GENERAL INTEREST

Communication and Volunteerism: The Impact of Role Models

The Influence of Setting on Supreme Court Religious Expression Decisions

Whistleblowers: Loyal Corporate Employee or Disloyal Employee?

TEACHER’S WORKBOOK

Infusing Critical Thinking into Communication Courses

Effective Listening Project: A Constructivist Activity

Gaining Knowledge: Creating Activities for Students by Students

Discovering Culture and Communication on the World Wide Web

Exploring Literary Characters in Classroom Performance

Are You “Wanted” For Poor Listening Habits?

ON THE WEB

Extraordinary Everyday Stories: Audio Resources for the Communication Instructor
Editor’s Note

I am pleased to introduce a new feature in this issue of the *CTAM Journal*, called “On the Web.” New and interesting ways to use the Internet in our classes are arising all the time, but discovering these websites on our own is not always easy. As an online journal, it seemed only natural to create a space in the *CTAM Journal* for articles which would introduce readers to such websites and how they can be used in the classroom. I hope you find this feature to be a valuable resource, and will consider submitting your own discoveries to future issues of the *CTAM Journal*.

During the 2006-2007 academic year, the CTAM Board of Governors decided that the *CTAM Journal* would go to an all-online format, beginning with Volume 34 (2007). With this change, we remain dedicated to producing a high quality journal comprised of articles that have gone through a rigorous review process, while allowing increased access of the journal to a wider audience.

The *Journal* is available at the CTAM Website: [http://www.mnsu.edu/spcomm/ctam/](http://www.mnsu.edu/spcomm/ctam/)
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**CTAM JOURNAL MISSION STATEMENT**

The *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal (CTAMJ)* is the scholarly journal of the Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota (CTAM). The journal is an outlet for articles related to issues of discipline-related importance including articles discussing innovative teaching methods. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome.

Authors should submit an electronic copy of their work as a Word document by e-mail to the editor. A separate, electronic title page should include a 100-125 word abstract of the article, author’s name and professional title, job title, the school or institutional affiliation of the author/s, a mailing address, and an e-mail address. Care should be taken that author identification has been removed from the manuscript itself for review purposes. **All manuscripts should be prepared according to current APA or MLA guidelines.**

*CTAMJ* encourages contributions from scholars and practitioners, who comprise all segments of the journal's readership, including K-12 educators, graduate school, community college, and college or university groups. The journal welcomes theoretical and applied articles from both the theater and communication disciplines. Capable scholars in the appropriate field will blindly review all general manuscripts.

No work will be accepted or rejected purely on the basis of its methodology or subject. Author sex, race, ethnic background, geographical location or work affiliation (secondary/college level, department, etc.) of the author(s) are never considered in making editorial judgments. The demands of the disciplines of speech communication and theater are key factors in the editorial judgments made. All editorial decisions attempt to balance these demands with the needs and interests of the journal's readers.

The journal is guided by three key principles:

- To provide an outlet for the expression of diverse ideas.
- To publish high quality scholarship in the disciplines of Speech Communication and Theater.
- To meet the journal-related needs of CTAM and its members.

**EDITORIAL POLICY**

The call for Manuscripts goes out in the fall of the year and the deadline for submissions is in March of the following year. Details of how to submit are given in the Call which is sent to all members, departments, and announced in SPECTRA. Book review ideas should be queried with the editor in advance of the submission date. Book reviews are generally published if accepted on a space available basis. All articles are read anonymously by at least two associate editors. All author identification markings are removed from the articles and no editor reads the work of a colleague. Associate editors may submit articles to the journal, but their work must go through the process of blind review, just as any other submitter. The journal editor facilitates the process and makes final decisions based on the associate editor's recommendations and comments. If there are any questions about the process, please direct them to the journal editor.

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CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS VOLUME 36, SUMMER 2009

The Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal is seeking manuscripts for Volume 36, scheduled for publication in summer 2009. The journal welcomes theoretical and applied articles and teaching suggestions from theater, communication and forensics professionals from secondary and collegiate levels. All general articles will undergo a blind review process by a minimum of two reviewers. Manuscripts may be submitted for one of two sections: general interest research and essays, and teacher's workbook. Please clearly indicate whether the manuscript is intended for the (1) general interest research and essays section, or the (2) teacher’s workbook section. Contact the editor concerning book review proposals.

A new feature has also been added to the CTAM Journal, called “On the Web.” With new and interesting Internet sources arising all the time, discovering these websites on one’s own is not always easy. Intended as a way to help CTAMJ readers find the best websites for use in the classroom, “On the Web” was introduced in Volume 35 as a means of bringing these websites together thematically in one place. If you have found an innovative use of the Internet in your classroom, consider submitting your discovery for inclusion in the next issue of CTAMJ.

Authors should submit an electronic copy of their work as a Word document by e-mail to the editor. A separate electronic title page should include a 100-125 word abstract of the article, author’s name and professional title, job title, the school or institutional affiliation of the author/s, a mailing address, and an e-mail address. Care should be taken that author identification has been removed from the manuscript itself for review purposes. All manuscripts should be prepared according to current APA or MLA guidelines.

Authors are reminded to keep the Journal audience in mind: students and teachers at the high school, community college, private college, and university levels. All manuscripts must be submitted by March 31, 2009. Please e-mail manuscripts and any questions to Aileen Buslig, CTAM Journal Editor, buslig@cord.edu
Communication and Volunteerism: The Potential Impact of Role Models

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ABSTRACT
Volunteers are an important subset of society who provide many services to people and organizations in need. Based on Social Learning Theory, a preliminary study was designed to investigate the role communication may play in fostering positive attitudes and behaviors in college students regarding volunteerism. Surveys completed by 321 college students were collected and the relationship between instances of communication with role models (e.g., parents, peers, religious leaders, siblings, coworkers, extended family) and participant attitudes toward and rates of volunteering were examined. Results indicated the more conversations shared between role models and participants the more likely it was that participants held positive beliefs about volunteering and volunteered at higher rates. The significance of further research into this relationship is highlighted and implications for educators and practitioners are reviewed.

The attitudes of U.S. first year college students toward community involvement and helping others are reported to be higher than they have been in 40 years, according to a national longitudinal study conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute (2006). The rates of civic engagement and community involvement among young adults are key topics being discussed with great interest in contemporary political, social, and academic spheres. For example, academic service-learning projects have been reported to increase sporadic and episodic volunteering among students 18 to 24 years old (Lillian, Cramer, Dietz, & Grimm, 2006). Yet, simultaneously the rates of regular volunteering have been decreasing among 16 to 24 year olds (Keeter, Zukin, Andolina, & Jenkins, 2002; Lopez, Levine, Both, Kiesa, Kirby, & Marcelo, 2006), which suggests individuals in this age group may be more willing to volunteer when it is compelled, episodic, and associated with some form of reward.

In light of the shifting volunteer behaviors of young adults, we want to draw attention to the importance of research questions that investigate how communication about volunteering may influence the rate at which a young adult may be inclined to volunteer. Although studies have researched the motivational factors that are typically related to volunteer behaviors (Clary, et al., 1998), little attention has been focused on examining how communication may influence
volunteer participation. Altering the research perspective, from individual (psychological studies) to interactional (communication studies) in nature, offers a novel approach to researching this topic. To address this interest, a preliminary study was designed to investigate the relationship between conversations with role models about volunteering and the attitudes a college student associates with volunteerism and his or her volunteer participation.

*Volunteerism’s Importance for Individuals and Societies*

The importance of volunteering is framed within the definition of the act. Wilson’s (2000) definition of volunteerism states “volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause. Volunteering is part of a cluster of helping behaviors, entailing more commitment than spontaneous assistance but narrower in scope than the care provided to family and friends” (p. 215). In this regard, volunteerism is defined as the act of helping people on a regular basis who are not included in a person’s circle of social support, without expectation or receipt of reward or compensation for the help provided. Volunteering regularly at a local animal humane shelter or working at a local food shelf on a regular basis would be examples of activities that are considered within the boundaries of the definition provided. Unlike Furco and Billig’s (2002) definition that includes student service-learning projects, participation in academic service-learning falls outside of the definition adopted for this study due to the compelled nature of the service being provided, and the compensation of a grade being rewarded to the student for his/her efforts. At the heart of the definition we adopted for this study was the altruistic nature of an act of volunteering as helping others at the personal cost of an individual’s time, talents, or resources. Although altruistic by definition, it is important to acknowledge that volunteering generally provides benefits to more than just the person or organization receiving the help; volunteering has been documented to provide benefits to the individual as well as society at large.

On a personal level, volunteering can provide many positive effects for the volunteer that are noted to motivate a person to become and/or maintain his/her volunteer behavior (Clary, et al., 1998; Eyler, Giles, Stenson, & Gray, 2001; Wilson, 2000). For example, Eyler et al. (2001) reported that students who volunteer indicate a higher awareness of their spiritual and moral identity associated with the volunteer activity, a positive effect on interpersonal communication and leadership skills, and a more developed sense of social responsibility and citizenship skills. Volunteers are relied upon and documented as making a positive difference in their community (Fisher & Ackerman, 1998; Snyder, Omoto, & Crain, 1999) which is associated with a favorable sense of self esteem. Clary et al. investigated the reasons why people volunteer and identified the following six motivations: to reinforce personal values, to gain an understanding of self, to enhance one’s personal growth, to develop/advance a career, to gain/reinforce social ties, and to protect oneself from feelings of guilt. Clary et al.’s work adds to the recognition that even though altruistic volunteering does not involve compensation or receipt of reward, it likely offers an
individual benefits for having volunteered. More often recognized, however, are the benefits communities and organizations receive from volunteer efforts.

On a societal level, volunteers provide many services to organizations and groups of people that would otherwise be impossible to sustain in the United States (Dutta-Bergman, 2002; Fisher & Ackerman, 1998). In the U.S., volunteers make up a work force of 83.9 million people, of which Dutta-Bergman concludes that “this figure represents the equivalent of more than 9 million full-time employees at a value of $239 billion” (p. 355). As the population increases, it is expected the societal need for volunteers will also increase.

Currently, about one third of the U.S. population volunteer on a regular basis (Keeter et al., 2002; Lopez et al., 2006; U.S. Department of Labor, 2007), yet these rates are fluctuating. The majority of these regular volunteers are 35 to 54 years old, hold a college degree, are married, employed, female, and regularly attend religious services (Keeter et al., 2002; U.S. Department of Labor, 2006). Recognizing that these characteristics describe a person older than typical college students, it is warranted to emphasize the need to explain how younger adults may be socialized to become regular volunteers. This explanation will be especially crucial if young adults are volunteering at lower rates and/or volunteering for non-altruistic reasons, since these trends suggest the number of young adult who develop into regular volunteers in the future may diminish. Therefore, if we can increase our understanding of how communicating about volunteerism influences young adults as they develop in adulthood, we may be able to explain why individuals are more or less likely to support volunteerism practices and become regular volunteers. With this in mind, the role communication plays in the socialization process becomes an important phenomena to examine.

**Communication’s Impact on Volunteer Attitudes and Behaviors**

Speculating that a relationship exists between communication about volunteering and participation in volunteer behavior, we reasoned that the more a young adult communicates about volunteering with role models who volunteer, the higher the likelihood that s/he will report positive attitudes toward volunteerism and higher rates of volunteer participation. An explanation for this expected relationship lies in the tenets of Social Learning Theory (SLT; Bandura, 1977). Based on Bandura’s seminal work, SLT suggests that people learn how to behave socially via three main modes: personal experience, observation of others, and meta-communication about behaviors. We applied these seminal modes of learning as tools to help us predict the relationship between communication about volunteering, attitudes about volunteering, and volunteer participation. Applying SLT broadly to the socialization of positive attitudes toward volunteerism and volunteer behaviors, we expected to find that conversations with role models about volunteering would be positively related to the way a person thinks about volunteerism and volunteers. This claim is supported by research conducted by Maccoby and Martin (1983), Wilson (2000), and Keeter et al. (2002).
Maccoby and Martin (1983) investigated the socializing role parents play for their children, and established evidence that children look to significant role models, most notably parents, to help them learn how to socially interact with others. This work spawned numerous studies into the socialization process. Applied to volunteerism, Wilson (2000) suggests adolescents may form positive attitudes regarding volunteering by watching their parents volunteer and volunteering with them. Often “teaching by example” is a strategy used to socialize children and adolescents regarding appropriate ways to participate in society. The success of this strategy is illustrated in a report from the PEW research center (2002) that shows one out of every three people who volunteer regularly had parents who also volunteered regularly. Yet, if we consider that only 33 percent of current volunteers report having parents who regularly volunteered (Keeter et al., 2002), then who may be socializing the other two-thirds of volunteers? This question prompted us to investigate other potential people who may act as role models for an individual.

Beyond parents, there is ample research that suggests peers (e.g., Brown, 1990) and other people in an individual’s life may act as socializing agents (e.g., siblings, extended family, coaches, teachers, religious figures, media characters). In this sense, role models may include any significant other that an individual holds in high esteem regarding how to interact socially to achieve personal goals. Thus, in the event that a role model volunteers and an individual is aware of this behavior, there is a potential for that role model to positively influence the individual’s attitudes and behaviors toward volunteering. For example, a religious figure who volunteers by coaching a little league team, a friend who volunteers at the local food shelf, or a sibling who volunteers at a sports/community gathering is illustrating by example that they feel this type of behavior is important and worthy of their time. However, there is no guarantee that an individual will acknowledge the role model’s behavior, accurately interpret why the role model is volunteering, or internalize the behavior as something he/she should do in the future, unless the role model and individual talk about it. Reflecting back on Bandura’s (1977, 1999) work, SLT suggests that the most likely manner in which to insure that a person understands a behavior, and associates the accurate attitudes which the social agent intended to accompany the behavior, is to have the role model specifically discuss the behavior with the individual (Bandura, 1977, 1999). This claim is crucial to understanding the role communication may play in the socializing of future volunteers, such that discussion of the volunteer behavior is more likely to result in an individual’s awareness and internalization of the role model’s perspective and reasoning for why s/he volunteers, than just relying on the old adage of “leading by example.”

Complementing the work of Bandura (1977, 1999) and Maccoby and Martin (1983), Fazio and Zanna (1981) extend our understanding of how communication with role models about volunteerism and volunteer behaviors may operate by highlighting the significance of the mode through which social information is learned. Research indicates that the socialization of specific attitudes and behaviors will be most effective when conducted via the modes of meta-communication or personal experience (Bandura, 1977, 1999; Fazio & Zanna, 1981). This
research highlights the importance of communicating about volunteerism, and how direct
communication may have a stronger influence throughout the socialization process. Bandura
(1977, 1999) illustrates the important role of communication by explaining that in order for a
person to learn the specific moral judgments held by a role model in a situation, the role model
must vocalize their beliefs so the individual clearly understands the valence the role model
associates with the displayed attitudes and behaviors. Thus, discussion of the role model’s
attitudes and personal experiences regarding volunteering has the potential to increase the
likelihood that a person internalizes volunteer behavior and associates it with how s/he will
behave. When a role model fails to discuss their specific beliefs regarding volunteering with a
person, it is less likely that role model will be successful in influencing a person to hold similar
attitudes and behaviors regarding volunteerism.

Based on the argument that fostering volunteerism in young adults relies on more than
role models illustrating volunteer behavior, the relationship between the number of role models
with whom young adults communicate about volunteering and self-reported volunteer attitudes
and behaviors was examined. It was argued that young adults who communicate with role
models specifically about volunteering are more likely to hold more positive attitudes about
volunteering and will report higher levels of volunteer participation than individuals who
communicate with fewer or no role models about volunteering. To test these claims, the
following two hypotheses were advanced:

H1: Communication with role models regarding volunteering positively relates to more
favorable volunteer attitudes reported by an individual.

H2: Communication with role models regarding volunteering positively relates to higher rates
of volunteer behavior reported by an individual.

Methods

Participants & Procedures

This study used survey methodology to collect data from 321 college students (157
females, 164 males) attending a mid-sized university in the Midwest. Participants ranged in age
from 18 to 24 years old ($M = 19.54$) and were recruited from a general education communication
course. The majority of the participants reported their ethnicity as Caucasian/white (88%, $N = 278$),
and were predominantly in their first year of college (71%, $n = 229$).

To investigate the guiding research question and test the two hypotheses, a set of
variables were measured via scales incorporated into the survey. In the survey, volunteerism was
defined by a list of activities that were provided to give each participant an idea of what
behaviors were considered volunteering. The list consisted of the following behaviors: manual
labor (e.g., building a home, moving supplies, transporting goods), fulfilling an emotional need
(e.g., provide counseling or mentoring through an organization), educational/child
developmental (e.g., tutoring students/illiterate adults), meeting a medical need (e.g., helping at a
blood bank), environmental/animal organization (e.g., cleaning up trash, helping at the Human Society), political organization (e.g., supporting a candidate running for office), sports/recreational activities (e.g., coaching a little league team), school activities (e.g., bake sales, chaperone, field trips), religious (e.g., faith based events, fundraisers). This list was provided to participants prior to asking them any questions about volunteer attitudes or behaviors. Additionally, when asked to report their own volunteer behavior, participants were instructed to report only behaviors for which they did not receive school credit or were not associated with a class assignment.

**Independent Variable**

**Communication with role models.** This variable was measured using three statements to indicate if a participant had ever communicated about volunteering with role models (e.g., parents, peers, and “other” role models). For example, the parent item asked “Whether your parents volunteered or not, did your parents ever talk about volunteering with you?” and a response of no equaled 0, and a response of yes equaled 1. Similar phrasing was used to measure communication with peer and “other” role models. The *Communication with Role Models* variable ($M = 1.95, SD = 1.04$) was then represented as a total of the number of role models (parents, peers, “other” role models, or no role models) with whom the participant had communicated about volunteerism.

**Dependent Variables**

**Attitudes about volunteering (H1).** The 19-item *Attitudes about Volunteering* scale was crafted to measure a participant’s overall set of attitudes toward volunteering. Attitudes about volunteering were operationalized in the form of items that were adapted from the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI, Clary et al., 1998). Sample items included: “I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself,” and “No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about my negative thoughts.” In addition to this scale, a specific question was crafted to directly ask “In general, your thoughts about volunteering are…?” Each of the 19 items was followed by a five point Likert-scale response set, with 1 equaling a very positive and 5 equalling a very negative identification with the item. Internal consistency for the *attitudes about volunteering* variable ($M = 2.23, SD = .54$) was found to indicate good reliability ($\alpha = .88$).

**Volunteer behavior (H2).** The *Volunteer Behavior* variable ($M = 1.36, SD = .48$) consisted of a specific item that asked “Have you volunteered since you have been enrolled as a college student (without receiving school credit or fulfilling a class requirement)?” with a response of yes equaling 1 and no equaling 0. Volunteer behavior at the college level was considered more important than volunteer behavior prior to college because it was expected that
those volunteering in college were more likely to be doing so for more altruistic, rather than compelled, reasons.

**Results**

Descriptive analyses were conducted on survey items that inquired about the valence of the conversations between role models and the participants and to measure the amount of participants that were currently volunteering in college. Correlation analyses were conducted to test the hypotheses advanced in this study.

Frequency analyses were run on descriptive survey items to better understand the valence and frequency of the conversations that occurred between role models and participants regarding volunteerism. Seventy-two percent of the participants reported their parents spoke favorably about volunteering, 16 percent spoke neutrally, 9 percent never spoke about volunteering with him/her, and less than 2 percent were reported to speak negatively about volunteering. Fifty-one percent of the participants reported their peers spoke favorably about volunteering, 28 percent of peers spoke neutrally, 15 percent never spoke about volunteering with him/her, and 5 percent of peers were reported to speak negatively about volunteering. Beyond parents and peers, the types of “other” role models that were listed most frequently by participants included religious figures, siblings, coworkers, and extended family members (data was not collected regarding the valence of the conversations with “other” role models). Of the participants, 35 percent (n = 112) reported s/he had volunteered in college, with 79 percent (n = 255) reporting s/he had volunteered previous to college. When asked if a participant’s role models volunteered, 87 percent reported their parents, peers, and other role models had volunteered. Of the participants who reported they had volunteered previous to college, 203 of the 255 had volunteered with his/her parents.

To review, the descriptive analyses suggest two important trends that should be considered. First, conversation valence regarding volunteerism was generally reported to be positive in nature. The conversations with parents were noted as positive more often than were the conversations with friends, and the reported experience of volunteering with the participant was also found to be higher with parents than friends. Second, conversation frequency about volunteerism was reported to occur more often with parents than with friends or “other” role models. These trends offer descriptive information that suggests more research should be conducted to further explore the difference between how role models talk about volunteerism, and if the valence of the conversation or the conversation frequency has a more significant impact on fostering attitudes about volunteerism and volunteer behavior.

Correlation analyses were conducted to investigate the research question and test the hypotheses advanced in the study. Testing the prediction advanced in H1, a correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between Communication with Role Models and Attitudes about Volunteering (r = .28, p < .0001; Table 1). This finding indicates participants who reported more instances of talking about volunteering with role models reported more positive attitudes toward volunteering than those who never talked about volunteering or talked about it with fewer
role models. Testing the prediction advanced for H2, the correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship between Communication with Role Models and Volunteer Behavior \( (r = .18, p < .001; \text{Table 1}) \). This finding indicates that participants who reported more conversations about volunteering with role models also reported higher levels of volunteer participation than those who never talked about volunteering or talked about it with fewer role models.

**Table 1**

*Correlating Communication with Role Models, Attitudes about Volunteering, and Volunteer Behavior (N = 311)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
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<td>1. Communication with Role Models</td>
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<td>2. Attitudes about Volunteering (H1)</td>
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<td>.11*</td>
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<td>3. Volunteer Behavior (H2)</td>
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*\( p < .05, ** p < .001, *** p < .0001.\)

In summary, while the results of both tests establish support for the hypotheses advanced in this study, these results should be interpreted with care due to the preliminary nature of the study and the simplicity of the statistics used to identify the existing relationships. With that noted, these results offer noteworthy implications for future research to expand our understanding of how volunteerism may be socialized.

**Discussion**

Based on the tenets of Social Learning Theory (SLT; Bandura, 1977), we argued that conversations with role models regarding volunteerism would impact young adult volunteerism attitudes and behavior. In this regard, we tested whether more conversations about volunteering correlated with more positive attitude associations with volunteerism (H1), and more participation in volunteer behaviors (H2). Although it was anticipated that the most significant role models would likely be parents, peers and “other” role models (e.g., teachers, siblings, extended family members, religious and community leaders) were also included in the study. We found support for both predictions, and review implications regarding the application of this research to future studies and practitioners and educators as well.
Primary Implications

Primarily, the results of the study indicate that role models may be able to foster a stronger dedication to volunteerism by communicating with young adults about volunteerism. While the study does not test a causal relationship and is preliminary in nature, the implication of the results is that communication about volunteerism is an important factor to consider when advancing research on how volunteers are socialized. Within the sample population studied, positive conversations with significant role models were significantly correlated with positive volunteer attitudes and behaviors. Based on these results, an obvious future question to investigate would be if negative conversations with role models correlate in a similar way to negative individual attitudes toward volunteer behavior. At the heart of this question is the examination of a principle of social learning that when applied to volunteerism suggests that the attitudes and behaviors portrayed by role models regarding volunteerism will be similar to volunteerism attitudes and behaviors held by individuals. In this regard, we encourage research that will more accurately investigate the positive (or negative) socializing impact role models may have on young adults who are observing, discussing, or experiencing volunteer activities with them.

