992; Morreale 1994).

The use of any standardized evaluation form raises the question about which areas are appropriate to analyze and which cultural foundations will be used in assessing student speeches. These are important issues in the assessment of students' performances in the basic communication course.

We need to make our critique sheets less culture specific and more accommodating of individual and cultural differences (**See:** *Kelly*). Communication educators need assignment evaluation systems that incorporate differing models and orientations to the communication process — not one culture-specific point of view. For example, in our textbooks and classrooms, we expect informative speeches to have specific steps to include gaining attention, stating the thesis, and giving the listeners a preview; yet in some other cultures, this kind of introduction to an informative speech is unacceptable and too rigid (Victor, 1992). Communication educators need to research, test, and adopt evaluation measures that enable students to be comfortable with communication skills consistent with their own cultural makeup. Our approaches to

teaching communication are not supported by research on how other cultures respond in varying communication situations. Reliance on the tradition of classical audience analysis forces students to change their behaviors and communication patterns to "fit" a predetermined model. As a result, communication educators teach students to rely on laundry lists of cultural stereotypes attempting to characterize people from various cultures. These laundry lists seem to perpetuate the myths consistent with many of our American stereotypes of "appropriate" cultural dynamics.

One goal of cultural diversity assignments is for students doing the assignment and the students observing the assignment to become better informed about different cultures and communication practices as related to communication effectiveness. However, there is a danger that highlighting cultural differences might increase a student's tendency to stereotype others using a few characteristics and further insulate their views of culture (Victor, 1992). As communication instructors teach adaptation to listeners from different cultures, it is appropriate to develop cultural linkages that emphasize the similarities between cultures. It is easier to teach students to be more culturally sensitive if we teach them how to look for, identify, and emphasize these linkages.

A dichotomy in the study of cultural diversity centers on expected outcomes versus understanding the construction of diversity. The resulting dilemma for instructors is to accommodate everyone's cultural differences. Accommodating different points of view, different ways of thinking, and different ways of communicating goes counter to the way we traditionally teach the basic course. For the most part, we expect students to become "Westernized" in their thinking and in their communication performances (Hugenberg & Yoder, 1993) (**See:** *Kelly*). There are specific, and sometimes singular, sets of performance standards in the classroom that instructors want students to learn and adopt. Instructors have specific goals and objectives (outcomes) that include

specific communication models, processes, and approaches they want students to learn and apply in their assignments. These goals and objectives often conflict with opportunities to teach and discuss cultural diversity in the basic communication course.

An associated issue is the culture of the instructor. Instructors must also be aware of their cultural identity so it does not hinder or limit their instruction or affect their perceptions of their students from differing cultures using differing cultural communication practices. Moving away from the ethnocentric, "Western" point of view may force many communication educators to rethink the way they teach and evaluate student assignments in the basic communication course.

TEACHING DIVERSITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Another topic calls for specific lectures and class discussions emphasizing the influences of culture on communication and communication on culture. The authors even agree that communication education has settled into believing and mirroring a "dominant" culture and has focused instructional efforts to try and incorporate other "non-dominant" cultures into a dominant point of view (**Specifically see:** *Oludaja & Honken*). Within the pre-existing frame of reference of the "dominant" culture, this approach to emphasizing the existence of subcultures assumes they are in a "lower" position than the dominant culture. This problem is emphasized time-and-time-again by the value our instruction and textbooks place on the Eurocentric tradition. Sections of textbooks, with rare exception, address cultural diversity in merely superficial ways (pictures, names, examples, etc.). This is a poor substitute for addressing diversity as an integral part of the communication process.

Americans have a difficult time valuing other cultural traditions because we fail to value other ways of thinking and other forms of logic. A technique to reduce the emphasis on our mono-cultural point of view is to talk about co-cultures — placing different cultures on the same level; as co-equals. To teach different cultural "models," we have to teach students how to understand and appreciate differing points of view. Our role, in a culturally sensitive classroom, is to enhance students' understandings of different cultures and to apply these understandings in different communication situations.

It continues to be difficult to talk about culture and diversity in the basic course because we cannot agree on the characteristics of culture. For too long, educators have assumed culture meant ethnicity or race (Thomas, 1990; Aburdene & Naisbitt, 1992; Wood, 1994; and Gray, 1992). This is far too restrictive a view for it fails to reflect an accurate perspective of the complexities of culture and multiculturalism (**See:** *Sellnow & Littlefield; Kelly*).

Of course, studying ethnicity is not easy and reaching useful understandings of individuals' views of their own ethnic backgrounds can be very difficult. "What does it mean to be an African American?" or "What does it mean to be a Native American?" or "What does it mean to be European American?" or "What does it mean to be a Hispanic American?" are difficult questions — even for people from these cultures. Even the "American" culture is defined and operationalized differently in different parts of our country. This fact supports the contention that limiting the study of culture to solely ethnic or racial background limits the insights we may teach students in the basic course.

Each author agrees the key to adapting communication to people of different cultures is to first understand ourselves — then understand the situation — then understand others. Teachers have to teach students to be true to themselves in their communication with others. The authors contend communication educators take the concepts of audience

analysis and audience adaptation too far — forcing students to compromise themselves to adapt to listeners (**See:** *Sellnow & Littlefield*). There is a common practice in basic communication course classrooms that asks students to cross the delicate balance between their Selves and their audiences — and forces adapting the self to the audience. Students *cannot* become someone else during their assignments and instructors should not expect them to compromise who they are. Students should learn to be rhetorically sensitive, understand differences among people, and to use these differences in preparing their messages. Communication instruction can focus on helping students change their communication in response to these differences. However, more important than either of these notions, we must teach students to be comfortable with themselves and their communication skills when talking with others and reinforce this notion frequently in the classroom.

Another problem communication educators experience in trying to integrate diversity into their classes is the responsibility of textbook authors and publishers to explain and incorporate cultural diversity (**See:** *Oludaja & Honken; Goulden; Sellnow & Littlefield*). Communication textbooks are, for the most part, descriptive of the dominant culture and prescribe ways to make the student-reader more like the dominant culture. Authors and publishers attempt to meet the expectations of others, specifically reviewers. Reviewers have been taught to think in a "Western" manner; so changing the way they think is threatening. People resist change in the ways they teach the basic communication course (**See:** *Goulden*). Textbooks continue to offer linear reasoning because reviewers do not like different ways of thinking than their own (**See:** *Powell*). Little has changed in the way we have taught persuasive or informative speaking in many decades. Basic communication courses are predicated on communication skill development. Communication textbooks continue to validate the way the dominant culture thinks which, subsequently,

affects the way communication skills are taught. Authors and publishers need to add more about diversity to our communication textbooks than sample speeches, photographs, and obvious cultural names in examples. Token approaches to expressing cultural diversity in communication textbooks miss the issue of cultural diversity *in the classroom.*

We also need to teach students to listen to people from different cultures. A second message sent by the way we teach audience analysis and adaptation is that listeners should expect speakers to adapt to their point of view and their way of thinking. The message is: *Speakers need to adapt, listeners don't.* This is the wrong message to send to students in the basic communication course who will spend a large portion of their personal and professional lives listening to people — people with cultural backgrounds different than the student's own.

What follows are the papers shared by the participants in the Central States Communication Association Pre-Conference Seminar, "Cultural Diversity in the Basic Course." We all hope they provide an appreciation of cultural diversity and its appropriate place in basic communication courses.

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Teaching Communication Behaviors/Skills Related to Cultural Diversity in the Basic Course Classroom

Nancy Rost Goulden

Basic course educators find themselves responsible for a number of new and often difficult curricular decisions that come from the awareness of changing student populations and needs. The impetus for curricular change based on response to cultural diversity issues differs somewhat from some curriculum movements in recent history. Most waves of curricular modification occur after and as a response to some disruptive event such as the publication of *A Nation at Risk,* the launching of Sputnik, the passage of the GI Bill. In the present case, educators are not put in a position of damage control or crises management. Although some institutions have policies that call for implementation of multicultural curricular changes, faculty within their own content areas have a fair amount of autonomy in altering their curricula to fit the needs of their students today and tomorrow (Swanson, 1992).

NEED FOR CURRICULAR CHANGES RELATED TO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

A look at the faces in our classrooms each term tells us we are in the midst of a changing mosaic of students with changing needs. In addition, national boundaries no longer limit the future business partners and competitors with whom our

students will interact to colleagues with similar cultural backgrounds (Thrush, 1993). No one doubts the face of America is changing and that communicating in the cultural mixture of the twenty-first century will call for exceedingly high levels of flexibility, knowledge, and wisdom.

The purpose of this essay is to present suggestions for basic course directors and teachers interested in introducing multicultural information and/or skills instruction into their courses. First, a general process for curricular change will be presented. Then, instructional issues central to teaching communication behaviors and/or skills will be discussed.

GENERAL PROCESS FOR CURRICULAR CHANGE

It is worthwhile for those responsible for basic course decisions to look at three aspects of the course before making decisions about specific content, skills, and instructional strategies. Three general areas that form the foundation for the more specific decisions are: target audience, learning objectives, and types of learning.

