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SPECIAL SECTION
Constitutional Rights in Post-9/11 America

GENERAL INTEREST
Tornadoes of Utterances: A Theoretical Approach To Studying Discourse, Power and Knowledge

This House Would Not Mix Burdens: The Conflation of Fact, Value, and Policy in NPDA

“I’m, uhh, Sorry”: The Influence of Fluency and Communication Competence on Perceptions of Apologies

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Constructing Space and Time for Work and Family: A Structuration Perspective on Bed and Breakfasts

TEACHER’S WORKBOOK
Creating Community Outside of the Classroom: Strategies for Integrating Second Life into the Interpersonal Communication Course

Illustrating the Perceptual Process Through a Music Video

Understanding Coalition Dynamics: A Role Play Class Activity
Editor's Note

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/cmst/ctam/journal.html
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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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From the Editor

In the early morning hours of September 24, 2010 agents of the FBI raided the homes of peace and anti-war activists in Minneapolis and Chicago. They seized computers, papers, cell phones, pictures and other property. Subpoenas were issued summoning 23 anti-war and international solidarity activists to appear and testify before a grand jury.

These raids were widely condemned by civil rights organizations, legal groups, peace activists, and many others as an unjustified violation of First Amendment rights to organize and advocate.

As editor of the CTAM Journal, it seemed only natural to me that these events should be of interest to our community. The issue of free speech is of special interest to those of us who teach public speaking, debate, and performance. These raids took place here in Minnesota. But the issue struck even closer to home. Several of the individuals targeted were members of our own speech and debate community among them, Jess Sundin, Tracy Molm, Katrina Plotz, and Meredith Aby.

On September 21, 2011, Meredith Aby accepted an invitation to speak on the subject of freedom of speech and association in ten years after 9/11. Her speech, which was sponsored by the Department of Communication Studies at Minnesota State University, the Kessel Peace Institute, and the Mankato Area Activist Collective, is more than a powerful defense of free speech the right to dissent. It is the personal account of an ordinary person of extraordinary conviction—an activist, a mother, a partner, a teacher, and a debate coach—for whom standing up for right to oppose one’s government is more than an abstract principle, more than a theory. For Aby and other activists targeted by the FBI, the defense of free speech, free association, and the freedom to dissent are very real.

Meredith Aby was raised in Worthington, Minnesota where she competed on both her high school speech and debate teams. She went on to debate at Macalester College for three years. Aby continued her passion for forensics through coaching and has coached debate at Coon Rapids High School, St. Paul Academy and Jefferson High School in Bloomington where she has taught since 1999.

In her senior year at Macalester Aby became politically active with the Twin Cities Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. In 1998 she co-founded the Twin Cities based Anti-War Committee which organizes against U.S. wars and interventions across the globe. In 2008, Aby was one of the principle organizers of the Coalition to March on the RNC and helped organize a protest of tens of thousands against the war in Iraq in St. Paul, MN.

Aby and the other 22 anti-war and international solidarity activists who have been subpoenaed all are refusing to cooperate with the FBI’s investigation and risk imprisonment for doing so. They have organized a grassroots pressure campaign against FBI repression of the peace movement through the Committee to Stop FBI Repression (stopfbi.net).
Constitutional Rights in Post-9/11 America*

Meredith Aby
Anti-War Committee of Minnesota

I’m excited to be here and thank you very much for hosting me. I have a special place in my heart for Mankato. My great grandmother, Martha Wilson, was a settlement house activist and a social worker here at the YWCA in the ‘30’s and so Mankato always has a special place in my family’s history and in my heart.

So under the topic of constitutional rights, which is what I’ve been asked to speak about tonight, sadly enough there are a lot of different ways that we can examine that issue. We could look at the Fifth Amendment right to counsel and the right against self-incrimination and how that’s in jeopardy. We could look at our right to privacy under the Fourth Amendment and how that’s in jeopardy. Or, for example, today, there’s a protest happening in St. Louis Park because former President George W. Bush is speaking in St. Louis Park and they’re protesting the fact that the Eighth Amendment is in jeopardy through the use of water boarding.

I want to thank MSU for choosing to sponsor talk focusing on our case and highlighting the precarious situation dissent is in here in the United States, currently. For ten years, the tragic events of September 11, 2001 have been used as a pretext for endless war. Tens of thousands dead in Afghanistan, more than a million killed in Iraq, and a campaign of oppression at home carried out against thousands of Arabs, Muslims, and now even the peace movement. The road from 9/11 led the FBI to my door in the form of an early morning raid on our home almost a year ago today, on September 24, 2011, and a secret grand jury investigating about two dozen peace activists on terrorism charges.

When the Bush Administration used the events of September 11th to justify a war against Afghanistan, I joined the thousands of people to protest that war. I don’t think any of us knew that this would be a war that we would still be protesting ten years later. This war has cost tens of thousands of lives, nearly five-hundred billion dollars, and this war has lost the support of the majority of Americans. Even so, unfortunately, the Obama Administration continues Bush’s war, making it his own, and under his command the war has expanded into Pakistan and the War on Terror is still offered as a justification for aggressive military policies across the globe.

After 9/11, a war was also launched here at home on civil liberties. In an effort the clear the way for endless war abroad, the government has had to create a ‘war within.’ I watched in shame as this unfolded first within Arab and Muslim communities. Thousands of immigrants were rounded up and questioned, many detained and deported, and this has become part of a permanent campaign of repression which has now expanded beyond the Arab and Muslim communities.

* The speech was transcribed and edited by Bradford Wakefield and James P. Dimock. The original presentation was a Nadine B. Andreas Lecture, co-sponsored by the Department of Communication Studies at Minnesota State University, Mankato and the Mankato Area Activist Collective on September 21, 2011.
The Patriot Act, with 160 provisions, opened the door for unrestrained spying on American residents and citizens. It authorized the FBI and other agencies to tap our homes, read our e-mails, and comb through our trash. It laid the groundwork for a network of undercover agents hiding within our own communities from mosques to peace groups. At the time, we witnessed racial profiling on a massive scale especially in airports where Muslims, Sikhs, Arabs, and South Asians were questioned and searched and sometimes detained and prevented from boarding flights they had actually paid for. Under the guise of counter terrorism, this domestic spying has mushroomed. There are now more than 164,000 suspicious activity reports maintained by the FBI without criminal cause. These people are being investigated just because they ‘allegedly’ are suspicious. There is, moreover, a mounting list of so-called ‘terror-plots’ which have been manufactured by the FBI ensnaring individuals not suspected of involvement in any other criminal activities. The dangers of collaboration between local, state, federal, and private agencies are highlighted in last month’s shocking reports that the CIA is operating in violation of the law spying on Americans through the New York Police Department. That was reported on both National Public Radio as well as the New York Times.

A legal campaign has targeted Arabs and Muslims engaged in political or charity work that runs counter to “official” U.S. foreign policy. Dr. Sami Al-Arian of Tampa, Florida was an outspoken defender of civil liberties for Arabs and Muslims in the United States. He worked for the cause of the Palestinian people. Since his very public arrest in February of 2003, Dr. Al-Arian has spent five and half years in prison, much of that time in solitary confinement. He has now been under house arrest for three years. All of this with the government prosecutors failed to win a single guilty verdict against him for charges stemming from his political organizing. He is, as a matter of fact, serving time for refusing to testify. That’s what he’s being punished for.

In another important case involves the Holy Land Foundation, the biggest Muslim charity in the United States. Its leaders have been brought up on charges of material support of terrorism—which I will talk more about later because those are the same grounds under which we’re being investigated—they were convicted and sentenced to 15 to 65 years each for the crimes of sending money, food, clothing, medical and school supplies to Palestinian charities, some of which were the exact same charities that USAID—which is a branch of the State Department—was sending money to. Even while I was to some degree aware that these things were happening I never imagined that I would actually be next. I’m not oblivious to the fact that these things were happening but I thought that there was some sort of check which would prevent this from getting completely out of control.

But I was wrong.

At 7:00 a.m. last September 24th—so a year ago this Saturday—eight FBI agents busted through the door of my home and spent hours, almost the entire day, going through every room in my home searching for evidence that I had, quote unquote, “material support for foreign terrorist organizations.” The search warrant entitled them to seize any property associated with my political activism, any organization I’ve worked with, and anything about Colombia or Palestine, evidence of what I believe, what I say, who I know. I would argue that those are things
that should be protected, constitutionally. You know, evidence that I have an opinion—that shouldn’t be used as evidence against me. Evidence that I organize and do political work—that should be protected, that shouldn’t be used as evidence against me. And evidence that people know me should not be used against myself or against them because we’re supposed to have the freedom of association in our own country.

Before my phone was seized, I called my partner to come get our eighteen month old daughter out of our home. I was home alone with our daughter. She called others and soon supporters and a member of the National Lawyers Guild came to my home. I learned that coordinated raids were being carried out at five Minneapolis homes and the office of the Anti-War Committee in Minneapolis which I’m a member of, as well as two homes in Chicago. At the same time, agents from five different FBI offices were trying to question political colleagues of mine across the country in Michigan, North Carolina, Wisconsin, Arizona, and California.

My family was stunned. My daughter was confused as to why these strangers were in our home. I was told that I wasn’t being detained yet I couldn’t go to my daughter’s crib when she woke up without being escorted by the police and I was supervised as I changed her out of her diaper and put her in her own clothes. I, then, wasn’t allowed to leave my own living room when my daughter was awake. Meanwhile the FBI took our computers, my phone, boxes and boxes of flyers, petitions with signatures on them, and photos—any photo I had ever taken. So that included protest photos, and the entire record of the eighteen months of my daughter’s existence. The warrant said they were looking for “material support of terrorism” and how I “indoctrinate people into joining the Anti-War Committee.” The fact of the matter is, you don’t need to be indoctrinated to actually question the fact that U.S. foreign policy is wrong. I think that means you’re a person of conscience, I don’t think it means that you’re someone who has actually been indoctrinated. Questioning the fact that people on the other side of the globe who I have never met are my enemy actually just makes me a human being who connects with other human beings. It doesn’t make me a terrorist.

Also, they said they wanted evidence of how we finance the Anti-War Committee. Well, some people in this room know. I know that Jim, for example, has come to our annual spaghetti dinner where we charge people a lot of money to come and buy a pasta dinner that we have made in the Walker Church basement. It’s the Work a Day for Peace Dinner. We ask people to give a day’s wages for our pasta which I’m sure tastes very tasty but not in proportion to the amount of money people give for it. We’ve also had an annual yard sale where we take your stuff and we sell it to you guys. It’s the idea that they’re looking for evidence for how the Anti-War Committee finances itself is absolutely ridiculous because the fact is we finance ourselves by someone passing the hat at meetings just to be able to pay our own rent.

It was clear that my anti-war activism was the target of the raid, especially my solidarity work with the people of Colombia and Palestine. The search warrant zeroed in on international travel to these war torn nations as well as on the Anti-War Committee and the Freedom Road Socialist Organizations.
The day of the raid I began the work of defending myself, the organization I work in, and the movements that I have helped to build. On the one hand, my colleagues and I were well known in our communities as leaders of the peace movement. Many of us, actually, were the faces of the Coalition to March on the RNC. We were the public leaders that said, “Look, let’s go protest the Republican Convention and the fact that this is going to be the place to talk about war, right here in our home communities.” And we organized a legal and permitted march which over 30,000 people came to. But on the other hand, local and national news reports pictured me caught up in a high-profile terrorism investigation and my friends, my family, and my students at the high school that I work at saw me being accused of being a terrorist. So early that Friday morning, it was a very rude awakening to find that the War on Terror had, in matter of fact, come to my front door and that it was not something happening to other people somewhere else.

Before the FBI left my home with a vehicle full of my belongings, belongings still not returned a year later, they left me with a subpoena to appear before a grand jury in Chicago about a week later. I wasn’t the only one subpoenaed. Today, a total of 23 activists from Chicago, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Minneapolis have been issued subpoenas to testify at that grand jury and in May the FBI initiated another raid on a colleague of ours from the Coalition to March on the RNC in Los Angeles. And I think it’s important to take a look at who we are. We are all anti-war and international solidarity activists. Some of us are communists. Twelve of the 24 are parents, and seven of us have children under the age of seven. Three sets of those parents had both partners subpoenaed and are in danger of having both partners put in jail for contempt of court or in jail for these ridiculous terrorism charges—and then the question arises, who is going to raise their kids? Most of us worked together on the March on the RNC in St. Paul in 2008 and we range in age from twenty to seventy-three. Sixteen of us are women. Ten of us are union members, and four of us are Palestinian. What I think is important for you to take from those statistics is that we’re not a special group of people. As a matter of fact, we represent the types of people that are involved in the peace movement right here in Mankato. All of us are standing up and speaking out for what is happening to us and we’ve decided that we’re not interested in being victims of the War on Terrorism. Instead, we’re interested in making our case an example of what the War on Terrorism has done to our own community.

We have protested every U.S. war and act of aggression. We’ve extended the hand of solidarity to the people targeted in these wars and resisted the criminalization of liberation struggles across the world. It’s important to know that the work that we’ve been doing has put us in the crosshairs of a government investigation that has criminalized international solidarity as a whole. Like the Palestinians that I talked about before, the government will claim that sending a few dollars for kindergarteners in Palestine, which is what the Anti-War Committee was doing, that was a crime. And that the motive for our crimes can be found in our own words when we have spoken for the rights of people, like Palestinians, to resist war and demand justice. Our political work and opposition to the aggression of the U.S. government is what has made us a target. And what has been interesting through this process that I’ve learned that the material support statute—which interestingly enough, wasn’t a part of the Patriot Act…it was augmented
and made tougher by the Patriot Act but it’s something that actually happened after the Oklahoma City bombing in the late nineties—but the material support statute has been interpreted by the court as being almost anything. Material support could be speaking in solidarity with someone. It could be communication, coordinated communication, it could be money, and it could be weapons but the fact is none of us were actually being investigated for actually given weapons to anyone who is on the foreign terrorist organization list. The fact is that the idea we’re working with terrorists doesn’t take into account that in places like Colombia and Palestine that anyone who works against the Colombian government, anyone who works against the Israeli government is labeled a terrorist by those regimes. The fact is that Colombia is the world’s most dangerous place to be a trade unionist. Merely saying, like the people in Wisconsin did, “Hey, we have the right to collectively bargain,” saying something like that will get you a bullet in your head. Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, all sorts of well-known, internationally respected human rights organizations will tell you that Colombia is the world’s most dangerous place to be a trade unionist. But in Colombia, it isn’t the people who are killing the trade unionists who get called terrorists. It is the trade unionists. In Colombia, if you dare to say things like, “We think we have the right to get paid real money to work here,” that means you could be labeled a terrorist because you are challenging the Colombian government’s interest in being a free trade Mecca for U.S. corporations.

Similarly, in a place like Palestine, the Israeli’s define anybody who challenges their occupation as a terrorist and they use that label to justify demolishing people’s homes, even if they don’t believe the person who is a quote unquote “terrorist” even lives there. If someone is even just a family member of a person the Israeli’s have identified as a terrorist, they will demolish that family member’s home to punish them. Collective punishment is definitely a tool that the Israeli’s use—they’ll cut off the water supply for the community to punish the whole community for the fact that someone in that community resisted the occupation. So saying that we have been working with people who have been labeled “terrorists” doesn’t really deal with the political nature of who is labeled “terrorist” in these communities.

Since last September, we have learned more about how the quote unquote “War on Terror” has extended its reach to our own doorsteps. Just as had been the case as those who have been targeted earlier on the home front of this war, we were spied upon, infiltrated, and now we’re being pursued for what we believe in and who we know. Like many of them, many of us who have been subpoenaed have been placed on an air travel watch list, myself included. It is now impossible for me to travel across the country and not be subjected to a series of humiliating pat-downs, having all of my belongings rifled through, and frequently being the last person allowed onto a plane. Two of us, not me, have actually had our passports seized and are not being allowed to travel internationally even though none of us has been formally accused of anything. We’ve only been subpoenaed to testify for a grand jury and we’ve only had evidence taken from us. But the fact is, in the context of the War on Terror, it doesn’t matter whether or not you’ve been accused of a crime, you get treated like you’re a criminal.
All of us have refused to help the government make its case against us and I think it’s important to check in here in this moment and talk about what grand juries are because I think it’s important for you to understand why we would refuse to testify in one.

So there is a grand jury that has been convened in Chicago to investigate material support for terrorism. I believe, based on the information my lawyers have—which is tenuous at best—that this investigation began in August or September of 2009. And so this grand jury has been proceeding for about three years. In a grand jury, everything that happens is secret. Unlike a trial where everything happens in public and is a matter of public record and media can come and spectators can come, what happens in a grand jury is secret. It really reminds me more of a military tribunal in Peru than something you think would be happening in the United States. Overwhelmingly the people who are selected to be on a grand jury are white, wealthy, and senior citizens because the fact is, when you agree to be on a grand jury you’re agreeing to be on it indefinitely. Think about it, who has time to be on a grand jury to serve one or two days a month for three years? Most people have to go to their jobs, would be able to plead some sort of economic hardship and say, “Look, I can’t be on call to keep coming to this grand jury for three years.” Also, unlike a normal jury where both sides are represented with legal representation and you get to screen for juror bias, the grand jury is handpicked by the prosecutor. Also, there is only a prosecutor in the room with these jurors and they develop a relationship over the years and they’re spending time with each other where the grand jury believes the version of events that the prosecutor is telling them because those are the only version of events that they get to hear, because there’s no judge, no legal referee, there’s no supervision. It’s just the prosecutor and the grand jury. If you were called before a grand jury, anything you say or do will be held against you in a court of law, you could plead the fifth but the fact is that you can’t actually have a lawyer there with you to help you navigate what you do or don’t want to answer. You can have a lawyer outside of the room but there’s no lawyer actually allowed in the room.

Also, what we’re concerned about is not only do we think these grand juries are set up to produce indictments that are very undemocratic but we’re concerned about what they’ve actually indicated to us what they would like to ask us about. One of the things that they indicated in the legal documents that I have received is they want to know the names of who I’ve met with on political delegations to places like Colombia and Palestine and they would like to know the nature of what people have told me. The fact of the matter is, I can’t give that information. For example, in Colombia people had to go through military and paramilitary checkpoints just to come meet with me. People already risked their lives once in order to talk to me so I can take their stories and bring them back to the United States and talk about what’s really going on. What the impact of U.S. military aid to Colombia really is. But they ask me, “Please don’t use my name. Please don’t say the city that I am from. Please don’t take a picture of me.” And so I can’t betray that trust and give information that could potentially put these people in harm’s way. The fact of the matter is, I’ve never killed anybody. I’ve never held a gun and I’m certainly not interested in actually causing the death or any imprisonment or harm to another human being.
And so I can’t go and give this information that I know could be used in these very political situations to harm people.

At this point, almost a year after our homes have been raided, we’re still waiting to hear what the government has planned for us. None of us have spoken to that secret grand jury in Chicago and the prosecution has not yet brought charges against us. But they have sent a clear message that we remain in the crosshairs. The prosecutors have told our attorneys that they are seeking multiple indictments, so twenty-three of us have been subpoenaed. Some of us they’re looking at as witnesses and some of us they’re looking at as defendants in a trial and we don’t understand who falls into which category and they won’t say who is being pursued in what way. They refuse to return the majority of our property and their plan is to obviously hold it and use this as evidence against us.

This September we have had a number of opportunities to reflect on and remember the tragedy that took place on September 11, 2001 and to think about what has taken place in the ten years since then. And I think that our case should be a wakeup call for everyone. The casualties are mounting. People are dying in Afghanistan every day. People are still dying in Iraq every day and people are having their rights trampled upon in this country every day. So we think it’s important to fight back and say, “No, we want a world of peace. No, we want a world of justice.” So out of the raids that happened on our homes last September, we have been a part of building a national movement to try to raise awareness around our case. We have been very successful. If you go to our website—it’s StopFBI.net—you can see the letters from members of Congress that have been written on our behalf, letters that have been made public wherein members of Congress have written letters to Attorney General Holder, the person in charge of the Department of Justice, and to President Obama demanding an end to the FBI’s investigation of peace activists and questioning whether or not this is an appropriate use of law enforcement. Should law enforcement really be investigating members of the peace movement as opposed to dealing with actual issues of crime in our community? We have developed an emergency response plan and a list serve of supporters who are prepared to be able to move if people are indicted to be able to demand that there not be a trial.

We feel very strongly that the reason why none of the 23 of us are serving time in jail for contempt of court is because we weren’t quiet on September 24, or 25, or 26, or any of the days since then. We’ve been very loud in our opposition to the investigation against us and we feel like this has been really essential in keeping us out of jail. We feel like the national movement we’ve developed has been very good. We’ve also received a lot of really good press coverage, particularly at the national level this summer. The New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Boston Globe have all written about our case. A large write up specifically about our case appeared on the front page of the Washington Post this summer. Progressive media has also been repeatedly talking about our case and the reauthorization of the Patriot Act as well as the debate over who should be the next director of the FBI. Our case has been repeatedly used by these media sources as examples of how the FBI has run amok and how President Obama, despite his credentials as someone who used to be a professor of constitutional law, has not been
paying attention to how constitutional rights have been trampled upon under his own administration.

There are things you can do if you are interested in our case or in standing up for civil liberties. You can and you should speak out. One of the things that I have for you to take home with you this evening is this flyer which presents you with a short synopsis of our case. On the back it gives you information like how you can call President Obama or how you can call Attorney General Holder and say, “What are you doing? You should call off this investigation, it’s a waste of resources, these people are not criminals, these people are not terrorists, these people are the ones who actually denounce terrorism.” Additionally, you can sign up on our list serve and we can keep you up to date about our case. Finally, I passed around some flyers about some upcoming actions. We are recognizing the year anniversary of the raids this Saturday and you’re invited to come to one of the homes that was raided and protest and do a community march. It is important to note too that we are approaching the ten-year anniversary of the start of the war in Afghanistan and we think it’s important that people not cower and say, “Oh well, I’m afraid I might get into trouble,” or “Oh well, I might not want to raise my voice.” We actually think it’s more important than ever for people to raise their voices and say, “I’m a person of conscience and I have the right to speak out in honor of not seeing people as my enemy and instead questioning foreign policy that demonizes others.” So I’ll pass these out and then I’m going to turn it over for questions.

Thank you very much for coming.

Question and Answer

ABY: I don’t bite I promise and you’re far away from me, I couldn’t hurt you. Go ahead.

AUDIENCE: Did they charge you specifically in detail what you were accused of being accused of?

ABY: None of us have been charged with anything. What we’ve been is on the search warrant it describes the things that they’re looking for and so I can get some ideas of what the charges would look like, does that make sense? It’s on those search warrants and the types of language on the search warrant was that they were looking quote unquote “material support of terrorism.” They were looking for evidence of how the Anti-War Committee finances itself and they were looking for evidence for how I indoctrinate people into joining the Anti-War Committee. And the types of things they took from my house were definitely very political. They were flyers, they were sign-up sheets for meetings, they were notes, they were petitions people had signed, protest photos from my travels so those types of things give me an idea of what the charges would look like but definitely the material support statute is what I think, for example…they would be…the charges would go around material support for terrorism, or conspiracy for material support for terrorism, or something of that nature but no one has been officially charged with anything.
Go ahead.

AUDIENCE: Thank you. I don’t know if he made it tonight but I was just talking with one of my students who is very progressive but is also, like many is in a very, very tough spot financially and is thinking about the military because, you know, the benefits and so on…supposedly look good and I have urged him to try to speak with veterans who have been there who can tell what it’s like from the inside so he can make an informed decision. I know that this is a little bit off of your immediate topic but I think many young people are in similar positions with this young gentleman. So I’m wondering if you can give us some counsel if somebody in this room is debating signing up with the military because they think that’s the only way they’re going to be able to keep going with their education and get a job and so on and so forth. Where can they hear other perspectives from people who know?

ABY: I think that’s a particularly interesting question considering the recent change from the Department of Defense with the removal of the Don’t Ask Don’t Tell policy. As someone who’s gay and has been out for a long time, I’m in part excited about the fact that this is one less legal example of how people who are gay are treated as second class citizens in this society. But on the other hand it makes me sad because the fact is I’ve always liked the fact that people could always claim they were gay as a way to get out of a military draft and now that avenue has been removed from people. So I don’t actually believe in legalized segregation but there was always a silver lining in my opinion about it.

It’s been really challenging for me as a teacher. I’ve had a lot of students enlist and go. I had several students enlist in 2003 and come and ask for my blessing because they knew about the work that I did and those are some really tearful and heartfelt conversations because the fact is I would tell them, “I love you but I hope that you are incredible unsuccessful as a soldier. I hope that you kill no one. And I hope that you don’t get shot either. I hope you come back and you’re one piece. But the fact is, I can’t give you my blessing. Those people are not my enemy and I’m not interested in any way, shape, or form sacrificing you or anyone else’s child to that war.” The students that I’ve had who have come back…they’re not functional. They’re living in their parent’s basements, they’re alcoholics, they do drugs, they can’t get work. And the fact is you can’t send young people across the country, I mean across the world and ask them to do some of the horrible things that our young people have been ordered to do and have them come home and then be functional members of society. You can’t do that…and if you need evidence of that, I mean…one of the things I think that the Wikileaks has done for us is given us some of that actual footage and some of the people have been speaking out publicly like Bradley Manning and others who are able to say, “Yes! I was at that massacre and I was the person who was actually dragging the bodies away and trying to save people while the very people in my unit were shooting at people like they were in a video game.” It’s just this very dehumanizing process and I would say to someone, “You can’t sell your soul.” And the things that people are being asked to do are really very disturbing because the fact is even if you don’t do it, being in a
daily situation watching other people do it. It’s just really hard on people and they come back broken.

We have an activist who I work with in the Minnesota Peace Action Coalition and there are two with Military Families Speak Out…one is a woman and her son died last summer from cancer that’s related to his serving in Iraq and another person in Military Families Speak Out…His son is basically not functional with the post-traumatic stress that he has. So I just feel like I’ve heard so many stories that challenge the belief that people can go and serve in that…in this conflict…in this time and come back and get things like, “Here’s your discount college education.” Just…it concerns me. Also I know that Veterans for Peace in the Twin Cities does counseling…does peace counseling to try to talk people through what it’s like to go to war and hope to see what it would really mean. Veteran’s for Peace Chapter 27 is the group in the Twin Cities. I would just encourage anyone to go meet with someone who’s served and these are very beautiful people who have had a real change of heart and I think that you should hear what they have to say.

AUDIENCE: I was just wondering, what some of your credentials were…because you had brought up international foreign policy and also the U.S. military in other countries.

ABY: I’ve been an anti-war activist since about 1994. I traveled to Central America when I was a student at McAllister for a program that Augsburg organizes. They have a study abroad program and it really opened my eyes to seeing the impacts of U.S. Military Aid first hand and those people who had survived the civil war in El Salvador and they had very moving stories where they talked about the fact that, “Look, your country did this to me. Your country is the reason that I am now homeless. Your country is the reason,” for example, “that my community is ravaged.” And I in some ways wasn’t responsible for that. I was a junior high student living in Worthington, MN. It’s not like there was any anti-war movement that I could be a part of in a town of 10,000 people or I even knew that these things were going on. But it really changed me. It really made me feel a sense of responsibility for the money that my government sends to finance right wing governments who then use that money to go and kill people. That really changed me. During the El Salvador solidarity movement in the 1980’s there was this bumper sticker that I think really encapsulates my political philosophy which was, “El Salvador: Let the People Decide.” You know…the idea that the people of El Salvador should get to decide their political future, independent of who the U.S. wanted to win…and I feel like that pretty much sums up how I feel about things. It’s not our place. I’m sure that a lot of people in the world wanted us to pick somebody other than George W. Bush for eight years but you know what? That was what we did. We don’t get to choose the leaders of other countries similar to how they don’t get to choose the leader of our country.

So that experience around El Salvador really motivated me to do El Salvador solidarity work and then in 1988 I had a Committee member, Jess Sundin, who’s also been subpoenaed, who went to Iraq and took humanitarian aid to people in Iraq who were suffering from the
devastation of sanctions—the sanctions of Iraq killed more people than the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki combined—and just got to meet first-hand these children and these senior citizens who were dying and getting diseases. They were completely preventable! And the stories and the pictures she brought back really tore my heart. As a teacher hearing these stories of these children having to do their lessons in the dirt because the U.S. wouldn’t allow pencils because they had lead in them which could be used for weapons of mass destruction. Wouldn’t allow pencils into their country! It really just changed me and so Jess and I formed the Anti-War Committee in 1998 to work on solidarity with the Iraqi people. What’s sad is we’re still working on solidarity with the Iraqi people because we haven’t changed that.

But I’ve been an anti-war activist in the Anti-War Committee since 1998 and have done work nationally around the topic of Colombia through the Colombia Action Network and I’ve led two solidarity delegations to Colombia, one in 2004 and one in 2006. And in 2002 I traveled on a human rights delegation to the West Bank and to Gaza and I am one of a very small group of people that I know that have been to Gaza as recently as 2002. Soon after that, the Israelis made it very, very difficult to get in to Gaza. So, it’s still difficult to get into the West Bank but particularly difficult to get into Gaza. And so that is a topic that I feel I like that information was particularly valuable because it is in [short supply]. But those are some and then but my main work nationally has been around the Coalition march on the RNC. I was one of the principle leaders in that Coalition which is a national group. Does that help?

AUDIENCE: It does. I was just wondering because I am a veteran and I was wondering how your opinions were formed and just knowing that background gives more credit to what you were saying.