Subsequent to this primary implication is the speculation that volunteer socialization may likely be strongest via modes of meta-communication and personal experience, and weakest via observation. This is an underlying research question that needs to be investigated to confirm the effect noted by Fazio and Zanna (1981) and Bandura (1977, 1999) as it applies to socializing volunteerism. For example, while the socialization mode of observing role models may be enough to convince some young adults to volunteer, it is unlikely to be as effective as talking about the importance of volunteering with role models or experiencing volunteering first-hand with these individuals. While evidence suggests that vocalized moral judgments shared by role models are more influential than just observing role models engaged in volunteer behavior, this claim assumes the individual is receptive to the vocalized beliefs of their role models. This may not always be the case, and the effect should be further explored in different sample populations to confirm the robustness of the finding. In the event that it was established that there was a hierarchy of socializing modes relevant to volunteerism (e.g., personal experience is more effective at socializing than meta-communication, which is more effective at socializing than observation), we speculate that socializing young adults to hold favorable associations about volunteerism would happen most readily when a person has direct, positive experiences volunteering with a role model who directly relates his/her motivations for volunteering to the individual via conversations about volunteering.

Although the effect of modes of socialization need to be investigated in future studies, building awareness of the different modes as opportunities to encourage volunteerism is a novel way to think about encouraging civic and community engagement among young adults and merits application to everyday interactions. For example, if a religious figure or teacher has not clarified personal motivations for volunteering to a young adult, s/he may choose to initiate a
discussion regarding reasons for his/her volunteer behavior. Parents may choose to discuss the importance of volunteering specifically when they model it (e.g., baking brownies for a school bake sale, monitoring the concession stand at a local sports game), such as during a drive to a community/school event or during a family meal. The idea is that positive connotations to volunteering encouraged by the role model should be recognizable to the young adult and easily related to his/her life. Another practical application includes pursuing volunteering activities with a young adult, during which all three modes of socialization may be incorporated simultaneously. While the results of this study do not indicate how successful attempts such as this may be, the study does indicate that positive communication about volunteering is related to stronger attitudes and beliefs regarding regular volunteer participation, which puts into practice the research on the importance of the modes of socialization.

Another practical application related to the primary implication is that it may be beneficial to include people in the socialization process before they become adults to instill an awareness and dedication to volunteerism. This is speculation and was not tested in this study (which sampled a group of primarily first-year college students), however, the principles of socialization reviewed in this study imply that discussing the positive benefits of volunteering before an individual reaches adulthood may foster a stronger belief in the importance of volunteerism. Although using this strategy to foster individual engagement within a community through volunteering was not specifically tested in this study, it merits further investigation and should be tested in the future.

Secondary Implications

Secondarily, an important tangential implication related to this research is the recognition that the definition of volunteering is potentially shifting in a manner that may confuse future research attempts to investigate communication’s impact on volunteerism. The act of volunteering has been researched by many, which has resulted in different understandings of how the behavior should be conceptualized and operationalized in research. General definitions usually associate volunteerism with an altruistic, public choice to donate one's time and resources freely to benefit another person, group, or organization, with no sanctions incurred for not volunteering and no rewards received for volunteering (c.f., Omoto & Snyder, 2002; Snyder & Omoto, 1992; Snyder, Crain, & Omoto, 1999; Wilson, 2000). More recent definitions have begun to include behaviors that incur sanctions for not participating and provide rewards for the volunteered effort, such as academic service-learning projects (Furco & Billig, 2002; Lillian, et al., 2006).

The notable difference in the two types of definitions reviewed is that the general definitions are related to regular, uncompensated volunteer behavior, while more recent definitions include more spontaneous, episodic, and compensated volunteer behavior. This difference prompts the question: does it really matter how volunteering is defined if people are still participating and benefiting from the volunteering? We view the inconsistency in definition
as problematic because the inclusion of service-learning activities as volunteering behavior may be exaggerating student volunteer rates (e.g., Lillian, et al., 2006), and it may be shielding a more serious change in the underlying motivations young adults associate with volunteerism.

An awareness of the different definitions of volunteerism is relevant because future investigations of how communication impacts the socialization of new generations of volunteers should clarify if different communication patterns are necessary to socialize regular, uncompensated volunteers versus episodic, compensated volunteers. Currently, researchers and practitioners do not know enough about how communication patterns influence the socialization of young adult volunteers to recognize what effect, for example, academic service-learning projects may have on volunteer attitudes and behaviors. Even though service-learning projects may not model regular, uncompensated volunteering (e.g., students are required to participate and get a grade for their efforts), it is important to consider if the personal experience acquired through service-learning projects will foster positive associations with volunteering? In this regard, future research has much to explore regarding how communication patterns shared between an individual and role model may foster positive attitudes toward volunteerism.

Based on the preliminary results of this study, we speculate that teachers using service-learning projects may become potential role models with the opportunity to foster positive, or negative (depending on the situation), associations regarding volunteerism. Therefore, we suggest that teachers who practice these types of assignments with students integrate open discussions in class to review the personal benefits, recipient and societal rewards, and personal motivations that are associated with volunteerism.

**Limitations**

Due to the preliminary nature of this investigation, pre-existing reliable and valid operationalizations of communication patterns between role models and young adults regarding volunteer behaviors did not exist. This limited the manner in which data was collected for the independent and dependent measures. To address this limitation, future studies should include questions addressing instances of communication with role models regarding the valence of the conversation(s), frequency of the conversations, and context and timing of the conversation(s) in a manner that can be statistically analyzed. The sample population may have also limited the results of the study in that it consisted of primarily first-year college students who may not have had time to establish volunteer opportunities in the community in which they may have recently moved to attend university. To address these limitations future work should attempt to stratify the sample population across a broader range of college students (e.g., freshman through seniors), and collect a larger sample size to investigate variations in demographic characteristics.
**Future Work on Communication and Volunteerism**

In future studies on this topic, we suggest social, cultural, and economic factors should also be measured to investigate the effect of various internal (e.g., level of self esteem and self efficacy, empathic concern, locus of control, perception of relationship with role model) and external (e.g., socioeconomic class, cultural beliefs associated with collectivism, exposure to the civic or community involvement of others) aspects that may be related to volunteerism. An especially interesting aspect to explore in greater detail would be the gendered ways in which role models illustrate volunteer behaviors and communicate about volunteerism with young adults. Research of this sort has the potential to highlight correlations between the similarities or differences of males and females in regards to the volunteering behaviors of, for example, mothers and fathers, to which a person is exposed.

Additional research could investigate a question related to the primary implication of this study that asks why some young adults volunteer who may have role models who do not volunteer or role models who have promoted negative associations with volunteering. Studies with this focus could address the question of whether or not students exposed to negative volunteer experiences or no volunteering experiences will ever become volunteers themselves. Further examination of Clary, et al.’s (1998) work focused on motivations for why people volunteer may highlight how personal benefits (such as self exploration and understanding, or reinforcement of personal values) gained by volunteering may shape more effective ways to communicate about volunteerism. Extending this individual perspective, since Clary et al.’s work was conducted from a psychological standpoint, investigations incorporating a transactive communication perspective may offer different explanations for what aspects of interaction prompt a young adult to volunteer.

**Conclusion**

This study conducted a preliminary investigation of the relationship between communication and volunteerism. A positive correlation was predicted and found to exist between the number of role models (e.g., parents, peers, and other significant role models such as religious figures and siblings) with whom a college student discussed volunteering and the attitudes and behaviors that student reported regarding volunteerism. Implications from the study suggest that communication patterns are a worthy factor to investigate in relation to how young adults may be socialized to think about and become volunteers. This type of research is useful as it compliments the work of other disciplines that investigate volunteerism and community engagement, and highlights the essential need to better understand how what we say and do on a daily basis may influence those around us. Volunteers provide a substantial benefit to societies, and studies such as this one suggest there is much we have yet to learn regarding how communication may influence this significant group of people.
References


The Influence of Setting on Supreme Court Religious Expression Decisions

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ABSTRACT
The First Amendment prohibits any establishment of religion, a dicta that has been applied in an apparently inconsistent manner by the Supreme Court when called upon to evaluate various forms of verbal and nonverbal religious communication. Court decisions have approved religious prayers and displays in government settings. When such exercises and displays were introduced to the public school academic setting, the Court chose to disallow the practice. An examination of judicial opinions reveals that justices recognize three factors inherent to the academic setting which justify the apparently contradictory decisions. Because of the captive nature of the audience, the presence of peer pressure, and the unpredictability of pedagogical influences, the Supreme Court has significantly restricted religious communication in K-12 public schools.

During the latter half of the 18th century, relations between the American colonies and the English mother country deteriorated. Eventually, the colonists declared their independence, fought and won the Revolutionary War, and established a new government. The founding fathers authored and adopted the U.S. Constitution, a document that formed a democratic system of government. It was soon recognized, however, that the new system failed to provide and protect individual liberties. As a result of the efforts of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, this shortcoming was rectified in 1791 with the writing and ratification of the Bill of Rights. The First Amendment to the Bill states “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.” The First Amendment contains three clauses. The initial clauses (Establishment and Free Exercise) protect the freedom of religion while the final clause (Free Speech) guarantees freedom of expression.

On numerous occasions complaints regarding alleged violations of First Amendment rights reached the United States Supreme Court. Many related to religious matters. Questions arose as to whether public policies exceeded constitutional authority in establishing religious practices. Questions also were raised as to whether public policies interfered with the free
exercise of one’s religious beliefs. Not all First Amendment challenges focused on religious issues. Some involved free speech issues of dissent, fighting words, hate speech, and symbolic messages. Others treated free press issues such as news reporter’s privilege, copyright, obscenity, defamation, and invasion of privacy. Still others concerned the right to associate, petition, and demonstrate. Some litigation centered on claims of deceptive advertising. Recent cases dealt with the regulation of electronic media.

Some First Amendment cases involved a combination of religious and expression issues. These cases concerned verbal communication in the form of various prayers, nonverbal communication through the exhibition of the Nativity scene or a cross, and both verbal and nonverbal communication in the display of a monolith inscribed with the Ten Commandments. In resolving these religious communication issues, the Supreme Court rendered decisions that appear to be contradictory. The Court allowed religious prayer and religious displays in several cases involving governmental settings while restricting such practices in the K-12 public school setting. The apparent inconsistency has been recognized by legal scholars. Ashley Bell claims: “When questioning the Supreme Court’s modern Establishment Clause jurisprudence, critics consistently return to one theme – its lack of consistency” (1274). Likewise, Gary Gildin views religious expression jurisprudence as “no model of consistency” (469). Alexandra Furth notes that “the Court’s ambivalence about the appropriate role of religion in public life, as well as the proper means for analyzing such issues, has been apparent since its earliest decisions” (581). Finally, Scott Idleman observes that during recent years “the metaphorical wall of separation between church and state […] has clearly been construed to be less rigid or less insurmountable than certain prior cases had seemed to suggest” (2).

This article focuses on the Supreme Court religious expression cases and explores whether the uniqueness of the public school locus justifies these apparently contradictory decisions. It contains three sections: the first identifies decisions that involve religious expression in governmental settings, the second describes cases that treat religious expression in academic settings, and the final section explores reasons inherent to the public school environment that justify differing policies for the settings.

**Governmental Setting**

Six cases involving various forms of verbal and nonverbal communication comprise this category; one involved prayer in governmental chambers, two involved holiday seasonal displays, one involved display of a cross, and the others concerned display of the Ten Commandments. In each case, the religious practice or display involved a governmental setting.

**Marsh v. Chambers**, 463 U.S. 783, 1983, involved the practice of the Nebraska legislature to open each of its sessions with a prayer offered by a publicly-funded chaplain. Ernest Chambers, a tax-paying member of the Nebraska legislature, initiated legal action on the ground that prayer violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The Supreme Court, per Chief Justice Warren Burger, upheld the practice, noting that “the beginning of
sessions of legislative and other deliberative bodies with prayer is deeply embedded in the history and tradition of this country. From colonial times through the founding of the republic and ever since, the practice of legislative prayer has coexisted with the principles of disestablishment and religious freedom” (786). Burger stressed that offering prayer at the beginning of deliberative governmental sessions has become ingrained into the “fabric of our society.” Invoking Divine guidance at such gatherings is not “a step toward establishment,” but “simply a tolerable acknowledgement of beliefs widely held among the people of this country” (792).

Lynch v. Donnelly, 465 U.S. 668, 1984, concerned a popular nonverbal community religious display. Each year, the retail merchants’ association of Pawtucket, Rhode Island erected a display as part of its observance of the Christmas holiday season. The display, situated in the heart of the shopping district, comprised many figures associated with Christmas, including a Santa Claus house, reindeer pulling Santa’s sleigh, candy-striped poles, a decorated tree, carolers, colored lights, a banner that reads “SEASONS GREETINGS,” and a crèche representing the Nativity scene. Some Pawtucket residents started court action, challenging the city’s inclusion of the crèche in the display. The Supreme Court allowed the display. Justice John Stevens claimed that it had historical rather than religious significance.

It would be ironic [...] if the inclusion of a single symbol of a particular historic religious event, as part of a celebration acknowledged in the Western World for 20 centuries, and in this country by the people, by the Executive branch, by Congress, and the courts for 2 centuries, would so “taint” the city’s exhibit as to render it violative of the Establishment Clause. To forbid the use of this one passive symbol – the crèche – at the very time people are taking note of the season with Christmas hymns and carols in public schools and other public places, and while the Congress and legislatures open sessions with prayers by paid chaplains, would be a stilted overreaction contrary to our history and to our holdings (686).

In a concurring opinion, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor added:

Pawtucket did not intend to convey any message of endorsement of Christianity or disapproval of non-Christian religions. The evident purpose of including the crèche in the larger display was not promotion of the religious content of the crèche but celebration of the public holiday through its traditional symbols. Celebration of public holidays, which have cultural significance even if they also have religious aspects, is a legitimate secular purpose (691).

County of Allegheny v. American Civil Liberties Union, 492 U.S. 573, 1989, concerned two holiday displays located in downtown Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. County government permitted a Roman Catholic organization to display a crèche representing the nativity of Jesus on the staircase inside the county courthouse during the Christmas season. The county used the crèche display as the setting for its annual Christmas-carol program. Another display, outside an office building owned jointly by the city and county consisted of a 45-foot Christmas tree, an 18-foot menorah candelabrum associated with the Jewish holiday of Chanukah, and a sign bearing a
message that the city salutes liberty during the holiday season. The menorah was owned by a Jewish religious organization, but it was stored, erected, and removed by the city. The local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit to enjoin displaying the crèche and the menorah on the ground that such displays violated the establishment of religion clause. When the case reached the Supreme Court, the justices held that the crèche was displayed in a manner that violated the Establishment Clause because the county associated itself with the display in a way that endorsed a patently Christian message. Because the crèche stood alone as the single element of the display, was used as the setting for annual caroling, and occupied the “main” part of the building that is the seat of government, “the county sends an unmistakable message that it supports and promotes the Christian praise to God that is the creche’s religious message” (600). Regarding the second display, the Court held that the menorah was displayed in a manner that did not endorse religion but simply recognized both Chanukah and Christmas as part of the secular winter-holiday season. Although the menorah is a religious symbol, its message is not exclusively religious. The menorah is the primary symbol for a holiday that, like Christmas, has both religious and secular dimensions. Furthermore, the menorah stood next to a Christmas tree and a sign saluting liberty. The placement created an “overall holiday setting” that represents two holidays, not one. Justice Harry Blackmun, writing for the majority, indicated that:

the relevant question for Establishment Clause purposes is whether the combined display of the tree, the sign, and the menorah has the effect of endorsing both Christian and Jewish faiths, or rather simply recognized that both Christmas and Chanukah are part of the same winter-holiday season, which has attained a secular status in our society. Of the two interpretations of this particular display, the latter seems far more plausible (616).

Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board v. Pinette, 515 U.S. 753, 1995, involved the display of a cross on a state-owned plaza surrounding the statehouse in Columbus, Ohio. For more than a century, the plaza had been available for public addresses, festivals, and gatherings celebrating and advocating numerous causes. The case began when a local board rejected a request by the Ku Klux Klan to display a cross in the plaza during the Christmas holidays. The board claimed that the display would violate the Establishment Clause. The Supreme Court, in a plurality opinion prepared by Justice Antonin Scalia, noted that private religious speech was fully protected by the Free Speech Clause of the First Amendment. In addition, the right to use government property depended on whether the property had been given the status of a public forum. Scalia concluded: “Religious expression cannot violate the Establishment Clause where it (1) is purely private and (2) occurs in a traditional or designated public forum, publicly announced and open to all on equal terms. Those conditions are satisfied here, and therefore the State may not bar respondent’s [Ku Klux Klan] cross from Capitol Square” (770). Other justices concurred, offering a variety of reasons. According to Justice Clarence Thomas, “the erection of such a cross is a political act, not a Christian one” (770). Furthermore, “although the Klan may have sought to convey a message with some religious component, [. . . ] the Klan had a primarily nonreligious purpose in erecting the cross” (771). Justice O’Connor thought that “the reasonable
observer would view the Klan’s display fully aware that Capitol Square is a public space in which a multiplicity of groups, both secular and religious, engage in expressive conduct.” Accordingly, “the reasonable observer would not interpret the State’s tolerance of the Klan’s private religious display in Capital Square as an endorsement of religion” (782). Justice David Souter approved the display on the condition that the Klan provide a “disclaimer sufficiently large and clear to preclude any reasonable inference” that the cross represented governmental endorsement of religion (794).

Van Orden v. Perry, 545 U.S. 677, 2005, involved a display that surrounded the Texas State Capitol. A six-foot-high monolith inscribed with the Ten Commandments was among the 21 historical markers and 17 monuments that constituted the display. A citizen initiated court action, seeking a declaration that the display violated the Establishment Clause. The Supreme Court held that the monument did not violate the Clause because Texas had a secular rather than religious purpose. According to Chief Justice William Rehnquist,

Texas has treated her Capitol grounds monuments as representing several strands in the State’s political and legal history. The inclusion of the Ten Commandments monument in this group has a dual significance, partaking of both religion and government. We cannot say that Texas’ display of this monument violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment (691-692).

In a concurring opinion, Justice Scalia envisioned “nothing unconstitutional” when a State favors religion generally, honors God through public prayer, or venerates the Ten Commandments “in a nonproselytizing manner” (692). In another concurrence, Justice Thomas argued:

There is no question that, based on the original meaning of the Establishment Clause, the Ten Commandments display at issue here is constitutional. In no sense does Texas compel petitioner Van Orden to do anything. The only injury to him is that he takes offense at seeing the monument as he passes it on his way to the Texas Supreme Court Library. He need not stop to read it or even to look at it, let alone to express support for it or adopt the Commandments as guides for his life. The mere presence of the monument along his path involves no coercion and thus does not violate the Establishment Clause (694).

In yet another concurring opinion, Justice Stephen Breyer observed:

In certain contexts, a display of the tablets of the Ten Commandments can convey not simply a religious message but also a secular moral message (about proper standards of social conduct). And in certain contexts, a display of the tablets can also convey a historical message (about a historic relation between those standards and the law) – a fact that helps to explain the display of those tablets in dozens of courthouses throughout the Nation, including the Supreme Court of the United States. Here the tablets have been used as part of a display that communicates not simply a religious message, but a secular message as well. The circumstances surrounding the display’s placement on the capitol grounds and its physical setting suggest that the State […] intended […] nonreligious aspects of the tablets’ message to predominate. And the
monument’s 40-year history on the Texas state grounds indicates that that has been its effect (701).

McCreary County v. American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky, 545 U.S. 844, 2005, involved a similar display, but rendered a different result. The case involved two Kentucky counties that had erected in their courthouses large framed copies of the Ten Commandments. The American Civil Liberties Union initiated court action seeking an injunction against maintaining the displays. Soon thereafter, the counties expanded the displays, assembling with the Commandments framed copies of the Magna Carta, Declaration of Independence, Bill of Rights, Star Spangled Banner, Mayflower Compact, National Motto, Preamble to Kentucky Constitution, and a picture of Lady Justice. The collection was entitled “The Foundations of American Law and Government Display,” and each document was accompanied by a statement about its historical significance. The counties argued that the purpose of the displays was not religious but rather educational, informing citizens regarding some of the documents that played an influential role in the foundation of government. The Court found the purpose to be religious, not educational, because the displays lacked historical connection between the Commandments and the other documents. Furthermore, the Commandments are an active symbol of religion which clearly expresses the religious duties of believers. Justice Souter's majority opinion observed that the ceremony for posting the Commandments included a religious pastor who testified to the certainty of the existence of God. As a result, any “reasonable observer” would conclude that the counties “meant to emphasize and celebrate the Commandments’ religious message.” Souter concluded: “The point is simply that the original text viewed in its entirety is an unmistakably religious statement dealing with religious obligations and with morality subject to religious sanction. When the government initiates an effort to place this statement alone in public view, a religious object is unmistakable” (869). While McCreary and Van Orden seem contradictory, one factor explains the decisions. In McCreary, the Kentucky counties added the historical markers only after a legal threat had been introduced. In Van Orden, the State of Texas had for some time recognized the historical significance of the display.

Cases discussed in this section – Marsh, Lynch, County of Allegheny, Capitol Square, Van Orden, and McCreary – indicate that religious prayers and displays in governmental settings are constitutional under the First Amendment when they serve historical, cultural, or educational purposes. However, a display that carries a markedly religious purpose violates the Establishment Clause.

Academic Setting

In seven cases, the Court rejected a variety of forms of religious expression within the public school setting. Six of the cases concerned prayer connected with classroom or extracurricular school functions. The other case involved posting the Ten Commandments within the school. In each case, the religious practice or display involved an academic setting.
School prayer was the issue at stake in *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421, 1962. A group of parents initiated court action when the Board of Education required the following prayer, composed by the New York Board of Regents, to be said aloud at the beginning of every school day: “Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, and we beg Thy blessings upon us, our parents, our teachers, and our Country.” Writing for the majority, Justice Hugo Black noted that the practice violated the Establishment Clause. Black claimed: “There can [. . .] be no doubt that New York’s program of daily classroom invocation of God’s blessings [. . .] is a religious activity. It is a solemn avowal of divine faith and supplication for the blessings of the Almighty” (424). Furthermore, the practice “breaches the constitutional wall of separation between Church and State” (425). In a concurring opinion, Justice William Douglas pointed to the “divisive influence” of the practice and stressed the philosophical foundation behind the First Amendment: “The philosophy is that if government interferes in matters spiritual, it will be a divisive force. The First Amendment teaches that a government neutral in the field of religion better serves all religious interests (443).