Target Audience to Cultural Diversity Instruction

Obviously not all basic course situations are the same. Some classrooms are culturally homogeneous. Other classes are culturally diverse. In still other classrooms, a limited number of students representing national and ethnic groups other than Anglo-U.S. students are present. The makeup of the student population influences how educators considering multicultural instruction interpret their task. The literature suggests that educators may see their responsibility as either (1) preparing a fairly homogenous, usually Anglo-U.S., popu-

lation to live in a more culturally diverse world (Araujo, Jensen, & Kelley, 1991; Braithwaite & Braithwaite, 1991; Broome, 1991; Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Wiseman, 1991; Koester & Lustig 1991; Kudirka, 1989; Ostermeier, 1992; Swanson, 1992; Supnick, 1991; Thrush, 1993; Wittmer, 1992) or (2) aiding students who are new to the established culture in adapting to the culture of the classroom and campus (Flores, 1992; Jones, 1985).

Although recommendations for instruction are presented in the literature from these two different perspectives, the reality is that the same over-arching goals apply for both cases. Lervold (1993) explains, "After sincere reflection, it is clear that no significant differences exist. Instructors working within culturally diverse classrooms, and multicultural communication professors alike, must strive to comprehend and affirm effective communication principles/strategies that support the needs of all their students . . ." (p. 5). Lervold is suggesting that sensitivity to cultural diversity in the classroom begins with the instructor.

Learning Objectives

Lervold's (1993) statement is a good place to begin thinking about educators' learning goals for their students. The basic assumption for any curricular decisions for a basic course should be: **Changes must provide an opportunity for learning that is beneficial for students.** The student may not recognize the benefits; the learning may not even deliver those benefits, but the intent should be instruction that enhances the students' lives in and out of the classroom, in the present and in the future.

The unique composition of the classroom audience and the interest and expertise of the instructor will certainly influence what these goals will be. The goals might range from fairly modest learning changes such as students' understanding the

concept of "culture" to changes as difficult and complex as achieving communication competency in intercultural situations.

Categories of Learning

Gudykunst, et al. (1991) suggest that an introductory intercultural communication course "ideally should include cognitive, affective, and behavioral components." Although Gudykunst, et al. are discussing the introductory intercultural communication course, the premise is applicable to the basic communication course as well. Kudirka (1989) emphasizes the importance of this same combination. "Cross-cultural communication is an integrated package of knowledge, skill, ability and attitude . . . . It provides a way to know what to expect and how to interact when you live and work with people from other cultures" (p. 3).

Both Araujo, et al. (1991) and Braithwaite and Braithwaite (1991) focused on affective and cognitive learning in the basic course in their articles related to implementing multicultural instruction. Depending on the learning goals for the course, the basic course educator may wish to limit instruction to these two realms. However, because of the strong skills component in many of our courses, it is probable that, if not now, at some point in the future, many basic course programs will create goals that require instruction leading to behavior and skills learning. Most educators would agree that the development and refinement of skills and behaviors is based on and must begin with affective and cognitive learning, which leads us back to the inclusion of all three learning realms in our curricular plans.

SKILLS AND BEHAVIORAL LEARNING

Distinction Between Skills and Behavior

Most basic communication courses emphasize skills acquisitions and behavioral changes as central outcomes in one or more of the three following areas: public speaking, interpersonal communication, or small group communication. The relationship of skills instruction and behavioral change needs to be clarified before we consider how basic course teachers can approach multicultural learning in the behavioral domain.

Skills learning is only one possible route to behavioral change. Certainly behaviors may also be altered by gaining new information or changing attitudes. Skills instruction in the classroom is usually initiated by presentation of a description of the behavior, often incorporating a list of "do's" and "don'ts" and/or by introduction of a list of sequential steps one follows to produce the behavior. In public speaking classes, processes to produce speeches are often highly structured and codified. Even in more spontaneous interpersonal and small group situations, students, for example, study sequential processes of conflict resolution or problem solving. The student uses the behavior or process descriptions to create a tentative behavior. Then, through guided practice and corrective feedback, the student refines the behavior.

Behavioral learning that does not rely on skills learning is apt to be more self directed. Students may discover the process or "rules" on their own and provide their own corrective feedback as they use a trial-and-error process. Other behavioral changes may require little or no practice or refinement, but occur because of the desire to perform the behavior or the recognition that it is an appropriate and effective behavior.

When basic course educators commit themselves to incorporating behavioral/skills instruction in their classes, they face a new set of unique problems. They face the triple mysteries of what cultures to include, what skills to teach, and how to teach them. Fortunately, other scholars and practitioners have been searching for clues as to how to solve these mysteries.

Organizational Scheme

Literature that follows reports are organized to address the questions raised above of what cultures to select and how to teach behaviors and skills for culturally diverse situations. Information about instructional approaches from studies and texts have been initially divided into two categories: culture-general and culture-specific. The experiences and recommendations of authors who have used each approach provide insights into how to handle the dilemmas related to selecting cultures for study. Gudykunst, et al. (1991) explain the two approaches. The culture-general approach "involves a focus on the general factors that influence communication between people from different cultures and/or ethnic groups" (p. 274). In contrast, the culture-specific approach provides description and information about the communication expectations and behaviors of a specific culture and includes recommendations for how one might interact with members of that culture. Either approach or the two in combination might be utilized to promote affective and cognitive learning goals.

The final section, labeled "experiential learning/training" presents information related to teaching strategies. Two options are presented. The first, experiential learning, is based on direct, firsthand experiences and interactions with those from cultures other than one's own (Lervold, 1993). The training approach involves direct instruction by a teacher or trainer in order to learn communication skills. It should be

noted that teachers may choose either the culture-general approach or the culture-specific approach in determining whether to focus on skills and behaviors applicable to any culture or the skills and behaviors that apply to one culture.

Cultural-General Approach Leading to Behavior

This approach can be recommended because it does not force the instructor to choose the appropriate behaviors for one or a limited number of cultures. Instead students build a repertoire of skill or behavior strategies that can then be applied to specific situations. This is the approach Broome (1991) recommends for developing empathy in situations of cultural diversity. He suggests that if one approaches real interactional experiences with a mental frame of relational empathy rather than an egocentric template, students will, through experimentation, discover the "rules" of empathic communication for different cultures. Ostermeier (1992) also relies on face-to-face interaction of students from different cultures to promote learning about communication related to values systems.

Flores (1992) uses a culture-general approach to teach problem solving skills in multicultural groups. Although in this case a general guide is given for problem solving, the specifics of how different cultures operationalize the components of problem solving is discovered during the process. Unlike the direct experiential learning suggestions of Broome, Ostermeier, and Flores, Supnick (1991) has utilized culture-general learning in a business communications course through the indirect experiential approach of case studies and simulations.

From the technical writing field, Thrush (1993) points out that the cultural differences in such areas as graphic placement, logic, acceptability of evidence, and organization of

written and oral products require that competent communicators become aware of the preferred choices and adapt their writing and formatting for specific cultures. However, instead of suggesting that the culture-specific approach be used, Thrush proposes that the communicator use a list of the following five factors to analyze the needs and preferences of any culture: (1) world experience, (2) the amount of common knowledge shared within a culture, (3) the hierarchical structure of society and workplace, (4) culturally specific rhetorical strategies, and (5) cultural differences in processing graphics (p. 274). Those who teach the basic course, especially if it includes public speaking, might find this a useful heuristic for students to use in collecting information about communication behaviors for specific cultures.

Perhaps the most ambitious application of the culture-general approach is W. Barnett Pearce's text *Interpersonal Communication: Making Social Worlds* (1994). Pearce rejected the choice to write "an integrative textbook including all the topics taught under the rubric of interpersonal communication" (p. xv) and instead chose to "write a distinctive book that takes what I consider to be the most powerful concepts in the field and make them available for students." In his book-long conversation with students, great chunks are about or build on the subject of culture. Pearce guides the readers to think about the concepts that seem to be universal rather than those that are culture specific. He stimulates the reader to question past conclusions that imply universality for interpersonal behaviors and recommendations. For example, he shares with students his hunch that Knapp and Vangelisti's model of interactional stages "is most accurate in describing romantic relationships among adolescents and young adults in contemporary Western societies or those influenced by Western societies" (p. 242). Then Pearce suggests that students interview students and representatives from diverse backgrounds to see if their romantic and nonromantic relationships follow the model.

In an attempt to respond to the need to develop new behaviors for diverse audiences, many public speaking texts have taken a culture-general approach in emphasizing audience analysis and adaptation, pointing out that speakers need to learn about the backgrounds of audience members and tailor messages to audience members that may represent diverse cultures.

Part of the difficulty in adapting public speaking instruction to a variety of cultural needs is the typical skills approach that prescribes uniform process steps and performance expectations. Casmir (1991) identifies the limitations of such "laundry-list" skills instruction in the public speaking and interpersonal areas when one is trying to create a course that prepares students for communication with representatives of a variety of cultures. Casmir writes "she or he who would speak or become interactively involved in intercultural efforts must *know many* things, and must not be satisfied with merely learning a set of techniques, or gathering a 'bag of rhetorical tricks'" (p. 233).

The public speaking text *Between One and Many* by Brydon and Scott (1994), approaches behavior change through the cognitive and affective realms. These authors have quietly integrated information and applications that seem to come out of an acceptance that cultural diversity is here and since a variety of cultural backgrounds and experiences are an integral part of student's past, present, and future, we should simply make that reality an integral part of how we study communication. This public speaking text has a section on Rhetorical Sensitivity that inevitably and naturally includes a sub-section on appreciating Human Diversity and a section on Language that inevitably and naturally includes a sub-section on Language and Culture. Likewise the "delivery" section address Multicultural Nonverbal Diversity. These do not read like afterthoughts or the obligatory treatment of the subject, but, again, are inevitable and natural inclusions.

