

VOLUME 22

1995



---

Applied Scholarship and the Role  
of State Journals and  
Associations in its Promotion

---

Can You Walk(Man) and Talk  
at the Same Time?: The Effect of  
Personal Stereo Use on Students

---

Clarifying the Role of Metaphor  
in Rhetorical Epistemology

---

*The Paper Bag Princess:*  
An Analysis of Gender

---

Barbarian at the Gate

---

Utilizing Theatrical Performance  
in Rhetorical Theory Pedagogy

---

Personality Assessments as a  
Guide to Acting Pedagogy

---

The Lack of Political Cartoons  
in The People's Republic of China

---

The Book Stops Here:  
Communication Strategies and  
the Demise of the Sears Catalog

---

JOURNAL  
OF  
COMMUNICATION & THEATER ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA





# COMMUNICATION AND THEATER ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA JOURNAL

Volume 22

Summer 1995

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Applied Scholarship and the Role of State Journals and Associations in its Promotion <i>Gerald Pepper</i>	3
Can You Walk(Man) and Talk at the Same Time?: The Effects of Personal StereoUse on College Student's Interpersonal Communication <i>Rebecca Ann Lind</i>	19
Clarifying the Role of Metaphor in Rhetorical Epistemology <i>Roy Schwartzman</i>	33
<i>The Paper Bag Princess: An Analysis of Gender</i> <i>Kristin Dahlen</i>	47
Barbarian at the Gate <i>Jim Graupner</i>	55
Utilizing Theatrical Performance in Rhetorical Theory Pedagogy <i>Victoria Tait Coffman and Daniel D. Gross</i>	65
Personality Assessments as a Guide to Acting Pedagogy <i>Barbara Mackey</i>	79
The Lack of Political Cartoons in The People's Republic of China <i>Jim Schnell</i>	91

# **COMMUNICATION AND THEATER ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA JOURNAL**

**Volume 22**

**Summer 1995**

## **EDITOR**

**Donald E. Rice  
Concordia College, Moorhead**

## **ASSOCIATE EDITORS**

**Stephen Collie, Winona State University  
Verna Corgan, Hamline University  
Helen Fisk, St. Paul Academy  
Clair Haugen, Concordia College, Moorhead  
JoAnn Holonbek, College of St. Catherine  
David Lapakko, Augsburg College  
Debra Petersen, University of St. Thomas**

## **EDITORIAL ASSISTANT**

**Sonia Bitz  
Concordia College, Moorhead**

## **CTAM OFFICERS**

**President: Jim Graupner, Stillwater High School  
President-Elect: Gerald Pepper, University of Minnesota, Duluth  
Secretary: Susan Collie, Winona State University  
Treasurer: Larry Schnoor, St. Olaf College  
Newsletter Editor: Thomas Endres, University of St. Thomas  
Historian: Cynthia Carver, Concordia College, Moorhead**

*The Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal* is published annually, usually during the summer by the COMMUNICATION AND THEATER ASSOCIATION OF MINNESOTA. Regular Membership in CTAM includes the journal subscription. CTAM membership information can be obtained from any of the officers. Single issues of the journal can be purchased by contacting the treasurer or editor. Departments may place advertisements in the Journal by contacting the editor.



**The Book Stops Here: Communication  
Strategies and the Demise of the  
Sears Catalog**

*Thomas G. Endres*

97

**TEACHER'S WORKBOOK**

**Spotlight on Teaching Method**

**Relinquishing Power in the Classroom  
A Case Study on Self-Directed Teams  
in the Classroom**

*Gerald W. Driskill and Brian Polansky*

115

**Self-Directed Teams in the Classroom:  
Three Strikes and They're Out!**

*John Gribas*

132

**Self-Directed Teams and Classroom  
Culture: Be Careful What You Ask For,  
Your Professor Just Might Give It To You**

*Carey H. Adams*

143

**Teaching Assignments**

**The Network Party: Exercise for the  
Interpersonal Communication Course**

*Julie Day*

154

**Visitors From Another Planet:  
An Experiential Approach to Teaching  
Delivery Skills**

*Laura K. Oster*

157

**The Substantive Basis of  
Speaker Credibility**

*J. Clarke Rountree*

161

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Gamble and Gamble's *Literature Alive!--  
The Art of Oral Interpretation and  
Maryanne Lenning's *Instructor's Manual****  
*Michael W. Shelton*

163

**Browne's *Comparing Broadcast Systems:  
The Experience of Six Industrial Nations***  
*Jim Schnell*

165

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

1995 was a great year for the *CTAM Journal*! The foremost accomplishment was the receipt of the CSCA State Journal Award for Top State Journal. Not only that, Donald Fishman's article from the 1994 issue "Copyright and the First Amendment" received the CSCA Best Manuscript in a State Journal Award. Such recognitions belong to the entire association and to all editors, authors, and staff, past and present. I share this joy with all of you.