The issue arose again in *School District of Abington Township v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203, 1963). The Court considered a Pennsylvania law which required high school students to hold religious exercises at the start of each day. Participation was voluntary; students could leave the room if they wanted, or they could remain in the room and not participate. The Schempp family, members of the Unitarian Church, argued that the exercise contradicted their religious beliefs. A companion case, *Murray v. Curlett*, involved a Baltimore Board of School Commissioner’s rule that religious services be held at the beginning of the school day. Madalyn Murray and her son, both atheists, argued that the exercise threatened their religious freedom “by placing a premium on belief as against nonbelief” and subjected their “freedom of conscience to the rule of the majority” (212). The Supreme Court, per Justice Tom Clark, recognized the activity as religious in nature.

The conclusion follows that in both cases the laws require religious exercise and such exercises are being conducted in direct violation of the rights of the appellees and petitioners. Nor are these required exercises mitigated by the fact that individual students may absent themselves upon parental request, for that fact furnishes no defense to a claim of unconstitutionality under the Establishment Clause (224-225).

In a concurring opinion, Justice Douglas acknowledged that, in these cases, there was no direct effort at establishment. He stressed, however, that even a minor violation of the First Amendment must be rejected. “What may not be done directly may not be done indirectly lest the Establishment Clause become a mockery” (230). Justice William Brennan agreed, noting that “interpretation of the Establishment Clause permits little doubt that its prohibition was designed comprehensively to prevent those official involvements of religion which would tend to foster or discourage religious worship or belief” (234).

The *Stone v. Graham*, 449 U.S. 39, 1980, case involved a Kentucky statute that required the posting of a copy of the Ten Commandments on the wall of each public school classroom.
The Superintendent of Public Instruction justified the posting on the ground that the purpose was secular rather than religious. The Supreme Court’s *per curiam* opinion disagreed.

The pre-eminent purpose for posting the Ten Commandments on schoolroom walls is plainly religious in nature. The Ten Commandments are undeniably a sacred text in the Jewish and Christian faiths, and no legislative recitation of a supposed secular purpose can blind us to that fact. The Commandments do not confine themselves to arguably secular matters such as honoring one’s parents, killing or murder, adultery, stealing, false witness, and covetousness. Rather, the first part of the Commandments concerns the religious duties of believers: worshipping the Lord God alone, avoiding idolatry, not using the Lord’s name in vain, and observing the Sabbath Day (41-42). The decision noted that the Ten Commandments were not integrated into the curriculum; posting of these texts on the wall served no educational purpose. Instead, if the posting had any effect “it will be to induce the schoolchildren to read, meditate upon, perhaps to venerate and obey, the Commandments.” The justices concluded that, while this result might be desirable, “it is not a permissible state objective under the Establishment Clause” (42).

Wallace v. Jaffree, 472 U.S. 38, 1985, began when a father of children enrolled in Alabama public schools sought an injunction against an Alabama statute which authorized public school teachers to hold a one-minute period of silence for “meditation or voluntary prayer” on each class day. The parent complained that his children had been subjected to “various acts of religious indoctrination” and were “exposed to ostracism from their peer group class members if they did not participate.” The Supreme Court, per Justice Stevens, held that the Alabama law “had no secular purpose” and thereby violated the Establishment Clause (56). Justice Lewis Powell likewise concluded that “Alabama’s purpose was solely religious in character” (65). And, Justice O’Connor found the law to be unconstitutional because “the purpose of the statute is to endorse prayer in public schools” (77).

Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577, 1992, began when principals in the Providence, Rhode Island public school system invited members of the clergy to offer invocation and benediction prayers as part of graduation ceremonies. The father of one of the graduates initiated court action, arguing that the practice violated the Establishment Clause. He noted that the Constitution guarantees that government may not coerce students to participate in activities which “establish” a religious faith, or “tend to do so.” Speaking for the Court, Justice Anthony Kennedy agreed. He found the government involvement with religious activity to be “pervasive, to the point of creating a state-sponsored and state-directed religious exercise in a public school.” Furthermore, “conducting this formal religious observance conflicts with settled rules pertaining to prayer exercises for students” (587). He concluded:

The sole question presented is whether a religious exercise may be conducted at a graduation ceremony in circumstances where [...] young graduates who object are induced to conform. No holding by this Court suggests that a school can persuade or compel a student to participate in a religious exercise. That is being done here, and it is forbidden by the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment (599).
Justice Blackmun’s concurrence provided a detailed examination of religious expression jurisprudence, after which he observed:

The Court holds that the graduation payer is unconstitutional because the State in effect required participation in a religious exercise. Although our precedents make clear that proof of government coercion is not necessary to prove an Establishment Clause violation, it is sufficient. Government pressure to participate in a religious activity is an obvious indication that the government is endorsing religion (604).

Justice Souter added his support to the decision: “When public school officials, armed with the State’s authority, convey an endorsement of religion to their students, they strike near the core of the Establishment Clause. However “ceremonial” their messages may be, they are flatly unconstitutional (631).

Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe, 530 U.S. 290, 2000, provided yet another decision that found religious rituals in public schools in violation of the Establishment Clause. Parents and students objected to a school district policy that allowed students to read Christian prayers and invocations at graduation ceremonies and home football games. The District argued that the student messages were “private student speech, not public speech.” The District stressed that there is a crucial difference between government speech which endorses religion, which the Establishment Clause forbids, and private speech which practices religion, which the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clauses protect. Writing for the Court, Justice Stevens disagreed, noting that the delivery of the type of messages involved in this case – on school property, at school-sponsored events, over the school’s public address system, by a speaker representing the student body, under the supervision of school faculty, pursuant to a school policy – is not properly characterized as “private speech” (302). According to Stevens, the policy is invalid because it “unquestionably has the purpose and creates the perception of encouraging the delivery of prayer at a series of important school events” (317).

In the cases explicated in this section – Engel, Schempp, Murray, Stone, Wallace, Lee, Santa Fe – the Court disallowed religious prayer and religious display in the academic setting. In each case, the justices determined that a religious purpose was central to the exercise or display.

**Justification of Apparent Contradictions**

The previous sections identify Supreme Court decisions that pertain to religious expression in governmental and academic settings. The decisions indicate that while the Court approved various forms of religious expression in the government setting, it rejected such forms of expression in the K-12 public school academic setting. The decisions appear to be contradictory. An examination of jurisprudential reasoning sheds light on apparent inconsistencies.

When the Supreme Court justices considered each of the cases, they examined the specific facts in light of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. In two cases involving the governmental setting, the justices found a violation of that principle. In County of Allegheny,
Justice Blackmun's majority opinion argued that the nativity crèche “promotes the Christian praise to God” (600). In *McCreary County*, Justice Souter's majority view argued that the manner in which the Ten Commandments were displayed constituted “a religious object” that was “unmistakable” (869). In these cases, the decisions were the product of reasoning from principle – religious expression which tended to establish religion had to be prohibited. In the majority of cases involving a governmental setting, however, justices cited circumstances which allowed various verbal and nonverbal forms of religious expression. In *Marsh*, Justice Burger contended that during the opening of legislative sessions, “prayer is deeply embedded in the history and tradition of this country” (786). In *Lynch*, Justice Stevens argued that the nativity scene has historical as well as religious significance (686). In *County of Allegheny*, Justice Blackmun claimed that the menorah display did not promote a single religion, but was part of an “overall holiday setting” (616). In *Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board*, Justice Thomas envisioned the Ku Klux Klan's cross as “a political act, not a Christian one” (771). And, Justice Rehnquist in *Van Orden* argued that the posting of the Ten Commandments had a secular rather than religious purpose (691-692). In the majority of religious expression cases that involved governmental settings, the justices argued that unique circumstances allowed various forms of religious expression. The line of argument was based on circumstantial exceptions to the Establishment principle.

In cases involving academic settings, the justices upheld the Establishment Clause principle but not necessarily because of the potential establishment of religion. Rather, the justices found causal factors inherent to the academic setting which justified upholding the principle: 1) captive audience, 2) peer pressure, and 3) pedagogical unpredictability. The justices argued that these factors produced potentially negative effects on the learning environment.

The first justification asserts the existence of a captive audience in the public school setting. Justice O’Connor, in her concurring opinion in *Wallace*, argued that kids are very impressionable and function as a captive audience. O’Connor claimed: “This Court’s decisions have recognized a distinction when government-sponsored religious exercises are directed at impressionable children who are required to attend school, for then government endorsement is much more likely to result in coerced religious beliefs”(81). Writing in *Lee*, Justice Souter realized the role of a captive audience. He noted that school officials requiring a prayer as part of the graduation exercise is similar to Presidential religious proclamations or other statements of support for religion in public life. However, prayer in such settings is “rarely noticed,” “conveyed over an impersonal medium,” “ignored without effort,” and “directed at no one in particular.” Souter went on to indicate that prayers under these conditions “inhabit a pallid zone worlds apart from official prayers delivered to a captive audience of public school students and their families” (630).

A second justification is the existence of peer pressure. Justice Kennedy acknowledged the “undeniable fact” that forces of supervision and control which operate at a high school graduation ceremony impose “peer pressure on attending students to stand as a group or, at least, maintain respectful silence during the invocation and benediction.” Kennedy pointed to
psychological research which documents that “adolescents are often susceptible to pressure from their peers towards conformity, and that the influence is strongest in matters of social convention” (Lee, 593). Justice Stevens cited factors in the school setting as contributing to the peer pressure. For example, in the Santa Fe case, the event resembled a regularly scheduled school-sponsored function – message broadcast over school’s public address system, cheerleaders and band members in uniforms sporting school name and mascot, school’s name on banners and flags, crowd displaying school colors and insignia. It is likely that under such influences observers would judge “messages as a public expression of the views of a majority of the student body delivered with the approval of the school administration (308).

A third justification envisions danger in the unpredictable nature of teachers. Justice O’Connor, in Jaffree, expressed concern that the coercive impact of the “moment of silence” would increase “if the teacher exhorts children to use the designated time to pray” (73). This concern was also noted by Chief Justice Burger in Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U.S. 602, 1971, a case which examined whether the religious clauses of the First Amendment were violated by state statutes which provided financial support to church-related schools. Burger warned:

We cannot [. . .] refuse here to recognize that teachers have a substantially different ideological character from books. In terms of potential for involving some aspect of faith or morals in secular subjects, a textbook’s content is ascertainable, but a teacher’s handling of a subject is not. We cannot ignore the danger that a teacher under religious control and discipline poses to the separation of the religious from the purely secular aspects of pre-college education. The conflict of functions inheres in the situation (617).

In Engel, Justice Douglas noted that the classroom teacher is a public official being funded by the public payroll, having responsibility for “performing a religious exercise in a governmental institution.” Douglas acknowledged that, in such instances, “it is said that the element of coercion is inherent in the giving of this prayer” (441-442).

This section reveals that justices cite three factors – captive audience, peer pressure, and pedagogical unpredictability – which contribute to the different decisions reached by the Supreme Court when judging forms of religious expression. These factors indicate that inherent differences in the governmental and academic settings provide reasonable accountability for the decisions.

Conclusion

The wording of the First Amendment clearly prohibits any establishment of religion or denial of the free exercise of one’s religious preference. That dicta has been applied in an apparently inconsistent manner by the Supreme Court. The Court has approved decisions involving religious prayers and displays in government settings. When such exercises and displays were introduced to the academic setting, the Court chose to disallow the practice. An examination of Court opinions reveals that justices recognize three factors inherent to the academic setting which justify disallowance of such practices. Because of the captive nature of
the audience, the presence of peer pressure, the unpredictability of pedagogical influences – the Supreme Court has significantly restricted forms of verbal and nonverbal religious communication in the public schools.

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Whistleblowers: Loyal Corporate Employee or Disloyal Employee?

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ABSTRACT
Whistleblowers have received much media attention and scrutiny during the last decade due to high-profile corporate scandals and reports of unlawful activities in government and private sector corporations. There is a changing trend in the perception of whistleblowers from troublemakers to loyal employee. Interviews, based on a FBI whistleblower case, were conducted with eight employees in a Fortune 200 company. Results of qualitative analysis and findings reported in this paper support the perception of whistleblowers as loyal employees who have a strong sense of right and wrong, and are committed to calling attention to wrongdoing. The solution proposed is a call for corporations to adopt effective policies and procedures for employees to disclose any improprieties or misconduct to maintain the integrity of the organization.

Introduction

On February 6, 2007, former FBI agent-turned-whistleblower Jane Turner, won her suit against the FBI. Despite her outstanding career and evaluations, the FBI declared her “unfit” in 2002 when she reported her concerns about the agency to authorities outside of the agency. Her decision to go outside the FBI with her complaints came after a long and discouraging battle to report malfeasance and wrong doings up the chain of command within her Minneapolis FBI office. The research in this paper reports the perceptions of management and contract employees of a Fortune 200 company who were asked their opinion of whistleblowers within the corporation in 2005, a year after Agent Turner’s case was made public, but long before she was exonerated in February 2007. The research addresses the question: What are the perceptions of employees at various levels in a large and profitable, yet politically dependent, corporation toward whistleblowers?

In researching the question on whether or not whistleblowers are loyal or disgruntled employees, their motivations may come into question. There are two types of whistleblowing disclosures: motivated and unmotivated. According to Poneman (1994), “Motivated communication means that the whistleblower will report wrongdoing for purposes of personal gain. Unmotivated communication means that the reason for whistleblowing is grounded solely
in an ethical conflict for the whistleblower” (p. 120). While this paper does not tackle whistleblower behaviors, motivation is a noteworthy factor to consider when trying to understand the perceptions of others toward the whistleblower.

This paper will attempt to suggest that there is a positive shift away from the perceptions of whistleblower as disgruntled or self-motivated communicator to the perception of whistleblowers as loyal employees. Researcher conclusion and recommendations calls for corporations to adopt a comprehensive Code of Business Conduct and effective policies and procedures for employees to freely disclose unethical behavior and Code violations.

**Literature Review**

According to Roberta Ann Johnson (2004), longtime whistle blowing researcher and professor, a whistleblower is a member or former member of an organization who exposes nontrivial wrongdoing and makes the information public.

**Disclosures: Unmotivated vs. Motivated**

Whistleblowing disclosures fall in two categories: unmotivated and motivated. “The likelihood of a true report of fraud is strictly higher when the report comes from an unmotivated, whistle-blowing source. The worst signal is generated when the report of fraud is false and the whistle-blowing source is motivated” (Poneman, 1994, p. 120).

Despite the generally accepted view of the societally positive motives of whistleblowers, some whistleblowers may be disgruntled, malicious employees who disclose misconduct for their own personal gain (Bather & Kelly, 2005). Some whistleblowers may be seeking financial rewards, obtained as a percentage of the return to victims for the fraudulent misconduct exposed (Johnson, 2003). An individual’s true motivation for blowing the whistle may be difficult to identify; a whistleblower may be driven by motives of retribution. Although whistleblowing is often associated with good citizenship, this link may not be recognized within many organizations (Bather & Kelly, 2005).

**Whistleblower Checklist**

Johnson (2003) provides ethicist Sissela Bok’s “Whistleblower Checklist” of questions to evaluate the basis of their decisions.

**Dissent:** When whistleblowers claim their dissent will achieve a public good:

*What is the nature of the promised benefit?*
*How accurate are the facts?*
*How serious is the impropriety?*
*How imminent is the threat?*
*How closely linked to the wrongdoing are those accused?*
**Loyalty:** When whistleblowers breach loyalty to their organization:

*Is the whistleblowing the last and only alternative?*

*Is there no time to use routine channels?*

*Are internal channels corrupted?*

*Are there no internal channels?*

**Accusation:** When whistleblowers are publicly accusing others:

*Are accusations fair?*

*Does the public have a right to know?*

*Is the whistleblower not anonymous?*

*Are the motives not self-serving?*

For some whistleblowers, their felt loyalty to principle and their commitment to preventing harm so outweighed for them all other factors that there was no deciding. The decision was made. It is what C. Fred Alford (2001) calls a ‘choice less choice’ (p. 40). To believe that whistleblowers make their decisions to expose wrongdoing on an entirely rational basis misrepresents the important ingredient of emotion that all may share (Johnson, 2003).

Former Minneapolis FBI attorney, Coleen Rowley, firmly contends that when deciding to blow the whistle, motivation should not be a factor. In a speech given in an Advanced Organizational Communications course at Metropolitan State University, Rowley (personal communication, October, 2003) stated, “Only when the subject is significant, you know you are right and being 100% truthful, and you’re not the least bit personally motivated.”

The facts of the situation will determine if the allegations are well founded and there is no personal agenda. Tom Greene, who represented Pfizer whistleblower, David Franklin, who was awarded a $27 million dollar settlement, contends that private lawyers need to assess which cases to accept. “A whistleblower may have some baggage, but that doesn’t mean you disbelieve what he says. You want to develop evidence to corroborate independently what he or she is reporting to you” (O’Donnell, 2004, p. 2). Louis Clark, head of the Government Accountability Project, believes credibility is also an important factor. “Our credibility as an organization rises and falls with the people we choose to represent” (O’Donnell, 2004, p. 2).

A loyalty conflict is the dominating feature of whistleblowing (Bather & Kelly, 2005). When employees go outside the chain of command and go public on wrongdoing, they are perceived to be either loyal employees or disloyal, disgruntled employees.

“When allegations prove true, the whistleblower is hailed as a hero, and sometimes richly rewarded. However, without such vindication, whistleblowers come across as irresponsible “snitches” who value personal aggrandizement over team-playing” (Clark, 1997, p. 2).
**Disloyal Employee**

Whistleblowers have historically been at risk of being labeled troublemakers (Brickey, 2003). Some whistleblowers may be disgruntled, malevolent employees who disclose misconduct for their own personal gain (Bather & Kelly, 2005). The motivation of the whistleblower has important implications (Poneman, 1994). If an offense is being committed within an organization without the knowledge of senior management, then senior managers can be made recipients of the whistleblower’s disclosures. However, the whistleblower must be aware that they are being disloyal to colleagues and that the senior managers may recognize the disloyalty as a greater offense than the behavior being complained of (Seebauer, 2004, cited in Bather & Kelly, 2005).

Ethan Posner, a former deputy associated attorney general, who now defends companies against whistleblower suits, asserts that “Many whistleblower cases involve employees who have had disciplinary problems or hold grudges against employers” (O’Donnell, 2004, p. 2). Arbitrators have tended to agree with employers that whistleblowing is an act of disloyalty which disrupts business and injures the employer’s reputation (James, 1990, cited in Hoffmann et al., p. 292; Bather & Kelly, 2005).

**Loyal Employee**

Most whistleblowers are among the best employees in the organization (David, 2005, cited in Benson & Ross, 1998). Evidence indicates that whistleblowers are highly altruistic (David, 2005, cited in Singer & Turner, 1998). Whistleblowers often describe themselves as members who initiated whistleblowing because of their loyalty to the organization (Baker, 1983, cited in Miceli & Near, 1992). Whistleblowers are perceived as having the organization’s long term interests at heart (Street, 1995, cited in Bather & Kelly, 2005). Loyal, long-term members of organizations may be more likely to blow the whistle than to remain silent (Kolarska & Aldrich, 1980, Hirschman, 1970, cited in Miceli & Near, 1992). Many whistleblowers have been on the job for years, are highly respected and are considered by their managers to be successful and loyal employees (David, 2005, cited in Glazer et. al., 1994).

Whistleblowers are among the unsung heroes who are making a difference in our lives every day (Redford, 2005). They should be hailed as major heroes of democracy (Bennett, 1997). As a nation, we ought to be thankful for the courage of unsung heroes who have sacrificed much to protect society. We owe a great debt of gratitude to whistleblowers that have saved us from environmental hazards such as toxins that are carelessly dumped into lakes and streams (Cherrington, 2002). Ethics business professor, Marc Lampe, stated, “It takes an act of courage for people to stand up like this” (Kinsman, 2003, p. 1). Whistleblowers become heroes of conscious because they believe in honesty as the most basic moral precept (Bennett, 1997). Through the years we have used the term ‘whistleblower’ pejoratively, but whistleblowers have a
very important function. Speaking up when you witness wrongdoing is a vital issue in today’s corporate world (Kinsman, 2003).

*Time* magazine named Coleen Rowley (FBI), Sherron Watkins (Enron) and Cynthia Cooper (WorldCom) as Persons of the Year 2002. “They were people who did right by just doing their jobs rightly – which means ferociously, with eyes open and with the bravery the rest of us always hope we have and may never know if we do” (Lacayo & Ripley, 2002, p. 24).

Martin Andersen, Director for the Government Accountability Project, hailed Coleen Rowley as a hero. “Often whistleblowers are painted as crackpots with an ax to grind, but the strong, professional way in which Rowley testified reflected the best qualities of the FBI” (Chanen & Furst, 2002, p. 2). Stephen Meagher, former federal prosecutor who represents whistleblowers, commented that “whistleblowers have been recast from crackpots to national champions” (Dwyer & Carney, 2002, p. 2). Internal whistleblowers have shown that they are team players and want to improve the organization they work for (Alford, 2004).

**Changing Trend in Perceptions**

In recent decades, the general public increasingly began to see whistleblowers as heroes instead of pariahs (Johnson, 2004). There is a growing trend that whistleblowers are heroes (Fairbank, 2002). Johnson places whistleblowing in its historical context, explaining how changing cultural values have placed importance on whistleblowing as a form of public service and safety, rather than as a full individual act (Johnson, 2003). The age of whistleblowers is a new corporate culture in which ‘informants’ are more likely to be valued than harassed (Verschoor, 2005). Whistleblowers that might have once been viewed as “snitches” are now perceived as performing a civic duty (Johnson, 2003).

A survey published by *Time* magazine provides insight on the perception of whistleblowers. Six out of 10 Americans view whistleblowers as heroes, while fewer than two out of 10 view them as traitors. Noteworthy is that almost three-fourths of American’s polled said they would become whistleblowers if they were to become aware of serious criminal abuses at work (Europe Intelligence Wire, 2002). With the greater respect afforded whistleblowers, more people are willing to speak out (Fairbank, 2002). It is clear that for Americans, whistleblowing is a part of the cultural landscape. The most significant pattern related to whistleblowing is that it is on the increase (Johnson, 2003).

**Whistleblower Support and Protection**

The types of hardships experienced by whistleblowers in the past are decreasing as support for these heroic people increases (Bennett, 1997). Media attention, helpful organizations, and interested legislatures create an environment supportive of whistleblowers (Johnson, 2004). The Government Accountability Project (GAP) provides legal support defending whistleblowers against reprisals and assists them in pursuing their dissent more
effectively. The Cavallo Foundation rewards acts of moral courage in business and government (Bennett, 1997).

The landmark Sarbanes-Oxley Act gives those who report corporate misconduct sweeping legal protection (Dwyer & Carney, 2004). There are a considerable number of additional federal and state statutes that protect whistleblowers in a variety of circumstances (Verschoor, 2005). An executive who retaliates against a corporate whistleblower can be held criminally liable and imprisoned for up to 10 years. Fired workers who feel their cases are moving too slowly can request a federal jury trial after six months (Dwyer & Carney, 2004). Adopting user-friendly whistleblower protections could open new lines of communication and new conversations about the mission and operation of the organization (Johnson, 2004).