A second public speaking text that provides students with knowledge about public-speaking-related communication from a variety of cultures is Gamble and Gamble's *Public Speaking in the Age of Diversity* (1994). Within each major step of the speechmaking process, the authors have included special sections labeled "Considering Diversity." These sections include information about cultural expectations, recommendations for applying new insights or information to the speaking situation, and discussion questions. The authors have incorporated both the culture-general and culture-specific approaches.

Culture-Specific Approach Leading to Behavior

Some writers seem quite confident that culture-specific skills acquisition for multicultural communication is appropriate and feasible. Typical of this viewpoint are authors who represent the business and organizational community. Kudirka (1989) chooses a culture-specific approach in which company trainers instruct business representatives in the appropriate interpersonal behaviors and skills applicable to business transactions with representatives from a target culture. She acknowledges that skills training is an "ongoing process" that "requires a strong long-term commitment on the part of the employer" (p. 6). It is improbable that such in-depth culture-specific training would be practical for students in a basic course; however, using a training approach for working toward limited skill development might be possible.

Swanson (1992) believes skills sensitization and practice should be part of the organizational communication curriculum. Students should learn the appropriate criteria with which to evaluate skills from a variety of cultures. She recommends an experiential learning approach that may fit under either the culture-general or the culture-specific

approach, and that engages students in activities with representatives of diverse cultures through tutoring or projects in local businesses that have diverse work forces or expertise in international business.

Many recent interpersonal and group texts have included specific sections describing communication behaviors and expectations from specific cultures such as the African-American culture and the Japanese culture. Specific gender communication behaviors are also frequently described.

The Gamble and Gamble (1994) text described above also pinpoints public speaking information that is culture specific. However, for the most part, public speaking texts continue to present only one model of public speaking and imply that the linear, logical, factual evidence approach to public speaking is what students need to know and be able to execute. An exception is a text published several years ago, *Communicating: A Social and Career Focus* by Berko, Wolvin and Wolvin (1981) that did provide the opportunity for students to become aware of alternative approaches to logic and reasoning by including sections on Theological Reasoning and Eastern Philosophy.

Even if the basic course does not include skills training for alternative models of public speaking, Koester and Lustig (1991) make the point that part of our responsibility as communication educators is to teach students that "skills taught to improve communication within the context of Anglo U.S. culture may not necessarily be appropriate within other U.S. (and international) cultural contexts" (p. 253).

CONCLUSIONS AND APPLICATION

The experiences of writers presented in the literature suggest a number of directions for faculty interested in meeting the communication behavior/skills needs of students in a culturally diverse classroom or society. The first implication is that basic course planners should look for texts that use the

concept of culture as a foundational means of looking at communication. The search for an appropriate text should not be limited to those mentioned in this essay. There are many authors and publishers who are trying to meet our needs in this area. The choice of a text for the basic communication course and whether it uses the culture-general approach or the culture-specific approach is up to the faculty.

A second suggestion is to create situations where students experience communication with individuals from cultures other than their own. These exchanges result in both culture-general and culture-specific learning and may lead to behavioral implications. Students can be guided to become field researchers on their campuses and in their communities. Through real encounters among people from diverse backgrounds discussing questions of significance to all, students can both collect information and practice skills of meaningful intercultural dialogue. On some campuses, teachers may have to rely on role playing or simulations if the opportunities to meet and talk with representatives from a variety of cultures is limited. These experiential approaches can be partnered with assignments that help students learn how to locate information and apply their finding to whatever new cultural challenges come their way.

One other approach is to incorporate an assignment as a part of a basic public speaking course that combines the culture-general and culture-specific approaches with experiential learning. (See Appendix 1.) The assignment requires students to research public speaking practices from a specific culture of their choice and then present an informative speech that shares their finding with the other students. Students have the options of interviewing a representative of their chosen culture about public speaking practices, analyzing speeches from the culture. or reading description of the practices in journal articles. In the students' next speaking assignment, they have to choose three behaviors from their chosen culture and incorporate those in either the construc-

tion or presentation of the speech. They inform the audience of the practices they have chosen and give the instructor a card delineating those behaviors. If the practices are inconsistent with the usual speech-making practices of the course, the standard criteria for evaluation in that area do not apply.

Students have found this an interesting assignment and believe that they have learned not only more about public speaking practices in more than one culture, but also now have a start on how to research and apply those practices to their speech making.

In addition to the suggestions above, there is a final possibility, to follow Pearce's lead and search for those important concepts that cross cultural boundaries. No doubt learning to live in a diverse population means looking for differences and respecting those difference, but surely it should also mean looking for commonalties. Perhaps this dual vision is an important component in fulfilling the learning objects for students who live in a culturally diverse world.

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APPENDIX 1
ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SPEAKING MODELS

Directions to the Student: *The following assignment description is distributed to students.*

This assignment involves your *next two speeches.* The first speech will be an oral report based on research about expectations and practices related to public speaking in a culture other than the one that you think of as your culture. You will research public speaking in another culture by at least two of the following three means.

(1) You may study and analyze the presentation of a speech. You may attend a live performance or use a taped speech. If you choose the live alternative, I would suggest audio-taping the speech if possible for additional study. The video tapes of Landon Lectures in Farrell Library include female speakers, African-American speakers, Latino speakers, Israeli speakers and probably other cultural representatives I do not know about.

(2) You may interview a member of the culture you have chosen to learn about in order to discover audience expectations and speaker and speech conventions in the culture. There are many international students on campus and representatives of a variety of cultures in Manhattan, Junction City and at Fort Riley.

(3) You may read about public speaking in the chosen culture from journal articles and convention papers. I can point you to specific articles and ways to go about finding the articles.

Some features of public speaking that may follow unique patterns include: voice and body behaviors during presentation, language choices and patterns, topic choices, organization, support for claims, reasoning, persuasive appeals, ritualistic elements. This list is meant to get you started on your analysis and research, not to limit your discoveries.

For the *second* speech, you may choose any topic and any audience outcome goal. However, in planning and presenting the speech, you must implement *three practices* or *features* that are characteristic of public speaking in the culture you have studied. Before the speech, inform the classroom audience of the elements from another culture you plan to incorporate in your speech and also turn in a card listing the elements.

Cultural Pluralism: Language Proficiency in the Basic Course

Bayo Oludaja
Connie Honken

We live in an increasingly diverse and interdependent world. The United States is at the hub of global diversity. Gutek (1992) has rightly pointed out that "While Americans have a cultural identity that is particular to the social, political, and economic context in which they live, they are members of a racially, linguistically, religiously, and culturally diverse society" (p. 219). Further, the United States continues to be a nation of immigrants. Considering the influx of people from Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean, the number of ethnic minority children is expected to exceed one-third of the school-age population by the year 2000 (Bennett, 1990). Another source of cultural diversity is the increasing number of international students enrolling in American universities and colleges. The number of international students rose form 34,232 in the 1954/55 academic year to 356,187 in the 1987/88 academic year (Gibson & Hanna, 1992). These numbers continue to rise as colleges and universities throughout the United States actively recruit students from foreign countries.

In response to the growing diversity of the U. S. society, many institutions of higher learning are making some adjustments in their programs. For instance, Levine and Cureton (1992) claim that "54% of all colleges and universities have introduced multiculturalism into their departmental course offerings" (p. 26). They specifically identify English and

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history as leaders in this endeavor. As communication educators, we cannot afford to ignore the challenges of cultural pluralism in the basic course.

The basic communication course is a component of the general educational curriculum in many colleges and universities in the United States. It introduces students to the fundamentals of the communication process and offers the opportunity to learn communication theories of and/or practice the skills necessary for the effective use of that process. Its design has reflected the original perception of the United States as a melting pot — a perception which assumed that cultural differences in communication styles, language usage, attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors could be fused into one American culture. It is what Chen (1993) has described as "an 'Americanization' model which believes that achieving certain White Anglo-Saxon Protestant values is inherent to educational success" (p. 3). Taylor, Rosegrant, and Samples (1992) call the assumption that underlies such a model a myth, and current trends in multicultural education pose challenges to the melting pot theory.

One challenge that is pertinent to the basic speech course is that of language. Our position with regard to this challenge is that instructors of the basic course and authors of the basic course textbooks need to be sensitive to the difficulties that culturally diverse students have with the English language. We advocate this position not as a political ideology, but rather, to promote intercultural understanding as a worthy goal of effective communication.

Our objective is two-fold. First, we examine some of the difficulties that culturally diverse students (especially international students) have with language usage in the basic course. Second, we offer some suggestions that could help increase understanding between native and non-native speakers of the English language.

AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

Our interest in this endeavor grew out of some comments that international students in the basic communication course made in response to exercises on language. When dealing with a chapter on language, we discussed cultural influences and how the English language can be confusing to many non-native speakers and some minority students. The following aspects were discovered to be common sources of confusion.

Homonyms

Homonyms are words with the same pronunciation, are usually spelled differently, and have different meanings. All the students are asked to come up with as many meanings as they can for the word "meat/meet." Usually, the students come up with about five different meanings. Next, they are asked to generate as many meanings as they can for the word "horse/hoarse." The class then discusses some other words that might cause problems and that could result in misunderstandings. Other common homonyms causing problems are "their/there/they're."

Homographs

Another area that the class is asked to consider is the confusion that improper syllable stressing could cause in word meaning. There are several words that if the stress is put on the first syllable, they become nouns; if the stress is put on the second syllable, they become verbs. For example:

Per'mit — a license or an official document.