ABY: Jim?

AUDIENCE: I was wondering, there are lots of high profile antiwar activists in the United States. Can you give us a sense as to why you and your group were targeted?

ABY: That’s a really interesting question because I still wake up in these moments where I feel like I’ve been cast in a really bad made for TV movie that I would’ve shut off eight hours ago. I’m like, “This story kinda sucks.” Moments when I’m like, “Really! I’m a very small fish in this very big pond in the universe” and I think the answer comes down to this…It’s not that I’m some super evil bad ass terrorist supporter or even a very exiting person. I think what it comes down to is the fact that in the lead up to the RNC, law enforcement infiltrated a lot of peace and justice groups in the Twin Cities and the City of Saint Paul, the State of Minnesota and the federal government has spent millions of dollars on the riot gear, the weapons, on the surveillance. All these different types of things but millions of dollars and they were not able to produce a lot despite all of these millions of dollars. So there wasn’t actually some big terrorist plot to destroy the Republican National Convention. There were eight activists in the Twin Cities—the RNC
who were charged by the State [of Minnesota] for conspiracy riot and other types of charges like that, and only actually four of those people ended up accepting some sort of plea deal. But at least half of them the state actually ended up saying, “We don’t have enough to prosecute you people.” And they had several infiltrators, they were infiltrators as part of that. What is interesting is that our mole spent another two years investigating us, and I feel like what quote unquote “Karen Sullivan” …I think that what she did, she was pressured…that she had to show something for the work she had. And I think she sold them a particular bill of goods to try and make us particularly sexy and interesting. And I…to be honest I think she made a lot of stuff up. And I don’t know if that was for her own job promotion or if that was to keep earning lots of money from this gig.

I have no idea but that fact is that this is that, absent the RNC, I think that I would still be doing peace activism and would not be receiving attention from the federal government. I think it really has everything to do with the fact that there was this level of surveillance and infiltration that happened in the lead-up to the RNC and that makes me concerned about what’s going to happen to the peace community of Chicago. Chicago is going to host the first joint summit between the G8 and NATO in May which isn’t only a national security venue but an internationally security venue. What types of civil liberties and lives are going to be destroyed in that type of surveillance type project. What is going to happen to the people who are hosting the RNC in Tampa next year or the DNC in Charlotte? I think that the cases for ten years after the DNC in L.A., you know what I’m saying… the people suing about their civil liberties being violated and we just keep having more casualties after these national securities events. And I think it’s more important for us as a community to say, at the point where your national security makes us less secure, maybe you shouldn’t hold your national security event.

Yes. Yes, you.

AUDIENCE: You keep saying that you worked at school and you were a teacher, has this whole situation affected your job all or anything?

ABY: Well I think it’s very complicated because the fact that I am a union member—really happy about that!—they can’t fire me because the fact is that I’m really good at my job. I’m not saying that to brag. I am. I love teaching, I love working with my students. I have the highest AP scores in my building probably. I’m good at what I do. But the fact is that, obviously, it’s really super unpopular to be investigated for material support for terrorism when working with young people, right? So that’s the opposite of what you want to have if you’re a teacher… having done…But there isn’t any evidence that I tried to recruit people to be a part of some secret group against the United States or something like that in my classroom. So I haven’t lost my job and my school district said their going to stand by me in the case of an indictment. They said I would only be at the risk of losing my job if I am found guilty and at that point I would argue I have much bigger problems weather I keep my job. At that point I became a parent. You can’t be a parent from prison. Then you’re a pen pal not a parent, you know? And I obviously would like to
be a parent to my daughter. So they claim that I get to keep working there in light not being guilty of anything.

But I have been ordered by the school district that I’m not allowed to talk about my case to my students and I think that’s been very confusing for them. I understand that my school district has ordered me to do that because of the fact that they want to cover their own ass too, obviously. They said it’s for my own protection…students say things, then it turns into a big game of telephone…but I see the debates happening on YouTube where different students are arguing about whether or not I’m a terrorist…you know in the little comment section. And really they are arguing whether or not they like me as a human being. And whether or not I’m accused of being a terrorist supporter…it justifies whether they got a D on last week’s quiz. Or they got an A so obviously I’m not a terrorist supporter…I’m totally an awesome teacher and it just turns into things that are not about me but whether they agree with the grade I’m giving.

I did have a homeroom student last year who told me she was scared of me for half of the year because she saw my picture on the face of the Star Tribune the day after the raids happened by my home and she didn’t know whether or not I was a terrorist and she said, “Then I got to know you and I know you’re not a terrorist. You’re the nicest teacher in the school and really care about me.” And I think that’s great but it also hurt my heart because here is this young person and I’m her home room teacher, the person she is supposed to come to if she’s having problems navigating this large suburban high school but instead she thought I was terrifying. They are another example of some of the collateral damage of this investigation.

I think it’s even harder on the children of the parents who have been subpoenaed. My daughter, fortunately, doesn’t understand what’s happening. If the FBI comes for me and I’m indicted and held in jail for several days as they decide whether to let me out on bail or if I’m jailed for contempt of court my daughter will understand that. She’s old enough now, two and a half. She will know that her mom is not there and that something is wrong. But the kids who are five, six, and seven, they totally understand. We have one girl who can use the word subpoena in a sentence—you know…when your seven you shouldn’t really use the word subpoena in a sentence—but she cried every day last year at school. They had a mental health team there at the school that they developed trying to figure out how to help her deal with the stress, the fact that she was worried that the FBI would come for her parents, that she would be left home by herself, that was her fear. She doesn’t understand that that’s not what would happen…We had another girl that was five, she’s now six and every time someone knocks on the door she jumps because she’s worried that they have come back for her dad. So I feel like the worst collateral damage that’s done here has been the stress put on these little people who have had their lives in flux now…not knowing for a year now…not knowing where things are going to be at with their families.

AUDIENCE: I just have one more question. As an activist and somebody who had communication with Palestine and Colombia, weren’t you almost expecting possible…repercussions?
ABY: It’s not against the law to travel to Colombia or to the Palestine. And I wasn’t traveling to some place that has a ban on. I mean you can buy an airplane ticket on the internet. You can go to Minneapolis airport and buy a ticket to Bogotá tomorrow. It’s not against the law to travel to these places. Also it’s not against the law to go and talk to people and have conversations with them. The problem is the way this material support statute has been interpreted…the Supreme Court in Holder vs. Humanitarian Law Project last spring interpreted material support as being basically anything. And the problem is that the material…I believe when Congress passed the material support provision in the late 90’s after the Oklahoma City bombing…I think they intended weapons. I don’t think they intended coordinated communication. I don’t think they intended on things like having a conversation. I don’t think they intended things like money to a kindergartner who goes to a school that maybe someone who is related to a rebel fighter happens to send their kid to. I don’t really think that this is how it was intended to be but it how it has been abstracted to be. But the fact is that, no I think that organizing for peace is legal and protected activity and I’m upset that my government thinks that organizing for peace should be considered illegal and unprotected activity.

AUDIENCE: These laws, you know, the names of them like “material support for terrorism” and the Patriot Act. I feel like they are misleading. Do you feel like the government is in a way false advertising in the names of these laws to pretty much confuse the general public as to what they’re actually supposed to do?

ABY: Well unfortunately it’s not these types of laws. I don’t know how many people have heard of or are familiar with this joke “Clear Skies Initiative”…actually giving companies grounds to do more pollution. You can put the title, whatever you want, at the top of the bill and pass it and that doesn’t necessarily mean that is what the bill is actually about.

But no, I agree that calling the material support statute for terrorism…it makes people think that I am being investigated for giving guns but the fact is that there will never be any evidence of me giving guns or training…I have never even held a gun! I don’t even know the names of guns. I don’t even know the names of bullets. I would be useless. We were the one family in Worthington that didn’t hunt. I’m just saying, I grew up in rural Minnesota where everyone knew how to use guns and we were the one family that didn’t. And so I would be useless in that type of arena.

I think, just to give an example of how the material support statute has been used, last summer when the flotilla was trying to return to Gaza—and this flotilla was an act of solidarity with a group of people who are under siege, this group of people were not allowed to get food, water, building supplies et cetera to rebuild this community after this devastating war with the Israelis—they were threatened by Hillary Clinton, the Secretary of State of the United States, that they would be prosecuted under the material support statute and serve decades in jail because they would be giving material support to the government of Hamas. And the problem is that our
government doesn’t see the distinction between people who are suffering under war and governments or groups of people that they don’t like. What I find fascinating is when I travel to the Palestine and when I travel to Colombia, people never saw me as an agent of country at war with them. People are always able to distinguish between me and my government which I find very fascinating because my government can’t give the same act of distinction the other way.

I met with people in rural Colombia who told me I was the only person they had ever met from the United States that wasn’t there as a contractor, a member or the CIA, or special-ops military person. They said you are the only person we have really ever met who is from the United States who has come to our community who isn’t trying to kill us or help our government try to kill us. They could see that I was not my government. We were distinguished from our government but our government won’t see the people that are suffering are different from a government or a group of people whose in proximity and are related to those people.

I found it interesting in Somalia they had this horrible famine and the United States government, this summer actually, had to say publically that they were going to suspend the material support statue because no one was sending aid to the Somali people because the people were worried this law would be used to prosecute them. The Somali community in Minnesota has been very much under attack using this statue. Two women who are going start a trial this Fall, who are Somali, are being charged with material support for terrorism and their alleged crime is sending used clothes to a refugee camp in Somalia because those clothes can somehow directly help Al-Shabab which is a group the United States has labeled the terrorist organization.

I would argue that things like humanitarian aid, like clothes, food, playground equipment et cetera should be not politicized. I think those people should just have them because they breathe oxygen. I think people should just get to have clothes and I don’t care what the political beliefs are of the children or whoever. People should just get clothes and food but that’s not the way it is. What I found interesting was that the United States had to admit that they caused so much fear in the Somali community that no one was sending aid to people who were literally starving to death. I think that it shows the way this law has been targeted against solidarity and peace.

AUDIENCE: Do you think it would make any difference…I find it incredible because international human rights law is being absolutely flouted here. Completely flouted. If people will just go to the web and read the most basic human rights covenants. Does it make any difference…say…can Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch…Can other recognized human rights groups, can they do some of the same things and not be brought under the gun as you have been? Or do you think the government has become so flagrant that, even, ‘you gave water to Palestinians so you’re going down’?

ABY: I think that our case—and the National Lawyers’ Guild would argue—that our case is being used as a test case to see how broadly this material support statute can be used and to see to what degree. So far this law has been used almost exclusively on Arab and Muslim people in
this country and while four of us are Palestinian primarily we are not Palestinians. Some of us are people who have been in solidarity with Palestine although not all of us. I think that this is being used as a test case to see if other sectors of society can have this broad sweeping law be used against them.

I do think the fact that the flotilla was threatened with this law demonstrates the fact that they are getting bolder with how they’re going to use this law. But they didn’t, for example, charge anyone and I don’t…no one’s been raided or openly investigated in that regard but the fact is that they are also expanding this idea of how the material support statue can be used.

There’s currently another secret grand jury that’s investigating Wikileaks and Bradley Manning and one of the things that Congress has talked about doing is declaring Wikileaks as a foreign terrorist organization because then, if you gave money to Wikileaks or you were in support of Wikileaks, then that would make you providing support for terrorism. And so I think that these cases demonstrate the way that the government is trying to take these powers for a test drive and see to what degree they can expand the scope of power and executive power that they have…to define what is or isn’t legal even if that historically, under a peace time situation, would not have been legitimate. And that’s, unfortunately, been normal in American history. During World War I, during Vietnam, etc. there are lots of examples where the Bill of Rights has gone through the shredder during periods of war, this is just, unfortunately, the most recent manifestation of something that has happened several times in American history. But I don’t think that means history has to repeat itself. I think it’s important to fight back and demand that we don’t want to see this escalate or snowball or go anywhere. It’s not too late. Nobody’s actually been charged. Nobody’s actually been sent to jail. So the fact is we do have an opportunity to try to turn this around and hold the government accountable and the fact of the matter is, at the end of the day, these people are all politicians.

President Obama, if you look at the public opinion polls, has lost his base. He is realizing, “Uh oh!” there’s all sorts of people, like Bronson in the previous panel who said he didn’t vote for him…he said he voted for him, he’s not voting for him again. I, too, am not voting for the president and did the last time. And the fact is that we, as the peace movement have the opportunity to say, “You can’t come to us every four years and ask us to door knock for you and flyer for you and give money to you and watch you put the people who have devoted their lives to peace and justice in jail or in harm’s way because you politically think it’s possible.” So I think we have an opportunity to try and stop this because the fact is Eric Holder is a very political person. Obama is a very political person and I think fundamentally it’s political why nobody is serving for contempt of court right now. So I do think we have an opportunity to try to change the headway and, for example, not let other people go through the stuff that my family has gone through.

AUDIENCE: When you think of all the comparisons with...are we becoming a place like Colombia?
ABY: Well I think that’s one of the ironies of this whole process, right? In places like Colombia you are in danger of being called a terrorist because you dare to critically think and openly express opposition to the government’s policies. Likewise, in our country, we are being demonized and called terrorists because we dare to question who our government is at war with and who our government defines as its allies. Right? And so I think that it is scary because the fact is we aren’t in the situation—nowhere near the situation—that people are in in Colombia. I’m not actually in danger of being picked up at a military check point and carted away in a van and never heard from again. That’s not the situation we’re in and I think it would be disrespectful to the people’s stories that I got in Colombia to say that we are a Colombia version 2.0.

But the fact is that I do have a lot of moments where I think about that poem from World War II…First they came for the communists and I didn’t say anything because I wasn’t a communist. And then they came for the socialists and I didn’t say anything because I wasn’t a socialist. And then they came for the Jews but I didn’t say anything because I wasn’t a Jew. And then they came for me and there was no one left to say anything.

I do feel like we are an opportunity because many people on the anti-war movement have been really shocked that these things are happening. But the fact is that these things have been happening since September 11th, they’ve just been mostly happening to Arab and Muslim people. I think it’s time for the rest of America to realize that you can’t stand by and watch some people’s civil liberties be shredded and then not think that at a certain point it’s going to bleed over and affect your civil liberties. Our rights are all interconnected.

AUDIENCE: I think the real mistake on September 11th is really…it should have been treated as a law enforcement problem rather than as it was treated because if it was treated as a law enforcement item then you’d have the world on your side but then the way it was handled—going to war with Iraq which doesn’t make any sense—it shows that the government, I think, is committing treason against our country in a way.

ABY: I think it’s sad that a senseless tragedy—three thousand people dying—has been used to justify the deaths of millions of people and to justify taking rights away from thousands of people in our own country. I just think that’s sad because I don’t think it had to turn out like that. I don’t think that death has to lead to more death. I don’t think that having our trust and safety as a nation, having it be violated, has mean that we have to do that to other countries or we have to do that to our own people, our own country.

Yes?

AUDIENCE: Do you think that there is any opportunity or any chance that in any point in the near future that we as a country can get the material support act interpreted in a way that’s more constitutional?
ABY: Well, there is an opportunity but the problem is that the Supreme Court would say that this is constitutional because that’s what they decided in Holder vs. Humanitarian Law Project. The deal is that when the Patriot Act came up for debate in the spring...There’s group called the Bill of Rights Defense Committee—and several civil rights organizations but the Bill of Rights Defense Committee is the one I’ve spent the most time investigating—are proposing alternative language for the material support statute. There is a movement of people in Congress who would like to have it defined so it doesn’t go after charity work, so it doesn’t go after acts of solidarity and there is a growing debate about the Patriot Act about whether or not it is being used to actually protect us or hurt us. And I think that the Patriot Act has provided a really interesting opportunity for coalition building because the fact is there are people on the really left and the really right who are working together because it’s not a Democrat vs. Republican issue. It’s not. People who are textbook libertarians and the people who are really liberal are concerned about giving the federal government this much power to basically do whatever they want. And it’s the moderates in the middle who are like, “Oh, it’s about terrorism so we have to let them do whatever because terrorism is so scary!” So, it really becomes...there’s starting to be an actual debate, right? And I believe that debate is actually happening in Congress because we the public are demanding that there be a debate. Because the fact is, at the end of the day, politicians only do what we let them do.

I used to have this bumper sticker that said “The Labor Movement: The Folks Who Brought You the weekend” and my dad said, “Well that was an act of Congress. They passed the 40-hour work week.” And it’s like yea, they just did that because they were like “Yea! Let’s help people!” [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] I said, “No dad that’s not what happened. We got the 40-hour work week because people demanded it and then the people made Congress make that happen.

The fact of this is that at the end of the day we need to make this an issue that people are willing to stand up for, that we should have a right to privacy. You shouldn’t be able to get a warrantless tap. You should actually have to have a probable cause to go and investigate someone. It should be—the fact that they went to a meeting to organize a protest should not mean that the FBI gets to investigate you and start following you around! There has been some really great coverage in the past year in the Washington Post and they have had a whole focus on what’s been happening in terms of our rights in America and they really got some great coverage...talking about the fact that literally before there had to be some sort of evidence that you were committing some sort of illegal act in order to be investigated and now—literally coming to this meeting! You know...if the FBI wanted to...that could use this as grounds.

I don’t know. I don’t want you to take from this that the FBI is following you home. I don’t actually think that there are enough agents for that. I’m just saying that they don’t actually need any good reason to start investigating people. New York Times covered this year that they don’t actually need a good reason to go and do thing like search through all your garbage. My students say things like, “Well if you haven’t done anything wrong it doesn’t matter”—which I think is totally funny because all of them would feel violated if anyone ever read any of their text messages even though their text messages are about thing like “dude” and “yeah” [AUDIENCE
LAUGHS] Still, that’s something they want to have *totally* protected and I get that…but I think it’s just funny that they don’t really see the connection. The fact that if your life is put under a microscope, the fact that they may start investigating because you came to a peace meeting that you end up getting busted for something else. Or somebody else that you are connecting with—does that make sense?—Someone gets busted for something else they were doing…So the idea is that the standard went from “probable cause” to “you had an opinion.” And that’s a fundamental aspect of the American justice system. It’s not supposed to be that “you had an opinion” is the same as a probable cause.

AUDIENCE: You had said earlier that you [met with people in Palestine and] in Colombia that you had never carried a gun and you didn’t want to hurt people…but aren’t you risking their lives every day in your communication with them? Are you prepared to accept their blood on your hands when they get killed for being in cooperation with an American?

ABY: I—first of all, you’re making assumptions about what I do. I mean the fact is that I’ve met with people on the ground when I went on these peace delegations but I haven’t had any communication with anyone from Palestine ever since I left. First, because I don’t speak Arabic. I can’t have any communication with anyone from Palestine even if I wanted to because I don’t have any skills.

Regarding the people from Colombia…I’ve had very limited communication with absent my trips there because the fact is all of their e-mails are already being read. You know what I’m saying? And their phones were probably already tapped so we weren’t having open and honest communication outside of our visits and I certainly now—I’m never going to get to travel to Colombia again. I mean, there’s no way…which saddens me. It’s probably the place that I love most in the world absent my own home. I’m never going to get to see the people I care about and I can never even tell them that I’m being investigated or that this has happened in my life because I would literally be putting them at risk…because they can’t be associated with someone who’s being investigated for material support for terrorism. And I don’t know if having that with me ever…do you know what I’m saying? If that is being held against me but we have a wall of separation and I have not had any communication with people from Colombia nor will I for the rest of my life because I know what that could do to them. Also, before I was being investigated, I wasn’t willy-nilly about my communication with people and these war torn countries, nor were they. They were very much, very thoughtful about who they called, where they called from, if they ever e-mailed people, et cetera because they were operating under the conditions of war under very repressive governments.

Jim?

AUDIENCE: I think that one of the really important things that the peace movement has done is not just with current conflict but in decades before, if you go all the way back, is they were one of the leading forces to bring to light a lot of things that our government has done—you brought
up El Salvador I think? Throughout the 1980’s there was...horrific crimes were being committed with the backing of the United States government. The peace movement was—before the newspapers, before there was a movie being made about it—peace activists were trying to get that information out there. Is there a sense in which these kinds of prosecutions and subpoenas are having a chilling effect on people joining the peace movement now? I mean I can’t help but feel like that people think twice when they see what’s happening to your organization before they think, “Well, I’ll join on the Mankato campus.” We saw that in 2002, when I first came here. We had students who at that time—especially students who were international students...particularly if they came from Muslim countries—who would not attend various rallies and speeches and activities like this because they were afraid that they would end up on a list for showing up to this kind of thing. Is this now an extension of that?

ABY: One of the things I’m concerned about is I do feel like by targeting us the government is trying to criminalize international travel and solidarity. And I do think that it is important to have our own relationships with activists on the ground that are like us, that are struggling for peace and justice because the fact is, if I’m limited to getting information about what’s happening in places like Colombia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine that was covered in the Star Tribune or the Washington Post, I’m screwed! Because they print...they act like what the Department of Defense says is true and they aren’t interviewing people who are actually—for example, one side of what’s happening in Gaza is not reported. The Israeli’s won’t even let reporters in Gaza and the fact is that if we, the peace movement, can’t go and be with people and say, “Look, I know that this community’s water was cut off from this day to this day and water is a human right. I know that, in this community, X amount of these children are suffering from malnutrition because they aren’t able to get any food in their community and that is a human right. Children have to be fed.” Having these stories is important.

I saw what happened when Jess went to Iraq—that the work we are doing totally transformed itself because we did have someone at the rallies, talking to the media saying “No, this isn’t what’s really happening in Iraq. These sanctions are not about preventing weapons of mass destruction from getting into Iraq!” Jessica talked about that story about pencils and lead but the U.S. government wasn’t talking about not letting pencils into Iraq...But if you could just hear that you would just be like, “Wow! That is ridiculous! There is no way that a pencil being used by a second grader is going to be transformed into a weapon of mass destruction.” And as my partner would say, it would be used as a weapon of math instruction because she’s a math teacher. [AUDIENCE LAUGHS] But the fact is, you need those types of stories to be able to challenge that one-sided narrative of what’s happening in this country and the Department of Defense has an enormous ability to unleash this propaganda machine, to beat the drums of war...

They use words like collateral damage. They don’t talk about who is really affected by these drone attacks, how many civilians are really injured and the make it sound like the people in Iraq and Afghanistan are happy that we were there. And I think it’s important to be able to say, “No! We are not welcome! These people don’t want us. They see us as the committers of
terrorism, not protecting them from terrorism.” You need to be able to provide that counter-narrative and if you can’t talk to people from those countries, it becomes very hard to make that case. Similarly, it’s very hard for people from these countries to actually get to the U.S. to tell us their story. One, because of the war that is happening in their country. Two, because it’s very expensive to travel to the United States. And three, because sometimes their own countries or our country won’t let them in because they are labeled as terrorists because—oh my gosh!—they decided to question the dominant order. So I do think that’s an important role. And the peace movement, even if you look back as far as, even if you just look to Vietnam, that was a huge part of the peace movement.

One of my favorite and most moving stories that deals with the history of that conflict was when Howard Zinn and other peace activists actually traveled in North Vietnam to get POW’s and met with people who were North Vietnamese and say, “Look, we are not at war with you.” Do you know what I’m saying? They could actually meet with people from North Vietnam, they could communicate with people back in the United States, like these people—the United States was claiming these people eat babies for breakfast, practically. They were trying to be a part of not demonizing of other people and I think that is important.

I studied Russian when I was in high school and I think part of my love for this work really comes from that. I studied Russian during the Cold War, meeting the people from the Soviet Union, seeing that they weren’t all excited in the morning at the thought of nuking us and really countering this narrative that they were out to get us and we were out to get them.

You need to be able to build relationships so that you can see...The US likes to make it seem like the only person living in Libya right now is Muammar Gaddafi. The only person who lives in Iraq is Saddam Hussein. So thus when we were dropping bombs willy-nilly we couldn’t accidently kill civilians because only one person lives there we’re just trying to kill him. So it’s okay if we bomb schools, and hospitals, and roads, and bridges because we’re not hurting anybody because nobody else lives there. And I just think it’s important to be like, “No actually these are people.” And Jess knew—when she’d read in the news reports she would be, like, “I’ve been to that city...I know that that city has literally the hanging gardens of Babylon that city has, actually has some of the world’s most ancient history. Please don’t carpet-bomb that part of the country.” Those places had connection to her more because she’d been there.

We need more Americans to have connections with these places that the US is bombing so they don’t seem like wacko places. Just the other day I saw a piece on—I’ve seen it on Facebook because they’re a super awesome source—but where a person had put up a picture from a major newspaper where they had Libya in the Middle East instead of northern Africa. Where the hell did that even come from? But the fact is that we need people connected with these people that we’re at war with so they can’t be so easily dehumanized. And I think international solidarity is a vital piece of that. I think we need to defend that right to be in solidarity with other people as opposed to having it be just another [casualty] of this work.
AUDIENCE: I just want to say to you—because I know you talked about whether or not people are turned off about joining and stuff—I was talking to some people in Student for a Democratic Society up at the U of M and they were telling me even after—because there was one girl at the U who was even part of the raids—and they were telling me that after that happened...it was like the school year just started and they just got a bunch of people to join and they were really afraid that everybody would get scared and leave. But actually they got way more involved. And they’re like, “Oh shit! People who are in this are getting targeted by the government this is terrible, we really need to get involved now!”

But also I remember last year when we were doing an occupation on the lawn here [at Minnesota State University, Mankato] there was one Muslim girl who...her family is from Michigan and she was really interested in what we were doing but she was like, “No I can’t get involved.” In Michigan she knew another family who just overnight disappeared and weren’t there anymore. And she told me that and I was like, “Wow that’s really terrible.” And she’s like, “I really wish I could join but I don’t want that to happen to me.”

And so...yeah.

ABY: Well, I think that gives us an obligation, right? As people who, for example, are experiencing that reality...to do that type of protesting because other people have already had that right taken away from them. And I do think it’s an example of the rights you don’t use you forfeit. I do think it’s important for people to use the rights they would like to keep because if you won’t, you don’t necessarily get to have them.

I know you have asked a lot of questions and I know we are running short on time. I just want to make sure that everyone who wants to ask a question gets to, OK?

MODERATOR: We are coming up on about 8:30 so we have time for one more question. If anyone wants to ask something, if you have been holding back, now is the time.

AUDIENCE: You mentioned throughout the talk about how there is this opportunity to make changes. Is that opportunity more of a like, philosophically this is a time to make changes, or is there way we can actually take that you can take that ideological thought into an actual reality?

ABY: I don’t totally understand the question.

AUDIENCE: You know you mentioned that this is the time we actually start to change a lot of these things that are happening. You know...is that just like an ideological “this is the time we have to” or is there a plan that you have or people you know have that will make these changes?

ABY: Well I think that if you look at American history that the fact is they can’t do things...the government can’t do things like disappear Palestine families if the people respond. You can’t
have—you can only have people locked up for their ideas if the majority of people in our country thinks that’s wrong.

Part of our problem is breaking through this general, pervasive feeling of people in this country who yell at their television sets and think that that’s actually doing something because it’s not. The television can’t actually hear you and it doesn’t convey messages to our elected leaders. The fact is we need to challenge that idea where people get upset about things and actually do things. We need to educate people in our society because there are a lot of people who don’t know that there are people in Minnesota—not somewhere else—who are being investigated for crimes relating to the material support of terrorism and being peace activist. There people in Minnesota who don’t know that there were two Somali women who are up on charges for material support of terrorism for sending used clothes to a refugee camp. And part of the problem is we need to change this level of ignorance because the fact is I believe that these things can only happen if we let them. I think that society shows that.

Historically, at the end of the day, politicians care about saving their own jobs more than they do about anything. And if they honestly thought this was a deal breaker they would be like, “You know what? I think that’s a bad idea. I don’t think I like that.” So far the people who have been the most vocal members of the government about our case already ideologically agree with us but there have been many people who have told us I think this is probably a bad idea who haven’t done anything about it. I think it’s because their constituents haven’t made them. They’re not ideologically apposed for taking a stand for civil liberties but at the end of the day they don’t want to alienate themselves from their supporters by standing with people who are accused of terrorism and so what I think we need to do is really push back on this idea that people can just be demonized and called terrorists.

I really believe terrorists have become the way communists was in the 1950s...that all you have to say is someone is terrorist and “Okay! You don’t need a warrant to tap their phone...Okay! You don’t need a warrant to do sneak-and-peek” where you get to go into their house and investigate stuff and leave. These types of things have been made legal in the Patriot Act. And feel like we need a movement of people in society to say, “Look, this not acceptable!” Absent that things will continue along the same course that they are. And I think it starts today. People could make a phone call, people could write an email, people could go to stopfbi.net website and sign up to get information or sign a national petition. I think it starts smaller with a phone call and then it gets bigger by educating people, taking action, and organizing other events—we’ve done a lot of speaking events! We’ve done them at churches, we’ve done them at union meetings, we’ve done them at schools, at house parties. I mean whatever people want to do…but I think the key thing is if people are moved by these examples then people should do something as opposed to hoping that we don’t end up with internment camps version 2.0 or something like that. I think that would be a bad idea. I don’t think there’s any historical evidence that thinking something was wrong and not doing anything about it has ever worked whereas I do think there is a lot of historical evidence to the contrary, that doing something when you think something is wrong can actually produce results.
Well, as Jim said, I think we are at time and so I wanted to say thank you very much for coming out tonight and if you wanted any more information I’d be happy to share it with you, and thank you for coming.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUDS]
General Interest Articles

Tornadoes of Utterances: A Theoretical Approach to Studying Discourse, Power and Knowledge

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ABSTRACT

This paper expands upon our current understanding of the nexus between discourse and power by presenting an alternative theoretical approach to studying the intertextual workings of various discourses and how they work independently and interdependently to create power. Using Bakhtin’s theories of language, the paper first shows how all discourse is heteroglot and intertextually related to other discourses. The paper then shows how this intertextuality works to increase the connection between discourse, power and knowledge as discussed by Foucault. Taking this knowledge, the tornado model of discourse and power is presented as a theoretical and methodological tool to be used in studying specific discourses. Additionally, the tornado model can be used to help resist the power of such discourses.