**Effective Internal Processes**

Companies must rethink how they deal with whistleblowers and revisit a wide range of policies (Dwyer & Carney, 2002). Corporate level executives and the board must adopt core values or ethical guidelines and put them into practice (Verschoor, 2005). Official company policies are an important way of telling employees exactly how the company stands on a given matter (David, 2005). An effective policy can serve as an instrument of reform, giving an organization a chance to correct any impropriety before it becomes public knowledge (Bather & Kelly, 2005). The importance of providing adequate responses to internal complaints must be recognized as a key factor in avoiding external reporting (Miceli & Near, 1994, cited in Bather & Kelly 2005). Organizations must ensure that the policies are formalized, communicated widely and always followed in a consistent manner (Bather & Kelly, 2005).

C. Fred Alford (2004) contends that corporate policies and procedures rule. The organization that responds effectively to whistleblowers in effect has no whistleblowers. The most ethical organizations are likely to be the most invisible, at least as far as whistleblowing is concerned. “Whistleblowing occurs when the organization fails to listen” (Alford, 2004, p. 3).

**Method**

To gain additional information and insights on the current perception of whistleblowers, qualitative research and analysis was determined to be the most appropriate method. Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted at a Fortune 200 company in Minnesota.

**Participants and Process**

A stratified cross-sample of four management and four contract employees from various divisions within the organization volunteered to participate. Years of service ranged from 11 to 24 years. Volunteers were asked to read a *City Pages* article about former FBI Agent Jane Turner that blew the whistle on FBI agents due to malfeasance in the handling of numerous cases
(see Appendix A). Participants were interviewed separately to prevent having their opinions influenced by other participants and to ensure confidentiality. To ensure reliable reporting of subject responses, all participants agreed to tape-recorded interviews. Nine open-ended questions were asked to gain additional information on the perception of whistleblowers (see Appendix B).

**Results**

Qualitative measures enhance our insight into the perception of participants. Content analysis of respondents’ answers to interview questions illuminated three central themes: (1) The failure of organization’s to respond seems a likely reason whistleblowers must act outside normal corporate procedures, (2) employee responsibility to “do the right thing” seems to be what these interviewed employees believe motivates a whistleblower and (3) loyal employees and their loyalty to the organization is what drives a whistleblower to act, even when it means harm to themselves in terms of their position, career and even retirement.

**The Failure of Organizations to Respond**

The literature cited in this paper points to the basic premise that the act whistleblowing occurs when organizations fail to respond to internal reports of wrongdoing. Respondents clearly recognized the FBI’s lack of response to Agent Turner’s reports of malfeasance and investigative failures. All respondents voiced their disappointment that a government agency such as the FBI, whose basic foundation is to protect the people of the United States and investigate wrongdoing, would not fix the offenses that were reported. The FBI lost sight of the very reason they are in existence. Respondents believed Turner was credible and exhibited due diligence throughout her career. She upheld the high standards of the FBI in bringing forward supportive evidence to the right individuals within the organization. She followed the chain of command and was justified in her efforts to seek an acceptable response.

Participants did not view the act of providing meaningful information for an organization to address as whistleblowing. One employee commented, “Why would they consider it whistleblowing when that was part of her job?” Employees have an obligation to report wrongdoing and organizations have an obligation and responsibility to investigate further, to either confirm it or disprove it. It is something that is owed to the individual reporting it as well as to the organization in general. The FBI should have acted upon the information as opposed to “shoving it under the rug” and going down the road of retaliation.

**Employee Responsibility to “Do the Right Thing”**

Overall consensus was that Agent Turner was motivated to “do the right thing” to protect the children on the reservation and to uphold the integrity of the investigation related to stolen artifacts from Ground Zero. Turner’s core values were reflected her in steadfast commitment to
do what was right. Participants stated that Turner was ethical, honest, and had strong moral beliefs. She knew the truth and it was her responsibility and moral obligation to “do the right thing”. Everyone expressed respect and admiration for her in upholding these principles. Each person truly put themselves in her shoes as a tenured, loyal employee who was trying to do what was right.

**Loyal Employees and Their Loyalty to the Organization**

My respondents felt, unanimously, that Agent Turner has all the qualities of a loyal employee and this directly reflects what is reported in the literature cited in this paper. All respondents answered affirmatively that they believed Agent Turner was a loyal, long-term employee who was dedicated to the organization. Several participants suggested that Turner could have gone to the media, but as a loyal employee, she chose to communicate within the organization. Turner was determined to maintain the integrity of the FBI.

When asked whether they viewed whistleblowers as loyal or disloyal employees, all participants responded with remarks such as “that’s a tough one,” “it could be a combination,” and “it depends on what motivates them.” Consistent with the literature on motivated disclosures, it was the sentiment of respondents that some whistleblowers can also be perceived as disloyal employees. An example would be an employee who is a poor performer and is about to be terminated. Such an employee may go to the media to report alleged wrongdoing. The assertion is that the employee is motivated by retribution and/or personal gain. All respondents generally believe whistleblowers are loyal employees who make the decision to disclose information for internal investigation by the organization.

**Discussion**

The qualitative research approach proved to be an effective method in gaining insight on the participants’ perceptions. This was very important for the study as the rich textual information was far more meaningful than quantitative research could have revealed.

This research is based on long-term employees in one organization reflecting on the news coverage of former FBI Agent Jane Turner, turned whistleblower. The researcher chose this whistleblower case because it occurred in Minnesota where the organizational interviews occurred. Interestingly, however, only one respondent recalled hearing “something” about the case but did not recall any specific information. All other participants had no former knowledge about the case.

Some of the questions asked were rather pointed and could have been structured differently. Despite this shortcoming, the researcher believes the questions stimulated responses and dialogue that would garner similar results with less directed structuring.

These results confirm the importance of internal processes for employees to report wrongdoing. The Code of Conduct is an organization’s stated commitment of behavior
expectations for all employees and external agents and stakeholders. Employees at all levels of the organization have a personal responsibility to abide by the Code of Conduct. Employees reporting good faith concerns should be protected in this communication process with assured confidentiality and anonymity. All reports should be taken seriously and vigorously investigated. An effective policy provides the company an opportunity to take corrective action when the facts of the situation are well founded and there is no personal agenda. Results of the study and literature revealed management responsiveness to internal disclosures of wrongdoing is crucial to this process. Without some mechanism to assure a path to an official and powerful ear, the organization will suffer. The organization’s culture and processes will best guide the appropriate path creation and “ear” (i.e. department such as Legal or H.R.) Technologies within organizations should be making this process easier to facilitate if it truly is a priority for the organization. Respondents felt their own organization had accomplished this well.

Results of this study also support the idea that generally people want to do what is right. This is similarly reported in the literature. Since the high-profile corporate scandals, there has been a marked increase in whistleblowing disclosures that suggests a “do the right thing” culture that is founded on moral and ethical obligations to bring about change. Organizations can learn from the mistakes of fallen corporations. The time is ripe for fostering a collaborative atmosphere that builds trust, honesty and integrity at all levels of the organization.

This study suggests there is a change in the perception of whistleblowers. There is a positive shift away from the perceptions of whistleblower as disgruntled or self-motivated communicator to the perception of whistleblowers as loyal employees. There were no differences in viewpoints between management and contract employees. All participants were supportive of whistleblowers and viewed Agent Turner a loyal employee who was loyal to the FBI in wanting to maintain the integrity of organization.

The National Whistleblower Center began a “Jane Turner Legal Defense Fund.” The million dollar question is: Why did the FBI go at great lengths to discredit Agent Turner which ultimately led to her termination? The Senate Judiciary Committee and the Justice Department Inspector General are reviewing Agent Turner’s complaint against the FBI.

Outcome of Turner Lawsuit against FBI

Former FBI Agent, Jane Turner, won her federal lawsuit against the FBI on February 6, 2007. Jurors awarded Turner $565,000 in damages for lost wages, emotional distress, loss of reputation and similar injuries. Jurors found the FBI had retaliated against her for filing a 1998 sex-discrimination complaint. Juror comments mirror the sentiments and comments made by respondents that participated in this research. “I think you were the very best FBI Agent,” juror Mashima Dickens told Turner. “Looking at the way you were treated, I just said you were screwed left and right,” Dickens said, tears rolling down her cheeks. Juror Renee Anderle hugged Turner in the hallway outside the courtroom in Minneapolis: “I just want to tell you I have nothing but the utmost respect for you” (Browning, 2007, p. 1).
Judge Rosenbaum will reduce the non-wage damages to the statutory limit of $300,000. Turner’s attorneys plan to file for compensation. Her complaint against the FBI relating to memorabilia taken from Ground Zero after the September 11 attack is still pending with the U.S. Inspector General’s Office.

**Future Directions**

Whistleblowing has become a phenomenon that has resulted in countless articles from various disciplines. Although much has been written about whistleblowers, I would like to see more research and studies on the changing attitudes of corporate USA toward whistleblowing. Perhaps this study can be a stepping stone as an approach to studying and documenting the changing attitudes and positive shift in the perception of whistleblowers.

**Conclusion**

In an era where many people have lost faith in leaders of organizations, the important role of whistleblowers has become increasingly evident. High-profile corporate scandals (Enron and WorldCom) brought heightened public awareness, scrutiny and disenchantment of unethical leaders and practices of wrongdoing. There is a resurgence of a “do the right thing” culture where employees are ethically duty-bound to disclose misconduct. In recognition of this wave of accountability, it is incumbent upon corporations to adopt policies and procedures for employees to freely disclose unethical behavior. Effective policies and management responsiveness is paramount in creating a culture that values ethical behavior, honesty and integrity.

The changing trend in the perception of whistleblowers as loyal employees has not gone unnoticed. Results of this study and research compiled in the literature suggest that there positive shift away from the perceptions of whistleblower as disgruntled or self-motivated communicator to the perception of whistleblowers as loyal employees.

**References**


Appendix A

Below is a brief excerpt from the October 6, 2004, City Pages article to provide background information about former FBI Agent Jane Turner’s case:

**Special Agent Jane Turner vs. the FBI: The Making of a Whistleblower**

When Jane Turner left the building on her last day of active duty at the FBI--November 21, 2002--it was the end of a distinguished 24-year career in which Turner went places that few, if any, women in the Bureau had gone before her.

For more than four years, Turner had waged a quiet and increasingly isolated battle to address what she saw as troubles at the FBI, ranging from job discrimination toward female agents to malfeasance in the handling of numerous cases. She came to take a special interest in child sex abuse cases on North Dakota Indian reservations, which arose with distressing frequency and rarely got investigated.

Turner complained repeatedly to her bosses about these lapses, and about other alleged misconduct by her fellow agents. She had taken her complaints, and the corresponding evidence, up the chain of command all the way to then-Director Louis Freeh's office. In response the Bureau waged a campaign to undermine her reputation, suppress evidence of its own wrongdoing, and drive her out.
Appendix B

Research Questions

RQ1: What are your first impressions about Jane Turner after reading the City Pages article?
RQ2: What do you think about the FBI’s response to Jane’s reports?
RQ3: How well justified do you feel Jane was in blowing the whistle?
RQ4: What alternative actions could she have taken?
RQ5: How credible do you feel Jane is?
RQ6: What do you feel motivated Jane to take action?
RQ7: In what ways do you consider Jane Turner to be a loyal or disloyal FBI employee?
RQ8: What is your perception of whistleblowers in general? Do you generally think they are loyal or disgruntled employees?
RQ9: If a similar scenario happened in the corporate world instead of a government agency, how would you feel differently about it?

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Infusing Critical Thinking into Communication Courses

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ABSTRACT
The importance of critical thinking is generally recognized by educators and during the past 20 years numerous initiatives have been taken to improve critical thinking. Although research demonstrates courses in communication study can have a positive impact on critical thinking skills, we argue that instruction in critical thinking can be more explicitly covered in basic communication courses. This article details our efforts to infuse critical thinking into an entry-level communication course and outlines a guide to help communication teachers integrate critical thinking into their courses.

Introduction

The importance of critical thinking is categorically accepted and its value universally recognized. Willingham (2007) noted, however, that while “everyone would agree” (p. 8) that critical thinking is “a primary goal of education” (p. 12) nearly 20 years of “initiatives designed to encourage educators to teach critical thinking…today we still lament students’ lack of critical thinking” (p. 8). Courses in communication have been one of the few bright spots in those initiatives. According to Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, and Louden (1999), meta-analysis of studies of critical thinking, found that explicit education in communication may enhance critical thinking by up to 44 percent. Given the importance of critical thinking and the significance of Allen et al.’s findings, our goal is to demonstrate how critical thinking concepts and strategies may be incorporated throughout a communication studies curriculum in order to further enhance the value of communication courses. We believe the infusion of critical thinking can have a significant impact on excellence in undergraduate education.
Definition

We utilize a definition of critical thinking offered by Scriven and Paul (2004): “Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action” (n.p.; emphasis added). The definition is appropriate and useful as it directly addresses the intrinsic link between communication and critical thinking.

Program Development

As noted above by Allen et al. (1999), communication is critical for advancing critical thinking. Therefore, all aspects of speech communication have the potential for incorporating and applying critical thinking. Instead of developing a stand-alone unit on critical thinking, our agenda was to incorporate critical thinking pedagogy throughout the entire semester coursework. We specifically focused our efforts on critical thinking implementation in an entry-level hybrid speech communication courses, SPEE 100: Fundamentals of Speech Communication. At our institution, Minnesota State University, Mankato, the introductory course is taught using a large-lecture with recitation sections. The large lecture addresses interpersonal communication theory, emphasizing how we perceive, understand, and make use of various communicative strategies. Public speaking, small group dynamics and other applications of communication skills are developed in the recitation sections. This course was selected because of the large number of students the course reaches (up to 750 students per semester) and because this course is, for many students, the only communication course they will take in their college careers. We believed this course was the ideal format to reach the greatest number of students.

While one of the sessions in the large lecture addresses the principles of critical thinking, most of the lectures ask students to move beyond memorizing definitions to applying the theory in more critical ways. For example, the lecture covering the perception process also addresses the various cultural factors which impact and influence their interpretation of certain situations.

The large lecture is taught by a faculty member in the department and graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) handle the recitation sections. Our department offers 25 sections of SPEE 100 each semester and we knew we wanted continuity across all sections. Therefore, in order to ensure that critical thinking concepts were infused throughout the course, we developed a training program and an assessment rubric for our GTAs to employ in their recitation sections. We believe that in order to fully exploit the intrinsic link between communication and critical thinking we must teach the teachers to not only think critically themselves but to put critical thinking at the forefront of their teaching.

The primary component of the training program is a matrix—The Guide to Assessing Critical Thinking—which we developed to help GTAs assess the level of critical thinking on
speeches and written assignments. Adapted from the “Universal Intellectual Standards” articulated by Richard Paul and Linda Elders (2006) in *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools* and the matrix format developed by Washington State University’s *Guide to Rating Critical & Integrative Thinking*, our guide can be used to assess both oral and written communication. The GTAs use the guide to train students in composing speeches and to grade assignments in SPEE 100. *See Appendix A to view the Guide to Assessing Critical Thinking*.

The SPEE 100 course in which we implemented our program is a hybrid course wherein students are instructed in many facets of communication theory including public speaking, interpersonal, nonverbal, listening, intercultural, conflict, and group communication processes. Because the guide for critical thinking was developed in this context, we believe that the guide has broad applicability and that it would be suitable not just in this communication course but in virtually any introductory communication course, including written composition courses, at both the high school and collegiate level.

**The Eight Criteria of the Critical Thinking Matrix**

We have specified eight criteria for evaluating critical thinking in either speeches or written texts: purpose, thesis, information, concepts, assumptions, inference, point of view, and implications. These eight criteria can be used by students and teachers in a number of ways including evaluating sources such as magazine or newspaper articles, assessing one’s own composition prior to submission and grading of submitted work.

**Criterion One: Purpose**

Deliberate communication, such as a composed speech or essay, does not take place without motives. What does the speaker want to accomplish? What does the speaker hope to achieve?

Unless we, the audience, determine a speaker’s motives in producing a speech, we cannot properly assess it. We suggest students consider the difference between editorials and advertising campaigns. While the purpose of the author of an editorial might intend to persuade readers relative to a particular position, an advertiser’s purpose is to sell a product. Students are encouraged to consider how these differences impact their interpretation of a text. Our ability to interpret and evaluate a text is severely limited if we don’t consider purpose. As they write speeches, we urge students to reflect on steps they have taken to ensure that their purpose is clear and intelligible to their audience.
Criterion Two: Thesis

A thesis is the primary claim a speaker is attempting to demonstrate to the audience. A thesis is the heart of any composition and consists of a single, clear, declarative sentence. Speakers will often clearly articulate their thesis statements. Other times the thesis is implied which can make the process of identifying the thesis more difficult but no less important. In order to identify a thesis, a critical thinker should consider each of the parts of the composition. The entire composition should support a single claim. The thesis should clearly relate to the speaker’s purpose. For example, if a speaker is interested in the environment and wants to give an audience ways to conserve energy, she might write a presentation with the thesis “you should turn off all electronic devices when not in use.” Students should be able to identify the thesis of texts they read. In composing speeches, students should be able to clearly articulate their thesis statements.

Criterion Three: Information

Information, along with concepts and assumptions (the fourth and fifth criteria) is one of the building blocks critical thinkers use to reach conclusions, make decisions, and solve problems. Information is of the starting point for critical thinking and critical thinking depends on good information. If your facts are wrong, your reasoning cannot produce true conclusions, good decision or viable solutions. The ability to evaluate information and assess its quality depends on the nature of the information, which may come in many forms.

The basic types of information are examples, witness testimony, and expert opinion. Examples are best used to clarify or demonstrate. The key word to identify an example is “like.” When we are using examples we are saying, “This phenomenon that is unknown to you is like another phenomenon that is known to you” or “This complex phenomenon which is difficult to understand is like this less complex phenomenon which is easier to understand.” Testimony is the offering of details, facts, and descriptions that the audience has not experienced firsthand. Even for those who have had similar experiences, testimony provides an alternate perspective on those experiences. Testimony allows the audience to have the experience through a witness (i.e., one who testifies). Expert opinion (sometimes called “authority”), while it is often confused with testimony, differs in some very important ways. A person becomes a witness by virtue of experience. A person becomes an expert by virtue of training or education. For example, if a person were to speak on the effects of smoking, the person might be a witness by virtue of being near someone who smoked and thus having had firsthand experience of the effects of smoking. A medical doctor who speaks on the effects of smoking, on the other hand, is an expert with a different kind of knowledge, one learned by study and training in the heath of the human body.

Ethical speakers make it possible for audiences to think critically about the information they used. Good information is verifiable in the sense that (the audience may check on the accuracy of the information independent of the speaker) and credible (the source of the
information can be trusted). In evaluating sources like magazine articles and websites, students are encouraged to consider the information writers use and whether or not the writer has made it possible for readers to evaluate the source of that information. Similarly, when composing speeches, students are reminded to take steps to permit audience members to critically reflect upon and evaluate the information used.

**Criterion Four: Concepts**

Concepts help form the basis for reasoning. For example, before we can claim, “Scott Peterson murdered his wife, Lacy” we must know what it means to murder someone. How is murder distinct from other forms of homicide such as manslaughter? This is particularly important when our concepts are hard to define, and when speakers call upon audiences to make value judgments. If a speaker argues, for example, that the death penalty is wrong and should be abolished, he or she will need to be sure to define what is meant by “wrong.”

Teachers of critical thinking and logic have long recognized equivocation (using a word in two or more different ways) and ambiguity (using words in ways that permit multiple meanings) as fallacies. Critical speakers should clearly define important terms and concepts. Weaver (1967) pointed out that the word “define” comes from the Latin finire with means “to limit or set bounds” and we can think of defining as building “a fence around whatever is being defined, which separates it from everything else” (p. 25). This fence gives a speech clarity and avoids confusion (unintentional) or misleading (intentional) arguments.

**Criterion Five: Assumptions**

There is an old adage about assumptions: that when you use them you make an “ass out of you and me.” A humorous play on words to be sure but the implications expressed are misleading. Assumptions are dangerous because they influence our perception and because they are all too often unspoken and unexamined. They are also inevitable. No speech can begin with a history of the world and a philosophy of everything. Speakers have to start somewhere and that means they will, inevitably, leave something out. Behind every assumption, there lies another assumption. Our goal, then is not, as the saying suggests, to eliminate assumptions but rather to understand their impact to prevent unwarranted assumptions whenever possible.

The examination of our assumptions is a hard practice to implement and a difficult habit to develop. Our approach to developing this aspect of critical thinking begins with the position taken by Therborn (1980), that each of us has a set of assumptions about the world in which we live and that these assumptions are essential because without them we would be unable to function. Our assumptions tell us what we can expect; they orient us and help us to fill in the blanks in a world where all of our knowledge is partial. Therborn identified three foundational assumptions:
Critical speakers consider their assumptions before they begin composing a speech. These three questions serve as a starting point from which students can begin to examine their assumptions about the world in order to determine whether or not the assumptions they are making are reasonable and whether or not it is reasonable to expect the audience to make the same assumptions. Moreover, as part of their critical evaluation of information, students are encouraged to ask the same questions with regard to the sources of information they read. Finally, as part of becoming critical speakers students are challenged to develop strategies to make their assumptions known to their audience. Where something is assumed—rather than known or demonstrated to be true—the critical speakers give the audience the same opportunity they had to examine those assumptions and chose whether or not to accept them.

**Criterion Six: Inference**

Inference is perhaps the most difficult and complex aspect of critical thinking. Philosophers and logicians have discussed this issue for centuries and there is still disagreement about what constitutes valid inference (sometimes called “derivation”), and how best to instruct students in the principles of its proper function. Critical thinking begins with credible information and clearly defined concepts, and reasonable assumptions. Inference is how we move from the information, concepts, and assumptions to valid conclusions. There are two ways in which this is done: deduction and induction. We find the distinction between the two is especially relevant for students as they develop their critical thinking skills.

Deduction is also sometimes called formal logic and it is the form of inference wherein if the premises are true the conclusion must be true. Deduction takes the form of a three-part structure called a *syllogism*:

<table>
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<th>Premise:</th>
<th>If A is the same as B, and</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Premise:</td>
<td>If B is the same as C, then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion:</td>
<td>Then A is the same as C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The strength of such reasoning is that, if we start with premises that are true, our conclusions will also be true. We encourage students to think of deductive reasoning like mathematics and, in fact, much of the advanced work in deductive reasoning involves the use of symbols rather than language because symbols permit invariance in meaning and a definitiveness of quality that is not possible in language. Although language is symbolic, “there are numberless gradations of meaning, of relationship, and of tone which must be taken into account” (Weaver, 1967, p. x).

This, unfortunately, results in a dilemma for if given premises which are true deduction can guarantee true conclusions but only if there is certainty with respect to the premises and only if there is an absolute precision in the use of language. The practical application of deductive inference is thus limited. Students are instructed to use deduction only when the concepts
involved are clear and precise and when they are certain of the accuracy of the information they are using. For example, students might argue deductively:

Premise: No form of punishment is justified if it cannot be applied fairly
Premise: It is impossible to apply the death penalty fairly
Conclusion: The death penalty is not justified.

Although the deductive inference is sound, students must be able to identify the weak points in their argument that deduction cannot remedy: whether or not the first premise is a reasonable assumption and whether or not the second premise is supported by good information.