Furthermore, submissions were up and several changes were made. The Top Student Paper and Book Review features were continued and a new Teacher's Workbook section called Spotlight on Teaching Methods was added. Additionally, I made the decision to accept and publish articles in both APA and MLA format, depending on the subject mode of the paper. My hope in doing this is that authors would view the *CTAM Journal* as accessible to social scientists and to those writing from a humanities-based perspective.

Again, my thanks goes out to the following individuals: Sonia Bitz, my superb editorial assistant; Donna Podratz, our department office manager; Judith Litterst, immediate past president and avid supporter of the journal; all the Associate Editors and CTAM Officers acknowledged on the title page; my colleagues at Concordia; all those who supported the journal through advertising; Dennis Ringdahl of Richtman's Printing; and most importantly, all of the authors who submitted manuscripts to the Journal. Again, many thanks to all!

## CTAM JOURNAL MISSION STATEMENT

[The mission statement was written by Jerry Pepper and adopted by the CTAM Board of Governors.]

The *Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota Journal* (CTAMJ) is the scholarly journal of the Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota. It is also an outlet for innovative teaching methods as well as issues of discipline-related importance. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome. The CTAMJ encourages contributions from scholars and practitioners who comprise all segments of the journal's readership, including K-12 educators, graduate school, community college, college and university groups. The journal welcomes theoretical and applied articles and teaching suggestions from both the theater and communication disciplines. All general articles will be blindly reviewed by capable scholars in the appropriate field.

No work will be accepted or rejected purely on the basis of its methodology and/or subject and/or the geographical location of the author(s) and/or the work affiliation (secondary/college level, department, etc.) of the



author(s). Author sex, race, ethnic background, etc., 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. But, when making editorial decisions, all attempts are made 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 February 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. All articles are read anonymously by 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 Editors' recommendations and comments. If there are any questions about the process, please direct them to the Journal Editor.

# APPLIED SCHOLARSHIP AND THE ROLE OF STATE JOURNALS AND STATE ASSOCIATIONS IN ITS PROMOTION

Gerald L. Pepper, University of Minnesota, Duluth

*I do research, drink wine, and pontificate in an academic cloister, most of the time happily buffered from relevance. (March, 1991, p. 21)*

March's statement was made, of course, with tongue firmly in cheek. Still, as jest or not, it is clearly a fact of academic life that many of us are often criticized by "outsiders" as elitists, engaged in non-meaningful research that does little to advance the human condition. Research for research's sake that discovers the obvious, the uninteresting, or the irrelevant.

On the other hand, those who practice what has come to be called "applied" research often find themselves being criticized from the inside of the profession. We're charged with all sorts of crimes against the academy, ranging from being atheoretical, to being driven by consulting fees rather than science, and for conducting unscientific (read outside of a laboratory, so uncontrolled) inquiry.

Is either set of charges legitimate? That probably depends upon who you ask, and how they define themselves and their research. From my point-of-view, and the position of this paper, both sets of claims are asking the wrong questions. The distinction between "basic" and applied research is artificial, more a problem of semantics than practice. In this paper I'm going to address a variety of issues that often get in the way of our understanding and acceptance of scholarship, whether applied or "basic." I'm going to focus on three areas: (1) the nature and importance of applied research; (2) the role of state journals in promoting applied research as well as all forms of scholarship; and (3) the role of state associations in facilitating scholarship. This paper will present the case that state journals and associations should play a prominent role in the definition and promotion of applied scholarship. As we will see, despite the unfair perception that applied researchers currently endure, it is precisely in the area of applied research that some of our greatest potential lies, as both researchers and practitioners.