Communication is essential to obtaining power, as well as the ability to exercise it. Various scholars have explicated the numerous ways in which language is both power and powerful, the discourse/power/knowledge connection. I expand on these theoretical forays by providing a specific, critical, approach for studying how various levels of discourse work together to create power in interpersonal relationships.

I will first show how all of our discourse can be divided into one of three levels – cultural, social, interpersonal – and how each of these levels are dialogically related to the others. I will then discuss how all of our discourse is heteroglot such that “at any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions – social, historical, meteorological, physiological – that will insure that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would have under any other conditions” (Bakhtin, 1981 p. 428). Combining the work of Bakhtin and Foucault, I show how heteroglossia operates to create power exercised through discursive exchanges. I then provide a model, the Tornado Model of Discourse and Power, that can be used a guide for parsing out, analyzing, and increasing our knowledge of the various discourses at play in our everyday discursive meanderings. I close with a brief application of the Tornado Model.
Utterances Comprising Utterances Comprising Utterances

In order to understand the nuances and dynamics embodied within the discourse/power/knowledge connection, it is first necessary to understand the dialogic nature of all language. As social beings, our discourse occurs within the context of other social beings. Consequently, we understand our existence through defining our being in the world in terms of both ourselves and these others. This process of understanding is at the core of dialogism as explicated in the following.

When we speak, we choose certain words and combine them into intelligible utterances. Although we may think what we are doing influences what we say, the opposite is true. That is, “it is not experience that organizes expression, but, to the contrary, expression that organizes experience” (Volosinov, 1986 p. 85). The way(s) that we communicate about our experiences in the world influence our understanding of those experiences. Through speaking and attributing words to the phenomena around us, we make sense of our world in order to understand it: “We see the world by authoring it, by making sense of it through the activity of turning it into a text, by translating it into finalizing schemes that can order its potential chaos” (Holquist, 1990 p. 84). In order to know our reality, we author it. As social beings, meaning becomes a social product through jointly created shared definitions of words.

Just as meaning and words are social products, so too are our individual utterances: “no utterance in general can be attributed to the speaker exclusively; it is the product of the interaction of the interlocutors, and, broadly speaking, the product of the whole complex social situation in which it has occurred” (emphasis in original, Volosinov, 1976, p. 79). To put it another way, just as our words, meanings and life are social, so too are our utterances. Although we may think that each time we speak, we are originally authoring our utterances, we are not. Our utterances contain portions of the utterances of others so that “the internally persuasive word is half-ours and half-someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 345). More specifically, “any concrete discourse…is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgments and accents” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 276). Even before we are able to speak, we are surrounded by utterances and discourse – from other individuals, from television, from radio, and from any other number of sources. Our utterances then comprise a bricolage of all these other utterances. When we speak our utterances are “full of transmissions and representations of other people’s words” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 338). All of these other utterances permeate our own utterances, thereby making our discourse intertextual.

Even though our personal utterances comprise multiple other utterances, we are not necessarily aware of how and where these utterances combine with ours. The essence of utterances and discourse “always develops on the boundary between two consciousnesses, two subjects” (emphasis in original, Bakhtin, 1986, p. 106). For example, my utterances and my discourse form in the metaphorical space between myself and those with whom I communicate. My speaking of an utterance is not the completion of the utterance. My utterance enters the space between us where it combines with your utterances, your words and meanings. Even though I
speak the words, they gain relational meaning only through your hearing them and combining them with your words. Our discourse, then, is not my words or your words, but our words, intermingling and combining.

Many of us are generally unaware of this intermingling of utterances and discourses. As specifically noted by Bakhtin:

In our enthusiasm for specification we have ignored questions of the interconnection and interdependence of various areas of culture; we have frequently forgotten that the boundaries of these areas are not absolute, that in various epochs they have been drawn in various ways. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 2)

Our current approaches to the study of communication often have excluded a whole area of epistemological inquiry, specifically, critical analysis of interpersonal communication. By trying unduly to classify phenomena and lock them into opposing binaries, we have often failed to look at the embodied nature of lived experience. In order to bridge this gap of knowledge, “we must deal with the life and behavior of discourse in a contradictory and multi-languaged world” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 275). We must examine how people actually speak in their everyday existence as opposed to how we think they speak. We must listen to their discourse and try to understand it as spoken. Because “no utterance is devoid of the intertextual dimension” (Todorov, 1984, p. 62), we must examine the intertextuality or interconnectedness of all utterances. To move closer to this type of inquiry, it is necessary to understand just what Bakhtin means by intertextuality.

Intertextual Weaving Of Discourses

At its most simplistic, intertextuality can be understood as the combination of past, present, and future utterances. Whereas dialogism focuses on the other-directed formation of our discourse, intertextuality focuses on the internally structured formation of discourse. Therefore, intertextuality appears in the spoken utterance, as well as the interweaving of spoken and written utterances. Our utterances form a text, explained as “any coherent complex of signs – thoughts about thoughts, experiences of experiences, words about words, and texts about texts” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 103). The text as utterance, then, is defined as including “its plan (intention) and the realization of this plan” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 104). Additionally, “language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 60). Intertextuality occurs in the metaphorical space between our intention as a speaker and the realization by the speaker. What I intend to communicate as a speaker depends upon the meaning attributed to my communication by the receiver. A tension is thereby created between intention versus meaning. As a speaker it is my responsibility to ensure that the meaning I intend is the one received by the receiver of my communication, unless, of course, the receiver can read my mind. Once we understand and accept that intertextuality applies to all utterances, we can move into understanding how it plays out in our utterances.
Todorov, reading Bakhtin, asserts that “every utterance is also related to previous utterances, thus creating intertextual (or dialogic) relations” (emphasis in original, Todorov, 1984, p. 48). In other words, “there is no first or last discourse, and dialogical context knows no limits” (Bakhtin as cited in Todorov, 1984, p. 110). Discourse, all discourse, is never-ending and never-beginning, it is ongoing. Even though we may think that we end our discourse when we end a conversation, we do not. The intertextual dynamic indicates that our discourse continues to swirl, combining and recombining with other discourses, making the meaning of our discourse in constant flux. More specifically, Bakhtin (1981) clarifies that “verbal discourse is a social phenomenon” (p. 259) that embodies the social at all levels or “social dialogue reverberates in all aspects of discourse” (p. 300). This is explained in the following passage:

Every concrete utterance of a speaking subject serves as a point where centrifugal as well as centripetal forces are brought to bear. The processes of centralization and decentralization, of unification and disunification, intersect in the utterance; the utterance not only answers the requirements of its own language as an individualized embodiment of a speech act, but it answers the requirements of heteroglossia as well; it is in fact an active participant in such speech diversity. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 272)

In summary, “the utterance as a whole is shaped as such by extralinguistic (dialogic) aspects, and it is also related to the other utterances. These extralinguistic (dialogic) aspects also pervade the utterance from within” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 109). Each utterance comprises other utterances at the same time that it operates in conjunction with these and other utterances. Caught in the whirling of centrifugal and centripetal forces, no individual utterance stands alone or is created independent of other utterances. Each utterance is intertextually woven with other utterances, which in turn are woven together into discourse. Using Bakhtin’s theories of discourse as a foundation, I set forth a specific method to study this swirling of utterances through parsing out the various discourses found in individual utterances.

**Swirling Utterances**

Recall that utterances develop on the boundary between two levels of consciousness – ours and an Other’s. However, “instead of conceiving the space between two different levels of consciousness as a gap that is overcome only through an activity determined by a preordained telos – an activity in which the initiative of parts in affecting the whole is highly limited – dialogism sees the gap between higher and lower levels of consciousness as a zone of proximal development” (Holquist, 1990, p. 83). Like our discourse, the space between levels of consciousness is not one with a set beginning and end. Instead it is an amorphous place, changing and changeable through our discursive constructions. This gap presents a distance “that may be traversed (at least partially) through the pedagogical activity of the parts in a dialogic simultaneity relating to each other in time” (emphasis in original, Holquist, 1990, p. 83). Through our discourse we negotiate a way to traverse this gap in such a manner that we express our intended meaning as understandable to others. This negotiation represents what Bakhtin
refers to as “dialogic tension” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 314). The key to understanding discourse is to get at this tension, to understand just what dialogic tension embodies and how we negotiate our way through it.

We must first recall there is no beginning or ending to discourse despite that “every word is directed toward an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates” (emphasis in original, Bakhtin, 1981, p. 280). The answerability of discourse is not an end in and of itself. At the same time each word anticipates an answer, it also refers to an object in a specific context resulting in the “unfolding of social heteroglossia surrounding the object, the Tower-of-Babel mixing of languages that goes on around any object” (emphasis in original, Bakhtin, 1981, p. 278). This Tower-of-Babel mixing of languages embodies the nature of discourse and has not been studied extensively. To clarify this lack of study, Bakhtin related it to specific phenomena as embodied in three levels of discourse:

These include the specific phenomena that are present in discourse and that are determined by its dialogic orientation, first amid others’ utterances inside a single language (the primordial dialogism of discourse), amid other ‘social languages’ within a single national language and finally amid different national languages within the same culture, that is, the same socio-ideological conceptual horizon. (emphasis in original, Bakhtin, 1981, p. 275)

I expand Bakhtin’s discussion of these ‘ignored’ language phenomena by translating them into specific types of discourse. As such, I relate single language to our interpersonal discourses, social language to media discourses, and national languages to cultural discourse. As I will demonstrate in the Tornado Model, we can see examples of each type of these discourses at play throughout our discursive exchanges at any given moment. Before explaining the model, I will discuss how discourse creates knowledge, which in turn allows for the possibility of power.

The Power of Discourse

Power is created and enacted through the knowledge created and communicated through discourse. Through discourse we gain knowledge, while at the same time the impact of discourse is realized in its transmission and production of power (Foucault, 1990). We have an inherent relationship between discourse, power and truth:

There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operate through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. (Foucault, 1980, p. 93).

Truth is not something waiting to be discovered but is actually a complex of rules, an economy of discourses. Discourses, however, produce not a rule but a normalization that exerts power through discipline. Therefore, even discourse that appears to be aimed at subverting existing power structures is itself a form of power. With discourse we are active participants in extending
this power. The end result is a whirling of truth, power, knowledge and discourse in which each feeds off of and strengthens the others.

For Foucault, the relationship between discourse and power is especially damaging to individual subjects. Discourse acts as an “economy of power” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119) that creates and disseminates “procedures which allow for the effects of power to circulate in a manner at once continuous, uninterrupted, adapted and ‘individualized’ throughout the social body” (Foucault, 1980, p. 119). Discourse is more than just communication through the use of language; additionally “it is a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed” (Foucault, 1972, p. 55).

These “distinct sites” can be better understood by considering discourse in conjunction with Foucault’s discussion of the panopticon and panoptic gaze. As a metaphor for power and societal control of power, the idea of the panopticon can be seen at play in various ways. The panoptic prison works by being physically constructed and operated in such a manner that prisoners know they could possibly be under continual surveillance. Because of this possibility of surveillance, the prisoners learn to monitor themselves and change their behavior accordingly. In other words, they internalize a surveillant gaze that may not even be there. Like the prisoners housed in the panoptic prison, we learn to function as if we are always under surveillance. In such situations, discourse serves as a metaphorical gaze under which we monitor ourselves and discipline ourselves accordingly.

What we hear and see around us in discourse presents images or ideals of what we should/could be -- we change our behavior accordingly, just as the prisoners of the panoptic prison do. These discourses exert power not by presenting direct mandates that must be followed in order to avoid punishment. Instead, discursive power is realized in the ability to gain access to our minds and through our minds, our bodies. There exists a “tyranny of globalizing discourses” (Foucault, 1980, p. 83) that act as “grids of specification” (Foucault, 1995, p. 42) or a “net-like organization” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). This tyrannical grid “prevent[s] even the possibility of wrongdoing by immersing people in a field of total visibility where the opinion, observation and discourse of others would restrain them from harmful acts” (Foucault, 1980, p. 153). Therefore, instead of the necessity to imprison us in an actual prison, we are all imprisoned in a metaphorical prison from which we cannot escape – our everyday existence is one of continual, self-imposed surveillance through discursive regimes.

**Tornadoes of Utterances and Power**

In order to understand and study how the intertextual component of discourse and discourse’s creation of power come into play it is necessary to understand how each level of discourse presented above operates on its own and how they all operate together. Bakhtin does not provide us with a specific diagram or layout of these levels of discourse. A diagram can be inferred, though, by returning to his discussion of intertextuality. At any given instance our present utterances are swirling together in the midst of centripetal and centrifugal forces. These
opposing forces create a mass of whirling levels of discourse. Visually, one can imagine these whirling levels of discourse in the form of a tornado – up and down forces combined with inward and outward pulling forces (See; Appendix A: Figure 1). Looking down into the tornado from the top, a bird’s eye view, the three levels of discourse are seen as three concentric circles swirling independently and interdependently with each other (See; Appendix A: Figure 2).

The Tornado Model becomes more clear by understanding the organic development of the weather phenomena of tornadoes. On a basic level, a tornado occurs when opposing wind forces meet. The clashing of these oppositional forces results in the funnel cloud formations associated with weather tornadoes. More specifically, the inklings of a tornado begin when there is a disturbance in the upper levels of Earth’s atmosphere. This disturbance is akin to a churning of winds. As it continues to churn it moves down through the atmosphere gaining force and power as it moves closer to Earth’s surface. The tower of churning forces moves in a circular motion exerting force up and down. As the winds circle, more power is pulled into the tornado. This additional power exerts greater outward force. The tornado’s power and force is both vertical and horizontal, then. At any point between the initial inklings of disturbance and final touchdown, the swirling winds may dissipate into nothing, avoiding destruction. When the churning winds touch down on the ground, destruction is inevitable. After touchdown the only question is how much destruction will there be?

Figure 1 (at Appendix A), demonstrates how the tornado model represents the intertextuality of discourse. A disturbance begins in the upper atmosphere levels of cultural discourse. As this cultural discourse swirls it gains force through the addition of media discourse. These two discourses reinforce each other thereby strengthening the discursive impact of each other. Finally cultural and medial discourses touch down in lived experience through our interpersonal discourse. The power of cultural and media discourses is felt at this touchdown moment and afterwards. Additionally, through our interpersonal recreation of cultural and media discourse, we reinforce or strengthen their power. Our interpersonal discourse then works to exacerbate the destructive forces of the discursive tornado. Like a weather tornado, however, a discursive tornado may dissipate before reaching our everyday experiences. In other words, not all cultural discursive disturbances travel down to the interpersonal level. Additionally, the upper-level cultural disturbance may be precipitated by some occurrence at either or both of the other two levels.

The intertextual working and strengthening of discourse is illustrated in the Bird’s Eye of the Tornado Model found at Appendix A: Figure 2. Each level of discourse is represented by one of the concentric circles, showing how each type of discourse operates independently while also operating interdependently with the others. The important factor is that no one level operates in a vacuum: “Every discourse is by its very nature, ‘dialogical’ that is, caught in intertextual relations” (Todorov, 1984, p. 107). Viewing these levels of discourse as operating both interdependently and independently is supported by Bakhtin’s observation that the “dialogue of voices arises directly out of a social dialogue of languages” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 285). The dialogue I have with you is a result of the heteroglot of discourses occurring around me as well
as the heteroglot of languages occurring around you. Bakhtin (1981) asserts all discourse has a “dialogic orientation” (p. 279). As each level of discourse is dialogic and intertextual within itself, it is also dialogic and intertextual with the others.

The first level of discourse is the primordial or beginning discourse. By “beginning” a specific first discourse is not implied. “Beginning” refers to the base of other discourses, that discourse which is the most basic. I include at this level of discourse our intrapersonal discourses as well as interpersonal and small group discourses. This level is characterized by personal transmission between parties. However, “personal” is not necessarily equated with in-person and can include phone calls, e-mail, letters, etc. At the social or national level I include all media discourses. These are the multiple messages and images we see purveyed throughout media venues and to which we are exposed from a young age. Just as there is no one dominant media venue, there is no one dominant media message or image. The cultural level of discourse includes the macro-narratives embodied in such cultural institutions as law, medicine and religion. These are the discourses that structure our day-to-day existence and are sometimes thought of as big “T” truth. These discourses tend to become entrenched in society and are not quickly changed.

Because each level is dialogic and intertextual with the others, each type of discourse embodies the other two. For example, media discourse contains aspects and parts of both cultural discourse and interpersonal discourse. At the interpersonal level, individuals appropriate specific utterances from media and culture and incorporate them into our discourse. Additionally, many individuals view media images and attempt to emulate them (or at least desire to). Finally, cultural discourse is changed through interpersonal discourse in courts, medical offices and other institutions where they are created. At the same time, cultural discourse often responds to social discourse such as laws regulating the content of movies and television programs.

In addition to relations between levels, there are also relations within any one level:

There exists a dialogic and intertextual relation between my present utterance and my past utterances. Just as what I have said in the past influences what I say now, what I say now influences what I said in the past. No utterance is stable; it is always in flux. However, since every word is directed at an answer, there is also a future component. By saying our past utterances are in flux, Bakhtin is not asserting we enter some type of time warp, return to the past and respeak or change our utterance. Instead, the flux occurs through our revisiting past utterances in thought and interpretation. For example, assume I pass a friend on campus and greet her by saying, “Hi, how are you?” to which she responds, “Oh, fine.” I then say, “Good, talk to you later.” Now, assume later in the day I learn from another friend that the first friend had suffered a severe emotional setback earlier in the day. Returning to our exchange, I
understand “oh, fine” does not necessarily mean good so much as it means fine considering the circumstances.

In terms of discourse, this means when I participate in discourse, I am influencing both that which has been said and that which will be said. Through time, the specific “mediatization” of my utterances become normalized. I am no longer aware of how I am recreating social and cultural discourses through my discourse. This normalization can be detrimental for it operates as a tool to create and circulate hegemonic power as illustrated in the following discussion.

**Discourses Controlling Female Bodies**

As part of my research agenda I examine the discourses in American culture that operate to subjugate women to both their individual bodies and a collective “ideal” body. Trethewey (2000) asserts that women’s approach to their bodies is a reflection of the social construction of the female body and their response to that body. Women who fail to adhere to this socially constructed ideal face possible ostracization by various members of society, including other women. These women also ostracize or punish themselves through participation in what I call Body Shape Discourse and define as friendship talk focused on how women “view their own and other women’s bodies, as well as the things they are doing to either accept or change their bodies” (Russ, 2004, p.215).

Working from Trethewey’s (2000) assertion that women’s response to their bodies is a combination of the social construction of the ideal body and their response to this ideal, we see a multitude of intertextual influences within Body Shape Discourse. The current ideal body for women represents the aesthetic ideal of femininity and embodies the sexual ideal. As a result, many of the cultural and social discourses feeding into Body Shape Discourse can be considered sex discourses. Their power as sex discourses arises through our engagement with and use of them. Using the Tornado Model, we can begin to unravel the multiplicity of sex discourses at play in Body Shape Discourse.

**Cultural Discourses**

We can trace the formation of modern sex discourses at the cultural level to the time following the Industrial Revolution in America (Ryan, 1975; Hymowitz and Weismman, 1978). During this time, the home became representative of a calm, private refuge from the public marketplace. Women, especially middle and upper class, were expected to be the angel of the house where the house was the heaven to which they were restricted. As the 19th century continued, concerns over maintaining the sanctity of the home began circulating in American culture – the initial cultural disturbance. This concern was realized in social mandates to women to remain or at least to appear sexually pure. A significant part of this purity involved controlling all aspects of appetite, not just the sexual appetite. That is, to be a woman demanded a constant focus on the sexual appetite through limiting all physical appetites.
These mandates are still seen today throughout the cultural institutions of religion, medicine and law. For example, the Catholic Church controls women’s ability to consent to sexual relations through prohibitions against abortion and birth control. Medical discursive controls are seen in prescriptive approaches to body size and the medicalization of female behaviors that deviate from the norm. Legal discursive controls are seen in the multiplicity of laws regulating marriage, sexual relations, statutory rape, access to birth control, and similar issues.

More generalized examples of cultural discourses can be seen in the women’s clothing industry. Today any woman can walk into a store and buy clothing in “standardized” sizes. However, as any woman can attest, the standardization of such sizes does not extend to the cut or size of the actual piece of clothing. The standardization seems to be limited to the numbering of sizes (Russ, 2008). Working in conjunction with standardized sizes is the designer assertion that “modern fashion was best displayed on a thin body” (Brumberg, 1988, p. 238). This assertion is realized in the fashion standard of using ultra-thin models to model new fashions.

These various discourses all operate together to form the cultural level of sex discourse, the power of which is supervised by society as a whole. Through their dialogic operation, they work to create norms to which all women must adhere. Women’s subjugation then becomes a product of both implicit and explicit mandate. As egregious as cultural sex discourses may be, their power is magnified when combined with social sex discourses.

**Social (Media) Discourses**

At the social level of discourse, cultural sex discourses are normalized through repeated promulgation and exposure. At this level of discourse, Foucault’s assertion that discourse is more than just an expression, “it is [also] a space of exteriority in which a network of distinct sites is deployed” (Foucault, 1972, p. 55) can be seen in action. Through the technology and saturation of media, social sex discourse surrounds us in all of our activities. The result is desensitization to sex discourse and a simultaneous hyper-sensitization to the ideal female, sexualized body as the apparent norm.

Many women compare themselves to media images and turn to them as role models. Despite the advances made in recent years by feminists and other women’s activists, there is still a dearth of positive female role models. Therefore, “given few role models in the world, women seek them on the screen and glossy page” (Wolf, 1991, p. 58). The homogenized images we see in films, magazines and other venues are the images many women turn to as models for their own body. Supermodels, the ultra-thin models whose bodies are thought to best display new fashions, take on new importance. They “are heroes to little girls, not because of their courage or good deeds, but because of their perfect features and poreless skin” (Kilbourne, 1999, p. 59). In recreating cultural sex discourses, then, social discourses create an additional form of control over the female body.
Many of the ideal images purveyed through media are sex discourses and are sexual. One need only glance at the magazine covers found on any newsstand to find a multitude of examples of women posing to highlight their breasts or vaginal area or buttocks – or some combination. Women’s magazines such as Cosmopolitan, Shape, and Vogue and men’s magazines such as Maxim, FHM, and Stuff often present women in various stages of partial dress. Occasionally these magazines will present a woman totally nude with only the strategic placement of her hands allowing the cover to be shown publicly on the newsstand. This means one does not even need to purchase the magazine in order to view an eroticized female form.

Not all social sex discourse, though, is so overtly sexual in nature. Magazines, television, films, music, and video games present a subtler, though perhaps more pervasive, form of the discourse. Women -- and their bodies -- are put on display to be consumed through our gaze. Women’s bodies are used to sell everything from cars to shoes to alcohol to cleaning products. At the same time, in situation comedies, films and video games such as the popular Tomb Raider, idealized, sexualized women are repeatedly put into situations wherein they are simultaneously viewed and consumed by the characters on screen with them and the viewing audience, what Wolf (1991) has referred to as “beauty pornography” (p. 132) and “beauty sadomasochism” (p. 133). Under the guise of presenting beautiful women, what is actually presented is various manifestations of sex.

Sex discourses at the social level are not limited to visual images. Sex discourse is also found in the actual discourse, spoken and written, found within media artifacts. For example, sex discourse is found within teen magazines and their advice columns (Garner, Sterk & Shaw, 1998), within popular self-help books (DeFrancisco & O’Connor, 1995) and within advertisements (Goldman, et al. 1991; Kilbourne, 1999; Rakow, 1992), just to name a few examples. These textual discourses work dialogically with visual discourses as well as cultural discourses to create an especially onerous example of female subjugation.

**Interpersonal Discourses**

Sex discourse on the interpersonal or primordial language level recreates the discourse from the other two levels and reifies the objectified, idealized, and sexualized images of social discourses. Sex discourse at this level operate as a micropractice where each interchange becomes a local center of power and knowledge (Foucault, 1990, p. 98). Since the discourse occurs in the interpersonal realm, power becomes an intimate and direct mandate that gives the appearance it must be followed.

The multiplicity and variety of interpersonal relationships each of us engage in are varied and as such sex discourse at this level can be demonstrated in many different ways. For example, the husband who discusses with his wife what she could do to be more sexually appealing and the mother who helps “beautify” her young daughter are both engaging in one type of interpersonal sex discourse.
In terms of Body Shape Discourse as sex discourse, most specific utterances fall within one of two categories: declarative statements or questions (Russ, 2004). For example, declarative statements include such things as “I feel like a heifer,” “I look like an elephant,” and “I am so fat.” Examples of questions include “Do I look like I’ve gained weight?” and “Does this make my butt look big?” These statements are the externalized manifestation of the internalized idea that the ideal body seen in social discourse is the one all women should have. Women participating in Body Shape Discourse compare themselves to these ideal women and try to emulate them. The power of Body Shape Discourse as sex discourse is realized at this moment.10

Body Shape Discourse is manifested in the process of comparing one’s self to other women. Simmons’ (2002) study of high school girls aptly illustrates this process of comparison: A group of ninth graders talked to me about sitting around comparing bodies during free time at school. “If we’re not doing anything,” one said, “we’re like, ‘I want her legs,’ and ‘I like her height’ and I love her hair.’” (Simmons, 2002, p. 119)

This exchange demonstrates the extent of internalization felt by many girls and young women. They internalize the idea that they can pick and choose the ideal parts necessary to comprise their version of an ideal body. It seems they assume that like other consumer products, they can purchase the ideal body, which in some ways they can if they are willing to subject themselves to plastic surgery and other medical procedures.

Through comparison and participation in Body Shape Discourse, the body of each woman becomes the focus of friendship talk. This friendship talk arises as a direct result of the swirl of sex discourses dialogically brought into the friendship by each friend. Without even necessarily realizing it, the friends create a literal panopticon complete with surveillant gazes which feed off of each other strengthening the immediate surveillance and the larger social and cultural gazes. The doubly damaging nature of interpersonal sex discourse in terms of recreating a surveillant gaze is the same aspect that can be used to resist all levels of surveillance. Just an actual tornado can be diffused through its eye, a discursive tornado can diffused through changing its eye – interpersonal discourse.

Resisting the Destructive Power

The tornado of discourse described above is more than simple utterances influencing each other. Like an actual tornado, the discursive tornado is a powerful force that can potentially destroy. However, unlike an actual tornado, the discursive tornado can be destroyed. A weather tornado does not destroy every single physical object in its vicinity. Studying tornadoes one will find numerous stories of two neighboring houses – one destroyed, one left standing. Discursive tornadoes respond in a similar manner. While some people fall prey to the subjugating power of certain discourses, many do not. We can use this fact to start to find a way to resist discursive power. One can resist the destructive nature of weather tornadoes by taking
shelter in some type of physical structure. For discursive tornadoes, one must find some form of discursive shelter.

Even though discourse, truth, and knowledge feed off of each other to produce power, the power generated is not impenetrable. Recall that Foucault (1990) defines power as the “moving substrate of force relations which, by virtue of their inequality, constantly engender states of power, but the latter are always local and unstable” (emphasis added, p. 93). Even though it may seem, at times, that power relations are an all-encompassing stronghold, they are in fact much less strong. Power is “unstable” meaning it can change or more importantly be changed: “where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault, 1990 p. 95). The key to taking advantage of this instability is to work from the interior, the local center.

As power is transmitted through discourse, so too can it be resisted through discourse: Discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. (Foucault, 1990, p. 101)

Instead of being trapped under the surveillant gaze of discursive power, we can use similar discourse to “reverse” (Foucault, 1990, p. 101) or resist the gaze. That is, we are not forever stuck in a subject position subjugated to oppressive discourse. We have the power, with our own discourse, to resist subjugation.

In order to enact such resistance, Bakhtin’s thoughts on intertextuality and swirling discourses should be kept in mind. Just as all discourse is shot through with prior and future discourse, discursive power strategies present a “multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play” (Foucault, 1990 p. 100). To be effective, then, resistance must “reconstruct the distribution” of such discursive elements (Foucault, 1990 p. 100). Using terms related to the tornado model, we must destroy the eye of the tornado to stop its full destruction.

Changing cultural and/or social discourses present a daunting task; however, changing interpersonal discourse is a more manageable task. With time, education and diligence, habits such as Body Shape Discourse can be modified into more productive discourses. More importantly, a change in one level of discourse should eventually precipitate changes in the other two levels. As Bakhtin (1981) repeatedly reminds us, the formation of discourse is dialogically and intertextually contingent. No one type or level of discourse operates in a vacuum. Therefore, the intertextual context within which discourse operates can be used not only to create power relations, but also to destroy or change them.

Concluding Thoughts

The Tornado Model discussed in this paper presents an alternative way to study the discourse/power/knowledge connection. I have drawn from the theoretical musings of Bakhtin on discourse and Foucault on power and knowledge. While both of these bodies of research are
illustrative and instructive in their own right, they can be somewhat confusing and difficult to access. Combining the two into one approach can be therefore be overwhelming. One of my goals with this model was to find a way to move beyond this confusion and make the study of discourse, power and knowledge as it is played out in our lives more accessible and “user-friendly.”