The other form of inference, induction, is the form of logical reasoning wherein if the premises are true the conclusion is probably, but never certainly, true. Although incapable of producing certainty, induction is much more broadly applicable than deduction and if deduction is like mathematics, induction is the form of inference more closely related to science. Induction permits us to move from limited data to general claims or propositions.

For example, to continue the line of argument initiated above, let us suppose that a student claims that the death penalty is inherently unfair in its application. The student might consider the statistics relative to the application of the death penalty and argue that because the people of color and the poor are much more likely to receive the death penalty than whites and the wealthy, that the death penalty is discriminatory. That claim would require a consideration of death penalty cases. The student would not need to examine each and every case but only to consider a representative sample of cases. Enough cases would need to be looked at to draw a reasonable, but not absolutely certain, conclusion.

As noted previously, inference is the most difficult of the eight criteria for critical thinking. In developing our program we spend considerable time training Graduate Teaching Assistants in the principles of valid inference and the detection of fallacies. These lessons, then, were passed on to students in the recitation. Even then, developing a sense of sound inference is a time consuming process and one that places considerable demands upon students (see our reflection on issues and challenges later in this article).

**Criterion Seven: Point of View**

Whenever we speak, we become advocates for a particular belief, action, attitude, etc. Critical speakers understand that no matter how firmly they believe in the rightness of their position; there are others who believe just as firmly in the rightness of the opposite position. Critical speakers are attentive to this fact. They will identify alternatives (e.g., beliefs, ideas, proposal) and then try to understand why others advocate for those positions. Why do those who believe differently believe what they believe? Critical speakers acknowledge alternative beliefs and address them. This does not mean that critical thinkers actively attempt to refute everyone who thinks differently. On the contrary, critical thinkers demonstrate their willingness to consider alternative points of view and treat those with whom they disagree with respect. In our training of students, we attempt to instill what Scriven (1976) called the principle of charity or
the requirement that we start with the assumption that those with whom we disagree are as rational and reasonable as we believe ourselves to be and that they are persons of good will, open to consideration of our position and willing to give us a fair consideration of our information and reasoning. In evaluating sources of information, students are asked to identify writers’ efforts to demonstrate their understanding of alternative points of view while in their composition of speeches, students are asked to take affirmative steps to show they understand and appreciate those with whom they disagree.

Criteria Number Eight: Implications

Richard Weaver (1953) noted that the power to speak “is a liberty to handle the world, to remake it, if only a little, and to hand it to others in a shape which may influence their actions…. The changes wrought by sentences are changes in the world…” (p. 119). When we advocate for a particular position, we take on certain obligations and responsibilities. When we convince a person to take a particular course of action we have some responsibility for the consequences of taking that action. Beliefs and ideas—like actions—have consequences. Critical speakers consider the consequences of the beliefs and ideas they advocate. They ask themselves what would happen if the speech is successful and what the likely outcome is.

When evaluating sources of information, students are asked to draw out the implications of the position they are reading. If you accept this person’s claims, then what? How will this impact your other beliefs? Your attitudes? Your actions? Most importantly, however, students are charged with becoming responsible advocates who take their speaking seriously and always speak as though their words would, in fact, bring about changes in the world.

Assessment

Following the initial session in the large lecture where students are introduced to the basics of critical thinking, students are required to take a short quiz beginning with multiple choice questions in order to assess students’ understanding and recollection of the key concepts of critical thinking. The multiple choice questions are followed by an essay question that permitted students the opportunity to apply the eight criteria for critical thinking to persuasive and informative messages. See Appendix B for examples of the quizzes.

We also provide classroom assignments, deliberative dialogues, which give students the opportunity for in-depth critical thinking, exploration, and assessment. According to the Deliberative Democracy Consortium (2007), deliberation is “an approach to decision-making in which citizens consider relevant facts from multiple points of view, converse with one another to think critically about options before them, and enlarge their perspectives, opinions, and understandings” (para. 1). We incorporated deliberative dialogues to encourage students to think critically about issues they see as important. Deliberative dialogues are a flexible format for discussion of issues in the classroom and can be applied in many different ways. Numerous
examples of deliberative dialogues can be found on line at www.studycircles.org. As we implemented them in our courses, students were required to participate in three in-class deliberative dialogues. Topics were selected based on their relevance and importance to the students in the class. See Appendix C for an example of the Deliberative Dialogue Assignment.

Students are required to develop a statement that they will deliver orally in class. These statements must include the student’s stake (how the issue affects the student), source (a summary of the research the student has done on the topic), a statement of position (where the student stands on the issue), and if applicable, a solution (what does the student believe should be done). These statements are short, no more than three to five minutes in length, and start off the dialogue and discussion. Students are not allowed to respond, react or comment on other’s students’ statements until all the participants have finished. The floor is then opened up to discussion of the issues facilitated by the instructor who encourages open discussion and ensures that the dialogue does not degenerate into verbal aggression.

We should note that the number of students participating in each dialogue will vary depending on the constraints of each class. If class periods are short or if the class has a high enrollment, it may not be feasible to have the entire class participate in the dialogue. We believe it is important that each participant has enough time to make his/her statement and that sufficient time to discuss the issues raised be allowed in that class session. This may require breaking students into manageable groups with some students observing while others participate.

The final element of the deliberative dialogue assignment is a reflection paper on the deliberative dialogue process. The students answer the following questions:

1. After attending these dialogue sessions, what does the term deliberation mean to you?
2. Did our deliberative dialogue sessions change the way you think about social or political issues? Why or why not?
3. Which format for our discussions did you prefer: full circle, two groups, four groups or the on-line posting board? Why?
4. If you were to hear of a deliberative dialogue event in your community, would you attend? Why or why not?

As a final question, we asked students to reflect upon the assignment itself and our goals as teachers. We wanted to know whether they believed that the deliberative dialogues were worthwhile and educationally valuable. Overwhelmingly, students have responded positively to the deliberative dialogue sessions:

I really liked the dialogue sessions. At first, I had a hard time sitting and just listening to the opinion of others, especially when it was a subject that I was really for or really against. I have found the dialogues have made me more aware to try to listen fully and then to comment. (student comment, 2007)

I would absolutely attend any deliberative dialogue. I like the idea that we can all choose a topic, explain why it matters, what others have to say about it then we try to find the
best solution. I would like to be more involved in the community which I think is the best way to learn and support each other. (student comment, 2007)

I really liked them because it gave all of us a chance to speak our opinions on the things that are affecting our lives and the lives of people close to us. It also helped us to open up more freely with our peers. This also made me more comfortable about speaking in class and made me realize that people care about what you are talking about and they also have the patience to listen to what we have to say. (student comment, 2007).

The purpose of the dialogue is to create an opportunity for students to become advocates for their beliefs and values in the public sphere. John Rawls (1997) pointed out, the “basic feature of democracy is the fact of reasonable pluralism – the fact that a plurality of conflicting reasonable comprehensive doctrines, religious, political and moral, is the normal result of its culture of free institutions” (para. 1). For Rawls, democracy could only be maintained where “rights, liberties and opportunities” (para. 21) were respected by everyone and such respect was impossible without at least a basic understanding of the perspectives of others. Therefore, we believe that while realizing consensus on issues is possible, it is not the goal of deliberative dialogues. Rather the goal is to develop skills in advocating one’s position while cultivating an understanding and respect for the positions of others.

To this end, the Guide to Critical Thinking we developed can be applied in several ways. First, students are required to engage in research before the dialogue begins. We encourage students to research broadly and to seek out a variety of sources including traditional avenues of research such as magazines, newspapers, and websites and less utilized sources of information such as interviews, surveys and personal experience. We suggest students use the Guide to Critical Thinking to assess each of the sources of information they consult in developing their statement. This not only encourages students to rely on quality sources of information but develops their critical thinking skills and encourages them to cultivate the habits of critical thinkers.

Second, if not all of the students in the class are able to participate in the dialogue, students in the observer role can use the Guide to Critical Thinking to assess the dialogue. We discourage students from using the Guide to assess individual students because we believe that the quality of the dialogue is not the product of any one student’s efforts but collectively constructed. Applying the Guide in this way further develops students habits of critical thinking and encourages them to understand the dialogue as a process that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Finally, the Guide to Critical Thinking is a mechanism whereby instructors can assess student growth and their development of critical thinking skills. The Guide is primarily an assessment tool and it is constructed to provide students with feedback that encourages them to build upon their understanding of critical thinking concepts and learn to apply those concepts to public discourse and deliberation. The instructor can use the Guide to assess the dialogue and in
the evaluation of reflection papers. The \textit{Guide} thus becomes a tool to identify areas of competency and to develop strategies for improving critical thinking.

**Issues and Challenges in the Implementation of the Critical Thinking Initiative**

**Challenges**

The challenges we faced in the project centered around two themes. The first challenge was the number of students we were trying to reach. As previously noted, the SPEE 100 course serves approximately 750 students a semester in the lecture/recitation format. Additionally, the recitation sections were large with 30 students in each section, each meeting for only two hours a week. Our efforts to reach all 750 students included lectures, quizzes with essay format, and assignments to weave critical thinking throughout the course. The number of students unfortunately meant that we prioritized objective short answer assessments such as multiple choice exams rather than extended written responses that we believe are more consistent with critical thinking. Our ability to engage in in-depth dialogues was also hampered by the large number of students in each section.

The second challenge was the number of instructors who serve this course. The students have two teachers—a full-time faculty member who teaches the large lecture and a GTA who teaches in the recitation section. Furthermore, the course is served by a Basic Course Director who is in charge of the training and development of the teaching assistants: creating course assignments, creating a common syllabus/course calendar, and ensuring consistency throughout the 25 sections of the course. Therefore, although we had mandatory lectures and assignments engaging critical thinking exercises, we had to have some “blind faith” in our GTAs regarding how the message is reinforced during the recitations.

The challenges discussed above were addressed by implementing training during the GTA summer orientation program and by requiring a workshop for GTAs during the fall semester. While not all communication departments employ GTAs, we believe our training materials would prove useful as a guide for other speech communication instructors and/or departments.

**Training Instructors**

The training provided to instructors of SPEE 100 is twofold. First, during the summer orientation program, GTAs are taught how to implement the materials and assignments required in the SPEE 100 course, including critical thinking exercises and deliberative dialogues. GTAs engage in critical discussion groups during the summer orientation. Additionally, the GTAs read several academic articles written by authors who are writing from a critical pedagogical perspective. Through a series of small group discussions, the GTAs begin to grapple with pedagogical issues. During the summer orientation program, GTAs are also given specific
instruction regarding deliberative dialogues; the process is defined, illustrated, and practiced through a series of lectures and activities. The bulk of the training in critical thinking is conducted in a workshop early in the Fall term.

The workshop begins with a lecture about critical thinking skills similar to the lecture the students enrolled in SPEE 100 are given. The lecture defines critical thinking, examines the essential components of critical thinking, and explores the application of critical thinking to the basic communication course. Each instructor is given a workbook designed to both introduce them to critical thinking and provide them with exercises to practice critical thinking with their students. The workbook was provided to all instructors during a three hour workshop. The workshop introduces instructors to *The Guide to Assessing Critical Thinking* ("The Guide") and gives them specific instructions to use *The Guide* as a rubric when grading speeches and evaluating essay exam questions and other assignments in the course.

**Conclusion**

Lipman (1988) pointed out that critical thinking is, in essence, about making judgments and judgments are the key to decision-making. Those who make good judgments about the information at their disposal, about the issues involved, about the possible outcomes, make better decisions than those who do not make good judgments. The key to making good judgments, Lipman went on, is having a set of criteria that defines good judgment and on the basis of which we can distinguish good judgment from bad judgment:

A criterion is an instrument for judging as an ax is an instrument for chopping. It seems reasonable to conclude, therefore, that there is some sort of logical connection between “critical thinking” and “criteria” and “judgment.” The connection, of course, is to be found in the fact that judgment is a skill, critical thinking is skillful thinking, and skills cannot be defined without criteria by means of which allegedly skillful performances can be evaluated. So critical thinking is thinking that both employs criteria and that can be assessed by appeal to criteria. (p. 40)

Our objective was to produce criteria for critical thinking that could be used both by students as a means of evaluating the information they consume and for reflecting upon their own thinking and that could be used by instructors as a means of assessing students’ critical thinking. We believe that the *Guide to Critical Thinking* we developed can fill both roles. Moreover, we believe that our efforts indicate that the *Guide* is not only easy to use in the classroom but also broadly applicable and can be employed in a variety of speaking and writing courses.

The importance of critical thinking cannot be overestimated. As Sezer (2008) noted, the goal of education is not the accumulation of facts but rather “to have students think for themselves” and “many educators and philosophers” (p. 350) have stressed that critical thinking is a prerequisite for education, not a product of it. As critical pedagogues, we reject what Freire (1996) called the “‘banking’ concept of education” wherein “the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat.” (p. 53). True
education, and a truly democratic system of education, must allow knowledge to emerge through “invention and re-invention, through restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry” (p. 53). We believe that by infusing critical thinking into basic courses in communication—in both the high schools and the colleges and universities—that we better serve the interests of students. We cannot say that we truly seek the goal that education is supposed to serve and not teach in such a way that we encourage students to think for themselves. As Freire also noted, “To affirm that men and women are persons and as persons should be free, and yet do nothing tangible to make this affirmation a reality, is a farce” (p. 32).

We hope that educators throughout the communication discipline will borrow freely from the lessons we have learned and make use of the methods we have developed and to continue the efforts to integrate critical thinking practices throughout their teaching.

References


**Endnotes**

1 Throughout this work we make reference to speaking and speeches because we have principally been teachers of speech. We believe that the guide we have developed is just as valuable in the composition and evaluation of written texts as it is in speeches.

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**Authors’ Notes**

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## Appendix A

**Guide to Assessing Critical Thinking**

### 1. PURPOSE

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<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Mastering</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reasoner’s purpose is unspecified – neither stated clearly nor easily inferred from the composition.</td>
<td>The reasoner’s purpose can be determined but needs to be more clearly presented.</td>
<td>The reasoner’s purpose is clear and unambiguous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No effort is made to justify purposes.</td>
<td>The reasoner’s purposes are ambiguous.</td>
<td>The reasoner justifies his/her purpose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The reasoner makes an effort to justify his/her purposes.</td>
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**Comments:**

### 2. THESIS

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<th>Developing</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>No clear thesis is presented or implied.</td>
<td>The reasoner’s thesis lacks clarity or needs development.</td>
<td>The question is clear and well-formed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The reasoner needs to more clearly define the relationship between the question and the purpose.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a clear and exact relationship between the speaker’s purpose and the question.</td>
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**Comments:**

### 3. INFORMATION

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reasoner does not cite any information/fails to provide reasoning behind his/her conclusions.</td>
<td>The reasoner cites or references information and experiences.</td>
<td>The reasoner bases conclusions on relevant and accurate information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reasoner relies on inaccurate or unverifiable information.</td>
<td>The reasoner needs to do more to ensure that the information is accurate and verifiable.</td>
<td>The reasoner makes an effort to ensure that the information is verifiable.</td>
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**Comments:**

### 4. CONCEPTS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reasoner makes little or no effort to define terms/clarify ideas.</td>
<td>The reasoner makes some effort to define key terms or ideas but needs to be more explicit and clearer.</td>
<td>The reasoner makes a concerted effort to define all ambiguous terms and clarify important concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reasoner prevaricates/equivocates with respect to key terms or ideas.</td>
<td>The reasoner needs to be more careful about using terms consistently.</td>
<td>The reasoner uses consistent and precise language.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**
### 5. Assumptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>Mastering</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The reasoner makes supported or justified assumptions.</td>
<td>The reasoner needs to show more concern for/pay more attention to his/her assumptions.</td>
<td>The reasoner does not make unreasonable or unjustified assumptions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The reasoner seems unaware of the assumptions upon which his/her reasoning is based.</td>
<td>The reason needs to make his/her assumptions clear.</td>
<td>The reasoner is open and clear about what he/she is assuming.</td>
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**Comments:**

### 6. Inference

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<th>Emerging</th>
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<tr>
<td>The reasoner does not develop a clear line of reasoning between information and the conclusions he/she draws.</td>
<td>The reasoner needs to pay more attention to principles of valid reasoning/derivation.</td>
<td>The reasoner has clearly articulated and valid reasoning.</td>
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<td>The reasoner needs to make his/her reasoning clearer.</td>
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**Comments:**

### 7. Point of View

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<tr>
<th>Emerging</th>
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<th>Mastering</th>
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<tr>
<td>The reasoner is unaware of or uncharitable toward alternative points of view (relies on stereotypes, simplistic interpretations, “straw man” arguments).</td>
<td>The reasoner does not demonstrate a complete understanding of or appreciation for alternative points of view.</td>
<td>The reasoner fully understands and appreciates the points of view of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The reasoner needs to do more to respond to relevant objections of those with a different point of view.</td>
<td>The reasoner makes a concerted effort to address the objections of those with a different point of view.</td>
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**Comments:**

### 8. Implications

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<th>Mastering</th>
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<tr>
<td>The reasoner seems unaware of or unconcerned with the implications of his/her position.</td>
<td>The reasoner is aware of but does not demonstrate a concern for the implications of his/her position.</td>
<td>The reasoner understands and appreciates the consequences of or associated with his/her position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The reasoner has a simplistic/undeveloped understanding of the implications of his/her position.</td>
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**Comments:**
Appendix B

Example Quiz A

Part One (five points)
1. The form of derivation wherein if the premises are true the conclusions must be true is called

2. Which of the following is NOT one of the Criteria for Thinking?
   a. Accuracy, b. Breadth, c. **Point of View**, d. Clarity, e. Charity

3. The form of derivation which is most like science is called

4. Which of the Criteria for Thinking demands that we assume the best possible case with
   respect to interpreting the positions of others?
   a. Relevance, b. Point of View, c. **Charity**, d. Breadth, e. Significance

5. Which of the Criteria for Thinking asks us to consider whether or not our conclusions follow
   from the evidence?

Part Two (five points)
Read the following two statements. Who makes the better argument? Explain your answer in a
short essay (200–300 words). Your essay will be evaluated according to the critical thinking
matrix.

(1) From “A Defense of Media Monopoly” (*Communications Lawyer*, Fall 2003) by Clyde
Wayne Crews, Jr.
Information Cannot Be Monopolized
The most frequent justification offered for restricting media ownership is to prevent
monopolization of viewpoints expressed in the media, i.e., to protect diversity in ideas. But the
media are merely conduits for information of every sort, and information cannot be monopolized
where the government does not practice censorship. The media are an implementation of free
speech, not its enemy. Although this article is not a venue for a treatise on the follies of antitrust
law over the past century (that has of late found potential monopolies in pickles, intense mints,
and premium ice cream), let it at least be offered for consideration that there is no such
phenomenon as a media monopoly unanswerable to the rest of society, and to the economy
potentially arrayed against the media, if it were to abuse its station in society.

Absent government censorship, there is no fundamental scarcity of information. More
information can always be created, and in a free society, nobody can silence anybody else. The
most that big media can to is refuse to share their megaphones and soapboxes, which is not a
violation of anyone’s rights. Real suppression requires governmental censorship, or the actual
prohibition of the airing of alternative views.
(2) From “Policing the Thinkable” (Opendemocracy.net, October 2001) by Robert W. McChesney

Over the past two decades, as a result of neoliberal deregulation and new communication technologies, the media systems across the world have undergone a startling transformation. There are now fewer and larger companies controlling more and more, and the largest of them are media conglomerates, with vast empires that cover numerous media industries.

Media industries are barely competitive in the economic sense of the term. The giants do compete ferociously, but they do so under the rules of oligopolistic markets, meaning they have far greater control over their fate than those in truly competitive markets. It also means that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for newcomers to enter these markets as viable players.

By most theories of liberal democracy, such a concentration of media power into so few hands is disastrous for the free marketplace of ideas, the bedrock upon which informed self-government rests. The key to making markets work in the consumers’ interest is that they be open to newcomers, but the present conglomerate-dominated markets are not even remotely competitive in the traditional sense of the term.

This is not a new problem for capitalist media. In fact, in the United States, it was nothing short of a crisis a century ago, as one-newspaper towns and chain newspapers terminated competition in the American newspaper market, then the primary purveyor of journalism. Journalism at the time was still quite partisan, whence the political crisis that resulted from virtual monopoly. It was one thing for newspapers to be opinionated when there were several in a community and it was relatively easy to enter the market. It was quite another thing to have opinionated journalism when there were monopoly newspapers and they stridently advocated the political positions of their owners and major advertisers.
Example Quiz B

Part One (five points)

1. Perception involves which of the following activities:
   (a) Selection, Organization, Framing; (b) Selective attention, Selective exposure, Selective retention; (c) Closure, Proximity, Similarity; (d) Physiology, Psychology, Culture; (e) **Selection, Organization, Interpretation**

2. True/False: According to the lecture, all perception begins with a model or picture of the world that has three parts, what is good, what is possible, and what is logical.
   (a) True; (b) **False**

3. Filling in the details so that a partially perceived entity appears to be complete is called
   (a) Organization; (b) Similarity; (c) Proximity (d) **Closure**; (e) Framing

4. A _________ is a fixed, previously determined view of events, objects, or people.
   (a) Stereotype; (b) **Perceptual set**; (c) Attribution error; (d) Frame; (e) Interpretation

5. The process for attempting to understand the reason behind other’s behaviors is called:
   (a) Attribution; (b) Psychology; (c) Interpretation; (d) Framing; (e) Stereotyping

Part Two (five points)

Take a moment to look at the picture below. What is going on here? In a short essay (200-300 words), describe what you think is taking place and then reflect upon your perceptions; what you think has influenced your interpretation of this picture?

![Picture](http://chiapas.indymedia.org/display.php3?article_id=147832)

*Note. The Independent Media Center website notes “All content is free for reprint and rebroadcast, on the net and elsewhere, for non-commercial use, unless otherwise noted by author” (http://chiapas.indymedia.org/)*
Appendix C

Deliberative Dialogue Assignment

What is “deliberation”?
“Deliberation is an approach to decision-making in which citizens consider relevant facts from multiple points of view, converse with one another to think critically about options before them and enlarge their perspectives, opinions, and understandings” (The Deliberative Democracy Consortium at http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/deliberation/).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogue Assignment &amp; Issue</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue #1: Proposed Statewide Smoking Ban</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue #2: Issue TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue #3: Race and Racism</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dialogue #4: Issue TBD</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliberative Dialogue Response Paper</td>
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</table>

We hope this project may become a lens through which you see your role as a citizen of your community, state, nation and world. But, again, achieving such lofty goals, both in the “real world” and this classroom, is anything but easy; it will require us to utilize a number of interpersonal, intercultural and small group communication skills ...

Your Responsibilities as Participants:

Speaking:
✓ Follow the guidelines listed under “Preparing Your Statement”
✓ You have approximately one minute to make your statement – be sure to practice in advance
✓ PA 105 is long and narrow -- speak as loudly and clearly as possible
✓ Practice the skills of effective delivery – make eye contact, use gestures appropriately, use inclusive language

Listening:
✓ Listen carefully and thoughtfully to what others have to say
✓ Don’t mentally practice your statement while others are making theirs
✓ Avoid any distracting nonverbal feedback – rolling eyes, shaking head, clapping, yawning
✓ Do not engage in any direct verbal response – don’t try to build consensus (“It sounds like what we’re all saying is …”), don’t cross-talk (“Building off of what Mary said earlier…”) and don’t offer commentary (“If you believe what Robert said, then our nation is headed …”).