## The Nature and Importance of Applied Research

Simply put, applied research is research that "solves" real-world problems. Generally, though not always, the goal of applied research has less to do with

theory generation than with theory testing and application. In other words, without applied research, we would have little understanding of the relevance or real-world legitimacy of our theories of human interaction.

For many of us, the goals of relevance and application seem noble and important. For some reason, however, that is quite hard to understand, many have dismissed the importance of finding practical value in academic research (Kreps, Frey, Lawrence, & O'Hair, 1991). Instead, they accuse applied research of lacking the scientific rigor that supposedly characterizes laboratory-based, or basic research. The argument boils down to the claim that because theory generation is not the goal of the research enterprise, the enterprise is unscientific, unacademic, and worthy of scorn.

What an unfortunate posture to take! And clearly, what a misinterpretation of the scholarly enterprise. One need only look at some of the important contributions that recent applied research has made to our understanding of the human condition: Clair (1993) used narrative theory to frame a new understanding of the power inherent in instances of sexual harassment; Reel and Thompson (1994) looked at the effectiveness of certain AIDS prevention strategies; Olson and Olson (1994) examined the influence of judge's instructions on predisposing jury outcomes; Bantz (1993) gave instructions and insights into working as a member of a cross-cultural research team; Krizek, Hecht, and Miller (1993) offered brilliant insights into drug use and prevention strategies for adolescents; Wood (1992) used the strategy of letting victims of sexual harassment tell their own stories as a way to frame her explanation of such behavior; and, even in our own *CTAM Journal*, Limbaugh and Brown (1991) examined the impact of lectures on reducing communication apprehension, and Pepper (1992) offered advice on developing organization-based AIDS education programs.

The point of the above list is to remind us that applied research isn't about scholars who call themselves applied researchers. I have no idea how many of the above authors define themselves as applied researchers. And, it doesn't matter. What matters is that the result of their research had practical, real-world applications. It made a tangible difference in the lives of real people.

Many people will want to continue to debate the importance of this goal, arguing that the scholarly enterprise should be the generation of knowledge. But, for my money, knowledge without application, theory without relevance, is uninteresting, of limited value, and of questionable ethics. Its primary purpose is to entertain those of us in the academic community. It justifies our reason for doing what we do. However, as Avery and Eadie (1993) noted, analyses of the field have shown that we tend to talk to ourselves more than to others outside the field. This limits our influence on other disciplines, and results in a sort of self-perpetuating system of mutual admiration, whereby we



praise each other for doing good work, without feeling compelled to submit that work to the critique of outsiders, or the even harsher critique of applicability. A different way to put this is that the less applied we become, the less accountable we will have to be. And, the less accountable we are, the more likely we will be to reflect the attitude of March's statement at the head of this paper.

### Defining Scholarship

One of the biggest issues that traditionally has stood in the way of accepting applied scholarship has been the ways that the academy historically has chosen to define itself. Simply put, we have been inclined to make statements like: "I am a teacher," or "I am a researcher," or "I work at a research university," or other such claims that tend to put us into one box at the exclusion of other boxes. Now assuming that we all grant teaching as one of our primary reasons for participating in the profession, it is the research box that becomes the most problematic in terms of assigning value to our work, and in terms of describing and legitimizing what we do.

Unfortunately, the field and our journals have been too willing to perpetuate the myths of difference, rather than move us toward understanding and acceptance of each other. One of the biggest weights we force ourselves to carry around is the assumption that we need to publish at all costs and that publishing is synonymous with scholarship, so to be able to wear the mantle of scholar means that you are actively publishing. To reinforce this attitude, we're continually printing articles in which we have counted the numbers of publications of the most prolific among our ranks, as though those individuals should serve as some sort of benchmark by which we will gauge our own progress as scholars.

This approach at defining scholarship has some serious flaws. Erickson, Fleuriet, and Hosman (1993) did a nice job of articulating many of the most important concerns surrounding this publish or perish mentality. They argued that publication counts do not provide a useful yardstick for measuring quality scholars. Simply put, the activity of publishing for the sake of being published is not commendable. And, by continuing to print these counts of prolific publishers, we lay a mindset into graduate students and others that they need to become like those most proficient; i.e., they need to publish. What we really should be telling these folks is why they should publish. And, that many publications do not equal a good scholar.