To illustrate the model, I have used the “sex discourses” that intertextually comprise Body Shape Discourse or how many American women discuss their bodies. As this application shows, Body Shape Discourse is precipitated by more than just an individual’s dissatisfaction with her body. This dissatisfaction is a discursive response to a number of cultural and social mandates on how women should look and specifically how the “sexy” or attractive body should appear. The model is not limited to such applications, though. The model could be used to examine how parents’ conversation with their children recreate and reinforce heterosexist norms about marriage or how teacher/student discussions work to maintain the traditional educational model of students being passive receivers of knowledge, amongst many others.

The Tornado Model also has practical pedagogical applications. With the model, students can analyze a particular discourse at any level. From this analysis, they can begin to determine what other discourses intertextually create the discourse under examination. Finally, they can use this information to consider power relations created and maintained by the discourses.
Appendix A

Figure 1: Tornado Model of discourse, intertextuality and power
Figure 2: Bird’s Eye View of Tornado Model of Discourse: Dialogism across levels

1. Single level of language (Primordial dialogue)
2. National (Social) Language
3. Cultural Language
References


Endnotes


2 Throughout, I will primarily use “utterances” for uniformity. However, the concepts I discuss herein should not be understood to be limited to individual utterances as they also are at work in all discursive exchanges.

3 It is commonly thought that this and other works by Volosinov are actually the works of Bakhtin published under his friend’s name. It is beyond my expertise to determine whether this is true or not. For an interesting overview of the controversy, though, see Todorov, 1984 pp. 6-11; Holquist, 1990 pp. 7-12.

4 As used herein, intertextual refers to the interconnectedness of all utterances, spoken and written.
However, in recent years we have started to see a turn toward acknowledging and filling this gap: Baxter, 2004; 2011.

Written and spoken utterances are not limited to words printed on a page or words spoken to another individual. In our multimedia society, they should be thought of as encompassing all forms of texts – film, music, internet, video games, etc.

With the intertextual nature of discourse, there are multiple types of discourses at play every moment. However, for purposes of explanation here I am limiting this example to media discourses.

Some theorists would argue that the past link is much more direct. For example, Gunn Allen (1986) discusses the Native American concept of “achronicity” in which the sense of time “is not ignorant of the future any more that it is unconscious of the past” (Gunn Allen, 1986 p. 150).

It could be argued that these ideals pre-date the Industrial Revolution; however, during the 19th century the mandates separating the private home from the public marketplace became formalized through multiple legal discourses mandating the separation. These mandates, though, primarily applied to middle and upper class women, leaving working and lower class women to fend for themselves. For an interesting discussion of the plight of working and lower class women see Berry, 1999.

For an extended discussion of Body Shapy Discourse as sex discourse see, Russ, 2008.
This House Would Not Mix Burdens:
The Conflation of Fact, Value, and Policy in NPDA†

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the dispute in the forensic community over whether there is (or ought to be) a distinction between resolutions of fact, resolutions of value and resolutions of policy. This dispute is informed by philosophical literature on the subject in this paper. The philosophical positions are applied to the dispute in NPDA, and the author sides with the distinction rather than the collapse of the distinction. Theoretical, rhetorical, and pragmatic implications are drawn from the analysis, and pedagogical recommendations are made.

“Madam adjudicator, we have before us today the resolution: Resolved: Healthcare is a human right. The government team’s interpretation of this resolution is that it is a resolution of factvalue.” When I heard this interpretation as a novice National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) debater my freshman year, I was confused. According to my coaches, there were three kinds of resolutions: fact, value, and policy. There was no ‘factvalue.’ Hence, the entirety of the argumentation that my partner and I advocated in that particular round was technical and concerned with the interpretation of the resolution, which frustrated the judge, the government team, my partner, and me. Although it is entirely possible that the aforementioned round was an anomaly, or a product of too little practice on the part of the government team, I have noticed a tendency for NPDA teams tend to, as one of my former coaches put it, “not know anything about fact or value resolutions.” This paper is concerned with how coaches and students alike seem to be conflating fact and value resolutions in NPDA debate in recent years. Middleton (2005) explained:

The legitimacy of claiming distinctions between resolutions of fact, value, and policy in parliamentary debate has generated expansive debate. In particular, whether differences

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exist in the resolitional burdens provided by a resolution of ‘fact’ are different from those found in a resolution of policy or value. (The facts about “fact” debate)

There are many participants, who do not value this distinction, but this paper aims to establish the importance of the distinction and how we, as members of the forensic community can best train our debaters. As Knapp (1996) argued:

Interpreting the resolution from the oppositional standpoint is unwieldy at best — frustratingly impossible at worst. To aid in the process, the opposition can turn to more specific areas of interpretation, resolitional type. Resolitional types look to the resolution as a whole for guidance in the direction of the case. Resolutions may be of fact, value, or policy. I should note here that the notions of fact, value, and policy can and do overlap. To determine which policy we should adopt, we probably need a value to guide the policy. Certainly factual claims are required to show the importance of values in action. The waters can get pretty murky with all of these ideas floating around. A good, clean debate will assert the type of resolution and how facts, values, and policies help us to evaluate the pros and cons of the resolution. If the government does not make these issues clear, the opposition must clarify them through points of information or by asserting these issues in the Leader of Opposition constructive. (p.27)

Clearly, the types of resolutions are not always mutually exclusive. “Although seldom acknowledged, the history behind propositions of fact, value, and policy is rich and sophisticated, coming out of some of the finer thinkers of this century” (Fiordo, 1985, p. 102). As illustrated above, however, the clearer the government can be with these types of distinctions, the clearer the ensuing debate can be. Philosophical positions on the subject of the fact/value collapse or fact/value distinction can also be helpful to coaches and students alike. “After all, if there is one thing the rest of academia really seems to need from philosophers, it is a theory of propositions, or at least a theory of something like propositions” (Dennet, 1995, p. 205). The resolutions that debaters are given to debate over are interpreted by many to be propositions (i.e. Crossman 2005; Meany and Schuster, 2002), and by others simply as something like propositions, as Dennet suggested above. Additionally, there are different kinds of propositions. As Fiordo noted, “[I]n dealing with propositions, all propositions signify. Not all propositions denote. Similarly, once a proposition signifies, it signifies in degrees of adequacy, reliability, belief, and knowledge as well” (p. 103). Philosophers have argued about the way we think about and interpret facts and values generally, and more specifically within discussion and argument. Hence, a discussion stemming from philosophy is naturally warranted. We begin by examining the fact/value distinction in philosophical literature, apply these notions to NPDA debate, and draw implications from this analysis.
The Philosophical Standpoints

Philosophy is a study immersed in the study of language. It is precisely what we say and how we discuss our thoughts which philosophers speak and write about. For example, as put by Levinas (1990):

The original function of speech consists not in designating an object in order to communicate with the other in a game with no consequences but in assuming towards someone a responsibility on behalf of someone else. To speak is to engage the interests of men. Responsibility would be the essence of language. (pp. 20-21)

Here, Levinas is emphasizing the importance of the words we use themselves, rather than their referents as a responsibility to the other. What we say and how we say it matters to Levinas.

Traditionally, philosophers have maintained the view that fact or descriptive statements are mutually exclusive from, or at the very least, not the same as value or normative statements. Nietzsche’s iconic Four Great Errors, for example, are founded entirely on the human confusion of interpretation (value driven) with truth (fact driven). He explains his first of the Four Great Errors this way: “There is no error more dangerous than confusing the effect with the cause: I call it the genuine corruption of reason” (emphasis in original, Nietzsche, 1997, p. 30). This is clearly a violation of positing something as true, rather than as simply an interpretation, and proceeding as if other things may follow from it.

Many other philosophers, however, now conceptualize these two types of statements as the same, or at the very least, quite interconnected:

Developing and defending a philosophical position is a bit like weaving an intricate piece of fabric. When things go well, each strand of the argument adds strength and support to the others, and gradually interesting patterns begin to emerge. But when things go poorly—when one of the strands breaks—it sometimes happens that the entire fabric begins to unravel. A little gap becomes a big gap, and soon there is nothing left at all. (Stich, 1996, p. 3)

Though he was referring to his own theory regarding eliminative materialism in that passage, this sentiment is quite accurate when it comes to the disagreement over the fact/value dichotomy. Within philosophy literature, two positions emerge: 1) there is no fact/value distinction and 2) there is a fact/value distinction.

No Distinction

Those philosophers who do not advocate a fact/value distinction claim overall that words, by their very nature have evaluative impacts. As we educators know and teach most semesters, words have denotative and connotative meanings. Even denotative meanings to words do not exist outside of the usage of terms, given the dynamic and cultural nature of language. Perhaps the most influential author supporting this view is Putnam (2002). He argued that the dichotomy set forth by many scholars between objective and subjective is false. Instead, he claimed that the
subjective can in fact be rationalized and the objective, many times, has subjective implications. As Putnam (2002) argued:

The attempt of noncognitivists to split thick ethical concepts into a 'descriptive meaning component' and a 'prescriptive meaning component' founders on the impossibility of saying what the 'descriptive meaning' of, say, 'cruel' is without using the word 'cruel' or a synonym. (p. 38)

Overall, Putnam (2002) encouraged philosophers to see the interconnections between factual and evaluative statements rather than separating them entirely. Facts and values are so entangled in the real world, Putnam argued, that they simply cannot be completely severed from each other. Other scholars agree with Putnam’s claim that fact and value statements are not entirely mutually exclusive. For example, Rorty (1979) explained that the only way one can accurately contend that there are such thing as fact-only statements is if one can prove that there is such thing as a value-free vocabulary. Furthermore, Flew (1964) argued that speech acts are, or at least can be as Austin deems them, ‘illocutionary,’ or actually perform as they are said. While he claims that illocutionary speech acts justify deriving ought from is, he concludes this supports fact and value claims not being distinct. Derrida (1991), a master of the intricacies of language, explained:

The word ‘deconstruction,’ like all other words, acquires its value only from its inscription in a chain of possible substitutions, in what is too blithely called ‘a context.’ For me, for what I have tried to write, the word has interest only within a certain context where it replaces and lets itself be replaced by such other words as ‘e´criture,’ ‘trace,’ ‘dife´rance,’ ‘supple´ment,’ ‘hymen,’ ‘pharmakon,’ ‘marge,’ ‘entame,’ ‘parergon,’ etc. . . . ! (p. 275)

Derrida seems to reject the notion of discrete, hard-and-fast meanings of words. Rather, he supports the idea that words can only have meanings hermeneutically. The word play in his works are a performitive affirmation of his idea that things shift meaning and derive meaning within context.

This notion is, of course, echoed by contemporary rhetoricians. “Within speech act theory, a performative is that discursive practice that enacts or produces that which it names” (Butler, 1993, p. 13). Here, Butler supported the notion that referent and speech act are not distinct, but rather work together to produce a meaning. Read more literally, speech acts actually justify not deriving an ought from an is, only a repetitive is from an is. The performed identity embedded within speech acts do not prescribe, but merely illustrate a self or state of affairs.

Pro Distinction

While there is a push from many to merge fact and value claims, there are many philosophers who still support the fact/value distinction. Searle (1964) explained why it is that one should not derive ought from is:

[T]here is a class of statements of fact which is distinct from a class of statements of value. No set of statements of fact by themselves entails any statements of value . . . no
set of *descriptive* statements can entail an *evaluative* statement without the addition of at least one evaluative premise. To believe otherwise is to commit the naturalistic fallacy. (Emphasis in original, p. 43)

Searle was not suggesting that there is not overlap whatsoever between these types of statements, rather that there are two distinct primary functions. He further raised three distinct objections to being able to derive an ought from an is: 1) if a descriptive premise leads to an evaluative conclusion, there must be a hidden evaluative premise before the conclusion, 2) there must be a hidden evaluative principle behind the descriptive premise(s), and/or 3) the derivative relies on a factual interpretation rather than an evaluative interpretation. All of these objections show that if one is deriving an ought from an is, he or she is at worst illogical, and at best, mixing argumentative burdens. The impact of Searle’s (1964) argumentation was stated later:

> [E]valuative statements perform a completely different job from descriptive statements. Their job is not to describe any features of the world but to express the speaker’s emotions, to express his [sic] attitudes, to praise or condemn, to laud or insult, to commend, to recommend, to advise, and so forth. Once we see the different jobs the two perform, we see that there must be a logical gulf between them. (p. 53)

While it is obvious that not every single descriptive statement is without an at least connotatively derived evaluation and vice versa, for the sake of training argumentation and debate skills to students, there are enough clear differences to keep the categories in the traditional trichotomy valid. Perelman (1963) specified that in legal philosophy the is/ought distinction is essential:

> Indeed, as I entirely accepted the principle that one cannot draw an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’—a judgment of value from a judgment of fact—I was led inevitably to the conclusion that if justice consists in the systematic implementation of certain value judgments, it does not rest on any rational foundation. (p. 16)

Summers (1963) explained further that if the two are conflated, it is nearly impossible to distinguish between what one is arguing *is* wrong with the legal system and what *ought* to be done about the problem(s). This is a principle already clear in one of our individual forensic events, persuasion. The way, in which most persuasions are written now, there is a problem, cause, and solution point. These are all (hopefully) closely related, yet quite distinct. The solution does not belong in the section describing the problem or effect. To allude to Summers’s example, a persuasive speech on a bad legal system would establish in the problem point what is wrong with the legal system. The cause point would evaluate why the problem continues, in effect condemning (evaluating) the harms by expressing inherency, and finally the solution would state what ought to be done about the harms and inherency. In debate rounds, we are essentially dealing with one of these main points per resolution. True, there must be some statements made by debaters throughout the round that are not within the particular category of the resolution. Conversely, the main thrust of the argumentation is always aimed at proving (or disproving) the original resolution itself. The is/ought distinction is one that more closely mirrors arguments over the conflation of fact and policy, but is equally problematic to the
conflation of fact and value. Genova (1970) responded specifically to Searle’s argument that facts entail values:

This is a brute sense of ‘ought’ which simply indicates whether we value, commend, recommend, endorse (or whatever) the evaluated institutional facts without presupposing that they are themselves good, bad, or indifferent. This does not mean that there are literally two meanings of ‘value’ any more than that there are two meanings of ‘fact.’ There are, indeed, different uses of ‘value’ and ‘ought,’ just as there are different uses of ‘fact’ and ‘is,’ but . . . I contend that the meaning of these terms is not sufficiently determined by their use. (emphasis in original, p. 44)

In other words, the (mis)use of the term fact or value does not change the actual meaning of the word. Many rhetoricians will disagree with this philosophical stance. True, the definitions of words are dynamic and, many times, socially constructed. The concepts used in competitive debate also change over time. Due to the nature of forensic debate, however, it is essential to have some somewhat stagnant rules for the activity to operate within. Swinburne (1961) explained that descriptive statements are easily proven true or false, in the logical sense, while “[e]valuative assertions have properties the exact opposite of the four properties of descriptive assertions” (p. 302). Hence, not only are fact and value statements distinct, but the exact opposite of each other. Swinburne (1961) went beyond his initial observation to prescribe that “people ought not to infer from ‘descriptive’ assertions to ‘evaluative’ assertions” (p. 303). Descriptive or face statements merely illustrate the state of the topic, not whether the topic is good or bad, or whether any action ought to be taken for or against the matter. Hence, philosophically, mixing a fact and a value statement is poor practice. He further clarified:

Values do not belong to the world but belong to the spectacles through which each individual looks at the world; and so value-words can only function legitimately as devices for getting things done in the world or for expressing one’s feelings about the world, not for describing the world. (p. 305)

Therefore, mixing fact and value statements is unhelpful and theoretically dangerous. Basically, the most clear training for debate shows debaters how to operate within the box or tradition before they go outside the box, make their own box, or destroy the box. One way that this can be achieved is through training debaters about the traditional trichotomy.

Application to NPDA

NPDA debate is an extemporaneous format of debate, in which debaters receive their topic only 15-20 minutes (up to 29 minutes at the NPDA national championship) before the debate begins, depending on the tournament. Resolutions define sides for debaters; without them, the roles in a debate are hopelessly ambiguous. Traditionally, debaters are taught that there are three types of resolutions: fact, value, policy, just as beginning speech students are traditionally trained in public speaking courses that there are three forms of claims: fact, value, and policy. While many current NPDA coaches of highly successful teams may argue that there are no (or
should be no) hard and fast classifications of resolutions, argumentation and debate textbooks continue to introduce this distinction. (e. g. Crossman, 2005; Herrick, 2011; Hill & Leeman, 1996; Rybacki & Rybacki, 2008) Though there are NPDA teams outside of communication departments, it seems the most logical place for us to start training debaters would be with argumentation texts and scholarship.

However, as of late, (I would venture to say especially—but not exclusively—on the West Coast) some coaches are training their debaters that there are no such thing as fact resolutions, or (even more popular in my estimation) that every resolution is actually a policy resolution. While I disagree with this conflation on principle, I would be much more willing to listen to this kind of argument if it were informed by some theory. Please do not get me wrong. I am certain that the coaches who train their debaters contrary to the way that I train my own are informed by theory. However, I have rarely heard a claim in-round which states much more than “All resolutions have policy implications” or “There is no such thing as objective” as justification for not recognizing the traditional distinction. With an understanding of how the fact/value dichotomy, or lack thereof, is discussed in philosophy, we can apply these concepts to NPDA debate. Analogous to the philosophical positions, there are two primary positions regarding NPDA debate: 1) there is no distinction between fact and value resolutions and 2) there is a distinction between fact and value resolutions.

No Resolutonal Distinction

Those who conflate resolutions of fact and value usually suggest that statements of fact imply values or policy implications. Fiordo (1985) suggested that there is an interconnectedness between all forms of resolutions. “. . . [I]n dealing with informative propositions, as in natural science, the support for such propositions is guided by norms or standards (such as what is to count as admissible evidence), thereby blurring simplistic distinctions between informative and valutative propositions.” (Fiordo, 1985, p. 104) He continued, “[s]imilarly with informative or ‘is’ propositions and ‘ought’ propositions, while they may be treated as theoretically independent, there is a dynamic interaction and mutual Influence between these two as well.” (Fiordo, 1985, p. 105) More recently, Brodak and Taylor, (2002) observed the trend in NPDA to mix fact and value resolutions:

[W]e have stopped asking ourselves whether the proposition is best understood as an issue of fact, value, or policy. Instead, we allow ourselves to be argumentatively constrained by the mere appearance of symbolic identifiers in the resolution. Since the word justified is an indicator of value judgment, we limit the possibility of resolutonal identification to one of value whenever the word appears in the proposition. (p. 26)

This observation does not, however, provide a compelling reason to continue this practice. Brodak and Taylor (2002) critiqued traditional fact resolutions by saying, “since the resolution itself already has a correct answer, the resulting debate following the introduction of a ‘factual resolution’ has been predetermined as well” (pp. 28-29). However, this conflates theoretical
claims of fact (which can be true or false) with the lay interpretation of fact (which assumes that the statement is true). Another position against the trichotomy comes from Hanson (1997), who integrated the theories of Burke and Perelman. He concluded, “I believe Burke's theory can add to Perelman by giving a global perspective which points to the social implications and limits of the process of social reasoning” (Hanson, 1997, Sociality in the Rhetorics of Kenneth Burke and Chaim Perelman: Toward a Convergence of Their Theories). When we are reasoning in social situations, or any part of the “real world,” the trichotomy seems useless and counter intuitive. The debate round remains a forum in which, through trial and error, students can practice their argumentative skill outside of the real world. Although this position is intriguing and popularly practiced in debate, it unfortunately has remained under-theorized.

**Pro Resolutinal Distinction**

Those who support the fact/value distinction advocate the traditional notion of avoiding mixing burdens. Kuster (2002) asserted that there are three kinds of resolutions in NPDA: fact, value, and policy. He implied that these types of resolutions ought to be considered mutually exclusive, because this distinction is what he proposes as a benefit of NPDA. This is one way that students must learn a variety of rhetorical strategies, according to Kuster. The sources in this section may seem dated. Unfortunately, there is a dearth of current scholarship on forensics generally and especially on NPDA specifically. Some coaches may argue that my ideas of a distinction in categorizing resolutions is ‘old school’ or outdated. Anecdotally, I know that is not the case. Additionally, in a personal interview on June 15, 2012, with Professor John Vitullo, one of the directors of debate tabulation at the Phi Rho Pi National Tournament, he stated that the Phi Rho Pi Tournament uses two policy, two value, and two metaphor topics for preliminary rounds. Each regional governor submits a list of topics for the debate directors to choose from each year. Vitullo says that one of the challenges the directors face each year is that some of the ‘value’ topics are written as fact resolutions, which Phi Rho Pi only offers in the form of metaphor topics. In fact, the directors sometimes re-write resolutions to fit into a different category, because they were worded as fact when they should have been value or vice versa. Hence, clearly a national tournament acknowledges that there is indeed a distinction between fact and value resolutions, and beyond that even a proper way to write them. True, this is not the NPDA. However, because of the fragmented nature of the practice of forensics, even NPDA sanctioned tournaments vary quite a bit in their execution and interpretation of NPDA.

In support of the above, Corcoran, Nelson, and Perella, (2000) argued that there is a clear definitional distinction for each of the types of resolutions: 1) “a resolution of fact is a resolution which is, at least in theory, empirically provable,” 2) “a value proposition proposes that something is either good or bad,” and 3) “policy propositions ask the critic to determine if a particular proposal should be adopted” (Emphasis in original, pp. 211, 32, & 33). Winebrenner and Burnett (1997) introduced the idea of fact, value, and policy resolutions in their text this way:
Debate propositions are framed as statements about controversial facts, value judgments, or proposed policies . . . Because factual propositions and value judgments always involve subjective evaluation of various facts, there is a stock way of looking at such a proposition which will reveal its major issues. (p. 276)

These authors clearly explained that there are important theoretical and pragmatic reasons for understanding the differences between each type of resolution. In the same text designed to introduce a variety of forensic events to its readers, Trapp (1997) explained:

Defining the motion is a necessary but insufficient part of building a case for the proposition. Debaters must also construct arguments that support the motion . . . Constructing arguments for the proposition is a process that varies depending on the type of proposition being debated. We have already discussed the division of propositions into the categories of literal and metaphorical. Within each of those divisions, one can say propositions are either of fact, value, or policy. (p.305)

This introduction supports the need to encourage students to learn the distinctions, at least at first.

Inherently, human beings seem to weigh values in argumentative decision making. There must be a criterion for value decision, which differs from strict formal logical decision making. “Many arguments based on values involve comparisons” (Lundsford, Ruszkiewicz, & Walters, 2004, p. 84). Students are continually taught that facts and values are not the same thing. “A resolution of value compares value claims or postulates an expression of a ‘good’ that is subject to debate” (Meany & Shuster, 2002, p. 30). Many parliamentary debaters and coaches alike agree that value based rounds of debate are problematic. “There are some problems with most value motions and cases that purport to support these motions” (Meany & Shuster, 2002, p. 99). This is the most frequently talked about and contested form of resolution. Meany and Shuster (2002) clarified that the problems with constructing and debating value cases lies in the fact that values have many different interpretations and most value debates end up disputes over what the identified value means. One way that debaters can overcome this is to research values and their possible interpretations and applications, so that the debaters can adapt to their opponents as well as their audience. Value judgments seem to be inherent within every parliamentary debate round, however, because at the end of the round, the critic must choose which team has done the “better” debating, which is where clearly explained warrants can help.

Corcoran, Nelson, and Perella (2000) offered perhaps the clearest explanation of the requirements of value debate. In their text, which covers multiple formats of debate, they explain that NPDA involves fact, value, and policy resolutions which entail different stock issues. Specifically, they explained:

The traditional definition of *Prima-Facie* case is a case which, without refutation, would convince a reasonable person to adopt the resolution . . . The Organic Definition of a *Prima-Facie* case is a case which substantiates the stock issues required for that type of a proposition. (Emphasis in original, pp.34-35)
Hence, it seems the traditional trichotomy of resolutions is upheld by argumentation and debate texts. While many contemporary NPDA debate coaches may argue that the ‘trichotomy’ is dead, according to Swift (2007), at least some judges at the NPTE still support this traditional approach to resolutional analysis:

These judges [in the category of ‘stock issues’ in the study] expect the stock issues of each genre of resolution to be appropriately addressed. They may intervene, but only when a team is failing to meet the stock issues of the given resolution. From these judges’ perspectives, there are three, mutually exclusive types of resolutions: fact, value, and policy. They see that each of these types of resolutions has a separate set of burdens to be fulfilled, and expect that government teams will do so accordingly. These judges came right out and stated that they decide rounds “based on stock issues.” They also dislike especially fast delivery, “unwarranted topicality,” “kritiks,” and “generic disadvantages.” These judges appear to reject gamey positions in general. There were 12 that fit into this category. (p. 30)

In today’s competitive NPDA debate, many coaches favor supporting values through policy implications, or what was once referred to as quasi-policy. Unfortunately, this creates a sense of ambiguity which Plato argued is dangerous to students; any ambiguity in teaching is poor practice. For instance, when Plato referred to concepts of ethics and rules, he did not use the words interchangeably. Along this vein, Edgerton (1985) stated that human beings usually assess meanings from that which they observe and are taught before they evaluate any formal, written rules. This continuous practice of coaching without clear distinctions between types of resolutions may leave students frustrated and confused when their ballots come back disagreeing with whatever their coach(es) taught them to do. Conceivably, if more forensic teams incorporated this habit of teaching that the categorization of fact, value, and policy traditionally does exist into training, understanding of value debate would drastically improve.

**Impacts**

While this analysis is interesting, it is useless without some form of impact to the activity of NPDA. I hope that this paper serves as even a small call to continue to be both reflective and reflexive regarding our coaching and competitive practices and to write about this reflection/reflexivity. Having explored the arguments for and against the fact/value distinction from both philosophical and parliamentary debate literature, we are able to draw theoretical, rhetorical, and pragmatic impacts.

**Theoretical Impact**

Theoretically, we can conclude that NPDA has quite a bit to learn from philosophical literature. Even those who do not like the trichotomy may actually support the split for its
pedagogical value. Interestingly, Trapp (1997) explained why he promotes the traditional trichotomy of resolutions:

Personnally, I do not find the categories of fact, value, and policy to be theoretically sound distinctions. I am using them here because introducing my own category system might prove confusing without a full discussion of each of them and how they are similar and different from the more traditional fact, value, and policy categories. (p. 305)

Perhaps this provides even more support for the validity of training the difference between types of resolutions. Even though Trapp is not a fan of the distinctions, he sees the value of explaining the differences to (beginning) debaters.

Logically speaking, the only value implications that can truly come from a claim or resolution of fact occur once the claim or resolution of fact has been determined to be true or false. Until one has determined the truth or falsity of a claim, determining whether it is good or bad can be largely irrelevant and inaccurate. In the forensic world, if we can accept this premise, the conclusion we must draw follows. In order to draw any evaluative impacts from a debate on a resolution of fact, we have to agree on some things first. Even when setting up a traditional value style case in debate, certain things must be agreed upon as factual or at least acceptable by both sides, such as definitions, examples or evidence, etc.

I see deriving evaluative impacts or conclusions from resolutions similar to the way that we deal with kritiks (critiques) in debate. In NPDA, the impacts debaters can run (advocate) are pre-fiat and post-fiat implications to a philosophical or theoretical kritik. Suffice it to say, the impacts are rhetorical (pre-fiat) or hypothetically occur after passing the government’s plan (post-fiat). In the case of evaluative impacts in a fact round, these impacts can only occur post-ballot because, until the judge have voted that the resolution is true or false, nothing evaluative can be garnered from a resolution of fact. Of course, this position does not instruct the judge on how to judge a fact round. Further research and discussion should address that issue in the future.

**Rhetorical Impact**

Rhetorically, this analysis encourages us to lean toward precision in our thinking as debaters and as coaches of debate. Plato encouraged teachers to be precise with teaching practices (Pangle, 1980 trans.). Moreover, Kuster (2003) argued that a major value of NPDA debate is that students are offered resolutions of fact, value, and policy to debate. This variety expands students’ argumentative skill base. Rhetorically and argumentatively, this offers a reason that communication departments across the nation can continue to advocate and support these programs. If NPDA were to teach poor rhetorical or argumentation practice, communication departments would have a valid reason for pulling funding. Students—while creative and innovative—need structure and guidelines when mastering new skills. Forensics allows a lot of room for creative outlets, but we are teaching skills that students can utilize in other contexts as well. The clearer our theoretical positions are, the more accessible the
information will be to our beginning students. One small way in which we can accomplish this is through teaching the trichotomy in NPDA debate.