Permit' — to give consent.

Con'duct — type of behavior.

Conduct' — to direct or lead.

Dialects

The discussion of dialects is intended to help all students, but especially international students realize that there are regional variations, even in the use of the English language. Here are a few examples:

Gumband — another term for rubber band (east coast)

Schlep — to saunter (New York)

Uff-da — if someone bumps you or you are extremely tired, you may exclaim "uff-da!" (Northern Iowa, Minnesota)

Gasin — meaningless talk (midwestern)

Boondocks — a remote, rural place

Lively discussions often ensue over proper word usage and pronunciation. For example:

Do you drink *pop* or *soda?*

Do you *wash* or *wa/r/sh?*

Do you use a *sack* or a *bag?*

Is it *Ioway* or *Iowa?*

The following statements which were taken from students' response papers on these in-class activities and exercises illustrate how some international students perceive the difficulties they have with the English language.

1. A female student from Mexico said:

   In the speech class, the instructor and students are more likely to have conversations back and forth. Americans using slang in their dialogue is inevitable. Frankly, sometimes, I feel left when I see everybody

laughing except me. I am not saying using slang is inappropriate; in contrast, I really wish someone can tell me what is going on.

2. A similar concern was expressed with additional details by a male student from Japan:

   I really don't understand many funny words, and I wish someone would tell me what they mean. I am sure you realize that, but it will not be a wise choice if instructors stop and ask me whether I understand or not. I will feel bad[ly], unless you have set everything clear[ly] at the beginning of the semester. For example, you mention that the class may use a lot of slangs in conversations, so for those who do not understand the slangs, they are welcome to ask. Let us know that you are sincerely trying to help us and also understand our situation...what I am concerned [about] here is our feelings.

The comments by these students from Mexico and Japan indicate that international students desire to be fully involved in what goes on in our basic course classes. However, because of language barriers, they do not seem to realize their desire. As an alternative, the students pore over the textbook without necessarily making much headway.

3. Here is how another student from Malaysia expressed her concern over this:

   In my perspective, oriental students are more sensitive and vulnerable than American students. In fact, we all wish to solve our academic problems in class as the instructor lectures instead of going home and studying the whole chapter. However, due to our language problems, we tend to keep our mouth shut

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and not ask questions if we don't understand words or phrases.

Even when the students go over the textbook and/or turn to their dictionary for help, they still find that a number of expressions are beyond them.

4. Such was the experience of a female student from Japan who wrote:

   It is true that slang is not easy to understand for international students. For example, my dictionary has 'What's up?" as meaning of "What's the matter?" People here use it for "How are you doing?"

In addition to the problem of language, some international students struggle with instructors' attitudes toward them (students) and their language difficulty.

5. This added dimension was included in the comment made by a male student from Zimbabwe:

   As an international student, I am extremely sensitive about the attitude of the instructors as well as every single word they use. If their words or attitudes make me feel like they discriminate [against] certain races, then I will try my very best not to ask them questions. We are human beings and we believe what we see and what we hear and, of course, what we feel. What I am trying to say here is that instructors should be careful in choosing words in their lectures.

From all of the above excerpts it is clear that instructors need to develop an awareness of the common sources of frustration for international students in the basic course.

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON LANGUAGE

Argyle (1982) reminds us that language "is one of the most important differences between many cultures, and one of the greatest barriers" (p. 63). Language abilities are central to the determination of human intelligence. Before a student is able to reach his/her optimal capability in cognitive learning within a subject, proficiency in that language must be reached. Students must acquire a flexibility with their capacity to understand and use various abstract language relationships. Therefore, learning a language "can never be a matter of learning one interpretation for any given language item" (Edelsky, 1989, p. 98).

When looking at language ability, proficiency is commonly divided into five components: pragmatics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Our concern is with the area of semantics, particularly the lexical representations (Swinney & Cutler, 1979) with which culturally diverse students seem to have difficulty.

Since the way we use language follows culturally determined patterns which influence the way we put words together and the way we think (Samovar & Porter, 1991), bilingualism inevitably has an impact on the cognitive skills of people learning a second language. A common problem we encounter in this area concerns the inter-translatability of semantic and syntactic representations. As Neeman (1993) put it: "Even when international students study our language carefully, nothing can prepare them for the plethora of dialects, idioms, and new vocabulary that they face" (p. 4). Many English words have no direct equivalents in other languages. Besides, "even if a word is directly translatable, its underlying concept doesn't necessarily manifest itself in the same way from one culture to another" (Morical & Tsai, 1992, p. 65).

One of our tasks in the basic course is to facilitate the development of communicative competence, particularly in speaking and listening, and also in the comprehension of material presented within our texts. Since we use language to construct and communicate about reality (Spradley, 1979), it follows that a different language becomes a different version of reality. Failure to realize this point may lead us to assume that the international students who are not catching on in the basic course lack the ability to succeed in college. Instead of latching on to such an assumption we need to consider the effect of culturally diverse languages on the process of education and adjust our teaching strategies accordingly.

Because it is challenging if not overwhelming to respond effectively to basic communication course students according to their cultural backgrounds, many instructors find it easier to require culturally diverse students to adapt to the majority culture on their own. It is much easier for instructors to assume that the students in the basic course have had comparable exposure to the English language; and if they have not, then they ought not to be in the course. But since the decision about who enrolls in the basic course does not always rest with the instructors, we believe that they should encourage non-native speakers of English once those students show up in the class.

SOME WAYS THAT INSTRUCTORS CAN HELP

Extending help to non-native speakers of English inevitably raises questions. In asking speech instructors to be sensitive to language problems, are we not putting additional burdens on the basic course instructors that rightfully belong to English instructors? How does the instructor help non-native speakers without calling undue attention to the fact

that they are different? And how does the instructor evaluate their performance without compromising standards?

We are not suggesting a multilingual approach to the basic course or a lowering of standards. We strongly believe that international students who enroll in the basic oral communication course are aware of the challenges that language poses for them and they are prepared to confront those challenges. What we advocate is encouraging students to face the challenges as best they can. We offer the following recommendations:

First, instructors need to create a non-threatening classroom and office climate for all students. We suggest that the basic course class be viewed as a **community** of seekers. The notion of community implies that there is a network of cooperative, competitive, and even conflictual interaction among individuals and groups (Anderson, 1993). This network does not just happen; it is cultivated. One of the main tasks of the instructor is to cultivate a cooperative network of interaction that leaves room for healthy competition and conflict. The classroom atmosphere should encourage *all* students to ask and/or respond to honest questions. In order to achieve this sense of community, instructors should help students be aware of and show interest in common goals that can be used to regulate each member's activity (Kruckeberg & Starck, 1988).

Second, instructors should listen *patiently,* fighting the temptation to be sidetracked or frustrated by a student's accent or pronunciation, and listening with their ears, their eyes, and their hearts. They should listen carefully to the words while remembering that some languages do not have the intonation and stress patterns that English has (Oludaja, 1992; Thomlison, 1991)

Third, instructors should familiarize themselves with different modes of verbal behavior. Gudykunst and Kim (1984) have pointed out some differences that exist in African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and North American verbal styles.

Asian style is typified more by harmony and ambiguity than by arguments and persuasion. Instructors need to be especially careful not to equate silence with ignorance. The Japanese culture, for instance, believes that "He who speaks has no knowledge and he who has knowledge does not speak" (Samovar and Porter, 1991, p. 113). Knowledge of such differences can help instructors listen better and know how to interpret what they hear or don't hear.

Fourth, instructors need to realize that many students can write English better than they can speak it. If verbal participation is part of course assessment, instructors may consider asking questions and giving all students about a minute to jot down their responses. Then they may call on native and non-native speakers of English to share or read their responses. This approach may make it easier for international students to share without feeling like they have been singled out for help.

Fifth, instructors need to be considerate in their use of idiomatic expressions and technical jargons. We noticed this problem as a result of working closely with some international students in our basic course. We requested international students to go through just *five* of the sixteen chapters in our basic course textbook and jot down the phrases or expressions with which they had difficulties. Included in their responses were expressions such as "a star player," "she really lit up," "having a down day," "let's split," "this party is played," "he's really hot," "a bit peeved," "give Tom the plums and leave me the garbage," and "it's a lemon." Of course, we are not at all suggesting that native speakers refrain from using such expressions. In fact, non-native speakers need to learn them. However, since "language is the tool by which we are able to apprehend specific areas of semantic space" (Borden, 1991, p. 160), instructors can make sure that when they are used, their meanings are made clear for the sake of students who might be using their first culture's semantic space to search for the intended meanings.

Sixth, whenever possible, instructors should use examples that have universal applications. Since we associate words with something in our experience, lack of experiential background further complicates the search for meaning. When examples are limited to the local culture, instructors may take a few minutes to provide the background necessary for understanding those examples. When instructors do so, they refresh the knowledge of the native speakers as well as broaden that of the nonnative speakers.

Seventh, since some of the basic course textbooks now give some attention to the effect of culture on language usage, instructors can use that as a springboard for a broader consideration of the issue of language proficiency in a culturally pluralistic setting. They can also encourage authors who have started small to improve on the good start and hopefully more authors will catch the vision.

Eighth and last, instructors who are committed to managing cultural diversity within the basic course should resist the temptation to impose solutions on the students concerned. Instead, they should seek meaningful dialogue with the students and allow them to express how they would like to be helped.