After Each Dialogue Session:
✓ Turn in the written/typed copy of your statement, including the reference for your “formal” source
✓ Take a few notes on what you heard, and how you felt about what you heard – you’ll need them for your Deliberative Dialogue Response Paper
✓ Keep any personal anecdotes or statements of belief you heard confidential
My Responsibilities as Facilitator:

Timekeeping:
✓ Everyone will be heard -- at the 1 min 30 sec mark I will cut a speaker’s comments off.

Moderating:
✓ If emotions flare, I will step in and try to restore a sense of calm. A personal statement can sometimes feel like a personal attack, and when people are attacked, they tend to respond in a similar fashion. My job is to keep the discussion running smoothly and safely for everyone.

Questioning:
✓ If a participant offers too short of a statement (particularly in the first two dialogues), I will ask them questions which will attempt to draw out the requisite components of his/her statement.

Listening:
✓ The same rules for the participant apply to the facilitator.

Grading:
✓ You will have earned the full 20 points if you fulfill your responsibilities as listed at left.
✓ If your behavior impedes the ability of any participant to participate in the dialogue, you will lose all points for that session.
✓ Religious, cultural and/or political perspectives will have no impact on participant’s grade for this assignment, or on any other assignment in this course.

Preparing Your Statement

Your statement must contain three essential elements:

Stake: How directly does this issue affect your life? What do you have to gain or lose from your position within this issue?

Source: What have other scholars or researchers said about this issue? What statistics, findings or comments support, refute or generally inform your position?

Statement of Position: Where do you stand on the issue? Are you firm in your position, or are you ultimately undecided? What values have brought you to this position?

Depending upon the nature of the issue being discussed, your statement may also contain one additional element:

Solution: What do you think should be done? What kind of a solution would you find to be fair?
Sample Statement for the Statewide Smoking Ban Dialogue:

*My “Stake”*

I have to admit, I’m a bit split on this issue. I don’t smoke, and I truly enjoy a smoke-free environment when I go out to eat. I want people to be healthy, and if the figures cited in the “Tobacco Industry” article from CQ Researcher are accurate, state governments in the U.S. spend well over seven billion dollars annually to treat smoking-related diseases. That’s certainly a lot of money for taxpayers to pay. But, I’m troubled by the way this debate uses the term “smokers.” I drink alcohol on occasion, but I would be upset if people referred to me as a “drinker.” Smokers are people, and all people make choices – both good and bad. I have to remember that even as I point the finger at others’ consumer choices, I should also be willing to look critically at my own consumer choices as well. Should my ability to eat ice cream, drive a car and purchase products be regulated for the health of myself, others, and the environment? Maybe so, but I’d hope we could do it in a shared, thoughtful and inclusive way. Maybe a better, more inclusive solution than an overall ban would have been to offer permits for “smoking” establishments, and make low interest business loans available to owners of bars and restaurants so that they could raise ceiling height, redesign lounges and/or update ventilation.

*My “Source”*


*My “Statement”*

Citing Sources:
Please use APA style (see below) for citing your academic sources. Most databases will create a citation for you using the “Cite Now” feature. If you have questions, please see or email me.

Effective Listening Project: A Constructivist Activity

Nanette Johnson-Curiskis
Associate Professor
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Minnesota State University, Mankato
Mankato, MN

ABSTRACT
Constructivist learning allows learners to synthesize and understand new ideas and concepts based on their own current and past knowledge and experiences. This paper describes the constructivist philosophy of learning. The constructivist teaching and learning model is applied to a unit used in an effective listening course or a class with a unit in listening. Students construct a listening campaign demonstrating the importance of effective listening for a target audience.

Introduction
“...A young child who has never been to the hospital is in her bed. ...the nurse calls over the intercom above the bed, ‘Hi, Chelsea, how are you doing? Do you need anything?’ The girl looks puzzled and does not answer. The nurse repeats with the same result. Finally, the nurse says emphatically, ‘Chelsea, are you there? Say something!’ The little girl responds tentatively, ‘Hello wall—I’m here.’ Chelsea encountered a new situation—a talking wall. The wall is persistent. It sounds like a grown-up wall. She shouldn’t talk to strangers, but she is not sure about walls. She uses what she knows and what the situation provides to construct meaning and to act. Constructivist theories of learning focus on how people make meaning” (Woolfolk, 2001, p. 329).

Constructivist theorists believe Chelsea made sense of the talking wall because she linked what she knew with what was happening in her environment. She constructed meaning by activating her knowledge structures. “Human learning is a matter of strengthening internal knowledge structures. As one becomes engaged in experiences, his or her existing knowledge structures are activated” (Zahorik, 1995, p. 13).

The purpose of this paper is to examine constructivist learning theory, to present a brief history of the movement, and to discuss how constructivism affects knowledge, teaching, and learning. Finally, a constructivist model for teaching a major unit in an Effective Listening course will be proposed.
Constructivist Knowledge

“Constructivism means that as we experience something new we internalize it through our past experiences or knowledge constructs we have previously established” (Crowther, 1997, para. 5). Learners employ their own strategies, experiences, and active methods to organize and make sense of data rather than simply receiving knowledge from a sender or an “expert.” More specifically, “constructivism is an epistemological view of knowledge acquisition emphasizing knowledge construction rather than knowledge transmission and the recording of information conveyed by others. The role of the learner is conceived as one of building and transforming knowledge” (Applefield, Huber, & Moallem, 2000, p. 38). As Baylor, Samsonov, and Smith (2002; para. 3) note, constructivist knowledge is viewed:

- as something created, discovered, and experienced (Snyder, Bolin, & Zumwalt, 1992).
- Students have the opportunity ‘to take personal responsibility, exercise initiative, and be in control in the instructional setting through a variety of learning experiences’ (p. 415).

According to Applebee and Purves, constructivists view ‘knowledge as an active construction built up by the individual acting within a social context that shapes and constrains that knowledge but does not determine it in an absolute sense’ (p. 738). In order to transform knowledge, learning must be an active and ongoing process based on previous knowledge and linked to new knowledge. Students can then make decisions based on this new experience (Jordan, Metha, & Webb, 2000).

This new knowledge satisfies the “learners need to be seriously engaged in constructing meaning. Knowledge is not just something told to them. They must personally construct their sense of something” (Hunkins & Ornstein, 1998, p. 212). Knowledge is acquired “not by internalizing it from the outside but by constructing it from the inside, in interaction with the environment” (Kamii, Manning, & Manning, 1991, p. 18). Knowledge and meaning are linked with the world and with experiences in the world. Hanley (1994) clarified this process when she said “meaning is intimately connected with experience” (para. 5).

Constructivist theory provides “a beginning from which to achieve a deeper understanding of the individual’s action in social reality. Constructivism and constructivist theory examine the thoughts behind the actions of individuals” (Ritchie, 1982, p. 31). Learners understand concepts based on what is important to their schema, their world and their needs. Even though variations exist among students, Cobern (1991) said each “student constructs knowledge so that the knowledge is meaningful in the student’s life situation” (as cited in Crowther, 1997, para. 11). Davidson (1995) continued, “learning is an internal process and influenced by the learner’s personality, prior knowledge and learning goals” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 4-5). In the constructivist viewpoint, students learn because they are “constructors of their own knowledge, rather than reproducers of someone else’s knowledge” (Zahorik, 1995, p. 8). Knowledge is actively built and transformed rather than passively accepted. Constructivists transform knowledge “by fitting new information together with what
they already know. People learn best when they actively construct their own understanding” (What is constructivism?, 2002, para. 2).

Historical Background

“Constructivism is not a new concept. It has its roots in philosophy and has been applied to sociology and anthropology, as well as to cognitive psychology and education” (Hanley, 1994, p. 1). In fact, “aspects of the constructivist theory can be found among the works of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle (ranging from 470-320 B.C.), all of which speak of the formation of knowledge (Brooks & Brooks, 1993, p.23)” (as cited in Hanley, 1994, p. 1). More recently, “constructivist perspectives are ground in the research of Piaget, Vygotsky, the Gestalt psychologists, Bartlett, and Bruner, a well as the educational philosophy of John Dewey, to mention just a few intellectual roots” (Woolfolk, 2001, p. 329). “The main philosophy of constructivism is generally credited to Jean Piaget (1896-1980)” (Crowther, 1997, para. 9). However, “constructivism…from a practical perspective has roots in the ‘progressive’ model of John Dewey. …learners are active participants in knowledge acquisition, and engage in restructuring, manipulating, reinventing, and experimenting with knowledge to make it meaningful, organized and permanent. (Davidson, 1995)” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 4-5).

“Contemporary constructivism (thus emphasizing that there are currently a variety of conceptions in the literature) can be clearly linked to the educational philosophies of John Dewey (1933) and the Progressive movement” (Battaglia et al., 2001, p. 87). John Dewey’s experiential learning is often cited as a forerunner of the American constructivist perspective. Constructivist theory and learning strategies are clearly connections with John Dewey’s methodology. John Dewey (1938) believed experiential learning took place when a person was involved in an activity, looked back and evaluated it, determined what was useful or important to remember and used the information to perform another activity. Pragmatism, the philosophy of education proposed by John Dewey, is often defined as learning by doing. Simply stated, when one is actively involved in the learning process then what is learned has more relevance and meaning. However, Dewey did more than propose a simple learning by doing model. “From Dewey’s educational philosophy came the emphasis on experience, activity, and problem solving that helped to reshape our thinking about education and schooling” (Gutek, 1997, p. 101). Historically and philosophically, Dewey’s philosophy is easily linked with constructivism in that both promote active learning.

Learning and Constructivism

Teachers have always made decisions about teaching and learning based on their formal training, and the theories they professionally trust. In fact, “for centuries educators have assumed that children acquire knowledge by internalizing it from the environment” (Kamii et al.,
1991, p. 18). However, “today constructivist teaching is based on recent research about the human brain and what is known about how learning occurs” (What is constructivism?, 2002, para. 5). In fact, “dramatic developments in brain research and imaging technology are rapidly advancing our conceptualization of the human brain...The brain is powerfully shaped by genetics, development, and experience while actively shaping the nature of our experiences and culture in which we live” (Green, 1999, p. 682).

There is some evidence that constructivism has a link with increased learning. “In searching for answers, researchers in the 1990s have uncovered a massive amount of interrelated evidence in the brain sciences, the biological sciences... This evidence is starting to show in considerable detail how humans actually learn. We now can see why learning is much more than just the flip side of good teaching...Instead of thinking of the brain as a computer, researchers now see it as a far more flexible, self-adjusting entity--a living, unique, ever-changing organism that grows and reshapes itself in response to challenge” (Abbott & Ryan, 1999, p. 66). Abbott went on to build a case linking current brain research and constructivism. He believed current brain research supported constructivist learning theory. “For the brain’s predisposition toward constructivist learning to thrive, we must consider all aspects of a child’s learning environment. Constructivism is open ended, as is the neural structure of the brain” (Abbott & Ryan, 1999, p. 69).

**Constructivist Classrooms**

Constructivism is concerned with how the learner structures or configures knowledge. There are neither black and white, clear-cut solutions to problems, nor fast, easy answers to questions. Typically, the constructivist classroom fosters and rewards multiple interpretations of reality. The constructivist classroom depends on multi-cultural, active, experience-based learning methods and activities. “Again and again, the idea of learners getting involved in their learning, instead of passively receiving information from an instructor, has been considered the essence of education” (Herbert & Rubin, 1998, para. 1). Constructivist environments engage learners in relevant and meaningful knowledge construction. Classroom discussions are student driven and allow for brainstorming of ideas to reach conclusions. The students reflect on their own experiences and link their experiences to various aspects of their life. Prawat (1992) stated, “while there are several interpretations of what (constructivist) theory means, most agree that it involves...putting the students’ own efforts to understand at the center of the educational enterprise” (as cited in Applefield et al., 2000, p. 35). The individual student is at the core of the process. In the constructivist classroom the key to developing constructivist lesson plans is the inclusion of active learning strategies. “Both constructivism and student-centered design emphasize experiences, are activity centered, and are relevant. Students have the freedom to learn and create information; the curriculum is centered on their needs and interests. Individual students have the final responsibility for their learning” (Jordan et al., 2000, pp. 490-491).
John Zahorik, a professor of curriculum and instruction at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, synthesized several models for a constructivist classroom. He explained the worldview of knowledge and learning within a theory of constructivism. Zahorik’s assumptions about teaching and learning included, “knowledge is…not a set of facts, concepts, or laws waiting to be discovered. It is not something that exists independent of a knower. Humans create or construct knowledge as they attempt to bring meaning to their experience” (Zahorik, 1995, p. 11). Further, he stated, “Since knowledge is a construction of humans and humans are constantly undergoing new experiences, knowledge can never be stable” (Zahorik, 1995, p. 12). Based on his research and his assumptions about knowledge, Zahorik proposed a model for constructivist teaching. He found five basic elements that exist in all constructivist teaching. Constructivist teaching and learning depend on activating knowledge, acquiring knowledge, understanding knowledge, using knowledge, and reflecting on knowledge (Zahorik, 1995).

Driscoll (1994) and Marshall (1992) enumerated the most widely accepted assumptions about the constructivist classroom proposed in several prominent constructivist models. They found constructivist perspectives include “complex, challenging learning environments and authentic tasks, social negotiation and shared responsibility as a part of learning, multiple representations of content, understanding that knowledge is constructed, and student-centered interaction” (as cited in Woolfolk, 2001, p. 334). Hunkins and Ornstein (1998) summarized the basic tenet of the constructivist classroom when they said, “getting the student to be active in learning the curriculum is part of the constructivist emphasis….each learner must participate in generating learning…which…is constantly being connected with already existing knowledge” (p. 115).

Learning in a constructivist classroom is guided not only by different assumptions, axioms, and principles, but the constructivist classroom may appear different than a traditional classroom. A constructivist classroom might be viewed by the casual observer as chaotic and nonproductive. Dede and Sprague (2002) stated, “as teachers, we are taught to believe that learning takes place in a quiet and orderly setting. Activities in which students are taking an active role and sharing information with each other make for noisy classrooms. To an outsider, the classroom may appear to be in chaos. This does not mean students are not learning” (para. 12). However, a constructivist classroom allows for a traditional, quiet and orderly setting as well as the more active approach. Just as students create their own reality, they can also create their own environment by choosing more traditional approaches to learning the material. Caprio (1994) also addressed how the constructivist classroom differs from one based on the traditional model. “The average traditional American classroom, whether grade school or college level, tends to resemble a one-person show with a captive but often comatose audience. Classes are usually driven by ‘teacher-talk’ and depend heavily on textbooks for the structure of the course. Instruction in these classrooms is based on the idea that there is a fixed world of knowledge that the student must come to know. Information is divided into parts and built into a whole concept. Teachers serve as pipelines and seek to transfer their thoughts and meanings to the passive student. There is little room for student-initiated questions, independent thought or interaction.
between students. The goal of the learner is to regurgitate the accepted explanation or methodology expostulated by the teacher” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 7).

Unfortunately, and realistically “teachers worry that this type of classroom environment may be misinterpreted by others who see a constructivist teacher as not in control or not working hard” (Dede & Sprague, para. 12). A novice instructor teaching at a four year university provided a specific example. The novice asked the advice of a seasoned, albeit traditional, instructor regarding a lesson plan. The novice clearly proposed a constructivist model for the lesson. However, she was discouraged from using the plan because the seasoned instructor asked “Where is the teaching?” The novice teacher has since realized there was indeed teaching taking place; however, it was not the traditional “lecture” model which so often defines the “good teacher.” Unfortunately, the use of constructivist learning strategies is often met with such criticism and resistance.

The teacher in a constructivist classroom faces other unique challenges. Constructivist teachers must be creative and flexible in their approach to a subject and to the environment. “Constructivist instruction…places high demands on the teacher’s subject-matter understanding. The teacher must not only be familiar with the principles underlying a topic of study but must also be prepared for the variety of ways these principles can be explored” (Windschitl, 1999, p. 754). In the constructivist classroom, the instructor designs curriculum which encourages “students to discover principles by themselves. The task of the instructor is to translate information…into a format appropriate to the learner’s current state of understanding. Curriculum should be organized…so that the student continually builds upon what they have already learned” (2002, para. 2). In summary, in the constructivist classroom, “educators value and encourage students’ points of view…adapt the curriculum to challenge students’ suppositions…create opportunities for students to exhibit their work and share ideas…provide non-judgmental responses to their work and assess their performance authentically within the context of learning” (Kaufman, 1996, p. 43).

**Constructivist Teachers**

Wheatly proposed that the teacher’s role is to “provide stimulating and motivational experiences through negotiation and act as a guide in the building of personalized schema” (as cited in Crowther, 1997, para. 14). The role an instructor plays in any classroom is fundamental to teaching and learning. Constructivist teachers share their love of learning with their students because, in the constructivism perspective, “a teacher is, and always has been, ‘the most important agent of change in the classroom.’ The irony for teachers is that, while we encourage students to be co-teachers, we must not forget that as teachers we are also students” (Phye, 1997, p. 595). Kaufmann (1996) reinforced the teacher as learner paradigm when he said, “constructivist teacher educators are first and foremost learners who participate in the learning cycle with their students as they observe, participate, reflect and design new initiatives” (p. 42).
Brooks and Brooks (1993) produced the following summary of characteristics of a constructivist teacher. They found constructivist teachers:

1. become one of many resources that the student may learn from, not the primary source of information.
2. engage students in experiences that challenge previous conceptions of their existing knowledge.
3. allow student responses to drive lessons and seek elaboration of students’ initial responses and allow student some thinking time after posing questions.
4. encourage the spirit of questioning by asking thoughtful, open-ended questions and encourage thoughtful discussion among students.
5. use cognitive terminology such as “classify,” “analyze,” and “create” when framing tasks.
6. encourage and accept student autonomy and initiative. Be willing to let go of classroom control.
7. use raw data and primary sources, along with manipulative, interactive physical materials.
8. don’t separate knowing from the process of finding out.
9. insist on clear expression from students. When students can communicate their understanding, then they have truly learned” (as cited in Hanley, 1994, para. 2-3).

Phye (1997) claims that “for many classroom teachers, constructivism means modification of teaching practices rather than sweeping change. The modifications will likely take the form of changing the social structure of individual classrooms with less teacher-initiated instruction and more cooperative learning opportunities” (p. 594). Brooks and Brooks (1993) continued, “becoming a constructivist teacher may prove a difficult transformation since most instructors were prepared for teaching in the traditional, objectivist manner. It requires a paradigm shift and…abandonment of familiar perspectives and practices and the adoption of new ones” (Garmston & Wellman, 1994, p. 25). Therefore, when implementing constructivist methods an individual teacher may want to start slowly. Teachers may want to devise small units of study following a constructivist mode until they feel comfortable with a new style of teaching and learning. The teacher in the classroom is essential; however, the focus of the constructivist classroom is the learner.

Constructivist Learners

Most importantly, in the constructivist classroom the learner is at the heart of the process. “Emphasis is placed on the learner…rather than the teacher or the instructor” (What is constructivism?, 2002, para. 1), because “constructivists place the learner at the center of the equation; …the learner constructs knowledge rather than passively absorbs it (Brooks and Brooks 1993)” (Garmston & Wellman, 1994, p. 84). Constructivism “emphasizes the active role
of the learner in building understanding and making sense of information” (Woolfolk, 2001, p. 329).

As opposed to a traditional teacher centered classroom, constructivist learners are more often “encouraged to take responsibility in their own learning process (Wilson, 1996)” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 11). Combined with material, skills, and knowledge considered important by educators, researchers, parents, and other stakeholders in a student’s education, students are able to “…determine what they need to learn, manage their own learning activities, and also develop greater metacognitive skills. Students who…construct their learning…will graduate with the higher level thinking and problem solving skills that are necessary to be successful in today’s world” (Baylor et al., 2002, para. 11). Constructivist learners are empowered in the learning process. “Constructivist learning relies on the learner doing the work of learning (Dershem, 1996). Constructivist teaching empowers the learner to construct and interpret his/her understanding of knowledge and reality” (Baylor et al., 2002, para. 3).

The constructivist learner “interacts with objects and events and thereby gains an understanding of the features held by such objects or events. The learner…constructs his/her own conceptualizations and solutions to problems” (What is constructivism?, 2002, para. 1). They tend to become physically and mentally engaged in learning because constructivism allows students to be active participants in their own learning. Constructivist learners “search for their own understandings rather than to follow other people’s logic” (Thielfoldt, 1995, p. 15). Rather than relying on others to impart knowledge to them, students become active in the learning process. They learn how to think and how to learn. “In utilizing constructivism, a teacher can teach a student how to think and be a thinker” (Thielfoldt, 1995, p. 22).

Another benefit for the constructivist learner is the opportunity to engage in collaborative learning and research groups. Learners in the constructivist classroom take part in group activities and engage in group exploration of knowledge and truth. “Learners interact with the knowledge, the learning environment, and with other learners (Dershem, 1996)” (as cited in Baylor et al., 2002, para. 2). Frances, Kinzie, Muller, and Simmons (1998), found one of the general principles that promote learning for college students was “social learning experiences, such as peer teaching and group projects, particularly those that promote group construction of knowledge” (para. 4). Not only are group projects important because “two heads are better than one” but group projects also “allow a student to observe other students’ models of successful learning” (Frances et al., 1998, para. 4). Further, interaction with other learners tends to “alter the knowledge and change the learner’s perceptions of that knowledge; so what is learned is not based just on an individual’s past experiences, but on the collective experiences of the learning community” (Baylor et al., 2002, para. 2). Constructivist theory espouses that all learners possess a unique, personal view of reality which may be determined in part by their learning style. One’s reality is tied directly to one’s own perceptions, experiences, beliefs, attitudes and frame of reference.

Finally, constructivist “students are more actively involved than in a traditional classroom. Regardless of student learning style, the constructivist environment allows students to
search out the knowledge they need using the learning style that best fits them. They are sharing ideas, asking questions, discussing concepts, and revising their ideas and misconceptions... Collaborative environments...encourage the knowledge construction needed for more lasting learning (Jonassen, 1996)” (as cited in Dede & Sprague, 2002, para. 10).

Constructivist Model—the Effective Listening Campaign

By developing a listening campaign using a constructivist model, students learn the importance of effective listening in their personal and professional lives. The effective listening campaign is reminiscent of experiences students often have in elementary school with the Science Fair. The final result of the campaign is a poster display and an oral presentation. The purpose of the display is to sell the effective listening campaign to selected audience.

What follows is one unit of an effective listening class which will fundamentally reflect Zahorik’s five basic elements described earlier. This unit can be applicable to many situations—it can be used in either a high school or college level course, perhaps even on an elementary level. This project can be adapted to any course which contains a unit on effective listening. Through such a unit, “students will acquire knowledge, understand knowledge, use knowledge, and reflect on knowledge” (Zahorik, 1995, p. 8). This one activity-based experience can serve as a basis for constructing other effective listening concepts and activities. After learners discover what aspect of effective listening interests them most from this activity, they can construct means for learning effective listening skills. This activity triggers knowledge by having learners choose a relevant target audience for an effective listening campaign. See appendices for a student handout that describes the assignment (Appendix A) and suggested grading rubric (Appendix B).