Of course there is nothing inherently evil about encouraging research activity. But, in departments where research assistants are limited, where the

institution's primary mission is teaching or service, where release time to conduct research is not granted or is insufficient (I know of one institution where the research-based release means that the faculty person now "only" teaches three classes for a semester), and where there exist insufficient resources to back the research effort, the discussion of scholarship needs to take on a decidedly different tone.

The fact is, the push to publish has resulted in both great and trivial research. We must work to enlarge our understanding of scholarship to include and embrace teaching, service, and publication. And, since this article is about researching and publishing primarily, it is to publishing, and the role of the state journal in that process, that we now turn.

### The Role of the State Journal in the Research Process<sup>1</sup>

Because of the ambiguity that seems to surround the question of the merit of state journals, and the questions that surround those who publish in them, we need to come to a fuller understanding of the role and importance of state journals in the scholarship process. In this section, I will present six reasons in support of the contention that state journals be considered viable publication outlets by researchers, teachers, and committees charged with evaluating research efforts when making merit, tenure and promotion decisions.

However, before getting to those six reasons, we should examine two critical definitions so that you know what I mean when I say "viable outlet" and "state journal." *Viable outlet* refers to an entity that is able to survive, to live in a relatively independent fashion. All journals, of course, are subsidized, so financial independence is not a criterion of viability. As used here, *viability* refers to a journal's ability to exist free of unfair and unfounded criticisms based upon presumptions and speculation.

I remember, for example, the "old" *Journal of Applied Communication Research*. When the newly formed (and formatted) version sponsored by SCA came out recently as a national journal, many questioned its "viability" based upon memories of the old version. Others questioned the journal's viability based upon research paradigm parochialism. Interestingly, the journal (to my knowledge) seldom receives criticism from people who have read the articles. In other words, the content of the journal, its reason for existing, has made it a respectable, viable outlet for scholars. When I suggest that state journals are viable, what I mean is that their content should be judged before their circulation.

A *state journal*, as used in this paper, refers to the journal which is usually (though not exclusively) supported and promoted by the state communication

association. State association members' dues, association subsidies, and in a few cases, advertising, support the state journal financially. The journal is usually published once per year, though in certain cases some journals come out more frequently. *Finally, for the purposes of this paper, a state journal is one which demands blind article reviewing.*

### Six Reasons In Support For The Argument

This section will present six reasons in support of the contention that state journals should be considered viable publication outlets by authors, reviewers, and other commentators. The reasons are presented in no specific order, so the reader should not assume that one reason is of greater importance than another.

**Reason 1:** *Because of the number of advanced degrees granted in the speech-communication discipline, there do not currently exist enough publication outlets at the national and regional levels to absorb the research activity of the field.* According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (1993a, p. 17), in 1990-91 the field of communication conferred 4123 Master's degrees, and 259 Doctoral degrees. If that was a typical year, then we can assume that over the last five years, approximately 20,000 M.A.s and 1300 Ph.D.s have been conferred. If we assume that 75 percent of those with Ph.D.s and 25 percent of those with M.A.s are trying to publish, then just the last five year's worth of graduates has amounted to approximately 6000 communication scholars trying to find a publication outlet for their work.

Obviously my estimates might be off a little, but I doubt that they're too far off. My point is that given such a large number of publication candidates vying for such a small number of "officially sanctioned" (read, indexed in the Matlon/Matlon/Ortiz indexes) outlets, we can reasonably ask "where will these people publish?" and "how much will they publish?" It is no wonder that, according to Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbary (1989, 1992), the vast majority of communication scholars during the 1915-1985 period, who published, published only one article. This includes the "most prolific women" as well as men. According to Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbary (1993), regarding active scholars published between 1986-1990, 63 percent of the listings in the Matlon and Ortiz index had only one entry. And, given the volume of submissions to such a limited number of outlets, it is also no wonder that most of the journals in the indexes carry an 85-90 percent rejection rate. Indeed, there currently exists so much competition to publish in so little "recognized" space, that Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbary have concluded that as few as six



articles in the indexed journals would place communication researchers in the top 10 percent of all time.