CONCLUSION

Although our focus in this paper has been mainly on international students, much of what we have suggested can be adapted to African Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanics, and Native-Americans as well.

If the current trends in international students' enrollment continue, we can expect more cultural diversity among the students in the basic course. Since speech communities vary in regard to their sounds, vocabulary, syntax, and patterns of thought (Edelsky, 1989), such diversity will continue to pose a challenge to instructors. The challenge requires us to respond

with a sensitivity that helps create a learning environment in which every student can perform to his or her best ability. In rising to the challenge, students and instructors need to be sensitive to the fact that "when people learn a second language, they are learning more than a language; they are learning how to join a speech community" (Edelsky, 1988, p. 98).

If business corporations are giving greater attention to "developing international cross-cultural sensitivity in their employees" (Gutek, 1992, p. 227), it is important that educators also give attention to such sensitivity. It is even more important that those of us in the field of communication model the development of such sensitivity.

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Diversity in the Public Speaking Course: Beyond Audience Adaptation

Christine Kelly

Most approaches to public speaking are based on the works of Plato, Aristotle and other classical Greek scholars and have not been updated to include the views of women or minority scholars who can make great contributions to our understanding of rhetoric and public speaking (Gregory, 1993; Hanna and Gibson, 1989; Osborn and Osborn, 1994). The few attempts that have been made to include women and minorities in textbooks are generally limited to the inclusion of a speech or two by a woman or minority speaker or hints on how to be sensitive to gender and culture issues in audience analysis. For example, Gronbeck, McKerrow, Ehninger and Monroe (1990) include a section in the language chapter on "Views of Women's Communication" and in the appendix there is a discussion of "Gender and Communication." Hanna and Gibson (1989) have a short paragraph in their language chapter on stereotypic language. Gregory (1993) has a brief paragraph in his language chapter on sexist language, and Verderber (1988) mentions sexist and racist language. Although this is not a complete content analysis of all public speaking texts, these examples are representative of the way gender and diversity are dealt with in basic public speaking texts.

But since the speeches by women and minorities and methods of adaptation are viewed within the context of a traditional Western, male dominated view of public speaking, this does nothing to help students see beyond the traditional

model. Students need the opportunity to explore other methods of giving voice to ideas that involve exposing them to different models of speech preparation and presentation. When I was at the University of Maine, I and two of my colleagues created a supplemental reader for public speaking courses that incorporates the voices of women and minority speakers into the public speaking curriculum (Kelly, Laffoon, and McKerrow, 1994).

We hope this course reader will revolutionize the way public speaking is taught at the University of Maine and perhaps other universities. The goal for this reader is not only to introduce students to their speeches, but to introduce them to some of the different methods of organization, uses of evidence, modes of proof and styles of presentation that are used by women and minority speakers. Assignments encourage students to look at similarities and differences in the models presented and to incorporate their own personal styles into the development and presentation of speeches.

The genesis of this project was a frustration in recent years with the content of the basic public speaking course. In reading more about the communication styles of women and different minority groups I realized that much of what we teach students in the public speaking course violates the cultural views of students, especially those who are non-white and non-male. Until reading more about the use of eye contact in Japanese culture, I held my Japanese students to the same standard for eye contact as my other students. Communication educators typically also expect African-American students to conform to the textbook method of organization and delivery. Whether a new graduate teaching assistant, just learning the art of teaching public speaking, or a seasoned veteran in communication instruction, we all struggle with the same issue of how to reconcile culturally-biased expectations while being told to be more culturally sensitive. In order to make our courses more culturally diverse and

gender sensitive, we need to re-examine not only the content of the course, but also our methods of evaluating our students.

When instructors evaluate students, they compare the student's speech to "objective" standards for good speech as outlined in the course text. If the text is not sensitive to cultural or gender issues, then we are not considering the very real cultural and gender constraints facing some of our students. By asking them to meet the standards of the Western culture, we are often asking them to ignore and/or deny their own cultures.

In addition, most authors of public speaking texts argue that their goal is to teach students to become effective producers *and* consumers of messages. Since the reality is that our students will consume messages created by people who are from different cultures, we would be doing our students a disservice by not introducing them to the methods that may help them make sense out of those messages. Finally, Aristotle said that one must discover the available means of persuasion in any case, thus we commonly tell our students that audience adaptation is the key to creating effective speeches. By introducing students to different strategies and helping them understand why these strategies are used, we are providing them with a broader repertoire of strategies to understand and reach their audiences.

The reader, *Diversity in Public Communication: A Reader,* is a good start toward addressing many of these issues of diversity. It is designed to accompany a more traditional public speaking textbook and assumes that students will learn the Western model as well as these cultural models. The authors present four cultural models of public speaking: women's rhetorical style, African American rhetorical style, Chicano/a rhetorical style and Native American rhetorical style. Our reason for choosing these four models is closely related to the demographics of the United States. We also considered the availability of scholarly articles about these different methods. Some of the minority groups in the United

States have yet to be the subject of research on methods of public speaking. Students are encouraged to look beyond the traditional model of public speaking and to realize there are other equally valid models.

The introduction to the *Reader* explains the importance of understanding diversity and different models of public speaking. It begins with a discussion of the traditional Western model and explains reasons for examining these other cultural models. It also appeals to the students' desire to be successful in the work place:

> An understanding of the relationship between culture and public communication styles is essential to your preparation for and success in an increasingly diverse society and workforce. Population projections show the United States is becoming more racially and ethnically diverse. Also, businesses are forging global relationships which they see as essential to their survival. (Kelly et al. 1994, p. vii)

Thus, understanding cultural diversity becomes a practical concern for the students, and they are encouraged to view this knowledge as valuable to their future success.

Each section of the *Reader* begins with two or three articles describing a particular rhetorical style. Each section also includes sample speeches. Following these materials are discussion questions for each of the articles and speeches. The final part of each section provides suggested activities as teaching tools in class.

For example, the second section of the reader discusses African-American rhetoric. The first article, "The Need to Be: The Socio-Cultural Significance of Black Language" (Weber, 1994) discusses the origins of black language and the importance of language to African-American culture and then describes some of the ways African-Americans use language. According to Weber, to be a spokesperson for the black community the speaker must be articulate and eloquent and

be able to inspire the audience to participate in the delivery of ideas. A speech to an African-American audience would be considered a failure if the audience sat quietly, while a speaker trained in the traditional Western model would expect the audience to sit quietly. The second article, "A Paradigm for Classical African Orature" (Knowles-Borishade, 1991), explains that while the Western tradition contains three elements, speaker, speech and audience, the African model of rhetoric contains five elements: caller-plus-chorus, spiritual entities, nommo, responders and spiritual harmony. She defines each term and explains its significance to understanding African rhetoric. Knowles-Borishade (1991) discusses the importance of morality of the speaker and his or her message and how African-Americans use a humanistic approach to evaluate morality, whereas "traditional Western notions of morality are grounded in the supernaturalist belief that it is God, speaking through holy scriptures, who determines what is moral and what is good" (p. 493).

The last theoretical piece is "Malcolm X and the Limits of the Rhetoric of Revolutionary Dissent" (Condit and Lucaites, 1993). This article defines the rhetoric of dissent and uses that model to analyze the rhetoric of Malcolm X. Condit and Lucaites (1993) argue that Malcolm X used rhetoric to create a peaceful revolution with the goal of creating space in America for African-American voices. These theoretical articles provide a model for African-American rhetoric and help students understand the different ways African-Americans and whites use language. Then students are asked to use that model to analyze "The Ballot or the Bullet" by Malcolm X (1964) and "Common Ground and Common Sense" by Jesse Jackson (1989). They can also look back to the section on women's rhetoric to re-examine speeches by Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. These data help both instructor and student better appreciate cultural differences in other's communication. The instructor can better assess the speeches of students with differing cultural backgrounds.

Although each section stands alone, there are overlaps so students can see how cultural models might be combined. For example, there are four speeches by women from the cultural groups discussed in the reader. The women's rhetoric section includes two speeches by African American women, the Chicano section includes one speech given by a woman and a final speech by a woman is in the Native American section. There are also similarities in the cultural models presented. In the introduction to the *Reader* students' attention is directed to some of these overlapping strategies. The discussion questions also ask students to compare and contrast the cultural models with the Western model and each other, and in lectures one can highlight these similarities for students. Ideally this will encourage students to see that many speakers use a hybrid approach to public speaking and may lead them to consider using some of the strategies presented in the reader in their own speeches.

Many of the speeches in the *Reader* are widely available on videotape and instructors can show parts of the speech that best illustrate the model the speaker is using.

In addition to the *Reader,* we are testing different ways to incorporate a diverse perspective into at least three assignments in the public speaking classroom. We begin the term with our first new speech assignment, the cultural identity/heritage speech. This assignment is based on the method one educator, Etta Ruth Hollins, uses to train new teachers to be more culturally sensitive. Hollins developed a writing project for her students that asked them to consider their cultural heritage. Her goal was to help them get beyond the "myth of a monolithic white American culture" (Hollins, 1990, p. 203) We have adapted the project into a speech assignment that asks students to consider their cultural identity/heritage and what impact that might have on them as a public speaker. The students have to interview someone in their family who knows their cultural heritage, then give a speech based on what they learn. In the conclusion they explain how they

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think understanding their culture, and that of their classmates, might help them as a producer and consumer of public communication.