Research indicates listening is the most frequently used communication skill. “If frequency is a measure of importance, then listening easily qualifies as the most prominent kind of communication” (Adler & Rodman, 1997, p. 283). In 1926, Paul T. Rankin conducted what is considered the breakthrough study of listening. Statistically, Rankin found that 45% of communication time was spent listening, while 30% was spent speaking, 16% was spent reading and nine percent was spent writing (Floyd, 1998). Awareness of how important it is to be an effective listener is the beginning for developing listening skills. Superseding the knowledge or behaviors that make up effective listening is the need to understand the importance of effective listening in the learners’ lives.

Following teacher directed lectures, activities, and assigned readings, students identify a target audience of their choice. Generally speaking, students choose an audience related to their major or field of interest. Accurate and appropriate audience analysis is the first step in effective communication and helps the students activate knowledge. In this case, students are assigned to a committee representing a relevant target audience. Each committee is responsible for creating a positive, effective listening campaign designed to highlight the importance of effective listening for the target audience they represent. Accurate and appropriate audience analysis is the first step in effective communication. An analysis of the target audience helps the students to activate
and thereby construct their own knowledge. Students address the importance of good listening in that context. Students are directed to relevant listening research using the *International Journal of Listening*, textbooks, business sources, online databases, and any other scholarly resources.

Zahorik’s second element, acquiring knowledge, is evident by the use of references and sources of information. Students begin the project by employing textbooks, online resources, articles in journals, and conducting interviews with experts. These sources, resulting in acquisition of knowledge, provide the students with the data needed to prepare, perform, and document the needs of their target audience. Objectives are framed based on solid theory gleaned from scholarly resources.

Once the needs of the target audience are identified and objectives are framed, a methodology for advertising and announcing the campaign is prepared. Clearly, students in a constructivist classroom will generate their own ideas for advertising methods; however, they generally welcome some template ideas. Students have designed tee shirts, newspaper ads, posters and banners, caps, mugs and cups, brochures, web pages, billboards, buttons and pins, bumper stickers, and media public service announcements as methods of advertising to their target audience. Whatever methods are chosen, students prepare prototypes for the audience to react to, to see, to read, and/or to hear. Because of the public presentation of their results, students must employ elements of effective visual aids and visual displays. Students actively use their knowledge in order to construct the products, and processes as well as develop presentation skills.

Assessment of the campaign includes submission of a typed, detailed explanation of the campaign, the procedures, objectives, outcomes, sources of funding, operational details, equipment needs, and time commitment. This project must be clearly appropriate to the target audience. These details allow learners to continue activating, acquiring, understanding and using knowledge throughout the entire assignment. Within the basic assignment framework students are free to discover their own resources, examples, models, assessment tools, and structure. Finally, a set of references is prepared and included with the project paperwork.

**Constructivist Listening Campaign—An Authentic Task**

Students may, in their lifetime, be asked to prepare a campaign for something either personally or professionally; therefore, this assignment is an authentic task. At work, students might be involved with a public relations campaign. As members of organizations, students might be involved with campaigns to resolve social or political issues or problems. Social negotiation, or shared responsibility, is important in constructivist teaching. In this project, social negotiation exists because results are constructed in small groups. Students work on these projects collaboratively to construct meaning in a field of listening in which they are interested.

In the constructivist learning environment, assessment does not take place “at the end of the course but instead assessment methods are integrated into the learning process itself. The
purpose of assessment is...to promote the learning...and to find...what...qualitative changes are taking place in students’ knowledge base” (Tynjala, 1998, p. 177). “Reflection involves scheduled, structured time to review, think about, and analyze an experience to gain deeper understanding” (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 1). As an important adjunct to learning, learners are given the “opportunity to think about the knowledge they have gained, how their attitudes have changed” (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 1). Additionally, “formative evaluation (assessment that occurs throughout the learning process)...plays a key role in helping learners as they experiment during the constructivist activity” (Alesandrini & Larson., 2002, para. 5). Formative assessment can help the instructor determine if students are using their time wisely, if appropriate and sufficient resources are available, if there are ways in which the teacher and students can restructure the learning environment to promote learning. While periodic formative evaluations may not satisfy the university requirement for grades, the procedure can clearly keep learners are on the right track. By providing for several periodic student reflections and formative assessment opportunities, students have more training in writing and speaking. Reflection papers also allow students to take stock of what they are learning and how their tasks are meeting their own needs for learning.

At the conclusion of this campaign, students contemplate issues and reflect on their experience. There are also several types of reflection that can be employed. Specifically, “There are three types of reflection. Cognitive reflection examines the new knowledge and skills students acquire from their experience: information, data, alternative ways of knowing or perceiving (curriculum links are usually addressed as part of the cognitive reflection). Affective reflection examines what students feel as a result of an experience: emotions and attitudes. Process reflection examines what students learn from experiencing a process: planning, consequences of one decision making scheme versus another, working with others” (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 4).

Just as there are different types of reflection to meet the needs of the learners, there are also several channels for reflection. Students might be asked to write journals, “one of the most commonly used reflective assignments. However, writing exercises such as essays, plays, stories, and letters are alternatives to a journal” (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 5). Discussions, debates, or presentations “give students an opportunity to improve their communication skills and reflect on the project. Performing a drama, song or dance; or creating a painting, collage, or multi-media show are effective reflection strategies” (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 5).

Reflections utilizing several types of media allow “...students to showcase their strengths...the student who takes wonderful photographs but struggles with writing has a chance to shine” (Close Up Foundation, 2000, para. 5). Allowing for alternative options for reflection allow students to further employ constructivist perspectives. Students who are given the opportunity to construct their own evaluation techniques gain valuable knowledge. They have the power to realistically and authentically reinforce their knowledge construction based on their own schema and learning style.
Conclusion

Frances, Kinzie, Muller, and Simmons’ (1998) listing of practices which promote learning among college students included several references to constructivism. They cautioned teachers: “…although it might be difficult or even impossible to incorporate all these practices into one college class, if most college classes could incorporate just a few of these elements, colleges would develop into more learning-centered communities and would move toward meeting the learning needs of a greater portion of their students” (para. 6).

The constructivist philosophy of learning can be applied to effective learning in general. Synthesizing this philosophy into a campaign which identifies the importance of effective listening is a viable option for teachers and learners. By using constructivist principles and methods, classrooms become more learning-centered communities and meet the learning needs of many students.

References


Thielfoldt, S. (1995). *What is constructivism and how can it be applied to the schools today?* Unpublished Alternate Plan Paper, Mankato State University, Mankato, MN.


Appendix A

Effective Listening Campaign Assignment

You have been assigned to a committee. Your team will be responsible for creating a positive, effective listening campaign designed to highlight the need for and values of effective listening for a target audience of your choice. Some examples include our college’s students, employees of a business, college or high school or elementary school teachers, people employed in the helping professions, owners of a company, a high school professional development faculty committee, the CEO of a business/place of employment, the employees of a company, etc. The goal of the campaign is to promote effective and active listening. You will be designing a display booth “selling” your campaign. These may be reminiscent of your high school “science fair” displays.

Begin by choosing a target audience and then addressing the importance of and the need for good listening for that audience. The rewards and costs of listening should also be considered. You should start by revisiting material we discussed in class, by doing an online search for effective listening importance, visiting the International Listening Association webpage (www.listen.org), or journals and various texts you find in the library. What are your objectives for this campaign? Why is the campaign needed for this audience? Your group must prepare a presentation that will “sell” your campaign to the appropriate committee you have chosen.

Once you have done a needs assessment and have framed some objectives, You need to prepare at least 2 different processes or products to show in your “booth.” You may choose from the following products or processes or include your own ideas to get the word out to your intended audience: Whatever ever methods you choose you must prepare a prototype to see, read, and/or react to. (Therefore, if you are proposing a listening tee shirt, be sure to have a design ready for review on a transparency, on poster board or on an actual tee shirt!) Be sure to employ good techniques for effective visual aids. Some possible products include: tee shirts, newspaper ads, posters/Banners, caps, mugs or cups, brochures, web pages, billboards, buttons or pins, bumper stickers, radio/TV public service announcements.

Specifically, this project includes the following components:

1. A detailed explanation and rational for your campaign. Be sure the procedure, sources of funding, operational details, etc. are all well defined. Even without hearing a presentation or seeing your “booth,” a constituent of your target audience can get a sense of what this campaign is all about. Why is this campaign needed? Why is it needed for this specific audience? Be sure your campaign is clearly appropriate to your target audience. Justify why it is specific to your audience rather than to any audience.

2. Clear and specific objectives for the campaign which are detailed, complete and written as specific outcomes for this campaign. What do you want the target audience to learn, to be able to do, or to value at the end of this campaign?

3. Both of your processes and procedures should be well planned, carefully thought out, and appropriate to your audience and to a public setting.

4. Finally you will need to prepare a bibliography of 5 credible and timely sources of information.

All your paperwork and materials and “artifacts” need to be prepared so that they can be handed in for me to keep. If you need to have material for your portfolios, keep another copy for yourself. We can take digital photos of your “booth” for your portfolios as well. If you make banners or posters, I will want the originals with your paperwork/materials handed in.
Appendix B

Campaign Rubric

Team Members Names _______________________________________________________

Listening Campaign “Booth” Rubric--60 points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention getting display</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate summary of your campaign is evident from the presentation/display</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical/organized development or project</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Polished” exhibit</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team members seem credible/knowledgeable</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display appropriate for public and for your specific committee</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Points for Presentation</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Listening Campaign Paperwork Rubric—40 points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typed, detailed explanation of campaign; well defined</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Even without hearing a presentation or seeing the “booth,” a reader can get a feel for/a sense of what this campaign is all about)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives for the campaign are detailed and complete</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(You have listed specific outcomes for this campaign)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rationale for campaign is complete/needs assessment</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(You have clearly addressed why this campaign is needed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign clearly appropriate to target audience (MSU, company, community, a business you define, etc.)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Processes well planned, thought out, appropriate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography of 5 credible sources of information</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography of 5 timely sources of information</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prototypes/products are attractive, well prepared, easy to see</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible Points for Paperwork</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gaining Knowledge: Creating Activities for Students by Students

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ABSTRACT
This article describes an activity suitable for high school and college/university communication courses. Combining outside research with in-class discussions and class interaction give students the opportunity to become more knowledgeable about interviewing in the ‘real world.’ Students research interviewing topics, find articles to support their topic, then create an activity and present this to the class. This allows more in-depth analysis of common topics discussed in an interviewing class allowing students to take control for their learning, deepening the learning process for themselves and others while decreasing common interviewing pitfalls.

Goal

The goal of this activity is to provide a creative and fun approach to teach interviewing techniques by going beyond the textbook and in-class discussions. By the end of the semester, each student should be more knowledgeable about interviewing as well as having a complete file of articles to help prepare for the real world.

Courses

Interviewing, but could be modified for most communication classes.

Rationale

By participating, students take ownership of the class and into their learning. According to Davis (2001), “learning is an active, constructive process that is contextual: new knowledge is acquired in relation to previous knowledge; information becomes meaningful when it is presented in some type of framework” (p.177). Students read their chosen article and the entire class gets to learn to apply it, pushing them to think beyond summarizing content. This assists students to reach higher-order thinking in real world application by allowing them to synthesize their knowledge into a new situation. This activity also allows full participation by each individual, and through the activity, the whole class.
I make this a low point assignment. That way, there is not too much pressure; it is more about the process and the application of the article. This approach could be adapted easily for use in different classes.

**Directions/Explanation**

Each student finds an article that has something to do with interviewing; it can be on any topic relevant to the class (such as professional dress, how to write a good interview, body language, cross cultural interviews, typical interview questions, etc). I assign this to my class early on in the semester so they have time to research and think about their activity.

Each student is responsible for finding an article and presenting a ten-minute activity, which will expand on the article for the first 10 minutes of class time. Students must hand in their article **two** class periods before leading the activity. This gives me time to make copies and pass out to the class so it can be read before the activity and discussion. You could modify it so this could be done electronically over email. This activity gives each student the opportunity to show the knowledge that they have learned.

Students pick a day to present from a list of preselected days. My students email each other once they have a topic to limit duplicate topics. If they choose to miss class on their activity day, they will not receive the points. This activity could also be done over the Internet or in pairs/groups.

To begin this assignment, I had students read an article currently posted at AOL’s *Find a Job* website entitled, “Nine tricks if you’re bad with names” ([http://jobs.aol.com/article/_a/nine-tricks-if-youre-bad-with-names/20050808184609990064](http://jobs.aol.com/article/_a/nine-tricks-if-youre-bad-with-names/20050808184609990064)) to give students something to model from. During the beginning of class I asked students to tell me their thoughts on the article. We talked about the article’s suggested techniques for remembering names, when they may work and when they may not. I asked the students to share any techniques about remembering names that were not listed. Most of the students already knew each other, so I handed them a sheet of paper with a new name. They had to learn their new name and then meet as many new people as they could, and try to remember the names of people they met. I told them to act as if this were a party and to try to meet as many contacts as possible.

After about 10 minutes I asked them to sit down and remember and write down as many names as they could. I called roll, and had each student raise his/her hand so the students could associate the right name with the right face. The person who got the most right got a small prize. We then broke down the assignment talking about techniques that worked and why, we also talked about what could have been done differently.

The students enjoyed this! They thought it was great fun to take what they had read and discussed, and make it into something they could easily remember in a hands-on approach. They were very excited to try it themselves.
**Typical Results**

One should start talking about this early on in the semester, to allow for discussion about expectations of the assignment. I modeled my expectations of the assignment by creating and presenting the first activity, this allowed students to have a clear understanding of the assignment. It was also helpful to debrief the class with a short discussion of the topic and the activity. They should be graded not just on creativity, but also on their ability to help fellow classmates and create an open classroom atmosphere.

Through this ongoing activity students have an opportunity to get the most out of class, get to know each other and to help create information that will be of use to them while they are applying and interviewing for jobs. This allows students to diagnose common interviewing pitfalls, and help their classmates find the right remedy. Topics have included, how to dress, talking too much during interviews, how to write good thank you letters, how to evaluate benefit packages, how to build a resume, and the dos and don’ts of dinner etiquette.

**References**


Discovering Culture and Communication on the World Wide Web

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ABSTRACT

Discussions of intercultural communication mostly center round the interaction of culture and communication concerning differences in values, beliefs, norms and communication styles. However, cultural differences also stem from different cognitive styles, which impact intercultural communication. This article describes an activity that introduces students to cultural cognition theory. Combining research on the Internet, small group interaction, and class discussion, this exercise encourages students to apply theory to practice, to explore cultural differences on the Internet, and to develop their critical thinking skills. It also develops their awareness and skills needed to be mindful of the nuances of cultural differences. The exercise is suitable for high-school or university-level communication courses that discuss cultural differences as part of their content.

Introduction

Discussions of cultural differences are found in many communication courses as well as in many social sciences disciplines. These discussions mostly center on the differences in values, beliefs, norms and communication styles. Cultural differences, however, also stem from different cognitive styles. The exercise described below allows students to investigate the relationship between cultural cognitive styles and effective communication. Specifically, it allows students to examine how cultural cognitive processes inform effective communication on the Web as well as how the ubiquitous World Wide Web may actually serve as a sociocultural environment that helps shape and sustain culturally specific cognitive processes. Pedagogically, this activity capitalizes on students’ interests in the Internet as well as the required laptop computer ownership of many campuses, and encourages them to explore on their own, to apply theory to practice, and to develop their critical thinking skills.

The objective of this activity is to give high school or college students insight into the connection between culture and communication on the Internet. The activity helps students understand the key concepts of holistic and analytic cognitive styles as well as high-context and low-context communication. If the students complete the activity successfully, they should have developed the skills needed to be mindful of the nuances of cultural differences.
Theoretical Background

Cultural perspective on cognition is a dramatic shift from the mainstream psychology of the 20th century, where “basic” cognitive processes are generally presumed to be the same among all human groups. According to cultural cognition theory, “[c]ulture exerts fundamental influences on basic psychological processes” (Lehman, Chiu, & Schaller, 2004, p. 695). Different values, beliefs, practices as well as different social and perceptual environments encourage significantly divergent attentional and cognitive capacities, resulting in normative standards for information processing, which differ across cultures (Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001).

Cognitive style concerns the ways in which individuals consistently attend to, perceive, organize, and respond to stimuli. Cultural cognition theory proposes that there are two culturally specific cognitive styles: holistic cognition and analytic cognition. According to Nisbett and colleagues (Nisbett et al., 2001), an individual engaged in holistic cognition is oriented to the context as a whole, attends to relationships between a focal object and the background, and prefers explaining and predicting events on the basis of such relationships. In contrast, an individual engaged in analytic cognition detaches the object from its context, tends to focus on attributes of the object, and prefers using rules to explain and predict the object’s behavior. As holistic thinkers, East Asians tend to engage in context-dependent perceptual processes; their attention is oriented toward the field and to relationships between objects. North Americans, however, tend to engage in context-independent perceptual processes; as analytic thinkers, they decontextualize an object from the field and attend to its properties to establish category membership.

Nisbett and colleagues (Nisbett et al., 2001) reviewed a variety of studies supporting the theory. For example, in a study on attention, it was found that when Japanese and Americans were presented with scenes of fish and other underwater objects, and asked what they had seen, Japanese participants usually reported that they had seen a lake or pond whereas American participants usually reported that they had seen the focal fish. In a study on causal attribution, it was found that while Americans explained another person’s behavior predominantly in terms of traits, such as recklessness or kindness. Asian Indians explained comparable behaviors in terms of contextual factors, such as social roles, obligations, and the physical environment.

Evidence is found that culturally characteristic environments may afford distinctive patterns of allocating attention resources. According to Miyamoto, Nisbett and Masuda (2006), there exists a process of “mutual constitution of cognitive processes and sociocultural environment” (p. 118). Culturally specific websites should be an essential part of that sociocultural environment. While cultural cognitive styles inform web design, the outcomes of the design constitute part of culturally specific perceptual environment that shapes and sustains culturally specific cognitive styles. In this context, the activity enables students to observe how cultural cognition theory offers a unique approach to analyzing some of the most apparent cultural differences on the World Wide Web, a truly global medium.
Although the activity focuses on the Web, learning the theoretical underpinning will help students understand the differences in culturally specific cognitive styles. As cognitive style determines how an individual processes and responds to messages, the knowledge will increase students’ effectiveness of communicating with people of other cultures. The knowledge will also help students better understand culturally specific communication styles, such as high-context and low-context communication (Samovar, Porter, & McDaniel, 2006).

**Intended Courses**

This activity has been successfully used in intercultural communication courses. It is appropriate for a variety of courses that discuss cultural differences as part of the course content, especially in international contexts, such as global studies, international business, business web design, etc. For a middle-school or high-school class, the theory references/discussion may be taken out in order to emphasize the diverse cultural practices in presenting and structuring information on the World Wide Web.

**Preparation for the Activity**

First of all, establish with students that they will be given a chance to browse familiar websites as well as to try some unfamiliar ones. Emphasize that they may not understand what the unfamiliar sites say due to language barriers but it should not be a problem because the real challenge is to focus on and compare the visual features of the sites. Then, review the basic concepts of cultural cognition theory with students (see Appendix A). Help students connect the ideas of the theory to the need to improve their ability of being sensitive to and mindful of cultural differences. Finally, distribute the handout (see Appendix B) and ask students to complete it, preferably pairing students if conducted in class.

**Conducting the Activity**

The activity works well if conducted during an 80-minute course session or two subsequent 50 minutes classes (without theory references/discussion, the activity may be done within 50 minutes), where students have their own laptops and wireless connections. (Students can also work outside of class if resources are limited in the classroom.) Tell students that they should choose comparable websites from two countries, such as top national news sites or the web sites of the largest public companies. Alternatively, they may select a multi-national corporation to examine its English version and a version targeted at another country, such as China.

After students are done with their examination, have the class discuss their findings in larger groups. Do a quick assessment of whether it would be better to assign students to groups by site type or randomly assign them to larger groups. Find out the number of students who
examine different types of web sites (e.g. national news sites, business sites or different versions of a multi-national corporation’s site). If each of the types is examined by enough number of students to make at least one larger group, assign students by site type. This could lead to discussion of whether different genres (news sites vs. business sites) make a difference in web page design or in the case of different versions of a multi-national corporation’s site, whether and how the corporation adapts its web page design to create a look and feel that appeals to the targeted audience.

Once the students are in groups, ask them to discuss their findings and come to conclusions. Then have groups report on their findings. Guide the students to process information on three levels, description, explanation and reflection. Ask the students to describe similarities and differences in the web page design, such as layout, use of imagery and animation, and explain possible reasons for the similarities and differences. Help the students apply the terms of holistic and analytic cognitive styles to their findings.

After the discussion, ask each student to reflect on how the activity helps sensitize them to various cultural markers on the Web. The instructor can point out the connections between learning a theory, observing the theory in action, and applying it to their own lives to communicate effectively with people of other cultural backgrounds online as well as offline. The instructor might also choose to emphasize that effective intercultural communication is more than having a common language. Students need to be mindful of and adaptive to other ways of information processing. Developing their skills in being observant to cultural variations around them and being respectful of cultural differences is a vital part of life skills, which courses in communication studies help them develop.

Limitations

When conducted in class, the activity might be less successful if network connection is very slow. Class size also has an impact on the effectiveness and relative student involvement with the activity.

References

Appendix A

PowerPoint Outline for
Discovering Culture and Communication on the World Wide Web

Key Concepts

• Culture and systems of thought
  o Holistic thought – “involving an orientation to the context or field as a whole, including attention to relationships between a focal object and the field, and a preference for explaining and predicting events on the basis of such relationships”
  o Analytic thought – “involving detachment of the object from its context, a tendency to focus on attributes of the object to assign it to categories, and a preference for using rules about the categories to explain and predict the object's behavior”

• East and West differences
  o People of East Asian cultures tend to engage in context-dependent cognitive processes and to perceive and think about the environment in a holistic way.
  o People of Western cultures tend to engage in context-independent cognitive processes and to perceive and think about the environment in an analytic way.

• Attention and perceptual environment
  o Culturally specific patterns of attention may be afforded by the perceptual environment of each culture.

Asking Questions

• Is the World Wide Web a culturally specific perceptual environment, which helps shape and sustain culturally specific cognitive processes? Or

• Is there an emerging trans-cultural web style, which results in a universal look and feel on web sites across cultures?

Finding Answers

• Do the exercise (Appendix B) and discuss findings.
Appendix B

Student Handout
Culture and the World Wide Web

Go online to http://www.abyznewslinks.com, select a U.S. national news site, such as CNN.com or MSNBC.com, and then select a national news site from another country, preferably an Eastern country, such as China or Japan. Alternatively, you may go to http://www.forbes.com/forbes2000, which lists the world’s largest companies, and select two companies from the same industry, one being a U.S. company and the other being a company from another culture, preferably from the East (such as Taiwan, South Korea, etc.). Or you may select a multi-national corporation and find two versions of its web site, one in English and the other in another language.