**Pragmatic Impact**

Pragmatically, we can conclude that our pedagogy needs to be informed from this analysis. Many authors support NPDA as a format of debate, for various pedagogical reasons (e.g. Alexander, 1997; Backus, 1997; Berube, n. d.; Biles, 1997; Burnett-Pettus & Danielson, 1992; Crossman, 1996; Galizio & Chuen, 1995; Jensen, 1993; Jensen, 1996; Jensen, 1998b; Johnson, 1994; Johnson, Johnson, and Trapp, n.d.; Kuster, 2002; McGee & Simerly, 1997; Rutledge, n. d.; Rutledge, 1993; Rutledge, 2000; Theodore, Sheckels, & Warfield, 1990; Williams, & Guajardo, 1998). One of the most pedagogically theoretically sound practice we engage in is the fact, value, policy trichotomy. As coaches of NPDA, we ought to encourage our students to be clear in debate rounds as to what theoretical standpoint they are coming from, so that communication with the other debaters and with the judge can be truly educational and clear. Forensic teams have a hard time justifying themselves to communication departments as it is. The justification that communication departments need to hear is that forensic coaches are, in fact, instilling good communicative practices in their students. As articulated by Diers (2011):

> The leaders of forensics organizations must be leaders and actively manage their organizations. I can appreciate many forensics educators’ interests in encouraging student learning and creativity; however, organizational structure and clarity are not antithetical to student learning and creativity. This is why in our classrooms we set policies; why on our teams we set policies; and why in our forensics organizations sometimes we have to be ‘rules cops’. (p. 49)

While Diers was not specifically addressing the trichotomy, her sentiment can be applied here as well, I believe. No, we don’t have to attempt to quash creative interpretations or stop debaters or coaches from liking value or policy resolutions more than fact resolutions. However, especially given the academic and institutional support for the distinction between fact and value claims/resolutions, it follows that coaches would at least teach debaters this perspective.

As long as traditionally supported public speaking and argumentation texts support the distinction between claims of fact, claims of value, and claims of policy, communication departments are likely to agree and encourage coaches to also support this distinction. In the midst of economically uncertain times such as now, all forensic teams are at the risk of budget cuts. Coupled with the trend of seeking more external justification for continuation or growth of programs, debate coaches may become increasingly pressured to justify the invaluable skills and experiences they share with their students. While there are many departments (both within and outside of the area of communication) which allow forensic teams to exist without interference, we seem to be headed into an era of even more standardization. For instance, the most recent trend is Student Learning Outcomes, for which departments must provide “objective” stated goals and assessment which articulates how those goals are met (see, e. g. Student Learning
Outcomes: http://www.kn.pacbell.com/wired/fil/pages/listlearningjo3.html). In order to keep up with this sort of pressure, forensic teams may need to be more regimented and clear than in the past.

Conclusion

We have explored the philosophical literature, debate literature, and drawn implications regarding the fact/value distinction. Hopefully, as a community, forensic coaches can find common ground in this area. Although I expect that this paper will by no means resolve the dispute in NPDA debate, I hope that this project will, at the very least, provide a (perhaps small) impetus for continued discussion over the subject in forensic journals. This theoretical and conceptual discussion between coaches can positively impact our students in the future. I don’t know why the trichotomy is so unpopular in so many contemporary debate circles. I think it is an essential part of the beginning debater’s training. Sure, there are situations in which we can “move past” the trichotomy, I suppose, but I will remain resolved to believe it is essential. It is exciting that the NPDA community allows us to articulate our reasons for and against the trichotomy as well as multitudes of other theoretical positions. Pragmatically, I do not anticipate hearing a government team interpret a resolution as a ‘factvalue’ again, but I suppose without clear conceptual perseverance on the subject, it is always possible.

References


“I’m, uhh, Sorry”: The Influence of Fluency and Communication Competence on Perceptions of Apologies

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ABSTRACT
This paper reports the results of an experiment that examined the influence of increasing levels of nonfluency in apologies on audience perceptions. The influence of self-perceived communicator competence (SPCC) on perceptions of apologies was also examined. Favorable ratings of apologies decreased as nonfluency increased from low to moderate levels, but then increased as nonfluency increased from moderate to high levels. For high nonfluency apologies, individuals with higher SPCC rated the apology more favorably than did individuals with lower SPCC. Limitations and directions for future research are discussed.

Complaints are routinely leveled at people in all walks of life for all sorts of alleged misbehavior; accordingly, we are repeatedly faced with situations that impel us to explain or justify our behavior, to offer excuses or apologies for those aspects of our behavior that offend and provoke reproach from those around us.


Apologies permeate daily life, and serve a variety of different functions: they can provide us with a way to restore our self-image, offer an opportunity for conflict resolution, and serve as admissions of responsibility and remorse (Goffman, 1971; Grainger & Harris, 2007; Kramer-Moore & Moore, 2003; Scher & Darley, 1997; Tavuchis, 1991). Effective apologies not only restore image, they may even induce the offended party to comply with requests in the future (Goei, Roberto, Meyer, & Carlyle, 2007). Numerous inquiries have revealed the importance of several verbal behaviors in apologies, such as promising not to repeat an offense or expressing remorse (Goffman, 1971; Scher & Darley, 1997; Sugimoto, 1997; Vassallo, 2005). Previous research also indicates that in addition to verbal content, nonverbal elements such as tone of voice, facial expressiveness, and eye contact are also important (Anderson, Linden, & Habra, 2006; Chiles, 2008; Lazare, 2004; Park & Guan, 2009).

Given that nonverbal elements can be important in how individuals perceive and respond to apologies, it is worth considering the role of fluency. It is often the case that people, particularly when undergoing stressful or difficult interactions (such as those that follow a
hurtful event), are not speaking in ideal circumstances. Similarly, speech can sometimes be
imperfect or unclear. These imperfections may take the form of nonfluencies, where individuals
stumble over words, pause, or accidentally repeat themselves, the presence of which can
sometimes be related to how individuals perceive messages (Miller & Hewgill, 1964). Currently,
no studies have specifically assessed these relationships in the context of apologizing for a
hurtful event. The goal of this study is therefore to assess the extent to which nonfluency may be
related to how people perceive apologies.

There is some evidence to believe that there may be a meaningful relationship between
nonfluency and speaker perceptions. First, prior research indicated that, when receiving
apologies, the tone and manner in which an apology is given are of no small importance (Park &
Guan, 2009). Research suggests that nonfluency speech can have detrimental effects on people’s
judgments of a speaker in general. For example, early credibility researchers (e.g., Miller &
Hewgill, 1964; Sereno & Hawkins, 1967) found that as a persuasive speaker’s nonfluencies
increased, audience’s ratings of competence and dynamism dropped, though there was less effect
on perceptions of trustworthiness. In a study by Christenfeld (1995), participants attributed a
number of negative characteristics to a hypothetical speaker using large numbers of “ums,”
“ers,” or “uhhs,” including inarticulateness, lack of sophistication, discomfort, and nervousness.
The results were somewhat more complex when listening to an actual voice, but nonfluent talk
(i.e., containing vocalized or unvocalized pauses) was still perceived as less eloquent (competent,
articulate, fluent), and unvocalized pauses were also considered a sign of anxiety (Christenfeld,
1995; Stagner, 1936). Kraut (1978) found that observers tend to consider hesitant speech a sign
of nervousness, and indicative of deception. Fluent communication has been associated with
judgments of truthfulness by other researchers as well (e.g., Buller, Burgoon, Buslig, & Roiger,
1994; Riggio, Tucker, & Widaman, 1987).

Second, the effect of fluency on perceptions of apologies does not always appear to be as
clear-cut as one might first expect. A study by Chiles (2008) posed various scenarios in which
the participants imagined experiencing an offensive act and were then asked to describe the
verbal, nonverbal, and paralinguistic behaviors they would ideally like to receive in an apology.
Two distinct preferences emerged: for an apology delivered in a confident and clear manner; and
for an apology delivered in a nervous manner with obvious nonverbal displays of shame and
remorse. Fluency of speech or delivery neatly encompasses important nonverbal and
paralinguistic components of both style preferences. The question, then, is why there are
seemingly contradictory preferences for fluency or for nonfluency when evaluating apologies.
To facilitate an investigation of this question, five evaluative categories were chosen for analysis
based on their importance in the apology and forgiveness literature: sincerity, remorse,
truthfulness, performance, and likelihood of forgiving the offender.

**Qualities of Apologies**
In addition to evaluating the content of an apology, people evaluate the way in which one offers it (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Benoit, 1995; Scher & Darley, 1997). The first three characteristics of apologies identified relate to perceptions of message veracity. *Sincerity* is one of the most important factors in determining whether or not an individual accepts or rejects an apology. Research has indicated that apologies seen as sincere consistently receive more favorable responses and a greater likelihood of forgiveness by the injured party (Anderson, Linden, & Habra, 2006; Davis, 2002; Schlenker & Darby, 1981). *Remorse* is another vital aspect of how individuals understand apologies. Remorse seems to be linked to expressions of emotion. Expressions of emotion, particularly guilt and shame, can affect how the injured party will react to an apology, and elicit a more favorable response for some (Shlomo & Eisikovits, 2006). Research has shown that statements of remorse can contribute to the likelihood of apology acceptance (Kleinke, Wallis, & Stalder, 1991). *Truthfulness* refers to how closely individuals think the apologizer stays true to the actual events. When individuals try to create new accounts that diverge from what actually occurred, particularly those that downplay their responsibility, the apology elicits a less favorable response (Benoit, 1995).

The quality of *performance* concerns how individuals assess the offender’s ability as a communicator. It could be that an individual considers an apology to be insincere but nevertheless recognizes it as a well-constructed and delivered act of mortification. As self-perceived communicative competence of the receiver is one of the factors of interest in this study, an assessment of the perceptions of the competence of the apologizer was considered both appropriate and relevant (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988). Furthermore, because past research has found that socially-skilled communicators tend to be both more fluent, even when deceiving, and more likely to be judged as truthful (Burgoon, Buller, & Guerrero, 1995; Riggio et al., 1987), the influence of an apologizer’s fluency on others’ perceptions of performance is warrant.

The final area of interest ties into one of the vital functions of apologies: providing an *opportunity to grant forgiveness* (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). Research has consistently positively linked an offender offering an apology to the likelihood of being granted forgiveness (Bachman & Guerrero, 2006). Indeed, some scholars consider an apology and its response to be so interlinked that they function as an adjacency pair, where the utterance of one demands the utterance of the corresponding part, similar to question-answer and greeting-greeting (Robinson, 2004). However, simply offering an apology does not guarantee forgiveness. Some research on different verbal and paraverbal elements has found that sincere apologies (as opposed to “pseudo-apologies” and “non-apologies”) elicit more favorable responses on the part of offended parties (Anderson, Linden, & Habra, 2006). Part of what comes with accepting an apology is the expectation of forgiveness, and so this evaluative category is different from the others in that it is not a quality *per se* but concerns how individuals might respond to the apology.

**Apologies as Persuasive Communication**
Benoit (1995) argued that apologies are forms of persuasion because they are goal-driven communication that seeks to elicit a change in the behavior or attitude of the audience. As such, it seems likely to expect that apologies would suffer similar negative effects of nonfluency found by researchers studying other forms of communication (Burgoon, Buller, & Guerrero, 1995; Golman-Eisler, 1968; Miller & Hewgill, 1964; Tatchell, van den Berg, & Lerman, 1983). Past studies that have examined the effect of powerful versus powerless styles of speech found the use of powerless styles of speech incorporating nonfluencies elicited more unfavorable reactions (Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & O’Barr, 1978; Hosman & Siltanen, 2006).

As a unique form of persuasion, crafting and delivering an apology may also be likened to creating a deceptive message, in that the offender, wanting to have his or her message accepted, may experience heightened arousal. The potential for conflict, rejection, embarrassment, or shame, as well as the general face-threatening nature of the situation, can lead to behaviors associated with nervousness (Han & Cai, 2010), including performance decrements such as nonfluencies. In general, skilled communicators are more fluent, and perceived as more truthful, even when they are being deceptive (Burgoon et al., 1995; Riggio et al., 1987), so it stands to reason that a skilled apologizer would be more fluent and effective as well.

Although previous research (Chiles, 2008) indicated that one of the attributes individuals desired in apologies included expressions of nervousness and shame, the study was limited to participants’ descriptions of the qualities of an effective apology, and did not measure actual responses to apologies with different qualities. It is the aim of this study to rectify this limitation. Therefore, based on past research on the effect of nonfluency on the perception of messages, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a negative monotonic relationship between levels of nonfluency in an apology and receivers’ perceptions of sincerity, remorse, truthfulness, performance, and the likelihood of forgiving one’s offender.

Communicator Competence and Perceptions of Apologies

As previously noted, individuals respond to apologies differently. What seems sincere to one individual may not seem that way to another. While the competence of the offender may influence the effective creation and delivery of an apology message, so might the competence of the offended. Communication competence, particularly self-perceived communicator competence (SPCC) (McCroskey & McCroskey, 1988), has received considerable treatment in the literature of communication studies, but has not yet been applied to apologies. A competent communicator is defined as a person with “knowledge of appropriate communication patterns in a given situation and the ability to use the knowledge” (Cooley & Roach, 1984, p. 25). Individuals who perceive themselves as highly competent might then react differently in communication situations than those who perceive themselves as less competent, possibly assessing others’ communication ability relative to their own.
In his study of perceptions of nonfluencies in communication, Christenfeld (1995) found that while they created the impression that the speaker was “not doing so well” (p. 173), nonfluencies did not impact comprehension of the message. Christenfeld’s finding suggests that as long as an apology contains the appropriate verbal components (expression of remorse, statement of responsibility, promise not to repeat offense, offer of reparation/compensation, and request for forgiveness), both high and low competence communicators would understand the content of a “good” apology. However, these two types of individuals (high and low SPCC) may evaluate the same apology using different criteria.

One theoretical perspective that offers some insight is the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). According to this dual-process model, people respond to persuasive messages (such as apologies) by assessing different sets of cues. There are two nonexclusive routes that hearers can follow: the central and the peripheral. When hearers primarily follow that peripheral route, they tend to rely more on source characteristics when evaluating the message such as credibility and expertise, or characteristics such as nonverbal delivery style. When hearers primarily follow the central route, they focus more on message characteristics such as the presence of one- or two-sided arguments and evidence strength. If we assume that fluency is more of a peripheral cue, and that high SPCC individuals follow the central route more, we would then expect that they would be less influenced by changing levels of fluency. In other words, a competent communicator is likely to be a less influenced by style than content in any persuasive message, including an apology. Conversely, a less competent communicator may be more easily swayed by the (non-)confident delivery of a message than by the message itself.

Another explanation for differing expectations for higher and lower SPCC individuals is that communication competence has been found to be associated with a preference for more integrative conflict styles, whereas a lack of competence is associated with distributive and avoidant conflict styles (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989). As one of the measures of communication competence is a recognition of (relationally) appropriate and (task) effective communication (Spitzberg & Cupach, 1984), the association between competence and integrative conflict makes sense conceptually. This might make high-SPCC individuals more likely to accept or favorably rate all apologies, as that demonstrates a more integrative style of conflict management.

A related issue to consider is whether high SPCC individuals might respond differently to different levels of nonfluency. While few studies have been done directly linking SPCC and fluency, Blood, Blood, Tellis, and Gabel (2001) found that individuals who had frequent vocal nonfluencies (stuttering) tended to have relatively lower SPCC than fluent speakers. While not related to perceptions of others, this does suggest that nonfluency has a negative relationship with perceived communication competence. Richmond, McCroskey and McCroskey (1989) uncovered significant positive correlations between SPCC, self-esteem, and sociability, in addition to significant negative correlations between SPCC and audience anxiety, shyness, and introversion.

According to self-verification theory (Swann, 1983), individuals generally seek out and respond favorably to information that affirms their self-perceptions. In other words, high self-
esteem individuals like to receive positive information, whereas low self-esteem individuals counter intuitively like to receive negative information. This indicates the possibility that high levels of SPCC might create an “ego effect” where, because high-SPCC individuals consider themselves to be more competent communicators than the very nonfluent apologizer, they are more accepting of the apology as it confirms their self-perception of high communicative competence.

A second process that might be at work in this dynamic is that of empathy. According to Spitzberg and Cupach (1984), two characteristics related to communication competence are empathy and role taking. Empathy and role taking, in turn, are critical components of the altruistic model of prosocial behavior (Stiff, Dillard, Somera, Kim, & Sleight, 1988). In response to perceived distress in another, individuals first engage in perspective-taking, which then shapes their empathic concern for the distressed party. This then influences the prosocial communicative responses of the assisting party. As previously noted, SPCC has been found to be related to integrative conflict strategies (Canary & Spitzberg, 1989), which rely in part on awareness of and concern for the needs of the other party in a conflict. As such, it is possible that high SPCC individuals may respond empathetically to highly nonfluent apologies, if nonfluencies are perceived as a sign of nervousness and distress. On the other hand, the same sensitivity to differing levels of distress might not be expected of individuals with lower communication competence. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis based on prior theory and research:

H2: Higher SPCC individuals will rate apologies more favorably for remorse, sincerity, truthfulness, performance, and the likelihood of forgiving one’s offender than lower SPCC individuals; this difference will be greatest at high levels of nonfluency.

Method

Participants

The participants were 106 (44 male, 62 female) undergraduate students attending a small, Midwestern, religiously-affiliated private college. They ranged in age from 18 to 23 with a mean of 19.8 years. They represented 31 different majors, the most common being political science (n = 15), communication (n = 11), and education (n = 10). Potential participants were approached in students’ classrooms and public areas across campus and asked if they would be willing to participate in a study on interpersonal communication.

Experimental Design

Participants listened to one of six recordings (female and male; low, moderate, and high nonfluency) and then completed a questionnaire having four parts. Which apology was heard...
was determined as the result of the random selection of a number between 1 and 6, with each
signifying a different recording of an apology.

The primary researcher scripted an apology based on a scenario in Sugimoto’s (1997)
research: a friend had been using the participant’s computer and had accidentally erased an
important paper on which he or she had been working for two weeks. The script incorporated
what previous research had indicated are the critical verbal elements of an apology: promising
not to repeat the offense, offering reparation or compensation, stating responsibility for the
hurtful event, and expressing remorse (Goffman, 1971; Scher & Darley, 1997; Vassallo, 2005).
The researchers made the decision to include all of the elements of a “good” apology to be able
to focus the results of the study on the changing levels of nonfluency rather than the absence of a
specific verbal element.

Once the basic script was ready, the researchers inserted three kinds of nonfluencies into
the script: repetitions of single words, vocalized pauses (“uh”), and unvocalized pauses (lasting
approximately one second). These types of nonfluencies were selected based on those used in the
study by Miller and Hewgill (1964). Three versions of the apology were produced: “low” (no
nonfluencies), “moderate” (two of each type of nonfluency), and “high” (three of each type of
nonfluency). A male and a female digitally recorded a reading of the script, which the
researchers then reviewed and manipulated on a computer in order to decrease variation between
the two in terms of speaker delivery, volume, and speed without compromising the authenticity
of the original recording. A transcript of the script text is included in Appendix A.α

Survey Design

In the first part of the questionnaire, the participants described their perceptions of the
apology by responding to 15 statements, each on a 7-point Likert-type agreement scale. The
statements consisted of 3-item variations of the five evaluative categories: sincerity, remorse,
thuthfulness, performance, and the likelihood of forgiving one’s offender. Cronbach’s α for each
of the 3-item measures was satisfactory (Table 1).

The next part of the survey included the self-perceived communicator competence
(SPCC) measure developed by McCroskey and McCroskey (1988). This measure identified
twelve situations in which participants were to imagine communicating with someone, such as
talking to a friend, and then rate his or her self-perceived competence at communicating in the
situation on a 0-100 scale, with 0 representing “completely incompetent” and 100 representing
“competent.” Combining scores for these 12 items yields a total SPCC score. Reliability for this
combined score was satisfactory (Table 1). Total SPCC scores were then divided into high,
average, and low categories according to McCroskey and McCroskey’s definitions. Fifty-one
individuals fell in each of the high and average categories, but because only four individuals
were in the “low” category, these individuals were excluded from subsequent analyses.
In the final section, the respondents provided basic demographic information, such as age, sex, and major. Participants were also asked whether they had participated in a previous study on apologies, or had taken a course in nonverbal communication.

**Results**

Hypotheses were tested using a 2 (high/average SPCC) x 3 (low/moderate/high nonfluency) x 2 (sex of participant) x 2 (sex of speaker) reduced-model factorial MANOVA, with the five perceptions of apologies as the dependent variables.

Although there were no specific expectations as to how sex would relate to the dependent variables, it was included as a control variable in the analysis to determine what role, if any, it played. There was no significant main effect for sex of the participant, but there was for sex of the speaker, $F(5, 88) = 2.44, p = .04$, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .88$. For low and moderate nonfluency levels, the female received higher ratings in all five categories than the male (see Table 2). Only for the high nonfluency apology did the male receive higher ratings in perceptions of performance, as well as somewhat higher ratings for sincerity and truthfulness.

**Manipulation check**

In order to test whether participants accurately discriminated among the three experimental conditions of fluency, a manipulation check was conducted. Sixty students (20 males; 40 females) not involved in the main study each listened to two of the voice recordings (one male voice, one female voice) and rated the recordings using a 2-item (fluent-nonfluent; nervous-confident), 7-point semantic differential scale. Cronbach’s alpha reliability for the measure was acceptable at .79.

A 3 (condition) x 2 (sex of speaker) univariate ANOVA revealed an inverse linear relationship for perceptions of fluency and the nonfluency conditions, univariate $F(2, 114) = 175.65, p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .76$. Planned polynomial contrasts confirmed significant differences in perceptions of the three conditions, with the low nonfluency condition judged as most fluent ($m = 5.60, n = 41$), followed by the moderate nonfluency condition ($m = 2.78, n = 37$), and the high nonfluency condition ($m = 2.04, n = 42$). No main effect for perception of fluency was observed due to speaker sex, univariate $F(1, 114) = .41, p > .05$.

**Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of Nonfluency in Apologies**

For nonfluency there was a significant multivariate main effect, $F(10, 176) = 3.97, p < .001$, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .67$. There was also a significant univariate effect for nonfluency for each of the five perceptions of apologies (see Table 3). Planned polynomial contrasts confirmed that the participants perceived the three levels of nonfluency differently for each of the evaluative categories for apologies. However, although expected negative linear trends emerged as predicted in H1, they were overridden by quadratic trends (see Table 4). The highest mean
scores for ratings of apologies were for the low nonfluency apology. Positive ratings decreased as the nonfluency increased to moderate levels, but then increased for the high nonfluency apology (see Table 5).

**Hypothesis 2: Communicator Competence and Perceptions of Apologies**

Although there was no significant main effect for SPCC and perceptions of apologies, $F(5, 88) = .57, p > .05$, the interaction for Nonfluency x SPCC was significant, $F(10, 176) = 2.03, p < .03$, Wilks’ $\Lambda = .80$. In order to explore the relationship between nonfluency and SPCC, means for individual perceptions of low, moderate, and high nonfluency apologies were compared. There was no clear pattern for the low and moderate nonfluency apologies, but as predicted, for high-nonfluency apologies the mean score for individuals with high SPCC was larger than the mean score for individuals with average SPCC for each of the five apology perceptions (see Table 6). These higher scores were significant for perceptions of sincerity, $F(1,34) = 3.03, p < .05$ (one-tailed).

**Discussion**

This study focused on the relationship of nonfluency to perceptions of apologies. An expectation was that, as nonfluency increases, the favorability of ratings decreases. The findings provided some support for this hypothesis; both linear and quadratic patterns in ratings of perceptions emerged in respect to level of nonfluency. This indicated that people’s reactions to increasing levels of nonfluency may be more nuanced than anticipated. The apology lowest in nonfluency had the highest overall ratings. Hence, targets appear to prefer fluency over nonfluency. However, if there is nonfluency in an apology, these findings suggest that high levels can elicit more favorable reactions than lower levels.

This finding helps to explain some of the results of previous research. As previously noted, Chiles (2008) determined that, generally, people seemed to fall into one of two groups: those who prefer confident apologies, and those who prefer nervous apologies. The findings of the study indicate that there are some differences between what people say they want and what they actually consider to be an “honest” apology. Although in previous research (Chiles, 2008) some individuals indicated they did not want an apology to sound “rehearsed,” the difference in mean scores of ratings between the version with the highest levels of nonfluency and the version with the lowest was large (Table 5). However, the finding that highly nonfluent apologies received more favorable responses than moderately nonfluent apologies suggests that expressions of nervousness can actually contribute to more favorable perceptions of an apology. One possible explanation is that moderately nonfluent apologies may create the impression that the offender does not care a great deal about the apology, whereas offenders offering highly nonfluent apologies may appear as truly distraught about the event. With so many nonfluencies, individuals in the study may have thought that the offender must be earnest.
A factor that was revealed to have a significant relationship to how individuals respond to apologies was communication competence. The second hypothesis addressed the relationship between self-perceived communication competence and perceptions of apologies. The expectation was that individuals with high SPCC would rate apologies on the whole more favorably, but findings did not support this. High SPCC participants did, however, rate highly nonfluent apologies more favorably than average SPCC participants, and significantly so for perceptions of sincerity. Similar to the overall pattern observed in the data, a curvilinear trend was found for high SPCC individuals, where moderately nonfluent apologies received the least favorable ratings. In contrast, lower SPCC individuals rated the low nonfluency condition as the highest, and the other two conditions as significantly worse. Lower SPCC individuals did not appear to noticeably distinguish between moderately and highly nonfluent apologies.

As such, this finding suggests one possible answer to the conundrum previously described in the introduction: a group of people who reported that fluent apologies were the most sincere and another group who reported that nonfluent apologies were the most sincere. While high SPCC individuals still rated the low nonfluency condition the highest, the different patterns for moderate and high conditions indicate that different levels of SPCC could account for at least some of the discrepancy between the two “ideal” apologies described.

This relatively favorable rating of highly nonfluent apologies may indicate the existence of the “ego effect” discussed earlier, whereby individuals with high SPCC see a highly nonfluent apology as confirmation of their self-perception and, therefore, respond more positively. On the other hand, it could be that individuals with high SPCC saw nonfluency itself as a kind of communicative tactic and, consequently, a sign of a more competent apology. It is also possible that high SPCC individuals are more perceptive, and recognize that nervousness might accompany a heartfelt apology, as one might expect if empathic processes are at work. The high ratings of the veracity measures (sincerity, remorse, and truthfulness) by high SPCC participants of the high nonfluency message, in comparison to the average SPCC participants, seem to confirm this. Interestingly, for the low nonfluency condition, average SPCC participants’ ratings of the veracity measures were higher than high SPCC participants’ ratings.

Though not hypothesized, the sex of the speaker to whom participants listened had a clear relationship to ratings of the apology heard. In almost every case, the female offering the apology received higher ratings than the male. This finding could indicate at least two things. First, it could indicate that people of both sexes tend to respond more favorably to apologies from women than apologies from men. Previous research has indicated that women are generally more sensitive to expressions of emotion than men (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2005; Shlomo & Eisikovits, 2006). It is interesting, then, that both sexes responded in a similar manner to the female voice. The socially constructed gender roles may make it more acceptable for women to admit mistakes than men. Second, the finding could simply indicate that the two different speakers received different reactions because of differences in voice and tone. Although the researchers limited variation between the male and female voice samples as much as possible, some divergence was inevitable.
Implications

Previous research on apologies has tended simply to focus on whether or not apologies were considered sincere or insincere without specifically attempting to isolate and test the influence of specific elements (e.g. Bachman & Guerrero, 2006; Tomlinson, Dineen, & Lewicki, 2004). Those that have tend to stress the presence or absence of verbal elements such as expressions of remorse (Kleinke, Wallis, & Stadtler, 1996). Previous research on fluency tended to emphasize that nonfluency was almost always an undesirable quality in a communication act (e.g., Christenfeld, 1995; Hosman & Siltanen, 2006; Kraut, 1978; Sereno & Hawkins, 1967).

However, these findings indicate that in some cases, nonfluency can actually lead to more favorable perceptions (at least relative to other levels of nonfluency). As such, this study is valuable in that the findings suggest not only that paraverbal elements also have important relationships with evaluations of apologies, but that these relationships are complex and do not always follow linear trends. Furthermore, while fluency and apologies are both well-established fields of study in their own right, by bringing them together we were able to gain additional insight into both areas of research.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This research had a number of limitations. First, the sample consisted of primarily white, college-age students of mostly homogeneous cultural background. Reflective of the population from which it was drawn, participation from students of different ethnic or national backgrounds was low (2.8%). Therefore, this study could not speak to the myriad cultural differences that conceivably influence responses to apologies and is not generalizable beyond its sample. Some cross-cultural studies (e.g. Sugimoto, 1997) have found cultural differences, so this is a limitation worthy of note. However, these findings can serve as a starting point and comparison for subsequent research, and is therefore still valuable.

Second, there were inevitably differences between the male and female voices. Although variations between (male and female) and within (low to high nonfluency) audio clips were controlled as much as possible, there was probably more variation than simply the number of nonfluencies. This is one possible reason why there were significant differences in how individuals reacted to the male and female versions of the apology. However, given that visual stimuli were removed from the equation, participants were limited to audio cues, and the apology script was carefully crafted to allow focus on differences in levels of fluency rather than the apology itself, the expected noise that these variations could have created is presumably small.

Another limitation of this research is that it is inherently artificial, first due to the experimental nature of the study, and second in that it is hypothetical. The participants were not the recipients of actual apologies. Also, the apologies were scripted, meaning that they may have sounded less natural than apologies that occur in everyday life. However, the fact that
participants were listening to human voices rather than reading scenarios significantly enhanced the realism of the study. Additionally, the results of this study are in line with other experimental research that involved participants being placed in hurtful events and then receiving apologies of differing levels of sincerity (Anderson, Linden, & Habra, 2006). Therefore, this limitation does not inherently reduce the validity of the findings reported here. Future research could determine whether findings similar to those reported here are replicated when using a behavioral stimulus as opposed to a hypothetical one.