The most glaring flaw in all of this reasoning surrounding prolificacy is that it overlooks the many interesting flaws in the determination of what constitutes prolific, what constitutes "countable," and what constitutes quality. Meyers, Brashers, Center, Beck, and Wert-Gray (1992) noted exactly these points. They pointed out, for example, that the index used to generate lists of prolific scholars excludes the *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *Communication Reports*, *Communication Research*, and the *Association for Communication Administration Bulletin*. It also excludes books, book chapters, and articles written for journals outside of the communication discipline. And, obviously, such indexes exclude state journals. In other words, despite the many articles that count numbers of publications, we don't have any idea who is most prolific, because the only counting that counts is that based on the journals selected as countable.

It is unlikely that the number of advanced degrees conferred will decline considerably in the future, or that the number of national or regional journals will increase in any significant way, or that the publication expectations of college and university communication departments will be lowered. If we are going to have research expectations of faculty, then we must have a sufficient number of sanctioned outlets for those faculty to tap. The most natural and available existing outlets are at the state level.

**Reason 2:** *Because the generally acceptable outlets are dominated by researchers in Ph.D. granting institutions.* According to Hickson, Stacks, and Amsbary (1989, 1992), the vast majority of scholars published between 1915-1990, in journals indexed by Matlon/Matlon and Ortiz, taught or teach in doctoral granting departments. However, most communication scholars don't work in Ph.D. granting departments. Still, these scholars work in departments that are housed in colleges that require some sort of research publication record for promotion and tenure. What, then, are the great majority of scholars to do?

The answer is to redefine what is meant by "acceptable outlet." Those scholars in Ph.D. granting departments have the advantage (often) of smaller teaching loads than those in undergraduate departments, and graduate students helping with research. It is not uncommon for faculty in such departments to be attached in direct or indirect ways to numerous articles and research projects simultaneously, simply because they are not saddled with doing the bulk of the basic, time consuming data collecting and literature searching themselves. The result is that these scholars can have two or three or four or five articles out being reviewed at the same time. Thus, they stand a

far better chance of getting into the journals because they have more research being considered.

If we redefine "acceptable" to include state level journals, then the number of possible outlets will nearly double for all scholars. The availability of outlets will mean a greater chance of publication success for those scholars who don't work in departments that confer advanced degrees.

**Reason 3:** *Because they give scholars an outlet for nontraditional types of articles.* One of the great joys of reading state journals is the variety of articles that they offer. In my own experience with the *CTAM Journal* we published (through a blind review process) articles as diverse as statewide examinations of the basic course, motherhood as a rhetorical vision, the evolution of sitcom husbands, Minnesota's rhetorical vision on the quality of life, audiences in 18th century European theatre, AIDS education efforts in organizations, the rhetoric of Jim Jones, a Burkeian analysis of Jesse Jackson, father-daughter relationships, and technology transfers to China, among others.

Additionally, many state journals provide sections on teaching strategies, book reviews, and classroom exercises in many areas, but especially regarding public speaking, interpersonal communication, and theater classes. In short, state journals are less likely to be pigeon-holed as primarily quantitative (such as *HCR* and increasingly *CE*), applied (such as *JACR*), rhetorical (such as *QJS*), communication education (such as *CE* and *CQ*), etc. The lively debates, the application information, the scholarly treatment of complicated issues, the useful and important discussion of state association issues, and the diversity and flexibility of editorial philosophy all make the state journal an interesting, useful, scholarly, and fun outlet.

**Reason 4:** *Because they give scholars an outlet for work-in-progress.* This stands as one of the most important reasons for reconsidering our attitudes about state journals. As scholars we are, for some reason, resistant to unfinished work. We like to criticize, though too often we resent criticism. We hesitate to put our thoughts out for public display until we believe that they are completed, and then, if criticized, we resent and reject the critique and the critic.

Many feel that the most useful function of convention papers is that they allow for the expression of incomplete thoughts. In an analysis of the "importance" of various outlets for the presentation of ideas, as they affected tenure decisions, Rosenfeld, Stacks, and Hickson (1990) found that convention papers were considered relatively less important in tenure decisions. They carried about the same weight as the least important journal in the ranking. But, they are clearly not unimportant. They may be less clearly important than journal articles, but the authors stressed that we should not

overlook the role of convention papers in faculty development.