Be observant! Pay close attention to details! Examine the use of imagery and animation, as well as the layout on the page. Answer the following questions:

1) For each page, make a list of characteristics that catch your attention. Compare to see whether they are similar or different on the two pages? (This item asks students to jot down visual features that compare or contrast the selected pages. For example, students may notice that Chinese pages use more imagery and that Chinese pages are divided into many independent spaces while on U.S. pages, the layout is arranged around a focal point of the page.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imagery:</th>
<th>Other Culture’s web page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animation:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layout:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) What evidence have you found that supports (or rejects) the hypothesis that culturally specific patterns of attention may be afforded by the perceptual environment of that culture?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

3) With regard to the World Wide Web as a global medium, what does your discovery answer the questions of whether it is a culturally characteristic perceptual environment or whether there is an emerging web style that transcends cultural boundaries?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

4) What issues arise with regard to making web communication more effective across cultures?

___________________________________________________________________________

5) How do your findings in this exercise shed light on strategies for effective communication between you and people of other cultural background?

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Exploring Literary Characters in Classroom Performance

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ABSTRACT
Original classroom exercises are an invaluable instructional tool to actively engage students in analysis and performance of dramatic and non-dramatic literary texts. The basic principle of classroom performance emphasizes a critical and creative teaching perspective that stimulates student responses to the aesthetic, emotional and intellectual content of a literary text. Selected exercises that promote a more theatrical impulse in the study and performance of literary texts present meaningful opportunities for students to give vocal and physical visualization to the actions, attitudes and emotions of literary characters and, ultimately, enriches the classroom learning experience.

A number of traditional approaches to teaching literary texts (dramatic or non-dramatic) frequently view the notion of classroom performance as an occasional exercise in oral interpretation of literature or recitative reading aloud to an audience of student listeners (Lewis, 2003). Although acknowledging a literary text’s inherent dramatic qualities, there appears to be less agreement among teachers of English and theatre on the role that classroom performance might play in giving added dimension and meaning to the feelings and thoughts of literary characters. For still others, however, classroom performance is seen as an instructive exercise that cultivates a theatrical impulse in students to engage in meaningful character interpretation and role-playing activities (Spolin, 1986).

Whether constructed on literary analysis models, conventional acting theories or inspired by original exercise discoveries, classroom performance is an invaluable instructional technique available to English and theatre teachers who want their students to see, hear and feel literary characters. Pursuing a more theatrical approach to visualizing and voicing the actions, attitudes and emotions of literary characters should also stimulate student listeners to become more active participants engaged in understanding the aesthetic, emotional and intellectual content of a literary text when it is first analyzed and then enacted in a classroom performance.

Classroom Staging

There are a number of basic principles to consider in the classroom staging of a literary text. For example, the setting of the text may be more easily visualized by incorporating an
elevated platform framed by a miniature proscenium arch at one end of the classroom or the playing space may be arranged in-the-round, three-quarter round or in a semicircle. Classroom staging may feature small step-units or ramps, fabric panels, door frames, arches, stools, wall projections, draperies or painted backdrops to depict selected locales. Theatrical elements like lighting, projections, music, sound and special effects may also be used to indicate locales or to enhance the author’s narrative description of character action and attitude.

Student performers may wear suggestive costumes and subtle make-up to suggest a more striking physical presence or carry selected hand props to more clearly define their literary character portraits. The artistic line that defines what is “literal” or “localized” staging, however, is a very thin one in classroom performance. For example, a single white picket fence in a scripted excerpt of Mark Twain’s novel *Huckleberry Finn* or a painted backdrop of a gnarled tree in a scene from Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* may represent a specific locale but may not give substantial textual meaning to the complex issues of adolescent fantasies and cosmic free will addressed in these respective texts.

**Preparation**

As you begin experimenting with your own imaginative approaches to interpreting and visualizing literary characters in classroom performance, remember that it is important to present the literature on its own terms. Adaptations or excerpts from literary texts should be condensed to meet time limitations and the sequence of incidents or events should build to an unmistakable climax. It is also important to consider the number of student performers available, and to offer opportunities for all to participate in exercises, staging assignments and performances—either as actors, technicians, script writers, designers or production crew members.

**Classroom Exercises**

Although there is no prescribed formula to give vocal and physical shape or substance to literary characters in classroom performance, the original exercises that follow were designed to address student vocal and physical attributes that enhance a three-dimensional character portrait; and should provide an initial physical and vocal foundation for student performers to give immediate life and meaning to literary characters. Please approach each exercise with a performance perspective that is most appropriate for your individual style of teaching. Do, however, take the creative liberty of refining these exercises to meet the special needs of your students or to reinforce your desired teaching and learning objectives for a selected literary text.
Exercise 1: Character Search

Goal: To provide student performers an opportunity to explore performance metaphors in a classroom setting.

Approach: Pre-record a brief one-minute excerpt of music from a simple lyric, jazz tune, classical sonata, popular melody, folk ballad, and rap song. Have the students listen to each selection separately until they have a sense of the tempo and rhythm associated with each musical style. Divide the class into small groups of four or five and have each group perform as they move slowly to the melodic tones of the classical sonata; move quickly to the accelerated pace of the jazz tune; relax and sway to the tone of the simple lyric and popular melody; move with a measure of hesitation to the folk ballad; and then abruptly halt and sense the staccato and strident movement suggested by the rap song.

Following a discussion of the selective role of movement to reveal character motivation or to telescope character intention, repeat the exercise without the music using the following excerpt from Gwendolyn Brooks’ poem “We Real Cool” (Brooks, 1966). Instruct each student group that movements suggesting a forceful step forward may now be thought of as jazz or rap steps; movements of deliberate intent may be expressed in sonata steps; movements to focus attention or highlight a character point of view may be inspired by folk steps; and movements of intimacy may be signaled by recalling simple lyric and popular melody steps.

We real cool. We
Left school. We
Lurk late. We
Strike straight. We
Sing sin. We
Think gin. We
Jazz June. We
Die soon.

The exercise may be extended to include character movement that is appropriate for individual student monologues, group scene study work or scripting and performing non-dramatic texts. Excerpts appropriate for this part of the exercise might include a scene from William Shakespeare’s comic “mechanicals” in A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Joyce Carol Oates’ character portrait of the ostrich-like Leah in Bellfleur, the “confrontation” scene of Clay
and Lula in Amiri Baraka’s *Dutchman*, Anne Sexton’s poem “Unknown Girl in the Maternity Ward” or Mark Twain’s “diaries” of Adam and Eve.

**Exercise 2: Vocal Charades**

**Goal:** To familiarize student performers with the vocal vocabulary of character shades and tones of meaning.

**Approach:** Divide students into three groups and give each group a specific name that corresponds to the following vocal terms e.g., “jumping jaws,” “loose lips” and “trilling tongues.” Remind students that vocal variety is an essential ingredient in character development and that it is important to cultivate adequate breath support, speak at the optimum level of pitch using a comfortable rate and producing vowel sounds that are crisp and clear.

The “jumping jaws” begin the exercise by moving to the front of the classroom. Instruct the group to allow the head to fall slowly toward the chest. When all heads are resting comfortably at mid-chest, students slowly rotate the head up and down, but keep the jaw relaxed. Now instruct the group to slowly roll the head toward the right and then toward the left, making a semi-circle with the head motions. The group pauses and places both hands on the cheekbones as they slowly lift the head upward, keeping the jaw relaxed and motionless. When each head is finally lifted, the jaw should sag open. With the jaw open and relaxed, the group voices the following phrases in unison, moving only the tip of the tongue: da-da-da-da, de-de-de-de, la-la-la-la-la and le-le-le-le-le. The phrases should be repeated five times as a group and five times individually, or until the jaw begins to tense, and then the group returns to their seats.

The “loose lips” now move to the front of the classroom. Instruct the group to open the mouth wide to form an “O.” Keeping the tongue flat in the mouth, and resting the tip of the tongue on the ridge of the lower teeth, the group slowly begins to alternate the position of the lips from a small “O” to a large “O,” and then repeats the sequence ten times. When the lips are sufficiently flexible, the group voices the following phrases in short bursts of breath: oh-oh-oh-oh, ah-ah-ah-ah, mo-mo-mo-mo, and no-no-no-no. The phrases should be repeated five times as a group and five times individually, always keeping the lips rounded and the tongue flat, and then the group returns to their seats.

The “trilling tongues” group now move to the front of the classroom. Instruct the group to focus on d’s, t’s and ing’s to promote crisp and fluid articulation as they slowly arch the tongue toward the roof of the mouth and rapidly voice the following phrases: d-d-d-don’t, t-t-t-teeth and s-s-s-s-singing. Follow the precise articulation of the *d, t* and *ing* sound by having the group voice the following words, emphasizing each *d, t* and *ing* as precisely as possible: dentist, teacher, laughing, right, district, frolicking, distant, tepid and disappointing. The phrases and words should be repeated five times as a group and five times individually, or until the tongue,
teeth and lips are actively engaged in the articulation process, and then the group returns to their seats.

The exercise may be extended by having each group identify key words or phrases in the following excerpt from William Shakespeare’s “advice to the players” in *Hamlet* (III, ii, 1-19) that lend themselves to “jumping jaws,” “loose lips” and “trilling tongues” techniques that may reveal potential character shades and tones of meaning. The excerpt may also be voiced as a group ensemble or as a series of individual monologues.

*Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it, as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently, for in the very torrent, tempest, and as I may say whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o’erdoing Termagant; it out-herods Herod: pray you, avoid it.*

**Exercise 3: Character In-A-Box**

**Goal:** To acquaint students with the role that character attitude and hand prop play in classroom performance.

**Approach:** Begin the exercise by presenting the class with two cardboard boxes labeled “Character Attitude” and “Character Prop.” The “attitude” box contains individual slips of folded paper that identify specific character attitudes, e.g., angry, befuddled, anxious, joyful, reluctant, and puzzled. The “prop” box contains items easily held in the hand that might be used to underscore the selected character attitude, e.g., eyeglasses, cell phone, fountain pen, wristwatch, note pad and handkerchief.

Students approach the “attitude” box individually and select a single slip of folded paper indicating the desired character attitude and then move to the “prop” box to select an appropriate hand prop that best serves to reinforce the selected character attitude. Each student then performs a brief 1 to 2 minute excerpt from a reading assigned several days in advance of the exercise. The following excerpt from Rod McKuen’s *Eighteen* (McKuen, 1973) may also be assigned. It is important, however, that students perform the same excerpt to insure that multiple interpretations of the selected text emerge.

*I stood watching as you crossed the street for the last time. Trying hard to memorize you. Knowing it would be important. The way you walked, the way you*
looked back over your shoulder at me. Years later I would hear the singing of the wind and that day’s singing would come back. That time of going would return to me every sun-gray day. April or August it would be the same for years to come. These long years later it is worse for I remember what it was, as well as what it might have been.

Following individual performances, there should be active class discussion of the effectiveness of the voice in conveying the selected character attitude and the role of the hand prop in serving as an extension of the character’s attitude. Following class discussion, the exercise may be extended “matching” appropriate character attitudes and hand props to monologues from Edgar Lee Masters’ *Spoon River Anthology*, Dylan Thomas’ composite community portraits in *Under Milk Wood* or Sandra Cisneros’ finely etched character sketches in *The House on Mango Street*.

**Student Responses**

Student responses to these selected exercises have been universally positive and the exercises are easily adaptable for individual, pairs or small groups of students. It is important, however, to approach classroom performance as more than just reading or speaking aloud and to encourage students to reinforce their newly acquired skills through frequent rehearsal and warm-up periods. Allow each exercise to teach the performance lesson rather than engage in an extended discussion of desired outcomes. Students should also be encouraged to make their own adjustments to the exercises in the rehearsal period. It is important to practice economy and efficiency with these exercises. Encourage students to focus on a single performance objective and a selective character portrait most appropriate to the sample literature. To paraphrase the title song in the musical *Fiddler on the Roof*, it is the “tradition” of preparation, application, concentration and execution of the exercises in the rehearsal period that will insure classroom performance success.

**References**

Are You “Wanted” For Poor Listening Habits?

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ABSTRACT

In order to begin a semester or unit on effective listening with some basic theory and knowledge and to serve as an icebreaker, students are asked to design and share a “Wanted Poster” describing their poor listening habits. The significance of this assignment was guided by the ubiquitous nature of listening. Research verifies listening as the most utilized form of communication. “If frequency is a measure of importance, then listening easily qualifies as the most prominent kind of communication” (Adler & Rodman, 1997, p. 283). In 1926, Paul T. Rankin conducted what is considered the breakthrough study of listening. Statistically, Rankin found that 45% of communication time was spent listening, while 30% was spent speaking, 16% was spent reading and nine percent was spent writing (Floyd, 1998). Rankin’s statistics are consistently cited and replicated in the fields of communication and listening. Current research continues to substantiate Rankin’s original results. People spend a great deal of time listening in many contexts; unfortunately, “[M]ost people do not necessarily do it well” (Floyd, 1998, p. 2). Researchers Beloit and Lee “found that 25 percent of what most people listen to can be recalled. Of that 25 percent, 80 percent is distorted or not accurately received; this leaves only 5 percent of the total message accurately received” (in Seiler & Beall, 2005, p. 145).

Students begin this assignment by accessing Listening is a 10 Part Skill by Dr. Ralph G. Nichols, the “Father of the Field of Listening.” This document is available online at http://www.listen.org/Templates/Nichols 10 Part Skill.pdf. In addition, for students who prefer oral to written material, an audio version of a speech by Dr. Nichols covering this subject matter is available at http://www.listen.org/Templates/nichols/ralph_nichols.html. The 10 listening skills introduced by Dr. Nichols in the 1950s continue to be credible. After reading or listening to Listening is a 10 Part Skill, students prepare a “Wanted Poster” describing themselves and their worst listening habits (adapted from Cooper & Simonds, 1999). Posters are shared with
Discussion concludes the assignment. Whether this class is online or meets face to face, the discussion centers on improving the listening skills which the students identify as well as introducing concepts to be covered throughout the course. The discussion and posters allow the instructor to add valuable reinforcement to the original reading or speech.

Discussion revolves around what each student defines as an offense and how it complicates their listening and their communication. Because all students see others’ offenses, there is awareness that no one is exempt from listening faults. The discussion also allows students to realize they are not “alone” in struggling with their listening skills.

This activity also serves as a barometer which can determine future assignments or activities. For example, if many students define their offense as failure to eliminate noise, the instructor can design activities to highlight how to recognize and eliminate noise; if information overload is a common theme, the instructor can include activities which define overload and construct activities that allow students to understand why and how overload affects their listening.

The specific directions to students include:
1. Watch or listen to “Listening is a 10 Part Skill” (http://www.listen.org/Templates/Nichols 10 Part Skill.pdf) or (http://www.listen.org/Templates/nichols/ralph_nichols.html)
2. Obtain or make a picture of yourself (clip art, actual digital photo, caricature, etc.)
3. Choose an offense, a bad listening habit of which you are guilty. Explain the offense in detail under your picture by composing a beginning paragraph describing your offense and the trouble it has caused you (5 sentences minimum). Others will be seeing your posters; be prepared to share your work.

Some ideas
1. I can be seen (heard)...
2. Use extreme caution because I...
3. I am usually found...
4. Make up an alias for yourself which has to do with your listening offense.
5. Write a 2nd paragraph with a physical description (3 sentence minimum) of yourself as an offender. Use a physical description that “fits” your offense rather than a simple physical description of yourself.
6. Finish with a statement of a reward which is consistent with your crime (1 or 2 sentences)
7. Your posters will be shared with others.

Sample of previous wanted posters can be accessed at:
- Wanted Sample 1 (http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/johnsn3/wanted sample 1.htm)
- Wanted Sample 2 (http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/johnsn3/wanted sample 2.htm)
- Wanted Sample 3 (http://mavdisk.mnsu.edu/johnsn3/wanted sample 3.pdf)

This assignment has been used with traditional college students, as an in-class assignment and as an online assignment. It has also been used for business training sessions. It has always
been overwhelmingly successful particularly as an introduction to effective listening. By breaking down the listening process and then identifying his/her own specific problems, students are able to “own” their behavior. They can use the knowledge throughout the semester to apply concepts to their own situation. The wanted posters are often referred to throughout the semester thereby reinforcing the concepts and skills needed by effective listeners. This assignment explores the beginning of the path on the journey to improving important listening skills.

References


ON THE WEB

Extraordinary Everyday Stories:
Audio Resources for the Communication Instructor

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ABSTRACT
Communication instructors often supplement course texts with artistic works such as feature films, short stories, and memoirs. A less common form of supplementary material is the audio documentary/story. The discussion below introduces several audio resources likely to help students deepen their understanding of communication in general and interpersonal and intercultural communication in particular. I also offer a few ideas to those instructors wishing to help students create their own small-scale audio productions.

Audio Resources

American Radio Works (http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/)

American Radio Works produces outstanding full-length audio documentaries on a range of topics. The website includes clips and, often, photographs to go along with the sound. Many of the documentaries will not be relevant for most communication classrooms, but features such as “Married to the Military” (http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/homefront/) offer unique perspectives on the complexities and challenges of interpersonal interaction. I often find it helpful to look for clips from featured documentaries. For example, when I teach about the power of labels, I play a story called “Scraping by” from the feature “Hard Time: Life After Prison” (http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/hardtime/). The story deals with the response to the word “felon” and makes a nice five minute introduction into discussions about language and labels. Similar features can be found to suit personal teaching needs.

Radio Diaries (http://www.radiodiaries.org/)

Radio Diaries offers a range of unique perspectives and stories. Their mission is to “…find extraordinary stories in ordinary places.” The website features first person stories from
teenagers, senior citizens, prison inmates, and blue-collar workers—among others. Radio Diaries offers students the chance to listen to diverse individuals tell about their lives; the work archived here allows students the opportunity to have a sort of conversation with individuals different than themselves. Projects of particular interest include “Teenage Diaries” where teenagers explore identity development (http://www.radiodiaries.org/teenagediaries.html), the “New York Works” Project in which individuals in “vanishing” professions tell their stories (http://www.radiodiaries.org/newyorkworks-home.html) and “The Last Place: Diary of a Retirement Home” (http://www.radiodiaries.org/radiodiaries.html) in which personal and intimate reflections on aging are offered.

**Sound Portraits** (http://www.soundportraits.org/)

Home to the work of well-known audio producer David Isay, Sound Portraits features everything from a documentary about lobotomies to shorter recordings of the last words of condemned prisoners. Two especially compelling works are “Ghetto Life 101,” a Peabody Award winning documentary made by two teenagers growing up on the South Side of Chicago (http://www.soundportraits.org/on-air/ghetto_life_101/) and “The Sunshine Hotel,” a documentary focusing on a flophouse in New York City (http://www.soundportraits.org/on-air/the_sunshine_hotel/).

**StoryCorps** (http://storycorps.net/)

StoryCorps is a national listening project created by David Isay. The project invites ordinary Americans to tell and capture their not so ordinary stories. StoryCorps maintains two recording booths in high traffic areas within New York City (one in Grand Central Station) and has two mobile recording studios traveling the country collecting stories. The idea is deceptively simple. Individuals come to a StoryCorps location and conduct a 40 minute interview with a friend, neighbor, family member, etc. A trained facilitator helps the participants as needed and makes two broadcast quality recordings of the interview; one copy is given to the participants and one is sent to the Library of Congress which maintains a StoryCorps archive. StoryCorps describes its work as follows:

To us, StoryCorps celebrates our shared humanity and collective identity. It captures and defines the stories that bond us. We’ve found that the process of interviewing a friend, neighbor, or family member can have a profound impact on both the interviewer and the interviewee. We’ve seen people change, friendships grow, families walk away feeling closer, understanding each other better. Listening, after all, is an act of love...

The StoryCorps website offers a number of resources for communication instructors. The site posts powerful excerpts from recorded conversations (usually just a couple of minutes
long), the site offers advice on how individuals can conduct their own StoryCorps-like interviews with friends and family (a possible classroom assignment), and, through its “question generator” feature, the website will even help users generate specific questions for use in an interview.

**As detailed, each of the websites above presents a range of audio storytelling— instructors will find projects ranging in length from a couple minutes to a couple hours. Many longer works on these websites are divided into shorter vignettes that can often be used separately in the classroom.**

**Other Audio Resources of Interest…**

- **This American Life** ([http://www.thislife.org/](http://www.thislife.org/)): A popular public radio program featuring unique storytelling. Each one hour episode is divided into “acts” ranging from approximately 10-20 minutes—often one of the acts works well for classroom use.
- **Public Radio Exchange** ([http://www.prx.org/](http://www.prx.org/)): A site featuring audio work from independent producers across the country and world
- And, of course, **National Public Radio** ([http://www.npr.org/](http://www.npr.org/)): A source for a wide variety of complex and interesting audio work.

**From Listening to Doing: Tackling Small-Scale Audio Production**

The more I used audio work in my classroom, the more interested I became in learning how to help students (and myself) learn how to create audio projects. What follows is intended not for the production classroom, but for those instructors in interpersonal courses who may want to have students create small-scale audio work for a class assignment. For example, students might conduct and edit an audio interview with an elder or an individual from a culture different than their own. Students might assemble an audio collage featuring photos and comments from family members about interpersonal communication. And so on. This kind of audio work is exiting for students, fairly easy to produce, and can be done with fairly limited expense. The resources below help get you started.


This portion of the Sound Portraits website offers advice about conducting interviews, purchasing inexpensive equipment, and getting the best possible sound. This guide will prove helpful to students and instructors.
Transom.org  (http://www.transom.org/)

Billed as “a showcase & workshop” for new public radio, Transom.org offers valuable resources for the novice and experienced audio producer. The site features reviews of audio equipment, editing tips, and helpful links. The site also features a variety of unique programming.

Audacity  (http://audacity.sourceforge.net/)

Audacity is free open-source audio editing software for the PC and Mac. More elaborate programs such as Adobe Audition and Pro-Tools can also be used, but students in any course involving an audio component can easily download and make use of Audacity.

Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University  (http://www-cds.aas.duke.edu/)

The Center for Documentary Studies offers courses in audio production. I attended the beginner class in the summer of 2005 (Hearing is Believing) and Hearing is Believing II in the summer of 2006. Both classes were, in my opinion, outstanding. Instructors or students with an interest in learning and teaching about audio work may find the Center’s courses of value.

Audio-Related Assignments

There a number of ways audio can be incorporated into communication courses. I’ll mention general ideas here—ideas that could be modified for use in a wide variety of communication courses.

- Have students conduct audio interviews with community members. Instructors decide the on the focus. Examples include an interview with an individual whose job centers on interpersonal communication (e.g., a counselor) or an interview with an individual from a culture different from the student doing the interview.
- Have students create short audio essays (e.g., audio piece about identity for an interpersonal course)
- Students create short audio documentaries (e.g., communication in parents’ card group…or a day in the communication life of another student in the class)
- Have students write a paper applying communication concepts to a full-length audio documentary heard on one of the websites mentioned earlier.
- Invite students to explore some of the audio resources mentioned here and find examples of audio work depicting communication concepts or philosophies being discussed in the course.