The final limitation involves the self-perceived communication competence measures. The SPCC measure did not produce an equal or even somewhat equal distribution into the low, average, and high categories McCroskey and McCroskey (1988) identified. Given that the inclusion of the four low SPCC individuals into multivariate analyses might have produced more noise than meaningful data, their exclusion is warranted. Further, that the other two categories divided so evenly (51 participants in each) allowed for meaningful data analysis of differences. Nevertheless, future research that includes a more substantial low SPCC group could produce more representative results.

Furthermore, although an individual may perceives him or herself as a competent communicator, it does not necessarily mean that he or she is actually communicatively competent. The argument also was made that individuals with high SPCC scores were better at recognizing a competently crafted message, yet the evidence for that statement remains to be found. It seems clear from the results of this study that differing self-perceptions may correspond to the types of cues to which one gives weight in evaluating an apology. Future research could benefit from parsing of the competence component to determine whether confidence in one’s communication ability is the key factor in the equation, or whether high SPCC individuals actually do process messages differently because of superior analytical skills.

Appendix A: Stimulus Script

Speaker: I²-I’m sorry that I, uh¹, erased your big paper. I was wrong to (pause¹) use your computer carelessly. I didn’t mean for this to happen, but your work is gone and it’s-it’s¹ my fault. You didn’t deserve to have this, uh², happen to you, especially after you worked so hard on your paper. I (pause³) promise I will never mess around on, uh¹, your computer again. I want to try to make it up to you. If there’s anything I can (pause¹) do to help you get back to where you were on your-your¹ paper, let me know.

Note. Nonfluency¹ appeared in the moderate (6 nonfluencies) condition. Nonfluency² appeared in the high (9 nonfluencies) condition.
### Appendix B: Tables

#### Table 1

*Inter-Item Reliabilities for Measures*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of Apologies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remorse</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood to forgive offender</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Perceived Communicator Competence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Measure (Total)</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2

Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) for Apology Perceptions by Sex of Speaker and Fluency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Nonfluency</th>
<th>Moderate Nonfluency</th>
<th>High Nonfluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male Voice</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Male Voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>( n = 15 )</td>
<td>( n = 19 )</td>
<td>( n = 18 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>5.00 (1.02)</td>
<td>5.26 (1.72)</td>
<td>3.33 (1.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remorse</td>
<td>4.56 (1.15)</td>
<td>5.23 (1.73)</td>
<td>3.06 (1.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>4.78 (1.12)</td>
<td>5.28 (1.49)</td>
<td>3.39 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>4.84 (1.19)</td>
<td>5.47 (1.21)</td>
<td>2.78 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood to forgive</td>
<td>5.04 (1.27)</td>
<td>5.40 (1.28)</td>
<td>3.76 (1.13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Higher mean scores represent more favorable ratings in evaluative categories
Table 3

Univariate Effects for Nonfluency for Perceptions of Apologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remorse</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.70</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.52</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19.07</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood to forgive</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Group error)</td>
<td>92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

**Planned Polynomial Contrasts for Nonfluency for Perceptions of Apologies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Linear Trend</th>
<th></th>
<th>Quadratic Trend</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$t$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$t$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
<td>-2.64</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remorse</td>
<td>-2.28</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>-2.89</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>-4.42</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood to forgive</td>
<td>-1.74</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.008</td>
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</table>

*Note. $df = 99$*

Table 5

**Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) for Apology Perceptions Organized by Fluency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low Nonfluency</th>
<th>Moderate Nonfluency</th>
<th>High Nonfluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n = 34$</td>
<td>$n = 34$</td>
<td>$n = 38$</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
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<td>3.61 (1.41)</td>
<td>4.24 (1.56)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remorse</td>
<td>4.93 (1.52)</td>
<td>3.42 (1.35)</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3.52 (1.29)</td>
<td>4.11 (1.57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>5.19 (1.23)</td>
<td>3.19 (1.28)</td>
<td>3.79 (1.59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood to forgive</td>
<td>5.25 (1.27)</td>
<td>4.23 (1.39)</td>
<td>4.73 (1.37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Higher mean scores represent more favorable ratings in evaluative categories*
Table 6  

*Mean Scores (and Standard Deviations) for Apology Perceptions by Fluency and SPCC*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Low Nonfluency</th>
<th>Moderate Nonfluency</th>
<th>High Nonfluency</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Avg SPCC</td>
<td>High SPCC</td>
<td>Avg SPCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n = 15</td>
<td>n = 18</td>
<td>n = 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sincerity</td>
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<td>4.89 (1.57)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3.52 (1.23)</td>
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<td>Truthfulness</td>
<td>5.16 (1.18)</td>
<td>4.93 (1.51)</td>
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<td>Performance</td>
<td>5.11 (1.12)</td>
<td>5.19 (1.32)</td>
<td>3.44 (1.28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood to forgive</td>
<td>5.40 (1.12)</td>
<td>5.09 (1.43)</td>
<td>4.17 (1.32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Higher mean scores represent more favorable ratings in evaluative categories.
References


Mission Statement Creation and Dissemination in Service Organizations: Reaching All Employees to Provide Unified Organizational Direction

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ABSTRACT

Scholars extol the virtues of crafting effective mission statements and the importance of its frequent communication. Especially in nonprofit business settings, mission statements can be an important way to provide goals and purpose for an organization’s staff. Creating and conveying mission statements to unify a staff whose tasks span a broad range is a difficult but important part of visionary leadership. This study explored mission statement dissemination at a university to understand its impact on staff whose tasks included limited academic work with students. Analysis of questionnaires found nonacademic staff members were not exposed to the mission statement often and were not able to connect the statement to their daily tasks.

Nearly every large organization and business has some type of mission statement available on its website or in some part of its publications. Nonprofit organizations are required by the Internal Revenue Service to create mission statements to complete their applications for their 501(c)(3) tax status. Whether in for-profit or nonprofit business settings, scholars extol the virtues of crafting a well written mission statement (Bart, and Baetz, 1997; Blair-Loy, Wharton, and Goodstein, 2011; Williams, 2008). Mission statements are utilized for a variety of reasons in a variety of organizations, but mission statements are highlighted by scholars as being management tools. Leaders can use mission statements to guide the overall direction of an organization toward common goals.

A mission statement can be a powerful leadership tool, but its usefulness depends on a number of factors. Falsey (1989) described a mission statement as telling “two things about a company: who [the company] is and what [the company] does” (p. 3). Williams (2008) suggested the intended audience of a mission statement should move beyond individuals within the organization to focus also on external stakeholders such as clients and the community in which the organization is located. She went on to assert that a mission statement should indicate the direction for future progress and how to get there, an organization’s “priorities, values, and beliefs” (p. 96), as well as what makes an organization complete. Moore (2000) suggested mission statements in nonprofit organizations took the place of what he considered the overarching purpose of for-profit organizations. Moore argued for-profit organizations ultimately seek to maximize profits for stakeholders. He went on to point out that nonprofit organizations
do not seek profits and therefore do not have the same clarity in organizational purpose without a well-crafted mission statement. For a mission statement to be a guiding principle, it must be communicated frequently to employees and stakeholders in a way that meaningfully integrates the vision of organizational leaders to the actual daily activities of the employees.

Mission statements can potentially impact organizational effectiveness, but research suggested the mission statements’ wordings, content, and dissemination impact their overall ability to reach employees (Bart, 2001; Blair-Loy, Wharton, and Goodstein, 2011; Sattari, Pitt, and Caruana, 2011). For organizations like hospitals and universities, where employees’ tasks span a large range of duties, mission statements can be difficult to craft in a way that communicates organizational goal relevance to all staff members. The remainder of this article will explore mission statement dissemination within a nonprofit service organization to explore how segments of employees interact with the seemingly important leadership tool. The study was designed to understand how mission statement wording and dissemination effects employees’ ability incorporate the content of the mission statement into their daily tasks.

The organization in which the study was conducted is a midsized, four-year state university located in the Midwest. The mission statement, posted on the university’s website, was crafted by a group of university administrators which included the university president, the divisional vice presidents, the college deans, the program directors, and the executive committee of the faculty association. To maintain the university’s anonymity, the full mission statement will not be included in this article. However, major themes of the university’s mission statement included encouraging learning, engaging in research, and connections outside the university. Further justification for the organizational choice will be explored in the method section. Before delving into the analysis, it is important to explore the current base of research regarding mission statement components and communication.

**Literature Review**

Mission statements require consideration and care to fully reach their potential value. Though seemingly simple and often short, mission statements often are the product of great deliberation. Research from communication, management, leadership, and nonprofit organization scholars highlighted important considerations for mission statement creation and dissemination. The following sections provide overviews of research relevant to the concepts focused upon for the present study. These areas include explanation of the mission statement as a means of visionary leadership, mission statement dissemination, and specific mission statement considerations in the university setting.

**Mission Statements as Management and Leadership Tools**

Many definitions of mission statements have been offered by scholars, and from those definitions a number of themes emerged. Management scholar Sidhu (2003) compiled definitions
of what mission statements are or should be. Definitions included concepts such as defining the beliefs, principles, and fundamental character of the organization; what made the organization unique; the organization’s position in the market; employee behavioral standards; and the long term vision of the organization. In essence, he found a mission statement should be seen as a communicative management tool. Desmidt and Prinzie (2008) described mission statements as ideally encompassing both a statement of organizational character and a goal guiding the daily activities of those within the organization. They suggested it was also a statement to those outside the organization about what the organization values. As Morphew and Hartley (2006) pointed out, the “mission statement…is rightly understood as an artifact of a broader institutional discussion about its purpose” (p. 457). Thus, a mission statement should be defined as describing to internal and external stakeholders the organization’s current character while providing a unifying direction for the future of the organization.

Creating and communicating a unifying goal is vitally important to acting as a visionary leader. Eisenberg, Goodall Jr., and Trethewey (2010) described vision as “a credible and compelling view of the future” (p. 256). They went on to explain that leaders create a visionary statement “to communicate that future clearly and creatively to disparate others” (p. 256). Zenger, Folkman, and Edinger (2009) described how a well written visionary statement “enables all individuals to be engaged in day-to-day activities with a clear sense of direction and purpose, knowing how what they do fits into the big picture” (p. 20). Visionary leaders picture a future for the organization and work to achieve that goal, at least in part, through carefully crafting messages. Zenger, Folkman, and Edinger argued crafting a clear a mission statement is not enough. Consistent communication of the mission statement must take place “because in the whirlwind of daily activities, things are said and done that appear at worst to contradict or at best to be disconnected from the avowed strategy” (p. 20). Gow (2009) argued a mission statement should be able to link “actions and thoughts, practices and policies, back to [the organization’s] essential purpose” (para. 9). Thus, to realize the benefits of a mission statement, the mission statement must be carefully crafted by visionary leaders and must be communicated frequently to remain central to the daily tasks of organization members.

Mission Statement Dissemination

When considering how to communicate the mission statement to internal and external constituents, administrators should consider potential communication channels and the implications of using specific channels. Trevino, Lengel, and Daft (1987) described how choosing a medium correctly for a message requires recognizing “a) the ambiguity of the message, b) the symbolic cues conveyed by the medium itself, and c) situational constraints on symbol processing” (p. 556). Mission statement content should be carefully crafted so as to not require a great deal of explanation. Clear mission statement composition allows greater freedom for which channels administrators choose to communicate the mission statement to stakeholders.
The cues conveyed by the media themselves, however, should be considered when deciding how to communicate the mission statement to employees.

Mission statement dissemination, or the communication of the mission statement to organization members, could take place through a variety of channels, but the symbolic cues conveyed by the medium should be considered. While channel choice may seem like common sense, Trevino, Lengel, and Daft (1987) pointed out “lower performing managers select media for communications without considering the requirements of the message” (p. 554). Posting a mission statement on a bulletin board, for instance, most likely would not indicate a specific recipient. Doing so could convey the message that the mission statement was not directed specifically at any given employee, therefore conveying less individual importance. Email, and more specifically the email signature, may be a better way to communicate the mission statement as Abernathy (1999) described how an email signature can reinforce an organization’s identity with minimal effort on the part of those who include it. The email signature, a message included for many individuals in daily communication, could be a simple way to frequently communicate the importance of the mission statement. Additionally, face-to-face communication media such as individual conversations or staff meetings indicated more importance than departmental memos.

Modaff, DeWine, and Butler (2008) explored many types of communication technology in the workplace in an effort to create criteria for selecting mediated communication. “Word processing, email, Internet, voice mail, discussion boards, chat rooms, instant messaging, online training, videoconferencing, and virtual reality” (p. 281) were all included as potential mediated communication channels to disperse communication throughout an organization. Their criteria for selecting mediated types of communication include social presence and media richness. Modaff, DeWine, and Butler defined social presence as the ability to convey “characteristics such as warmth, personalness, and sensitivity” (p. 289). They described media richness as feedback ability and speed, language formality, structure, and variety, and vocal and facial expression abilities. These types of considerations should be made when considering how to convey the mission statement’s importance during day-to-day operations.

Before daily mission statement communication can occur and make sense, the mission statement must be introduced to the organization member. This initial introduction can take place before ever even entering the organization. Miller (2006) described the phases of organizational socialization as anticipatory, encounter, and metamorphosis. The anticipatory stage takes place before even entering the organization, so dissemination of the mission statement in the anticipatory stage would be through advertisements, public announcements, and the organization’s website. Deliberately communicating the messages about the mission statement to the public can be an effective recruitment tool. The encounter stage begins during the hiring process when the individual has direct contact with organization members and begins comparing expectations created during the anticipatory stage with actual experiences. These experiences include the interview process and initial training experiences, leading to understanding the organization’s direction and the organizational culture, both of which should be contained in the
mission statement. Mission statement communication during assimilation is important to informing employees about how their daily tasks tie into the overall character and direction of the organization. Doing so sets the tone from the beginning that their daily tasks are valuable and necessary, while at the same time showing them how they fit into the overall organizational structure.

**Mission Statements in Universities**

While the definitions and explanations were thus far primarily drawn from for-profit organization research, nonprofit organizations such as universities also utilize mission statements. Scholars differ on the value of mission statements, but even the most cynical scholars agree that mission statements serve at the very least a normative purpose. Education scholars Morphew and Hartley (2006) suggested every postsecondary educational institution should have a mission statement to take advantage of two benefits: instructing employees and creating a sense of shared purpose. They argued the mission statement conveyed acceptable work behaviors, but that it should also “communicate [the organization’s] characteristics, values, and history to key external constituents” (p. 457). Focusing a mission statement on external constituents was found to be one way students and parents evaluated the potential educational institutions. However, Taylor and Morphew (2010) found that “the communicative patterns of baccalaureate colleges are both vague and idiosyncratic” (p. 499). In 2010, Taylor and Morphew compared the mission statements featured on the *U.S. News and World Report*’s website describing the top colleges in the United States to those found in the colleges’ literature. They found mission statements were often changed or completely rewritten for the *U.S. News and World Report* by college administrators in an effort to market to prospective students. University officials re-focused the mission statements primarily for recruitment possibilities.

Focusing mission statements on academic goals for recruitment purposes was a phenomenon found not only in the *U. S. News and World Report*, but one occurring as a trend in university mission statements in general. A quick perusal of post-secondary educational institution mission statements showed how college and university mission statements focus on student related learning outcomes and producing academic research. For example, Harvard University Dean Harry Lewis (1997) proclaimed the university’s undergraduate college mission statement: “Harvard strives to create knowledge, to open the minds of students to that knowledge, and to enable students to take best advantage of their educational opportunities” (para. 3). The University of Alabama’s website (n.d.) hosted its mission statement, “to advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the State through quality programs of teaching, research, and service” (para. 1). Mission statements focusing solely on the work done on the academic side of universities may draw in potential students; they may also alienate employees whose academic contact with students is limited or nonexistent.

How is a member of the janitorial, food service, grounds keeping, or dormitory staff, each of whom play a vital role in maintaining the infrastructure necessary for a university to function,
affected by a student-outcome centered mission statement? Recruitment practices are important for universities, but the mission statement’s content should direct and unify all members of university staff work together toward a common goal. This leads to the research question:

*RQ: Does an academically focused mission statement impact the daily tasks of university employees whose work does not include direct academic student contact?*

Careful methodology is necessary to thoroughly answer a research question. Only through deliberate data collection can analysis take place. Therefore the methodology utilized for the study will be explained in the following section.

**Method**

Organizational selection was the first step toward answering the research question. Important criteria for organizational selection included a clearly declared mission statement and some method for contacting groups of employees who shared related job tasks. The organization selected was a midsized Midwestern state university. It was selected because its mission statement was easily found on the organization’s website and because the organization hosted several union and bargaining groups which divided employees by task responsibilities.

Upon receiving permission to contact employees regarding the study, the researcher informally analyzed the organization’s mission statement. Three major themes emerged from the brief statement: encouraging learning, engaging in research, and connections outside the university. The mission statement wording established clear direction for members of the teaching staff working academically with students because at least the very least “encouraging learning” is a part of daily teaching duties. However the mission statement’s language did not directly include the work of operations staff such as grounds keepers, food service workers, janitorial staff, or administrative staff, such as administrative assistants. All employees are needed for the university to function, but nonacademic staff members play a vital role in maintaining daily university operations. Tenuous connections could be drawn between the mission statement and the daily activities of nonacademic staff, but on its face the language did not seem to include all staff members.

To determine mission statement dissemination trends at the organization, an online questionnaire was created and distributed. The questionnaire explored initial as well as mundane exposure to the mission statement, sought to discover the channels through which the mission statement was disseminated, and questioned employees’ perceptions about the mission statement’s applicability to their daily tasks. A 13 question survey combining quantitative and qualitative inquiries was created and distributed via Google Documents to university employees in two employee groups. The questions have been included in Appendix A, though they have been altered slightly to protect the anonymity of the organization being analyzed. The groups will be called A and B for the remainder of the report. Group A was comprised of clerical,
maintenance, and technical support employees. Group B was comprised of service and administrative faculty. Data was gathered from 42 participants using an online survey combining qualitative and quantitative questions. Participants were evenly split between groups A and B (21 participants from each group).

Results

Survey results revealed three major categories important to answering the research question: employee knowledge of the mission statement, connection of the mission statement to daily tasks, and mission statement dissemination. The following sections disclose subjects’ responses to the survey questions. Because subjects were not required to answer all questions, some results will include the percentages of subjects who chose to not respond.

Knowledge of the University Mission Statement

Knowledge of the university mission statement is a necessary first step to understanding how it applies to daily tasks. When asked to record the mission statement in their own words, 69 percent of employees shared some version of the mission statement, 10 percent admitted not knowing the mission statement, and 21 percent did not answer the question. Of those who did not answer the question, 78 percent were from group A and only 12 percent were from group B. One response repeated verbatim the university’s mission statement, indicating either strong awareness of the mission statement or that the subject located the mission statement rather than putting it into his or her own words. Analysis of the subjects’ responses whose answers put forward their own version of the mission statement revealed several major themes. Major themes included learning in general or specifically learning done by students, connections outside the university, and preparing students for the future. Table 1 illustrates the full list of themes prevalent in employee answers.

Connection of Mission Statement to Daily Task Completion

Recognizing how much importance the mission statement has to employees’ daily tasks was another important data category. When rating how important they personally found the mission statement to be regarding completing their daily tasks, 21 percent of employees indicated it did not affect completion of their daily tasks, while 31 percent found it somewhat important, 36 percent found it important, and 10 percent said it affected almost all daily tasks (2 percent of subjects did not respond to the question). Subjects were also asked how often they considered the mission statement and its importance on their work; almost two thirds responded they rarely considered its importance (29 percent never considered it and 33 percent considered it only once per year). The remaining responses indicated 14 percent considered it monthly, 10
percent considered it weekly, and 12 percent considered it daily (2 percent did not respond to the question).

Perspective on a factor possibly impacting the evaluations of personal importance may be given by considering subjects’ perceptions of the importance their supervisors placed on the mission statement. Only 7 percent of subjects perceived their supervisor to view the mission statement as affecting almost all daily tasks; 10 percent perceived the supervisor didn’t have an opinion on the mission statement, 5 percent perceived it did not impact daily tasks, 31 percent said it was somewhat important, and 45 percent said it was important (2 percent did not respond to the question). Table 2 compares employees’ personal importance responses to their perceptions of the importance their supervisors placed on the mission statement.

A final qualitative question probed subjects’ connection between the mission statement and the way daily tasks were completed. For the qualitative question, almost one third (29 percent) of responses reported the mission statement affected the way they completed daily tasks; 21 percent of responses said it did not, 7 percent did not know the mission statement, 16 percent included other themes, and 26 percent did not answer the question. Table 4 shows the full responses of several research subjects. Subjects’ responses were not altered, and grammatical and spelling mistakes were not corrected. Subject numbers were assigned by when subjects submitted their survey responses.

Mission Statement Dissemination

Three main questions sought to understand mission statement dissemination to the research subjects: how often is the mission statement referenced, who references it, and through what channels is it communicated. Nearly 90 percent of subjects indicated the mission statement was rarely referenced, with 38 percent saying it was never referenced and 50 percent saying it was referenced only once per year. The remaining reported they experienced either monthly (10 percent) or daily (two percent) references to the mission statement. Responses indicated references to the mission statement were made by a variety of sources, including the university’s president (78 percent), the subject’s immediate supervisor (30 percent), colleagues (24 percent), or other sources (10%) such as in committee meetings and from high level staff members. Channels through which the mission statement was referenced included in-person staff meetings such as convocation (53 percent), work group meetings (nine percent), and annual meetings (14 percent). Written university publications accounted for 67 percent of mission statement communication, and email accounted for 21 percent. Other channels through which the mission statement was referenced included supervisor and co-worker actions, the university website, and an online human resources orientation video viewed during the hiring and training process.

Additional questions sought to understand subjects’ first exposure to the mission statement. Over 90 percent of subjects indicated the mission statement was not explained or connected to their place in the university when they were hired, with 76 percent never even hearing the mission statement in the hiring process. Of those who heard it, 17 percent reportedly
did not hear how the mission statement was tied to daily tasks. Only seven percent of subjects indicated the mission statement was both stated and related to the work they would be doing. Another question probing initial exposure to the mission statement asked subjects to state when they first remembered a reference to the mission statement. Responses found 16 percent reported being first exposed to the mission statement during the interview or training process, 14 percent reported being exposed sometime after the first month of employment, 14 percent reported being exposed during a convocation, and 12 percent reported reading it on the university website. The remaining respondents were unsure (12 percent), could not remember (10 percent), did not answer the question (10 percent), or offered other initial sources (10 percent). Two percent said they had never been exposed to the mission statement. The results illustrated in the previous three sections lead to several important suggestions for mission statement crafting and dissemination in the university setting.

Discussion

Guided by the research question “does an academically focused mission statement impact the daily tasks of university employees whose tasks do not include direct academic student contact,” the researcher surveyed support and administrative staff members of a midsized Midwestern state university. Almost one third of those surveyed either admitted to not knowing the mission statement or did not answer the question. Major themes present in the remaining mission statement answers included learning and student learning, connections outside the university, and preparing students for their futures. Learning and connecting university actions to outside entities resonated with the university’s actual mission statement; however preparing students for their futures was not a part of the university mission statement. Few subjects (11 percent) mentioned anything about research. Many employees were aware of the basic concepts of the mission statement, but the number of employees who did not know or did not answer the question indicated communication of the mission statement could be improved.

Nearly 90 percent of subjects indicated they rarely if ever heard the mission statement, and when they did it was most often communicated by the university president or a supervisor. Channels most often cited as referring to the mission statement included face-to-face employee meetings, in written publications, and via email. Almost two thirds of subjects rarely, if ever, considered how the mission statement impacted their work, though some employees articulated its importance in tasks involved with planning. Only about 10 percent of employees felt the mission statement impacted almost all daily tasks. Over 90 percent of subjects never received an explanation during their initial training regarding how the mission statement connected to the tasks they would be completing; 76 percent said the mission statement was never even mentioned during training. Based on the results it is clear university leaders should ask themselves four questions; each question is highlighted in the following sections.

Should the Mission Statement Be the Overall Visionary Statement for the Organization?
Educational organizations should decide if the mission statement is to be the focal point, guiding the daily tasks for staff members, or if the mission statement will be used as a recruitment tool aimed toward students. If the mission statement focuses primarily on academic tasks with students, it may ignore many staff members who make up the organizational infrastructure. A mission statement is not the only venue for creating a visionary statement to direct all organizational members. Another statement may serve the unification purpose of the mission statement (such as a ‘strategic goal’ or ‘motto’). Therefore educational organizations should take care to consciously choose a statement to unite a diverse group of staff functions to the common goal of the university.

**Is the Mission Statement’s Language Inclusive to All Staff Members?**

Assuming an organization decides the mission statement will be the statement designed to guide daily tasks of employees, the organization needs to consider the inclusivity of the mission statement wording. While in no way fully representative of employees, the data highlighted the seeming inapplicability of the mission statement to the daily tasks of some employees. Inclusive language crafting is a daunting task, but administrators must consciously and purposefully compose the mission statement to ensure the visionary goals are clearly set in a way all employees are incorporated. Surveying employees using questions similar to those utilized in this study could be one possible way for university administrators to gauge how well the mission statement is being connected to the daily tasks of employees. If survey data reflects the data found in here, such as over half of employees perceiving the mission statement is at most only somewhat important to their daily tasks, administrators should redraft the statement to avoid excluding support and administrative staff. Even slight alterations could greatly impact the value nonacademic staff members feel the university places on their work. For instance, Harvard’s undergraduate college could change its statement to “Harvard’s faculty and staff strive to create knowledge, to open the minds of students to that knowledge, and to enable students to take best advantage of their educational opportunities by creating a supportive learning environment.” By specifically including the word “staff” and by highlighting the necessity of the “supportive learning environment” non-faculty members are recognized in their roles and their tasks. Some tasks may not seem to fit within the scope of the mission statement, so administrators must ask themselves how they can help all staff feel connected to the overall goal of the university.

In addition to mission statement content, administrators should consider the overall comprehensibility of the actual mission statement language. Sattari, Pitt, and Caruana (2011) studied the readability of mission statements of Fortune 500 companies. They found most mission statements were difficult to read, and some mission statement wordings required the reading skills of a university graduate. If mission statements are written at reading levels exceeding the comprehension abilities of nonacademic staff, the likelihood nonacademic staff
will be able to connect the content of the mission statement to their daily tasks is very low. Therefore, in addition to considering mission statement content, administrators should consider the overall readability level of the statement.

**Do All Staff Members Understand How Their Work Accomplishes University Goals?**

Administrators must make clear how the mission statement applies to the daily tasks of every employee. The initial analysis of the university’s mission statement found a tenuous connection between the current mission statement themes and wording and the tasks completed by university operations staff members. Employees said they found the current statement to be important, however when asked qualitatively to describe how it affected their daily tasks, the amount of participants describing its importance decreased by 50 percent. It appeared organization members knew they were supposed to find mission statements important, but were not trained to understand how their mission statement applied to their daily tasks. Especially when the mission statement is more focused on academic endeavors, non-academically involved staff members must see how their work applies to the overall direction of the university. Understanding comes from the way the mission statement is framed by university leaders.

Supervisors, university officials, and human resource representatives play a vital part in communicating (both in action and word) how the mission statement is and should be incorporated into the daily tasks of all employees. Over 80 percent of subjects placed either less or the same amount of importance on the mission statement as they perceived their supervisors to place on the mission statement. This may indicate that how supervisors communicate about the mission statement sets the example for employees regarding how much importance they should personally place on the mission statement. Supervisors should receive training regarding how they can demonstrate the mission statement’s applicability to everyday tasks and why such demonstrations are important.

Human resources members and staff trainers should include an overview of the mission statement and how it applies to each employee’s work during every employee orientation. Data from the survey showed one person remembered hearing the mission statement referenced in an online training video, meaning the human resources staff has perhaps included the statement but has not placed enough emphasis to highlight the mission statement’s importance. After the initial explanation, supervisors and university leaders should reiterate the mission of the university and how each employee’s work is vital to completing the mission. For instance, janitorial staff trainers should highlight the importance of clean classrooms on academic success to cleaning crews. Food service and dormitory staff directors could emphasize at weekly or monthly staff meetings the importance of restful environments and nourishment as the first steps toward students being able to produce quality research and scholarship. Frequent communication of the mission statement, specifically regarding how it directs daily tasks, is important to employees recognizing how the visionary statement can direct all daily functions of the organizations, especially when mission statement language lacks inclusivity.
How Frequently and Through What Channels is the Mission Statement Being Shared?

The underlying conclusion present throughout the results of the study is that administrators need to consider how frequently they are communicating the mission statement and through what channels it is communicated to employees. Data suggested the mission statement was communicated infrequently through impersonal communications, such as large all-staff meetings, written publications, and in emails. These channel choices cue staff members about the apparent minimal significance university leaders place on the mission statement. For employees whose tasks do not relate to teaching, research, or direct student interaction, simply stating the mission statement without explanation could yield a high ambiguity for the overall message leaders are trying to convey. Very few employees reported receiving formal communication during the training process regarding how the mission statement applied specifically to their daily tasks, so infrequent and impersonal communication messages were not enough to stress the underlying messages it could innately express. Thus, even with its current wording, the mission statement failed to serve as the visionary statement it could have for the university staff. Impersonal channels, such as including the mission statement in all email signatures, can be used as reminders of the mission statement, but they must also be accompanied by clear and unambiguous explanations of its application to daily tasks.