The same should be said about journal articles, such as many that appear in state journals, that reflect thoughts in progress. The value of an outlet that accepts and encourages on-going thought cannot be over-stated. By committing thoughts to paper, writers clarify their thinking for themselves and their audiences. Writing ideas down aids in the development of reasoning and theory/model building. Committing to ideas that are reviewed gives the writer valuable outside feedback. Finally, there is great heuristic value for students as well as nonstudents in seeing the development of ideas, rather than simply the fruition of the research process.

One additional point should be made here. I have argued that state journals offer an outlet for work that is in progress, and this is obviously one reason that state journals are ranked "lower" when scholars are asked to evaluate their usefulness in promotion decisions. What we must remember, though, is how flawed any sort of journal ranking procedure is. Few conclusions can be drawn because of differences in faculty priorities when making distinctions. The rankings may indicate lack of knowledge about a journal as easily as different research interests of various scholars as well as a real hierarchy.

For example, relatively new journals, such as *Communication Theory* or *Text and Performance Quarterly* stand less of a chance of being highly rated because of limited exposure to a large audience. Does this mean that these journals are of less "value" than better known journals? Is the *Journal of Applied Communication Research* less important because its articles are applied? Is *Communication Studies* less important because its production schedule was interrupted?

When will we stop this foolishness of ranking and competition? One finds examples of the foolishness of ranking even to the level of statements about national versus state communication associations. Is SCA less prestigious than ICA because ICA holds conventions out of the country? Are state associations less valued because they cater to K-12 as well as college/university audiences? Are they less important because they recognize the value of monitoring communication standards of the students that the "prestigious" universities get later, or because they recognize the value of debate, forensics, and theater?

**Reason 5:** *Because they keep teachers researching, researchers finishing, and offer reticent scholars a non-threatening outlet for their research.* The key word here is "scholars." According to *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (1993b, p. 35), when asked about professional goals considered essential or very important, the option of engaging in research garnered 58.5 percent agreement. However, when asked to indicate how



much publishing activity that they engaged in over the last two years (professional writings accepted for publication or published in the last two years), 45.3 percent said none, and 25.7 percent indicated only one or two. This means that about 70 percent of the scholars who believe that publishing is important are being frustrated in their efforts to follow through on this belief.

If we assume that beliefs lead to action, and that these scholars were attempting to publish but finding it difficult, then we can also easily assume that the difficulties and frustrations are leading many to abandon the effort altogether. This is unfortunate, because what it implies is that the publishing process rather than the actual quality of work is stifling some or much of the effort of many researchers.

In commenting on this process, Friedrich (1987) wrote:

The only thing wrong with this view is that it dooms the majority of faculty to feelings of failure and inadequacy. . . . However, they do need to define scholarship broadly enough so that more than a select few have the possibility of achieving success. Administrators ought to encourage all contributions to knowledge—including those that describe educational strategies and techniques. (p. 51)

The process of scholarship must be understood as including teaching, research and service. And, with that understanding comes efforts to share teaching-related information and insights, a practice already fully in place in most state journals. State journals often present both articles and special sections devoted to teaching pedagogy, not just empirical studies of classroom and teaching manipulations.

By opening up our interpretations of "scholar," we will also be opening up our acceptance of scholarship. This will mean taking a longer look at the state journals and reevaluating their contributions to the development of scholars and scholarship.

**Reason 6:** *The journal speaks in a scholarly way to the association membership.* This is one of the most important functions for the state journal. It serves as an information source for the association's membership. As such, it provides a forum for association leadership to address the membership regarding scholarly issues, for the membership to keep current on general research, and as a source for innovative teaching methods and ideas.

Each of these functions is important when we view scholarship as including research, teaching, and knowledge of one's discipline. I can think of no journal in our field that offers as liberal and eclectic a selection of readings as most of the state journals of which I am aware. The *CTAM Journal*, for example, has published articles that are theoretical, applied, theater-focused, debate-focused, rhetorical criticisms, organizationally-focused, and about

interpersonal communication. It includes a teacher's workbook section that encourages the sharing as well as the critique of teaching pedagogy. And, it encourages discussion of issues pertinent to all of the K-university academic community.

If the above are good reasons in support of this paper's thesis, then why would people not submit articles to state journals, and why would tenure and review committees continue to discount state journal publications, and why would new assistant professors be encouraged to submit their work to "real" journals, avoiding the state level? There can only be two reasonable explanations: State journals are genuinely bad and should be avoided, or state journals are fine, but have a bad reputation.