This assignment is eye-opening for our students, since most of them are white and tend to see themselves as having no culture. We discourage students from saying they have no heritage because they are "just white." When students say that, we speak to them about what culture means in a broader sense than they are used to. For example, Maine has a very distinct culture, so we encourage them to explore what it means to them and their family to be Mainers.

This assignment encourages students to consider their own culture and how it affects their communication. The preliminary feedback is positive. Although many students said at first they thought the assignment was "stupid" and a "waste of time," once they started working on it, they said they enjoyed it and learned from it. I heard similar reports from the teaching assistants about their experience with the assignment.

The second assignment that incorporates a diverse perspective is the group discussion. The goal was to get students to use collaborative discussion techniques. The work of Kristen Langellier (1989) and others shows that women tend to use collaborative techniques in their discussions, and the purpose of the assignment was to give women an opportunity to use those skills and to introduce men to a feminine perspective on discussion techniques. This discussion format can give students an opportunity to present the different perspectives on public speaking from the reader to their fellow classmates. Each group is responsible for choosing a speech from the reader or from another source that fits the cultural model they have been assigned. Their task is to apply the characteristics of the cultural model as presented in the reader to the speech they have chosen. They are also encouraged to make comparisons between the cultural model and the Western model and to consider how these models impact

our understanding of the speech. For example, one group of students in my class analyzed the "feminine" and the traditional Western aspects of Ronald Reagan's eulogy to the Challenger astronauts and explained why the more personal and interactive style characterized as the "feminine style" was necessary and appropriate to the situation. Through this assignment we hope students will begin to identify the strategies used by different cultural groups and see the weaknesses of using just one model to analyze all public communication events.

The third assignment is the final speech in the course, a special occasion speech. Nero (1990) argues that current public speaking pedagogy places persuasive speaking at the top of a hierarchy and by doing so ignores the epideictic speaking style that many minority students experience in their own communities. This assignment is designed to allow students to express themselves in a way that is consistent with their cultural identity/ heritage.

Our *Reader* includes these activities and others to help those who seek to teach diverse styles of communication. This includes graduate teaching assistants who need direction as they begin teaching the basic public speaking course, especially to prepare these new teachers to address the resistance they might face from their students. We hope that explicitly addressing the importance of being well versed in multicultural issues and our goals for each section will mitigate potential problems.

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The Speech of Diversity: A Tool to Integrate Cultural Diversity Into the Basic Course*

Deanna D. Sellnow
Robert S. Littlefield

The Western Interstate Commission on Higher Education (1991) documented the demographics of the changing university population and supported the earlier findings of the American Council on Education's study that within the next fifteen years, one-third of the nation will be people of color. As representatives of these diverse groups enter higher education, institutions will be forced to transform their curricula to address and meet the needs of this growing constituency. As Garr (1992) suggested: "The question is no longer *whether* students should learn about diverse cultures, but *how*" (p. 31). Cultural diversity is "one of the largest, most urgent challenges facing higher education today. It is also one of the most difficult challenges colleges have ever faced" (Levin, 1991, p. 4). This paper addresses cultural diversity as it relates to communication using a series of five questions as a framework for discussion. We offer specific suggestions on integrating cultural diversity into speaking assignments in the basic course later in the paper.

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WHAT IS CULTURAL DIVERSITY AS IT RELATES TO COMMUNICATION?

At present, scholars in the field do not agree about what should be included in the definition of cultural diversity. Some believe it should take an international focus, suggesting that cultural diversity ought to address broad differences related to race and ethnicity in the global context. The American Council on Education's Minority Affairs Office suggests that cultural diversity in America should focus on African Americans, Native American Indians, Latino/Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans (1993). Others suggest that cultural diversity ought to be more broadly defined, including groups such as the elderly, Gay/Lesbian/Transsexual/ Transgender people, and individuals with what are labeled as disabilities (Griessman, 1993, pp. 1-6). We ground this paper in cultural diversity broadly defined; including differences arising out of issues of ability/disability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, regional difference, sexual orientation, or world view, among others.

This broad definition of cultural diversity makes its relationship with communication compelling. The various communication models developed and explained by countless scholars reflect the speaker and listener linked in a dynamic process. When the speaker creates a message, all of the experiences and knowledge she or he brings to the communication situation act as a reflection of her/his cultural perspective. Similarly, the demographics and world view of the listener(s) serve to mediate the perceived effectiveness of the speaker and listener(s) creating shared meaning. Most speech communication teachers espouse the importance of audience analysis and adaptation from the speaker's perspective, audience analysis and adaptation from the listener's perspective has not received equitable consideration in the communication journals or textbooks. There has been little attempt to

understand the process of a speaker's adaptation from the listener's point of view. A simple question to ask would be: *How well did the speaker adapt to your interests and/or knowledge in her or his speech?* Hence, we advocate the need for basic course instructors/scholars to reconsider audience analysis as it addresses cultural diversity from speakers and listeners jointly engaged in a communication transaction.

WHAT APPROACHES COULD BE ADOPTED AS CULTURAL DIVERSITY BECOMES MORE CENTRAL IN THE BASIC COURSE?

We offer two methods as starting points. The first, and perhaps easiest, plan is to use the basic course classroom to raise awareness about cultural diversity. This involves the transmission of information about cultural diversity. The basic course on many campuses is required of all students (Trank and Lewis, 1991). As such, students can increase their knowledge by preparing individually their own speeches about cultural diversity; as well as by listening to the presentations of their classmates. To some extent, a speech on cultural diversity can be used as a diagnostic tool in the assessment of student learning in general education. The impact of these curriculum changes related to the infusion of diversity into the basic course can be understood better by examining the topic selection and level of understanding demonstrated by students in the basic course.

The second approach we offer is actually an implicit result arising from the first. It involves the identification and development of skills related to communication with diverse peoples. Cognitive differences related to the analytical development of messages, the preparation of speech materials, and the verbal and nonverbal differences arising as a result of cultural diversity provide students with the tools needed to

communicate in a variety of contexts, particularly those associated with public communication.

Gordon (1992) provided some of the potential results to be gained through the introduction of cultural diversity issues to the curriculum. These may include learning to respect each other, liking each other, minimizing racism and sexism, and improving interpersonal relations. The goal is to "create a climate where everyone can contribute. . . ." (p. 24). Although it may be difficult to measure, students who are exposed to issues of diversity in the basic course classroom may also begin to respect issues of diversity as different rather than as better or worse.

The use of an expository speech on some aspect of cultural diversity can provide knowledge for students who might not otherwise be introduced to such information. As Rowe (1989) offered: "What is required is if people will personally do at least one thing each year to 'make a difference'" (p. 377). The basic course experience can be a meaningful opportunity for the introduction of such an annual effort for instructors seeking to meet the challenges of a increasingly diverse student population.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS OF DIVERSITY IN BASIC COURSE TEXTBOOKS?

A preliminary review of current basic course textbooks suggests a lack of attention to issues of cultural diversity. Some textbooks deal with diversity in the audience analysis and adaptation section. A few of the more recent textbooks have addressed the topic area, but have not viewed seriously their role in the areas of knowledge-building and skills development suggested earlier (Brydon & Scott, 1994; Gamble & Gamble, 1994). Another gap in the basic course textbooks is attention to culturally sensitive evaluation. When students

from diverse cultures present speeches on topics considered culturally diverse, they tend to be evaluated on the basis of traditional Western public speakers, with little attention to the cultural norms of their own particular cultures. Recent publications do attempt to meet the challenge of posing alternative frameworks for organizing ideas (Foss and Foss, 1994; Jaffee, 1995; Kearney & Plax, 1995). Certainly, it is encouraging to see that such models are being developed, however, the methods for evaluating speeches using these alternative frameworks remain ambiguous. Thus, we offer the "speech of information and diversity" assignment which focuses on cultural diversity in terms of content. With this assignment, instructors may continue to use traditional evaluation criteria while students enrich their understanding of cultures other than their own. Ideally (and perhaps eventually), the assignment could be modified to also require students to move beyond their comfort zones in terms of structure and delivery style as well as content. Until evaluation criteria are developed, however, the "speech of information and diversity" seems to be a viable option for basic course instructors choosing to incorporate cultural diversity into their course.

HOW WELL DO INSTRUCTORS ACCEPT CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE BASIC COURSE?

Generally, those instructors who resist the introduction of cultural diversity in the basic course lack a clear understanding of what cultural diversity means and how it can be integrated into the basic course to benefit the students' training. As a result, they focus on the demographic characteristics that are most familiar to them: age, sex, education level, economic status, and other accepted categories. Some resist the introduction of cultural diversity on the grounds that it has the potential to force students to talk about topics that

might be unfamiliar to them. Others disagree about whether cultural diversity speech assignments should be informative or persuasive in nature. Faculty development focusing on knowledge and skills acquisition, coupled with a clear explanation about what outcomes are being sought by having the students speak about diversity, can mitigate these concerns.

Most instructors' frustration seems to result from lack of guidance from textbooks and instructors' manuals. Comments offered by instructors at a mid-sized midwestern university after completing a diversity speech pilot test ranged from "perhaps there should be more discussion of what constitutes a culture," to "this was difficult . . . . The book doesn't really give us examples of intercultural or multicultural speeches."

Rather than avoiding the topic of cultural diversity in the basic course, textbooks should be expanded to include discussion of the topic and professional development opportunities, for basic course instructors. For example, those faculty who have had intercultural experiences, either in America or abroad; or who have had course work or experience in areas of intercultural communication or cultural diversity, could be called upon to lead other faculty in development sessions focused toward incorporating cultural diversity issues and assignments into the basic course. In addition, instructional development materials focused on incorporating cultural diversity could be provided with basic course textbook packages. Finally, short courses as well as pre-conference seminars could be offered at national and regional meetings to enrich instructors' knowledge about cultural diversity and the basic communication course.