University leaders such as presidents or provosts may benefit from knowing their inclusions of mission statements in major speeches (such as convocation) are one of the major ways by which nonacademic staff heard the mission statement referenced. Data showed that it was during meetings such as convocation that over half of employees remembered hearing the mission statement. References made by the university president were cited by almost 80 percent of respondents as a time they’d heard the mission statement. Major university leaders should be advised to utilize the mission statement as a strategic visionary leadership tool, and they should take advantage of opportunities through which they can unite the complex university staff. Leaders should also be made aware that when staff members primarily hear about the mission statement from them on infrequent intervals, the employees’ ability to connect the mission statement to their daily tasks is low. Administrators, supervisors, and human resources staff should communicate the mission statement frequently through a variety of personal and impersonal channels, specifically communicating how each job’s task plays a vital role in completing the university’s goals.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations to the study impact how far its results may extend to other situations. First, the total number of employees who took the survey was a small percentage of the total university staff. In part, the numbers limitation is due to who was invited to partake of the survey. The researcher sent the survey to staff group leaders who then forwarded the survey to the group
members, thus the total number of group members is unknown to the researcher. Additionally, the survey did not ask how long each subject worked for the organization. Long-term employees may have experienced multiple mission statements, and thus could feel less connected. Finally, the survey did not question what communication channels the staff members used most frequently. Knowing how communication flowed through the university may have illuminated additional possibilities for how the mission statement could or should be communicated. Future research could repeat the study with a larger pool of subjects. Comparisons could also be done between the staff members of public and private schools or schools of differing staff sizes to determine if those factors influence employees’ understanding of how the mission statement applies to their daily tasks. Additional research could ascertain how staff members themselves feel they fit within the larger university’s goals with the objective of crafting a mission statement to which nonacademic staff members can more easily relate.

Individuals often know actions they should take to make a situation better, but following through with suggested actions does not always occur. Researchers have suggested the potential benefits associated with effective mission statement crafting and dissemination for many years. The results of the present study could be used to remind university administrators of the importance of applying mission statement suggestions to real life situations.

References


Appendix A

Tables

Table 1

Major Themes Present in Subjects’ Record of Mission Statement in Their Own Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Number of Responses Including Theme</th>
<th>Percentage of Responses Including Theme*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student learning</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning (general)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing students for the future</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldwide focus</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support services</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City/community</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate students</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal growth</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University benefiting from work done</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating an environment for learning</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages in this column do not sum to 100 because they refer to prevalence of themes within employee responses. Some responses included several of the major themes listed here.

Table 2

Mission Statement Importance to Completion of Daily Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Level</th>
<th>Personal</th>
<th>Perceived Importance Placed by Supervisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely Important-Affects Almost All Daily Tasks</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Important</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Important</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>NA*</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Answer</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This was not an available option for the personal importance question.

Note: how much importance their supervisors place on the mission statement. Over 80 percent of subjects placed the same or less importance on the mission statement as compared to their supervisors. Only 14 percent placed more personal importance on the mission statement than what they perceived their supervisor to believe. Table 3 illustrates the relationship between the reported individual importance and perceived supervisory importance.
Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance Level</th>
<th>Percentage of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less Important</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same Importance</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Important</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did Not Answer the Question</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *The relationship was determined by comparing the individual importance to the perceived supervisor’s importance. For instance, if the perceived supervisor importance was “Extremely Important” and the individual rated the mission statement as “Not Important,” the relationship was recorded as “Less Important.”
Table 4

**Qualitative Evaluations of Mission Statement Impact on Daily Tasks**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Number</th>
<th>Subject’s Employee Group</th>
<th>Qualitative Response*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Absolutely. Daily tasks become pretty dull if there is no purpose behind them. The mission statement gives purpose and helps me realize that because I effectively complete my daily tasks, students are learning. This makes those sometimes dull tasks suddenly seem very important and it motivates me in my work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>I really couldn't tell you what the mission says. I do my job as efficiently as I can to serve others. I assume that's somewhere in the mission, but I didn't need Vice presidents to get together and approve how that was conveyed to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>My own work ethic and values are the main effects on my daily tasks. The mission statement would affect it if it didn't agree with my work ethic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>NO, i DON'T THINK YOU NEED A MISSION STATEMENT IF YOU ARE DOING YOUR JOB CORRECTLY, I THINK WE ALL KNOW WHY WE ARE HERE: THE STUDENTS!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>No... I feel like our mission and goals change a lot and that we're never sure what our &quot;strategic priorities&quot; are. I'm not even sure if the mission statement aligns with the strategic priorities or if the various task forces that are out there are working with the mission statement in mind. I try to think in terms of what the current ideas are and try to align my program and work to that, but it's difficult when it feels like things change often. I end up just &quot;staying the course&quot; and just trying to do my best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>No. Pretty broad and general. I am not faculty; the mission statement talks about learning but puts an academic focus on it rather than including student engagement or out-of-class learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Typically, I've used the mission statement in terms of thinking about securing funding. For instance, we were looking to do something with global initiatives in our office. I thought a lot about how this feeds into the mission statement/core values and if this could impact the services we offer. I don't think the mission statement drives me, but it helps validate why I might be doing something. Right now, it seems more of a reactive approach on my end.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>The mission statement stays central to my focus on a daily basis. It is what drives the direction of my projects with university clients.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Questionnaire Questions

1. Please indicate the staff union/bargaining group of which you are a member: [Group names were removed to protect the university’s anonymity]
2. When were you first exposed to the university mission statement?
3. When you were hired by the university, how much explanation did you receive regarding the mission statement and how it relates to your position? (Indicate by clicking the most accurate statement)
   o None
   o Mission statement was stated, but never explained
   o Mission statement was stated and explanation regarding how it tied into my work was provided
   o Mission statement was stated, explained regarding how it tied into my work, and was reinforced by my co-workers
4. How often is the mission statement referenced during work meetings, daily tasks, and/or other work related events?
   o Never
   o Once a year
   o Once a month
   o Once a week
   o Daily
5. How is the mission statement communicated to you (click all that apply)?
   - Email
   - Stated during work meetings
   - Written in publications from the university
   - Through the actions of my supervisor(s)
   - Through the actions of my co-workers
   - Written in daily correspondence
   - Explained during annual meetings
   - Explained during convocation
   - Other [open dialogue box]
6. In the past year who has made references to the mission statement (check all that apply)?
   - My immediate supervisor
   - My colleagues
   - The University President
   - Other (please state position title) [open dialogue box]
7. How important do you think your immediate supervisor views [your organization’s] mission statement to be?
   o Not important—doesn’t affect daily tasks
   o Some importance
   o Important
   o Extremely important—affects almost all daily tasks
   o Doesn’t have an opinion
8. How much importance do you, personally, place on the mission statement?
   o Not important—doesn’t affect my daily tasks
   o Some importance
   o Important
   o Extremely important—affects almost all my daily tasks

9. How often do you consider the mission statement in regards to its importance to your work?
   o Never
   o Once a year
   o Once a month
   o Once a week
   o Daily

10. Does the mission statement affect the way you complete your daily tasks? If yes, how? If not, why not?

11. What is the mission statement at this university (in your own words)?

Endnotes

1 Mission statement reference sources and the channels used for reference do not sum to 100 percent because subjects could select multiple responses.
**Constructing Space and Time for Work and Family: A Structuration Perspective on Bed and Breakfasts**

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**ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study explored how bed and breakfast owners communicatively construct privacy while operating a business out of their personal home. One hundred eighty-two B&B owners from 20 U.S. states and 20 countries responded to an electronic qualitative questionnaire that, in part, explored the issue of privacy. Three themes emerged from the data, including: traditional organizational structures, perception of availability, and banking of time and space. These themes revealed that the owners of the nontraditional businesses relied upon recognizable organizational structures used in more traditional organizations to create and maintain private space and time. They also engaged in communication with their guests that simultaneously enabled and constrained their sense of privacy. Finally, the owners reported using intrapersonal communication strategies that allowed them to account for the lack of privacy during peak-season, though these strategies may have unintended consequences in terms of family roles and mental and physical health.

The bed and breakfast industry is worth an estimated 3.4 billion dollars (Professional Association of Innkeepers International, 2010). This amount stems from the approximately 17,000 bed and breakfasts operated in the United States, and then expands to include the products and services necessary to operate these establishments successfully. The bed and breakfast industry, like most tourism-based businesses, is highly dependent on forces such as the economy (e.g., energy costs, consumer spending, access to credit) technology (e.g., social networking, web development), social issues, and political factors such as laws or taxes specific to travel and lodging.

The majority of bed and breakfasts worldwide are located in more rural areas. Numerous studies have indicated that many bed and breakfasts are opened to support the main farm business the family engages in (e.g., Pearce, 1990; World Tourism Organization, 1997). A secondary reason for venturing into the bed and breakfast business is as a sideline or hobby.
Finally, desired lifestyle is identified as a rationale for opening a bed and breakfast (McKercher, 1998). Of particular interest to the current study is the desire of some bed and breakfast owners to be able to manage work and family by creating a home-based business.

The Professional Association of Innkeepers International (2010) estimated that 72% of inn owners are couples and 79% of owners live on premise. Bed and breakfasts confound “home” and “work” for the owners and family members, and thereby provide a rich context for research exploring the communicative challenges associated with operating a home-based business. In particular, bed and breakfast owners must confront the issue of personal and family privacy as they may regularly have paying guests in their personal homes.

This study explores how bed and breakfast owners communicatively manage work and family, particularly the issues of private time and space, and does so through the lens of structuration theory (Giddens, 1979). Structuration theory is well suited for the investigation of how individuals operate a business such as a bed and breakfast, which is a business that requires around the clock merging of work and family and public and private space.

Review of Literature

Work-Family Balancing

The U.S. Department of Education (2007) has projected that if the current educational trends continue by 2016 women will hold 60% of bachelor degrees, 63% of master degrees, and 54% of doctorate and other professional degrees. These changes in levels of education and concurrent shifts in social and cultural norms have led to dual-career families or dual-career couples being hot topics in academic journals, popular press newspapers, and HR offices around the globe. This prevalence does not mean, however, the balance of work and family is without conflict. In fact, many researchers are beginning to use the term “balancing” when discussing work and family rather than balance because the former implies the ongoing nature of the challenges whereas the latter indicates a static process that can somehow be completely achieved and maintained.

The challenges of work-family balancing can have negative effects when the roles of home clash with the roles of family. This clash can reduce satisfaction with life, marriage, personal relationships, and family (e.g., Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Hammer, Bauer, & Grandey, 2003; Heilmann, Bell, & McDonald, 2009; Judge, Ilies, & Scott, 2006; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). Other effects of work-family clash can include stress, depression, anxiety, or substance abuse (e.g., Frone, 2000; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001), physical conditions like hypertension and ulcers (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997), and dietary problems (Allen & Armstrong, 2006).

Not all research on work family-balancing has been negative. When work and family roles are compatible, the effects on both work life and family life can be positive. Greenhaus
and Powell (2006) argued successful balancing can be beneficial for an individual’s mental and physical health. Balancing can also contribute to a person’s overall sense of happiness, satisfaction (derived from successfully balancing what is often viewed as contradictory roles), and perceived quality of life (Rice, Frone, & McFarlin, 1992). One role can act as a buffer when another role is particularly challenging; instead of continuing to focus on a hard day at work, the individual can turn his or her attention to more positive spousal or parent-child interactions. Conversely, work can provide spouses or parents the opportunity to problem-solve complex tasks and interact on a professional level in a way they are unable to with their family members.

Implications of organizational work-family policies

Organizations continue to struggle with realistic policies that help individuals in this balancing process while maintaining overall organizational productivity. These policies and accommodations have included on-site dependent care, alternative workplaces, and flexible scheduling. Prior research indicates that gender and interactions with co-workers still greatly affect who will and will not utilize these policies. Allen and Russell (1999) found that men are much less likely to use family friendly policies; overall these policies are underutilized as well by single workers, and career-oriented mothers (Bailyn, Fletcher & Kolb, 1997). Consequently, although the policies do exist in many organizations, working parents are still conflicted as to how to balance their work and family obligations in such a way that satisfies their employers, their own desired career goals, as well as the needs of their families (Kirby, Golden, Medved, Jorgenson, & Buzzanell, 2003).

For example, organizations that offer an option to work from home provide an attractive alternative for those workers seeking to balance work and family. However, working from the home can cause some unexpected and often unanticipated challenges for individuals utilizing the option (e.g., Butler & Modaff, 2008; Duxbury et al., 1998; Felstead & Jewson, 2000). Role overload can occur as individuals attempt to simultaneously balance multiple roles. Time management can become a strain if one role or the other begins to dominate an individual; this can also occur as the boundaries between work and family blur in such a way that both roles are compromised. Constantly having work at home can decrease family time, leading to a negative impact on relationships at home. Many individuals still find that they need to seek childcare in order to successfully complete their work responsibilities, which can increase parental guilt over being at home while another individual cares for his or her child.

Family-owned business

One option for individuals who are balancing work and family is to eliminate external organizational pressures noted above and become an owner of a home-based business (e.g., Danes, Haberman, & McTavish, 2005; Danes & Olson, 2003; Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996). The deliberate merge of family and work requires a complex negotiation
whereby individuals must decide if the family system operates like a business or if their familial patterns “of behavior, values, beliefs, and expectations are unintentionally transferred to the work environment” (Danes, Haberman, & McTavish, 2005, p. 117). While the term “family business” is a contested term within the research (Sharma, Chrisman, & Chua, 1996), we will use family-owned business in a manner consistent with Getz and Nilsson (2004), a business owned and operated by a person, couple, or family.

Although much of the literature on small and family-owned businesses overlaps in terms of economic challenges and struggles, there are significant differences. Namely, these differences include the balance of family dynamics and business operations in areas such as gender roles, dealing with family problems, general family involvement (who is included and who is excluded), challenges of decision making and label granting power, and evolution of the business throughout the family life cycle (Getz & Carlsen, 1999).

Sharma et al. (1996) observed “family business goals are likely to be different from the firm-value maximization goal assumed for the publicly traded and professionally managed firms” (p. 9). Research has often looked at which role family-owned business owners will preference first. Will family take precedence over work or will work dominate family life? Singer and Donahu (1992) identified two approaches: a family-centered business whereby the business is a way of life and a business-centered family whereby the business is a means of income. Similarly, File, Prince, and Rankin (1994) categorized family businesses differentiating between those whose business had no involvement in family dynamics (one in which family concerns were met over business needs), and another type that placed adapting to changing conditions either in the family or in the business as the foremost concern.

The particular family-based business of interest to the current study is the bed and breakfast. As discussed earlier, bed and breakfasts create a situation where the owners tend to live on site, and as a result they face the constant need to balance work and family since they regularly have paying guests in their home. The owners repeatedly confront the need to balance family private space and time with the needs of their customers. How they do this is the concern of this study, and structuration theory is particularly useful for understanding how the owners manage a business that seemingly eradicates personal space, at least during peak season.

**Structuration Theory**

Structuration theory was developed by Giddens (1979) in an attempt to explain the intricate interrelations between macro-level organizational structures and micro-level interactions. In explaining the relationship between structures and interactions, Giddens argued that “[t]o study the structuration of a social system is to study the ways in which the system, via the application of generative rules and resources, and in the context of unintended outcomes, is produced and reproduced in the interaction” (p. 66). Structure is comprised of rules and resources that produce conditions that create, change, or maintain social systems through interactions.
The rules and routinized practices individuals enact in order to accomplish their daily lives are generally known by the individuals. As knowledgeable agents, individuals “know a great deal about the conditions and consequences of what they do in their day-to-day lives” (Giddens, 1984, p. 281). It is important to note that with this knowledge, individuals also possess agency, which according to Giddens (1979) means “at any point in time, the [individual] could have acted otherwise,” (p. 56). The nature of the action is irrelevant. The fact that the agent could choose to act one way or another implies some degree of agency within the structure.

Individuals may not have definite goals “consciously held in mind” during every interaction in which they engage (Giddens, 1979, p. 56). The knowledgeable individuals bring to an interaction may occasionally be more a result of intuition (i.e., relying on routinized rules and practices) than a calculated response to the situation (Stones, 2005). Giddens accounts for this with his assertion that individuals possess both a practical consciousness (those actions that an individual can engage but not explain) and discursive consciousness (those decisions and individual can discuss).

Although individuals are generally knowledgeable and purposeful, intentional conduct (i.e., choice) can have unintended consequences for agents during the course of the production and reproduction of social structure (Stones, 2005). These unintended consequences are not only involved in social reproduction, but also become conditions of action (i.e., agency). Unintended consequences are often contradictory, and become so when “those consequences are perverse in such a way that the very activity of pursuing an objective diminishes the possibility of reaching it,” (Giddens, 1984, p. 313). This is seemingly descriptive of the experiences that bed and breakfast owners face as they seek balancing strategies to help them negotiate family life in the public eye but under the guise of privacy of the home.

The following research question stems from the literature and guided the current study: **How do bed and breakfast owners communicatively construct space and time for family while serving the needs of customers staying in their personal home?**

**Method**

The current study was one aspect of a larger study exploring the communicative management of family life when work is performed primarily in the home. The context for the current study was owners of bed and breakfast establishments. The researchers gathered data through an on-line qualitative questionnaire from 182 bed and breakfast owners who operate or have operated establishments in the United States or internationally. To answer the current research question, participants were asked to describe their experiences with constructing private space and time with customers staying in their home, and what rules or policies they have established to help maintain their privacy.
Participants

The sample consisted of 182 bed and breakfast owners from the United States (n=123) and other countries (n=20); thirty-nine participants did not indicate their geographical location. The participants were from 20 states in the U.S., with California (n=27), Colorado (n=18), Wisconsin (n=15), and Arizona (n=11) being the most frequent. Twenty participants were from countries outside of the U.S., including: France (n=5), Brazil (n=3), Italy (n=3), Argentina (n=3), Canada (n=2), Australia (n=2), Peru (n=1), and Uruguay (n=1). Participants most typically had owned and/or operated their bed and breakfast for 4-7 years (27%), 1-3 years (22.4%), or 8-11 years (21.7%). The participants were mostly between the ages of 55-64 (40.3%) or 45-54 (27.1%). Seventy-two percent of the participants were female, while 28% were male, and 31.5% of the participants had two children living with them while they owned and/or operated the bed and breakfast. More than three-quarters of the participants were married or had a significant other (79.7%), and of those, 91.5% of the spouses/significant others were involved in the operation of the bed and breakfast.

Procedures

We created an on-line qualitative questionnaire using surveymonkey.com. The questionnaire was composed of 16 questions (nine closed and seven open-ended) in four sections: Overview, Maintaining a Relationship, Parenting & Running a Bed and Breakfast, and Demographics.

Participants were identified via internet searches. Some bed and breakfast owners were contacted directly through email via publically available websites. We asked them to complete the questionnaire, and then to consider sending the questionnaire link to other bed and breakfast owners. We contacted bed and breakfast professional association representatives around the world via email, described the project to them, and asked for their support. Several association representatives agreed to forward the email request for participation to their association members.

Data Analysis

Open-ended responses to the relevant questions on the qualitative questionnaire were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Both researchers independently read the responses several times to familiarize themselves with the data, and both made initial notes in the margins about issues of interest. We then worked together to underline each unit in every response that addressed the research question. Each complete unit was then cut-out and taped to a notecard, serving as an initial code for that unit.

We read each code and made piles based on content. Each code was compared to the others, and similar codes were grouped together. Similar groups of codes were combined until
Results

Three themes emerged from the data in response to the research question: *traditional organizational structures, perception of availability,* and *banking time and space.* The three themes (and accompanying subthemes) revealed the multiple communicative means employed by bed and breakfast owners to create and maintain some semblance of privacy in light of opening the doors of their home to the public. Most of the respondents indicated establishing and maintaining privacy was indeed difficult, if not impossible at times. The importance of continuing to find ways to ensure some level of privacy, though, is evident in the words of one owner: “We feel we have made it this long (17 years) in the industry BECAUSE we established rules and policies to maintain our privacy. Everyone needs and deserves their own space and time, or burnout is inevitable.”

Traditional Organizational Structures

While bed and breakfasts are considered a nontraditional organizational form by most researchers, the owners reported employing relatively traditional organizational structures to help create and sustain a sense of privacy in their homes. This theme represents communicative means of distinguishing between public and private that can be found in most traditional organizations. In other words, the structures created by the owners of these nontraditional organizations are easily recognizable as structures used in traditional modern organizations to separate employees from customers, or members from non-members.

Bed and breakfast owners reported using written and oral communication to create and maintain structures that allowed them some sense of privacy and time to themselves, free from the presence, requests, demands, and needs of their guests. The traditional organizational structures that emerged from the data are represented by three sub-themes: *never open a closed door, unless it is a national emergency,* and *really have to leave to have private time.*

*Never open a closed door*

Many traditional organizations use physical structures such as closed doors, fences, signage, or locked gates to communicate to customers that certain spaces are private and not open to the public. While there is no explicit written or oral communication to customers about these boundaries, it is expected they understand and respect them. Bed and breakfast owners reported using similar structures to communicate implicitly to guests that certain spaces are off-
limits to them. One respondent, whose response provided the label for this sub-theme, articulated this point by saying:

> It is a pretty standard B&B policy that guests should never open a closed door. The kitchen is also usually off limits. Guests are not allowed to use the back door (kitchen door), so that the back doorstep remains my private space—they have the use of the very large front veranda.

At times, a closed door is not enough, and owners reported locking doors to reinforce private areas. The bed and breakfast owners expect their guests recognize traditional organizational structures, such as a closed or locked door, and assign the same meaning they would in any other public business.

The existence of “open” or “common” areas in the bed and breakfast was also a structure many owners felt implied “closed” or “private” areas to which the guests did not have access.

For several owners, allowing the spaces to afford a sense of what is public and what is private was important and seemingly sufficient for maintaining privacy, though some did admit that there are guests who cannot or choose not to recognize those boundaries. Other owners were not so willing to leave their privacy to chance, and explicitly communicated to the guests (in writing, face-to-face, or both) what their rules are for utilizing the space in their home. One respondent who preferred to communicate with guests face-to-face wrote, “When we show them the house we explain that certain areas are ‘ours.’ We’ve never had a problem with a guest crossing our boundaries.”

Another structure employed by many bed and breakfast owners to reinforce the “closed door” and thereby their privacy was the use of signage. Respondents had many suggestions for the use of signs to establish boundaries, such as: “Innkeeper duties are finished for the day. See you in the morning.” “The Innkeepers are napping and please don’t ring the doorbell.” “Downstairs is private—please knock if you need anything.” “PRIVATE” was the most commonly used sign. Regardless of the channels used or how explicit/implicit they were in the structures they employed, most of the owners attempted to communicate to their guests that a closed door indicated a boundary between what was public and what was private.

*Unless it is a national emergency*

A traditional organizational structure that is used by some bed and breakfast owners to help maintain privacy in their home is the use of time restrictions. With the sub-theme, unless it is a national emergency, respondents reported attempting to set particular hours that they would/would not be available to their guests, thereby ensuring themselves some private time and space, barring some important need.

Specific check-in/check-out times, typically used by more traditional hospitality businesses, are employed by some owners to give themselves a few predictable hours of privacy every day. Some owners are quite strict about these times, while other owners are less strict, such as the following respondent who said: “We established a specific check in time, but are
lenient with requests for arrivals outside that time.” While strict check-in/check-out times may vary by owner, sometimes their best efforts fail: “We have a check in time in hopes that we can have an hour or two each afternoon after our work gets done, but about 1 out of every 4 groups ignores the ‘any time after 4’ rule.”

Instead of check-in/check-out times, some owners opt instead (or additionally) for communicating a “closing” time to their guests. Some owners are quite strong in the messages they send with the closing time, such as “please call us before 8PM unless it is a national emergency.” Other owners implement a “closing time,” but make it clear to their guests they are still accessible. Some owners did not have strict check-in/check-out times or specific “closing” times, but did attempt to carve out some time each day for themselves. These times were far more fluid than are typical of traditional organizational structures, but are recognizable by guests.

**Leave to have private time**

The last sub-theme for the traditional organizational structures theme represents the idea bed and breakfast owners ironically have to leave their home in order to get some privacy. While most workers in the traditional workforce find their privacy in their homes, bed and breakfast owners often are not afforded that opportunity, and employ the traditional organizational structure of “leaving the office” to get some private time and space. An owner described the sentiment this way: “set boundaries for your guests—time and physical space, but mostly you need to remove yourself from the premises to obtain that.” Another owner acknowledged that some communicative energy needs to be expended to account for the absence: “I just have to tell them that I have something important to do, and just simply excuse myself.”

Owners who have spouses or significant others involved in the running of the business may find themselves with a built-in substitute to carry the load during their absence, though finding time for both partners to slip away is difficult: “it’s hard to have a long period of time when all of us can have private time at the same time.” It may also be difficult to negotiate who gets time away from the business since the guests may be constantly present. One owner shared how she and her partner communicatively manage this delicate situation: “There have been a couple of occasions where my partner would have preferred to be alone. We’ve developed a little system for identifying those moments as they arise and gracefully excuse ourselves for the evening.”

The first theme in response to the research question reflects data indicating that bed and breakfast owners, despite running a non-traditional business, rely on traditional organizational structures to create and maintain private space and time. These traditional structures are recognizable by guests, though not always respected.
Perception of Availability

The second theme, perception of availability, represents the idea that bed and breakfast owners create and maintain privacy by making their guests feel that they are readily available and able to take care of their needs. While this may seem antithetical, the owners suggested that creating the perception they were available to the guests actually allowed the guests to feel more secure and be less needy, thereby creating more opportunities for private time and space. The data in this theme is represented by two sub-themes: call us at any time, and identify their needs.

Call us any time

Several of the bed and breakfast owners noted that providing the guests with their cell phone number, room telephone number, or access to an intercom served to create a sense of need satisfaction for the guests, thereby leading to more private space and time for themselves. A respondent indicated her satisfaction with this system when she wrote, “Guests in house are given a cell phone number they can use to call us at any time. B&B guests are so considerate. We seldom get calls from guests after 9:00PM.” Another owner goes into more detail about how this simple system may work, “each guest room has a private phone which I believe promotes subliminal guest comfort; knowing that the innkeeper is on-site relaxing but is reachable at any time from the room phone.”

Providing guests with constant communication options has the benefit of providing privacy for the owners, but they also recognize that the business they have chosen demands this level of connection. As one owner stated:

We pretty much make ourselves available 24/7 since we are not a large B&B. We have an intercom phone if guests need to reach us, or if we forward the phone and they call us, we can still be reached.

Owners seem to be articulating the complicated nature of communication technology faced by both traditional and non-traditional organizational members. For the bed and breakfast owners, the technology that is expected in modern organizations serves to create private space and time for them while simultaneously tying them to the business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Identify their needs

This sub-theme represents data from bed and breakfast owners who suggest that they are able to create a sense of privacy by making a concerted effort to understand the needs of their guests and empower them to satisfy those needs. This sub-theme is perhaps best articulated by one owner that wrote, “Engage with guests early on in their stay. This helps to identify their needs and makes guests feel you are available. They in turn aren’t as needy for your time.”
another owner put it, “I try to make sure whatever the guests may need they can easily find and access on their own.”

While taking time and energy to communicate with guests and learn their needs would seem to detract from privacy, this is not necessarily the case. These owners argued that this communicative energy could be energy well-spent, as was the case for this respondent:

Clearly yet graciously communicating to guests (in various forms) helps to provide built-in personal time so that, for instance, we can eat lunch or dinner—not gulp. We might be able to squeeze in a 30 minute power nap before check in time, or run an errand or two.

The second theme, perception of availability, illustrates how bed and breakfast owners communicatively manage the perceptions of their guests so that they feel connected and empowered to negotiate their stay on their own, thereby creating more private time and space for the owners. The two sub-themes represent communication directly with the guests that serve (at times) to create privacy. The final theme discussed next exemplifies instances of intrapersonal communication that the owners engaged in to justify their lack of privacy during the busy seasons.

**Banking Time and Space**

The final theme emerging from the data in response to the research question was the least frequently articulated, but shows how some owners rationalize their lack of privacy during the certain times of the year. Banking time and space is the idea that some of the bed and breakfast owners participating in this study have seasonal downtimes or their business fluctuates with the economy, so they meet their privacy needs during those points in the year. This intrapersonal accounting allows them to manage the lack of privacy during the busy seasons. As one respondent said, “assume none [privacy] during the tourist season and make up for it in the nontourist season.”

While some bed and breakfast businesses are affected by the economy at any particular point in time, some operations are more predictable, allowing the owners to mentally prepare for the lack of privacy during those times. One owner alluded to this: “I usually don’t have guests from January-April, so I have a break. Pheasant hunting is from mid-October to the end of the year, that is a busy time, but seasonal.” Having some ability to predict busy times allows the bed and breakfast owners to fulfill their needs for private time and space during the off-season. While they clearly have these needs during the busy seasons, they reported justifying the lack of privacy during these times with the abundance during the off-seasons.

Three themes emerged from the data in response to the research question: traditional organizational structures, perception of availability, and banking time and space. The themes as described here represent different communicative approaches to managing privacy while operating a bed and breakfast out of a personal home. Respectively, these themes represent structural, interpersonal, and intrapersonal communicative activities that serve to create private
time and space for the bed and breakfast owners. In the next section, we attempt to make sense of the results in light of relevant literature.

Discussion

Although any individual who works from home faces challenges managing work and family time and space, bed and breakfast owners are unique in that their work is truly never finished. Their clients are in the home around the clock leaving owners with no choice but to attempt to find privacy in terms of time and space in their own home. As previously discussed, these strategies revolved around traditional organizational structures, the perception of availability and attempts to bank time and space.