HOW MIGHT ONE INCORPORATE CULTURAL DIVERSITY INTO THE BASIC COURSE CLASSROOM AS A PUBLIC SPEAKING ASSIGNMENT?

One means by which to address this concern in the basic course is to require students to prepare and perform an informative speech of diversity. While discussing cultural diversity during course lectures is helpful, students learn more readily when they are afforded the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts directly (Greene, 1988). Obviously, before an instructor can expect students to prepare such speeches, some reading and class discussion must take place around the issue. What follows is an assignment description for an informative speech of cultural diversity. Next, steps to help students brainstorm and organize an informative speech of cultural diversity are detailed.

INFORMATIVE SPEECH ON DIVERSITY

Students are asked to write and present a four to six-minute informative speech according to traditional Western standards. They are required to step beyond their comfort zones, however, with regard to content focused on some aspect of cultural diversity. They may prepare a speech of demonstration, description, definition, or exposition. Beyond these general topic requirements, the specific purpose must be geared toward some multicultural perspective. The speech may highlight differences arising out of issues such as ability/disability, age, ethnicity, gender, race, regional difference, sexual orientation, world view, and so forth. Students may elect to organize their speeches using any of the following designs: analogy, comparison, or contrast. Finally, students must consider a cultural perspective which, somehow,

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conflicts with their own cultural belief system. Students can use a comparative design in which one perspective is that of their own culture or subculture. However, the comparative design also encourages students to stretch beyond those perspectives which are most familiar and comfortable to them.

The range of speech topics is endless. Students may elect to compare the holiday traditions of two ethnic groups. They may choose to consider several nonverbal signals and their different meanings in various cultures. Students may consider the advantages and disadvantages of employing older Americans in the workplace. They may highlight the conflicting cultural perceptions about traditional and working mothers and fathers. Perhaps, they will consider the positive and negative stereotypes dominant American society holds about witches. Another popular topic might be the religious ceremonies or customs of Native Americans. Some students have compared marital rights and responsibilities among various cultures; others discussed cultural groups in America as diverse as Asian Americans, Gays, and the Ku Klux Klan; while other students focused on religious groups in America such as the Amish, Christian Scientists, and cults.

Students often identified various activities and looked at how different cultures approached them. Some examples included sports in the inner-city culture, interracial dating, and teen suicide. Some topics were focused on women or gender issues. Sometimes an object person representing a particular culture was discussed (i.e., Sergeant Dwight Johnson and the Statue of Liberty). Medical issues, such as alcoholism and drug use by people of different cultures, were also identified as topics. The "speech of information and diversity" lends itself to a wide array of topics within the parameters of cultural diversity.

The assignment appears to encourage a wide array of cultural diversity topics. By requiring a comparative organizational design, students speak about a perspective with

which they are familiar, as well as moving beyond that familiar perspective to consider another world view.

BRAINSTORMING AND ORGANIZING THE DIVERSITY SPEECH

It is important to allow both sufficient time for brainstorming ideas and adequate guidance in terms of narrowing the focus. The following brainstorming guide is one means by which to address these concerns.

First, ask students to generate a list of (sub)cultures. These can be groups within the United States or beyond. Once the list has been generated, ask students to brainstorm another list subdivided into the following categories: (a) objects, (b) processes, (c) concepts, and (d) events. At this point, ask students to connect two items (one from each list) by explaining *what* as well as *why* they are related. For example, students may ask why the group engages in a particular custom, or believe this way or that, and so forth. The goal is to help students learn to discover the meaning behind the actions, beliefs, or customs of a (sub)culture which is not their own.

Once students have achieved successfully this narrowing process, the instructor may ask them to compare or contrast their topic with that of another (sub)culture. As Table 1 illustrates, three options seem most apparent. (1) Students may compare or contrast two different (sub)cultures, neither being one to which they belong. (2) Or, students may compare or contrast one (sub)culture with that of the dominant American culture. (3) Finally, students may compare or contrast one (sub)culture with a particular (sub)culture to which they do belong. Regardless of whether students talk about their own cultural perspectives, they may ultimately also move beyond those perspectives into some cultural perspective which is diverse for them. As Table 1 depicts, by

shaping questions around these three ideas, more effective and less effective approaches are revealed to students.

Table 1
Comparative Frameworks for the
Speech of Information and Diversity

Central Question:	How do Jewish Americans Celebrate Yom Kippur?
Option 1:	How do Jewish Americans celebrate Yom Kippur as compared to Jewish Israelis?
Option 2:	How do Jewish Americans celebrate Yom Kippur as compared to the dominant American culture?
Option 3:	How do Jewish Americans celebrate Yom Kippur as compared to Christian Americans' celebration of a similar holiday?

CONCLUSION

If cultural diversity is to be taught effectively in the basic course, then textbooks, instructional materials, professional development opportunities, and evaluation criteria must be developed and made available to basic course instructors. One approach for incorporating cultural diversity into the basic course is the "speech of information and diversity." This assignment may be useful to instructors because it deviates from traditional public speaking assignments only in terms of

content (not structure or delivery style). Thus, existing evaluation forms could continue to be used to grade students' presentations. Ideally, this assignment could be modified to require alternative methods of organization and delivery, as well. However, until such evaluation standards are created, this assignment may, indeed, be a useful and workable approach for basic course instructors attempting to integrate cultural diversity into their courses.

The changing demographics of our college campuses compel speech communication educators to further examine their instructional approaches. We believe that sharing a variety of approaches designed to integrate diversity is a vital step in the search for effective diversity strategies. The basic public speaking classroom is an ideal place to begin or continue the dialogue about cultural diversity. This essay poses but one possible approach for consideration as instructors continue down the educational journey toward incorporating effectively cultural diversity into the basic course.

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Meeting the Challenge of Cultural Diversity: Ideas and Issues for the Public Speaking Course

Kimberly A. Powell

Cultural diversity has become a central concern at most levels of education. The term itself has become so accepted and commonplace that we often do not stop to ask what cultural diversity means for our respective fields. R. Roosevelt Thomas Jr., president of the American Institute for Managing Diversity at Morehouse College in Atlanta, defines diversity as building "systems and a culture that unite different people in a common pursuit without undermining their diversity. It's taking differences into account while developing a cohesive whole" (Gordon, 1992, p. 23). This seems a fruitful way to view cultural diversity in communication education. "Our challenge is not only to *accommodate* diversity, but to actually *use* it to bring new and richer perspectives to...our whole social climate" (Winikow, 1990, p. 242). The public speaking dimension of the basic communication course could better meet the challenge of cultural diversity by addressing training of graduate assistants, course content, and public speaking assessment.

Given the patriarchal traditions of rhetoric, it is no wonder that our courses often teach students that there is but one correct way to communicate. For example, many basic course texts stress that effective speech delivery "combines a certain degree of formality with the best attributes of good conversation. . ." (Lucas, 1986, p. 226); and organization relies upon "five organizational patterns: (1) chronological, (2)

topical, (3) spatial, (4) causal, and (5) problem-solution" (Beebe & Beebe, 1994, p. 171). A survey of basic course texts on public speaking shows that the Western tradition of linear organization, formal yet conversational delivery, and well documented content are the focus of our courses (Beebe & Beebe, 1994; Gamble & Gamble, 1994; Lucas, 1986; Osborn & Osborn, 1994). While there is nothing inherently wrong with this tradition, teaching from it exclusively does not allow for the variety of communication styles in this age of diversity. Even as our texts discuss diversity, the focus is on adapting to audiences, rather than on loosening requirements to include alternative styles of speaking. The Western tradition remains entrenched through the training of teachers of communication.

Through five years as a basic course graduate teaching assistant, I was trained partially through observing student speeches to teach according to traditional norms. One supervisor defined bad public speeches as those that use too much emotion, tell stories, and use over-flowery language. He then showed us a tape of an African American student speech. This speech was quite effective judging by audience response and intuition — yet we were instructed to give such a speech a low grade. Thus, we were instructed to penalize a student for giving an audience effective speech that grew out of his cultural communication style. This is not to say that every audience-pleasing speech should be given high marks. However, grading criteria should allow styles outside the Eurocentric norm. Training graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) to recognize a variety of speech styles may aid in the incorporation and valuing of cultural diversity in the basic course.

In addition to including diversity issues in GTA training, there are other ways to meet the challenge of cultural diversity in the basic course. First, when viewing sample speakers in the course it is important to view speakers of different cultures. Traditionally,

> Subject matters and approaches have been only slightly altered, perhaps with the inclusion of ... a speech by Martin Luther King ... these approaches leave unchanged the dominant notions of what should be taught. They leave the study of new perspectives and material on the fringes and keep at the center of the curriculum what traditionally has been considered essential and important to learn. (Smith, 1991, p. 132)

Sample speeches need to equally represent a diversity of speakers. Students need to understand that there are other African-American speakers in addition to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Using speeches of Malcolm X, Shirley Chisholm, Jesse Jackson, Henry Cisneros, and others representative of a variety of cultures (see Defrancisco & Jensen, 1994) shows that there are different speaking styles and effective speakers in all cultures. Viewing these speeches leads to a discussion of language use and style, different organizational patterns, and varying delivery styles.

Second, we can incorporate assignments into our public speaking courses which enhance student understanding and appreciation of diverse cultures. Students can choose a culture and interview someone from that culture, investigate nonverbal differences, communication styles, food and clothing differences, gender roles, among other dimensions, so the culture is no longer strange to them, but interesting. Students are made aware of the possibility that their interviewee is *not* totally representative of the culture; and to be careful not to perpetuate cultural stereotypes. The class is not only exposed to a variety of cultures and communication styles, but interaction between the students increases. A large international student population helps to bridge gaps as the American and international students interact for this assignment, and continue beyond (Powell, 1996).

We need to go beyond content to consider loosening the traditional public speaking requirements, discussed above.

Allowing students to speak from their own traditions will be liberating for the students and enriching for the class, which will be exposed to and learn to listen to a variety of communication styles and modes. For example, after hearing a speech from an African-American oratorical tradition, one white-American student approached me saying he couldn't understand anything that was said. To me, the speech was understandable, but different. By the end of the course, the students had allowed themselves to listen and be drawn into this emotion-filled style of speaking. The speeches were still composed of elements of traditional explanations of organization and effective language use, but were less rigid. We can loosen rigid requirements for speeches allowing more of a range of expression within the categories of effective public speaking. As Osborn & Osborn (1994) state, "... the public speaking class provides an ideal laboratory to explore and discover the different cultures that make up America. Students learn to tolerate and respect the many voices that make up what Lincoln once described as 'the chorus of the Union'" (p. xvii).

Cultural diversity in the basic communication course "opens up a myriad of possibilities and an education in itself. It can be frightening, frustrating, or even painful at first. It can also be exciting, enriching, and affirming" (Ellis, 1991, p. 214). According to the United States Census Bureau, by the turn of the century, Hispanics will become the largest minority group in the United States, followed by African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans (Gamble & Gamble, 1994, p. 19). The reality of a diverse society means, "Those of us who can study, work, and live with people from other cultures and races can enjoy more success in school, on the job, and in our neighborhoods" (Ellis, 1991, p. 214). By helping instructors understand that differences in cultural communication styles are not superior or inferior and incorporating examples and assignments that emphasize the richness of culture, not only will our courses be more interesting, but our

students will be better prepared to succeed in a diverse society.

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Author Identification

Nancy Rost Goulden (Ed.D., Northern Arizona University, 1989) is Assistant Professor of Speech and Coordinator of the Basic Public Speaking Course at Kansas State University. She has co-authored a public speaking text and co-authored the *Instructor's Resource Manual* for Verderber's *Challenge of Effective Speaking,* (9th Ed.). Her research interests include assessment of communication products and performances, teacher-student communication about grading, and the history of school rhetoric.

Charlene J. Handford (Ph.D., Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, 1979) is Professor of Communication at Louisiana State University in Shreveport where she has served as coordinator of the basic course and interim chair of the Department of Communications. She has published articles in *Communication Education* and the *Mississippi Journal of History* and two chapters in *Teaching and Directing the Basic Communications Course,* edited by Lawrence W. Hugenberg, Pamela L. Gray, and Douglas M. Trank.

Mark Hickson, III (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University, 1971) is Professor in and the Chair of the Department of Communication Studies and Co-Director of the National Institute for Media Citizenship at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. His research interests include nonverbal communication, communication theory, and communication education.

J.S. Hinton (M.F.A., University of Southern Mississippi, 1975) is a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri — Columbia and is currently on faculty in the Department of Communication at Mississippi State University. Her research interests include interpersonal communication, social support, family communication, and rituals and stories.

Connie M. Honken (M.S., Northwest Missouri State University, 1989) is an instructor of Speech Communication and Communication Disorders at Northwest Missouri State University. She also tutors intercultural students in language and dialect improvement. Her research interest include special education, communication disorders, and intercultural communication.

Lawrence W. Hugenberg (Ph.D., Ohio State University, 1981) is Professor of Communication and Director of Basic Courses at Youngstown State University. He co-authored two texts for basic communication courses, a simulation for the business and professional speaking course, and was a co-editor of a resource for the basic course, *Teaching and Directing the Basic Communication Course.* He is the former chair of the Basic Course Commission of the Speech Communication Association and the Basic Course Committee of the Central States Communication Association. His research interests include basic communication course pedagogy, communication competence, communication assessment and cultural diversity.

Christine M. Kelly (Ph.D., Purdue University, 1991) is an Assistant Professor of Communication at Otterbein College. Her research interests include political communication, rhetorical theory, and rhetorical criticism. Her most recent research examined the illegal immigrant issue in the 1994 California Governor's election. She recently finished editing a book entitled, *Diversity in Public Communication: A Reader.*

Michael W. Kramer (Ph.D., Texas, 1991) has been the director of the basic course at the University of Missouri — Columbia from 1993-96. In addition to educational issues, his teaching and research interests include organizational assimilation, group decision-making, and emotions in the workplace.

Aimée Langlois (Ed.D., Columbia University, 1975) is Professor of Child Development at Humboldt State University. She is also a licensed speech-language pathologist and, in that capacity, she consults with the Office of Disabled Student Services at the university for the benefit of students with communication disorders. For many years she taught graduate and undergraduate courses on the problem of stuttering and she published articles on the topic. More recently she has conducted seminars for teachers on the problems that students who stutter face in the classroom.

Robert Littlefield (Ph.D., University of Minnesota, 1983) is Professor of Communication at the University of North Dakota. He has served as the Director of the Institute for the Study of Cultural Diversity. He co-authored a workbook for the basic course at North Dakota State University and was instrumental in introducing diversity-related speeches and activities into the curriculum. His specialty areas include communication education, intercultural communication and managing a diverse workforce.

Bayo Oludaja (Ph.D., The University of Kansas, 1992) is Assistant Professor of Speech Communication at Northwest Missouri State University. He published an essay on principles and theories of persuasion and another manuscript on experiential approaches to intercultural communication. His research interests include language usage and listening in intercultural/international communication, nonverbal communication, and religious communication.

Kimberly A. Powell (Ph.D., The University of Georgia, 1992) is Assistant Professor of Communication/Linguistics and Director of Forensics at Luther College. She authored an article on using debate to teach persuasion in the basic course in. Other publications include studies of social movements and an anthology on *Women Public Speakers in the United States, 1925-1993.* Her research interests include social movement and feminist rhetoric.

Deanna D. Sellnow (Ph.D., University of North Dakota, 1991) is Assistant Professor of Communication and Director of the Public Speaking Fundamental Program at North Dakota State University. She is currently serving as the Vice-Chair and Program Planner for the Basic Communication Course Committee of the Central States Communication Association. She is editor of a workbook for the basic course at the University of North Dakota entitled, *The Practice of Public Speaking,* (3rd Ed.). She developed and teaches two courses in GTA training. Once course focuses on helping GTAs teach public speaking and principles and theories of communication. The other course, "Introduction to College Teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences," is open to GTAs throughout the University. She is also serving on a university committee to design a college teaching minor for graduate students. Her research interests include pedagogy in the basic communication course, communication education, gender communication, and rhetorical criticism of music as communication.

Shawn Spano (Ph.D., Indiana University, 1988) is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies at San Jose State University. His research interests include communication theory, interpersonal communication, social constructionism, and language pragmatics. He is the author of numerous journal articles and convention papers, and has recently written in the area of student outcomes assessment.

Bryan B. Whaley (Ph.D., Purdue University, 1991) is Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of San Francisco. In addition to investigating strategies of interaction with those with communicative disorders, his research includes language and social influence, and communication and health. He serves as Chairperson of USF's Disability Related Services Committee.

Glen Williams (Ph.D., Indiana University, 1993) is a visiting assistant professor of speech communication at Texas A&M University and is director of the basic course. He has published work pertaining to pedagogy, TA training and development, and directorship of the basic course. Glen also has published work that explores rhetoric during the American Revolution.

Jennifer Wood (M.A., University of Pittsburgh) is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Communication at the University of Pittsburgh. In 1990, she received the International Communication Association's award for Excellent Teaching by a Graduate Student. Her research interests include gender and communication, legal discourse, and engaged pedagogy.

Call for Papers

The Basic Course Commission invites submissions to be considered for publication in *Basic Communication Course Annual 10* to be published in 1998. The *Annual* is published by American Press (Boston, MA) and is distributed nationally to scholars and educators interested in the basic communication course. Each article is also indexed in its entirety in the ERIC database.

Since this is the 10th anniversary issue of the original publication of the *Annual,* of special interest to the editor are articles, both qualitative and quantitative, exploring the status and role of the basic communication course. Other manuscripts will be considered that address significant issues surrounding the basic course, instructional practices, research in the basic course, and teaching activities for classroom use.

Each submission must be accompanied by a 75 to 100-word abstract of the manuscript and a brief author identification paragraph on each author following the format of the *Annual.* All submissions must follow the latest APA style or they will be returned to the author(s).

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Please be sure all references to the author and institutional affiliation are removed from the text of the manuscript.

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Larry Hugenberg, Editor
Basic Communication Course Annual 10
Department of Communication and Theater
Youngstown State University
One University Plaza
Youngstown, OH 4455-3631
phone (330-742-3633
e-mail (aw869@yfn.ysu.edu)

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The Basic Communication Course Annual examines current introductory communication course research and pedagogical issues. Manuscripts may be experimental, theoretical, or applied in nature. Submissions regarding basic communication instruction at all educational levels are considered.

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