Bed and breakfast owners utilize traditional organizational rules and resources as a first attempt to negotiate time and space for themselves. They rely on their clients being knowledgeable agents who are familiar with and abide by traditional organizational policies such as never opening a closed door and signage that clearly delineates public versus private space, similar to what you would see in any retail store, banking facility, or dining establishment. Although this strategy does not necessarily involve oral communication, it is a seemingly effective use of nonverbal messages to promote adherence to norms that govern traditional organizations. Giddens (1979) would describe this reliance on traditional organizational strategies as using rules and resources to create a macro-level structure that in turn helps bed and breakfast owners manage the micro-level interactions with clients staying in their home.

Another commonly utilized strategy was an attempt to communicatively manage clients’ perceptions of the bed and breakfast owners’ availability. Whereas the previous tactics revolved around organizational-level structures, this strategy was interpersonally centered. The idea was that if clients had a direct way to contact owners with any problems or concerns they would be less likely to go looking for the owners and unintentionally cross into a private area of the house. This strategy appeared to be more geared toward maintaining space than actual time as it did intentionally or unintentionally mean that owners were on call most if not all of the time. As a part of their discursive consciousness (Giddens, 1979) owners were able to articulate that this strategy was a way of trying to meet client needs while not having to be physically present all of the time. Actions, however, create structures, and will either enable or constrain future interactions. It is conceivable that if clients have immediate and direct access to owners for the majority of their stay, they may also expect their problems or concerns to be immediately addressed as well. This is clearly an example of Giddens’ unintended consequences (1979). Unfortunately, the by-product of owners trying to find time and space for themselves and their families might actually mean they are more available to their clients in such a way that they reduce any possibility of achieving the privacy that they seek.

At the intrapersonal level, bed and breakfast owners utilize a strategy of mentally banking time and space to justify the public nature of their homes and their lack of personal or family time and private space. The idea is to suppress lack of time and space now in hopes that at a
point in the future, time and space will exist. This mental strategy may cause more stress, however, and increase the negative consequences of trying to manage public and private time and spaces because seasonality is a major concern for family-owned and operated bed and breakfast operations, particularly when the business is the family’s sole source of income. During peak season, the daily operations can easily consume and overwhelm family roles and responsibilities. Family businesses “tend to minimize labor costs by maximizing their own inputs,” which results in long hours with little or no time off for days, weeks, or even months depending on geographic and climate factors (Getz & Nilsson, 2004, p. 20). Families have little time for leisure or social activities and often feel the strain of loss of time with children, family and friends, religious participation, and other activities or hobbies. During these peak seasons, when the bed and breakfast is at capacity, family members may even be forced to give up their own accommodations in an attempt to maximize profits in an attempt to prepare for the inevitable off-season. Off-season for some bed and breakfast owners means fewer clients, but for other owners it means closing the business for the season. Although the costs associated with maintaining the house or houses remain consistent, mortgage payments remain, and other living expenses continue; the family has to rely upon the income that they saved during peak season. Failure to properly budget for unplanned expenses can place the bed and breakfast owners in a particularly vulnerable position.

Mental banking of time and space may have even greater mental and physical consequences for the already economically disadvantaged. In many developing areas of the world, bed and breakfasts are often a way to attain goals or rewards associated with improving social life (e.g., Pearce, 1990; Frater, 1982). Smith (1998) specifically analyzed small, third-world tourism enterprises and found significant and powerful incentives for their establishment. These incentives included influence over local economy and development, status attainment, access to professional and social networks, equity for future retirement, ability to hire friends and family members who might otherwise be unemployed, and the opportunity to be one’s own boss. Continually thinking about a time when the bed and breakfast does not have customers may serve as a momentary reprieve from lack of time and space, but constantly foregrounding thoughts of the business’s seasonality may increase already heightened concerns about economic sustainability and the individual or family’s economic future.

When taken together, the three strategies of (1) employing traditional organizational structures, (2) communicating the perception of availability, and (3) banking time and space, represent resources that the bed and breakfast owners employ to maintain boundaries between what is public and what is private (Petronio, 1991). Those boundaries are then more or less permeable depending on the extent to which the owners and guests recognize and enforce them.

Communication boundary management theory (Petronio, 1991), when employed in conjunction with structuration theory, sheds light on the efforts to construct and maintain the boundaries. Petronio (2000) argued that the public-private dialectic requires interactants to expend energy to co-construct what is available to be shared (public) and what is not to be disclosed (private). She posited three “balance frameworks” (2000, p. xiii) that could be used to
understand the efforts to distinguish between public and private: (1) polarization, where energy is expended attempting to maintain either privacy or disclosure, while concerns for the other are negated, (2) equilibrium, which is an attempt to balance what is kept secret and what is disclosed, and (3) weighted proportions, where more weight is given to one of the options over the others, but energy is still expended to maintain the other possibilities, though not to the same extent.

In the context of the bed and breakfast, owners need to construct boundaries that protect family time and space, while concurrently affording guests the opportunity to feel that they are welcome and “like family” themselves. When the owners used traditional organizational structures they were approaching their boundary construction from the equilibrium framework. While on the surface these explicit boundary structures may appear to be more in line with the polarization framework, but they were regularly coupled with other strategies that showed they were interested in attempting to maintain a balance between public and private. The strategy of giving the perception of availability was an interpersonal level strategy based in the equilibrium framework. As noted earlier, however, an unintended consequence of employing that strategy is that some guests took advantage of the availability and the boundaries between public-private became more permeable than desired by the owners. While traditional organizational structures are fairly explicit boundary markers, giving the perception of availability is a strategy that is more implicit and relies on the guests to more actively co-construct the boundary. Opening a door marked “private” is a clear violation of the boundary, but using a telephone number provided by the owner to contact him or her at any time cannot be considered an explicit violation of the boundary. The desire of the owners is that the guests will self-regulate, allowing the perception of availability to demarcate an otherwise tenuous boundary.

Finally, the weighted proportions framework explains the strategy of banking time and space. As peak and off-seasons come and go owners recognize they have to expend more or less energy in protecting private time and space. Banking time and space during slow periods, in essence solidifying the boundaries between public and private, allows them to be more accepting of the boundary violations that will inevitably occur during the peak-seasons. While this is not an optimal strategy, it does allow the owners to have some sense of ownership and control over their space and time at some points during the year.

Limitations and Future Research

To obtain respondent geographic diversity, electronic qualitative questionnaires were employed. One limitation of the current study is that the questionnaires do not allow for follow-up questions to further probe participants’ reflections. Respondents provided intriguing answers to the open-ended questions, but it was often clear face-to-face interviews would have allowed for even richer data.

Another limitation is the inability of the researchers to visit these bed and breakfasts and see the strategies in use. Observational data would have added a level of richness and
understanding of owners’ negotiations of public and private. We suspect that the owners who reported little with regard to how they communicatively manage privacy actually engage in multiple activities daily, but do so at a level of consciousness that did not allow them to be articulated in a questionnaire.

Future research in this area has several fascinating possibilities. First, research should explore the perspectives of children or significant others not involved in the operation of the bed and breakfast, so their voices could be included in the data. While the owners may not be able to fully comprehend or articulate how they communicatively manage private time and space, these other interested parties may.

Second, it would be valuable to obtain the guest perspective on how the owner(s) of the bed and breakfasts manage issues of privacy in the establishment. It was clear from the data we gathered the some owners work very hard to manage this tension, and the clients would be able to articulate the unintended consequences of these activities in a way that the owners never could.

Finally, research should explore how bed and breakfast owners communicatively manage work and family as they are raising a family and/or maintaining a relationship with a significant other in the presence of paying guests in their home. Research on this aspect would be a valuable contribution to our understanding of the communicative energy that is expended as owners of home-based business continue balancing work and family.

References


Creating Community Outside of the Classroom: Strategies for Integrating Second Life into the Interpersonal Communication Course

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ABSTRACT
The educational opportunities for Second Life across various courses have been well documented in the literature. However, instructors new to teaching online may not have explored Second Life as an instructional resource and may perceive using Second Life as overwhelming. For this assignment, students create an avatar and interact with other avatars in Second Life. This assignment can be used in the online or face-to-face communication course. Second Life provides a context where students can participate in interactions with other avatars, their classmates, and the instructor. Students observe and analyze self-disclosure, interpersonal deception, verbal communication, nonverbal communication, and additional interpersonal communication concepts.

Concepts: Self-disclosure, Interpersonal Deception, Verbal Communication, Nonverbal Communication, and additional interpersonal communication concepts

Course: Interpersonal Communication

Learning Objectives: 1) Identify interpersonal communication concepts in a virtual world 2) Reflect on the verbal and nonverbal communication in this context 3) Reflect on the potential implications of computer mediated communication, specifically self-disclosure and interpersonal deception 4) Interact with strangers, family, friends, the instructor, and classmates outside of the classroom or online course

Rationale: The educational opportunities for Second Life (SL) in various courses have been well documented in the literature (for example, Mahon, Bryant, Brown, & Kim, 2010; Ralph & Stahr, 2010; Boulos, Hetherington, & Wheeler, 2007). However, instructors new to teaching online may not have explored Second Life as an instructional resource and may perceive using this resource as overwhelming. This assignment can be used in the online or face to face
communication course. Second Life provides a context where students can participate in interactions with other avatars, their classmates, and the instructor.

**Time and material needed:** [http://secondlife.com](http://secondlife.com)


The instructor should also provide links in the online course that offer additional information about Second Life. For example: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zAb4XxnVMM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zAb4XxnVMM)

**Instructions:** Students in the online or face-to-face interpersonal communication course spend at least six hours in the virtual world Second Life. Students create an avatar and interact with other avatars in SL. Second Life allows for flexibility in the online communication course. Students are not expected to interact in this virtual world during specific times so they are able to complete the assignment at their convenience.

Students do not have a script for their interactions. Students can interact with other avatars by initiating conversations and other avatars may initiate conversations with them. Students use these interactions as examples in their Analysis Paper. Students will reflect on their own experiences as well as their observations of interactions.

After students have created their avatar they email their avatar’s name to the instructor. The instructor should include a list of each student’s name and avatar name in the online course or make this available for students. Students contact each other and meet in Second Life. In an online course students interact with students they did and did not know in a face to face setting, such as a prior course. This can be helpful for students with reservations about Second Life.

Students should have at least four weeks to complete the assignment. If possible, the assignment should be due near the end of the course so students have the opportunity to spend time in Second Life over the period of a few weeks or even months. During their time in Second Life, students interact with strangers, family, friends, acquaintances, and classmates. The instructor may also decide to meet his or her students in Second Life. This strategy may enhance teacher immediacy in the online course. The author’s university has a SL island where students and faculty can meet. Second Life provides a space where students and the instructor can interact outside of the face-to-face classroom or course management system.

Finally, the instructor should include in the syllabus and assignment that students should never disclose personal information about themselves in Second Life. Bugela (2007) raises critical questions about the implications of using SL in the college classroom. Instructors should consider these concerns when using SL.

Second Life provides a context where students can learn about computer mediated communication. Students complete a formal analysis paper about their experiences in Second Life. They illustrate their understanding of the course concepts by analyzing the interactions in this setting.
Instructions for Students

In this paper you will reflect on your experiences in Second Life. Your paper will include 3 parts:

Part 1: You will describe the nature of the communication in this setting.

Part 2: You will analyze the communication using course concepts.

Part 3: You will reflect on the significance of this type of computer mediated communication.

You will need to reflect on your experiences in SL and this will require having interactions and experiences to write about. The more time you spend in SL – the more you will have to write about and analyze in your paper. Six hours in Second Life is a minimum requirement.

Part 1: Description (45 points)

In order to prepare for this section, while interacting in Second Life you will need to consider the interpersonal communication concepts from the textbook, lectures, and class discussions. Discuss the following questions/ topic areas in this section:

1. What interactions did you participate in? Did you initiate these interactions? Why or why not? Include at least two examples of interactions you had in SL.
2. Describe the nature of the nonverbal communication in SL.
   a. What is the role of nonverbal communication in SL?
   b. Is nonverbal communication in SL different from face to face communication? If so, explain.
   c. Describe the physical appearance of your avatar. Why did you create an avatar with these physical characteristics? Does your avatar reflect your physical appearance? Why or why not?
   d. What type of nonverbal communication is appropriate in SL?
3. Describe the nature of the verbal communication in SL.
   a. Did you use text or voice feature when communicating in SL? Do you think this affected your communication? If so, how?
   b. Do you think you used more abstract or more concrete language use in SL? (see Floyd, 2011, p. 172).
c. In your opinion, do you think SL is a high context or low context culture? (see Floyd, 2011, pages 49-50). Your answer will be based on your experiences and observations. Explain your answer.
Focus on documenting specific interactions and describing the communication at the site. Use examples to back up the statements you make. Your analysis paper should document your experiences and your observations about the interactions. Identify 2-3 interactions and use these as examples in this section of your paper.

Part 2: Analysis (35 points per concept)

In this section of your paper you will use concepts to analyze your interactions in SL. You can select any course concepts from the end of each chapter under the KEY TERMS heading. However, you should not use the term Self-disclosure because they will use this concept in Part 3.

Select THREE course concepts from the textbook that you want to use as analytical tools. The concepts will provide insight in the interactions in SL. You will want to select the concepts that were most evident in your interactions. For example, concepts from chapter 1 (Floyd, 2011) would include implicit rules, self-monitoring, and context. (The assignment can be adapted for use with any undergraduate interpersonal communication textbook.)

Part 3: Potential Implications and Significance of Second Life (SL) (30 points)

1. Were you “comfortable” interacting in SL? Why or why not? What are your prior experiences, if any, with this type of virtual environment?
2. Did you notice self-disclosure in SL? What type of self-disclosure did you engage in? Explain your answer. Self-disclosure is sharing information about yourself that the other person does not know.
   Did you find yourself offering vague information about yourself or potentially including deceptive information? Did you engage in interpersonal deceptions? Explain your experiences. Use examples to illustrate your claims.
3. Will you enter SL after this class? Why or why not?

General Flow of Ideas/ Writing (20 points)

Debriefing

Students submit a formal analysis paper. The instructor should provide timely and detailed feedback using the rubric. In an online course, instructors could also have students share their SL experiences in an asynchronous discussion.
Assessment

Second Life has been widely used for educational purposes across academic disciplines. This assignment offers instructors an opportunity to use Second Life in an online or face-to-face course. Second Life offers a virtual world for identifying course concepts and engaging in computer mediated communication. For example, a student reported in his analysis paper that he planned to return to SL after the course so he could practice his communication skills. Yet other students frequently report that they are too busy with their real lives to have a second one. In the end, the assignment provides students a context for identifying and analyzing course concepts. In addition, instructors new to using virtual worlds are able to explore SL as a pedagogical resource.

References


Illustrating the Perceptual Process Through a Music Video

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ABSTRACT
This exercise uses a popular music video to illustrate the significant role that perception plays in the communication process. Perception is a continual and active process that impacts how people see their world, themselves, others in it, and the ultimate creation of meaning. By using a music video, students are immediately engaged because it is a medium that they are very familiar with. Upon completion of this activity, students will demonstrate a better understanding of how and why people perceive the same thing(s) in a variety of ways. They will also have a tangible example of the centrality and complexity of communication that can be interwoven throughout the class, connected to other classes, and applied to their daily lives.

Objectives

- To illustrate that perception is a complex, continual and active process.
- To explain how common and likely it is for people to perceive common stimuli in different ways.
- To encourage students to examine their personal beliefs, values, attitudes, etc. and how they contribute to their perceptions.

Courses

This assignment is appropriate for an introductory communication course, courses in public speaking, intercultural communication, or any course where perception is examined.

Rationale

Perception plays a key role in the communication process. Since it impacts how people see others, it influences how they ultimately interact with others. As well, how one perceives him/herself plays a significant role in how they see themselves and the world around them. Therefore, perception is an important factor in how people make meaning and draw conclusions. As Wood (2010) explained, perception is the process of selecting, organizing, and interpreting
information. Perceiving requires people to select certain things and organize and interpret what is noticed. Cherry (2012), reiterated the interactive aspects of perception, saying that it is the “sensory experience of the world around us and involves the recognition of environmental stimuli and actions in response to these stimuli.” It “creates our experience of the world around us and allows us to act within our environment.” (p.1)

In this activity, students will create a common storyline from their viewing of a short music video. Their responses and subsequent class discussion will allow them to see how their personal experiences with the world influence their perceptions.

**Activity Details**

Students will watch a music video called “Save Room” by popular singer, John Legend. The instructor will likely be able to find the video on YouTube. If not, it can be purchased via an online music store for $1.99. This video is appropriate because it depicts the singer in a New York brownstone in relationships with a number of different women. On its surface, it suggests certain conclusions. This activity encourages the students to examine superficial assessment. The video begins with some mild sexual-oriented content, suggesting it is appropriate for students at the junior level of high school and older.

The exercise can take place at the beginning of the perception material as a lead in. It can also be done along with instruction about the perception process or common perceptual tendencies.

The instructor will set up the video before class begins to maximize time. Students will be broken into groups of four or five depending on class size, with one person in charge of writing down the ideas of the group members. First, the video will be viewed with no sound. Typically, it gets a response out of the class because they recognize the singer. Some may even recognize the video and/or know the song. It does not matter if they do or not and does not impact the effectiveness of the assignment. After viewing the video, groups are asked to develop a common description of what they believe is the meaning/plot/storyline being conveyed in the video.

Once they’ve completed their storyline, a member from each group writes it on the blackboard and we all discuss them, examining if there are any similarities and/or differences. Students are encouraged to share their rationale for their conclusions.

Next, the students in the same groups are given the lyrics to the song. They can be found on different song lyrics websites. For this assignment, Lyrics.com was used. Again, after reading and analyzing the lyrics, they are required to determine a common meaning/plot/storyline just from the lyrics. A group member is selected to keep track of the notes and ultimately write the scenario on the board next to their initial summary. We discuss them, determining if there are any common themes shared by the groups and if there are any similarities to the video-based conclusions.
Once all of the summaries are on the board, as stated above, we examine if there were common themes across groups and if there were overlaps between the video storylines and the storylines they developed from the lyrics. Students are required to share their rationale behind the conclusions they drew. Once examined, we also open the discussion to everyone so they can share ideas, comments, and ask questions about how they perceived the video and lyrics the way they did. Many find themselves sharing how their personal life experiences powerfully impacted their rationale for the storyline they created. Just for fun and to provide closure for the students, we watch the video with the sound up. It is not relative to the assignment but the students seem to want that piece.

Assessment

There is no right or wrong answer to this assignment. The fact that there will likely be two or three different scenarios illustrates the primary goals of the assignment. Since perception is so active, continual, and individual, those elements become clear after completing the exercise. The activity has gotten positive responses. Students reported having fun doing it and enjoyed the opportunity to interact with a popular text. They also recognized how perception influences their daily encounters, therefore improving their understanding of the scope of communication.

References

Understanding Coalition Dynamics: A Role Play Class Activity

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ABSTRACT
The purpose of this activity is to illustrate the role and challenges of coalitions in group conflict and decision making. In this activity, students take on the roles of organizational members tasked to arrive at consensus, but having different goals, interests, and information that could impact the decision. In discussing this activity experience, instructors can illustrate the six principles of coalitions presented in Wilmot and Hocker’s Interpersonal Conflict text. This activity is applicable to any course that addresses conflict and group interaction, including interpersonal and group communication, organizational and professional communication, family communication, and workplace skills seminars.

The ability to recognize, assess, and manage conflict effectively can be tricky business. Individuals may have a variety of needs and goals that seem incompatible with the needs and goals of others, which serve as the root of conflict (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). While an individual may make behavioral decisions based on his or her own conflict management style preference, the individual is also the sole party responsible for those decisions. When conflict occurs between interdependent groups, however, the responsibility for poor conflict behavior is easily dispersed, and with seeming support from those in one’s own group, conflict between groups can easily escalate to the point of organizational disruption.

Whether in the form of school project groups, departmental divisions, or labor and management disputes, conflicts often occur between sub-groups, or coalitions, of people who are part of a larger group, organization, or community. The coalitions within a larger group are made up of individuals with shared goals and more frequent interaction (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011). Group conflicts can effectively disrupt the ability of the larger organization to achieve its goals. The purpose of the activity described here is to help students recognize the dynamics of coalitions and group conflict by first taking on the roles of individuals within a group conflict, and then discussing how communication within the scenario affected the outcome of the group conflict. After participating in this activity, students should have a stronger sense of potential sources of group conflict and recognize some common hurdles to assessing and resolving group conflict.

While the primary text for understanding the principles of conflict coalitions comes from the Wilmot and Hocker (2007) Interpersonal Conflict textbook and used in a conflict communication course, this activity is applicable to a variety of classes that address group decision making, including group communication, organizational communication, risk and crisis management, network analysis, family communication, and
university or workplace skills seminars. The seventh edition of the Wilmot and Hocker (2007) text includes a list and description of six principles of coalitions as part of the chapter on assessing conflict. Unfortunately, the current eighth edition (Wilmot & Hocker, 2011) does not provide the list of principles, but does include the principle concepts of coalitions in the text on mapping conflicts. However, for lecture and discussion purposes, the list of the coalition principles from the seventh edition offers a simple breakdown for understanding and improving group conflict dynamics after the activity.

For this activity, the class is divided into groups of six. Each person in the group will have a different role in the scenario of a local company (Funco) that is trying to decide on a soft drink distributor with which to contract in Asia. Each role in this activity serves to demonstrate different types of power, relationships, and goals within the group. While the overall goal of the company, and the primary goal of the company president, is to have this group reach a consensus decision on the distribution company with which to contract, the enacting of the character descriptions should result in the formation of coalitions. Common student experiences in this activity reflect typical challenges of coalitions in conflict: 1) that the goals of these interdependent individuals are initially seemingly incompatible, 2) not all individuals are willing to be completely open about their true goals and interests, 3) participants can have different understanding or knowledge of the situation, and 4) not all of the relationships and levels of support and access within the group are equal.

Understanding Coalitions Dynamics Activity

Objective

The purpose of this activity is to have students experience and demonstrate the dynamics of coalitions in a group conflict situation. Students will also be able to observe and discuss the impact of coalitions on group decision-making.

Time for the Activity

This activity should take about 30 minutes, 20 minutes for the role play and ten minutes for the class discussion.

Resources Needed

Instructors will need to provide one copy of the student role sheet (Appendix A) to each group of six students. The role sheet should be cut to separate each of the roles, and the separated roles given to individual students so that each student can see only her or his own role’s information.

Activity Directions
For this activity, the class is divided into groups of six. Each person in a group will have a different role in the scenario of a local company (Funco) that is trying to decide on a soft drink distributor with which to contract in Asia. Each role in this activity serves to demonstrate different types of power, relationships, and goals within the group. The six roles are as follows, with names changeable as needed: Dylan, the president of Funco; Pat, the night shift supervisor; Chris, the day shift supervisor; and three day shift labor representatives, DJ, Billy, and Kelly. Appendix A provides the different perspectives, relationships, levels of information, and individual goals of each role.

While student role players can verbally share any information they choose from their role description, they are not to let other group members see their role description. This rule allows the communication to more accurately reflect genuine communication, which includes opportunities and choices regarding honesty, openness, and deception.

The overall goal of the company and the company’s president is to have this group reach a consensus decision on the distribution company with which to contract. Groups are given 20 minutes to try to reach consensus. Participants can communicate or not communicate with whomever they choose in their group. Students can find separate spaces in and around the classroom to have private conversations with other group members (coalition conversations). The president is typically off to the side, with group members talking to her or him as desired.

**Alternative Approaches**

A class can have one or two groups of six taking on the roles in the activity, with the rest of the class members silently taking notes on what they observe in the interactions. To motivate all students enacting roles in this activity to work toward achieving consensus in order to avoid a stalemate (which would result in the president losing her or his job), the president can be given the power to fire employees that are seen as unreasonably inhibiting the decision-making process.

The group communication skills addressed in this activity are broadly applicable. The activity can be easily modified to suit the needs of high school and theater instruction programs. High schools can use this activity to address the challenges present in effective team building and group cohesion. For high school students, the scenario can be made more relevant by changing it to one of student government decision making, with the social connections being those of shared activities rather than alma mater. Similarly, theater programs can use this activity for developing conflict awareness and management skills among cast and crew teams. Instead of a workplace setting, the scenario can be changed to a theater production setting making a choice about a show. In modifying the roles, the company president can be changed to a student director, the social connections can become shared past productions among students, and the different coalition groups can be cast and crew teams. In any group setting that has members forming smaller groups that share common interests and interact more frequently, the
challenges of conflict between coalitions are likely to occur. The scenario can simply be modified to be meaningful to a particular class or program.

**Debriefing and Discussion**

After 20 minutes the class regroups as a whole to discuss the challenges each group experienced in trying to reach consensus. At this point students can openly share their role character’s interests and level of information during the activity, and how these factors influenced their communication with other group members. Other class members can also share what they observed during the activity. To guide the discussion, students can be asked to share what they observed about the following:

1. What coalitions did you see formed? Who communicated most frequently with each other?
2. What did you observe about the level of openness in communication by the different group members?
3. Who openly communicated with whom? What do you think might have influenced these choices?
4. How do you think power and the ability to influence were perceived by different group members?
5. How might deception have been used to influence others?

After class discussion, the instructor can present the six principles of coalitions as described in Wilmot and Hocker’s (2007) textbook *Interpersonal Conflict* (pp. 190-194):

Principle #1: Coalitions begin for good reasons.
Principle #2: Coalitions and counter-coalitions become self-justifying.
Principle #3: Coalitions become the problem.
Principle #4: Coalitions can be clarified by identifying who is in them.
Principle #5: Coalitions predict future conflict.
Principle #6: Organizational systems can be changed by softening the coalitions.

**Appraisal**

By putting students into the roles of different characters in a conflict, they can experience firsthand the frustration of having limited information in decision making and begin to see the importance of fostering more open communication in group decision making. The open reflection and discussion phase allows students to more effectively empathize with character roles other than their own. Through this activity, students can come to understand the importance of softening coalition boundaries and fostering more open communication among all group
members, making it possible to address conflicts at the level of interests rather than focusing on rights or power. With greater mutual understanding and trust, all group members can more comfortably engage in effective decision making that benefits the whole group.

To help students apply their new understanding of coalition dynamics to their own lives, instructors can assign students to reflect upon and write about their own coalition experiences, whether these are coalitions at their jobs, in student organizations, or even in their own families. As described by Wilmot and Hocker (2007), coalitions can be mapped by writing the names of group or organizational members and drawing circles that encompass the names of members that interact more frequently. Students can then write about what interests might be shared among circled coalition members, and describe how rigid coalitions and limited communication between coalitions might explain some of the conflicts they observed in those groups.

References


Appendix A: Activity Roles

**Dylan: President of Funco**
Your main goal is to have your two supervisors and three labor employee reps come to a consensus on which Asian distribution company to contract, Popco or Sodaki. If they can’t reach a consensus, a contract won’t be signed in time and you will lose your job. As a Finley College alumnus, you are on the athletics board with Pat (night supervisor), another Finley College alumnus and more of a business associate than a friend. Chris (day supervisor) is a Sheldon College alumnus. Both Pat and Chris are up for promotion to vice-president, which will largely be based on their successful recommendation of Popco (Pat) or Sodaki (Chris).

**Pat: Supervisor, night shift, Funco**
You are trying to work your way up to vice-president, and you know your ability to have your recommendation for Popco (vs. Sodaki) accepted as the Asian distributor could help you get the job. Popco has offered the lowest bid for the contract. You see Chris (day shift supervisor) as your main competition for the job. Chris makes a point of trying to make you look stupid in front of your boss. None of your night shift employees are represented in this meeting. You are a Finley College alumnus, as is Dylan (the president), and you both serve on the athletics board. Getting Dylan on your side could sway the others to agree with your recommendation.
All six of you must reach a consensus to get a contract signed.

**Chris: Supervisor, day shift, Funco**
You are trying to work your way up to vice-president, and you know your ability to have your recommendation for Sodaki (vs Popco) accepted as the Asian distributor could help you get the job. Popco, the lowest bidder, has recently received some bad press regarding labor practices, exploiting both children and elephants, which you feel would reflect poorly on Funco. Pat, the night supervisor, is your main competition for the job and is friends with Dylan (president), as both are Finley College alumni and are on the athletic board together. As usual, you have done more research than Pat on who should receive the contract. You expect your day shift employees (and labor reps) DJ, Billy, and Kelly, to support your decision.
All six of you must reach a consensus to get a contract signed.

**Kelly: Labor rep, day shift, Funco**
You are an employee at Funco, working in the warehouse with DJ and Billy. All three of you are labor reps, and your union is encouraging you to try to get Funco to sign a contract with Sodaki (vs Popco), the Asian distribution company that is unionized. Your supervisor is Chris. You have worked at Funco for 15 years, and have received only token wage increases while DJ and Billy started earning more money than you when they came to Funco five years ago. You were recently approached by Popco and offered a job that would pay twice what you get now if you are able to convince your company to sign the contract with Popco. You can’t tell anyone about the job offer without the offer being taken away. You were told the reported labor abuse issues with Popco were largely exaggerated in the media, and the company has been improving its reputation.
All six of you must reach a consensus to get a contract signed.

**Billy: Labor rep, day shift, Funco**
You are an employee at Funco, working in the warehouse with DJ and Kelly. All three of you are labor reps, and your union is encouraging you to try to get Funco to sign a contract with Sodaki (vs. Popco), the Asian distribution company that is unionized. Your supervisor is Chris. You are friends with DJ, but Kelly is a slacker who didn’t attend any union meetings.
All six of you must reach a consensus to get a contract signed.