Are state journals weak in terms of their scholarship? A journal is only as strong as the material it publishes. I can say with confidence that the *CTAM Journal*, for example, has a history of publishing fine scholarship. The review process used and that most state journals use is rigorous and thorough. Instead of saying that most state journals have weak scholarship, it may be more accurate to say that they have a different sort of scholarship than is usually seen in the larger regional or national journals. And this is only the case because such material is not submitted to the state journal. In other words, state journals are often criticized for not containing material that they didn't have the chance to review. Certainly, this is not a fair criticism.

Why, then, don't state journals receive the same sort of articles that the "big" journals receive? The obvious answer is because of the common perception that "good" research goes in the regionals or nationals, and the rest goes to convention papers or state journals. This sort of elitism is real, pervasive, and tragic, if for no other reason than, as stated above, it dooms most scholars to endless frustration because most will not be published.

Our attitudes about scholarship must change. Our attitudes about publication outlet viability must change. Our attitudes about tenure requirements must change. And, with it all, our attitudes about state journals must change.

### What Must State Journals Do To Meet Their End Of The Deal?

It would be unfair to say that all teachers are equally good, that all research is equally important, or that all journals are of equal quality. To argue that state journals should be more valued in promotion, tenure, merit, and research decisions, is not the same thing as saying that all state journals do an equally good job of promoting quality scholarship. Clearly, if state journals want to

garner the respect and/or status of regionals or nationals, then they must be prepared to do certain things.

First, all articles must be blindly reviewed. This doesn't mean that special exceptions cannot be made for invited pieces, but it does mean that the nature of the journal must be one that promotes the publishing of the best research of that which is submitted for review. Second, the journals must have a more comprehensive policy of critique that allows for work to be conditionally accepted contingent upon rewriting. It is too common for state journals to be on production schedules that don't allow for sufficient turnaround time for the rewriting process. And finally, authors submitting to state journals must be more willing to abide by the above two rules. They are suggested as quality control, not as punishment. We can't claim to have quality journals without quality control.

### The Role of the State Association in Promoting Scholarship

The final issue to be discussed is the role of state associations in promoting scholarship. You'll note here that I'm not talking about promoting research; rather, I'm talking about scholarship. Historically, this has been one of the more overlooked responsibilities of state associations. Most see themselves as responsible for overseeing licensure requirements, serving as a clearinghouse for information that pertains to theater, debate, forensics, and communication concerns, and so forth, as though those issues were independent of the scholarly process. And, it is even rarer for state associations to assertively and proactively encourage research. I think that such encouragement is an important job for the association to take on. In this section, I'll outline six ways that this can be done.

The first thing that state associations should do is encourage the association members to stay active in the association, and in their profession. Such activity takes many forms, including staying current with their fields, keeping informed on the key issues in related fields, and participating in the state and/or regional and/or national associations. Does staying current and active count as scholarship? Of course. And such activity is clearly a necessary step for anyone who wants to publish.

The second thing that state associations should do is back a substantial journal, both financially and philosophically. This means they must have accomplished editors that they let do the job of editing. In return, they must ask for accountability from that journal. The association leadership should play a role in articulating the mission of the journal, and its editorial philosophy. However, once these guiding premises have been developed, it is

the job of the editor to create and maintain a journal of high-quality, that represents the association and its members, and that fills a role in the academic community.

Accountability takes a variety of forms. First, the journal is accountable in mundane, but necessary ways, including financial responsibility, length, appearance, number of articles from Minnesota-based versus out-of-state authors, number of refereed versus solicited articles, and so forth. I call these mundane issues because, though important, none of them really define the journal in terms of its quality.

Quality accountability is the more severe and important measure by which the journal must abide. Quality includes meeting the demands of the association leadership, as well as the association membership generally. The readers of the state journal include individuals with extremely diverse needs and interests. We are K-university teachers, interested in theater, debate, forensics, history of rhetoric, interpersonal communication, organizations, groups, etc., etc. In short, we're a tough audience to please. So tough, as a matter of fact, that pleasing us all can't really be held up as the prime criterion of quality.

Rather, quality must be a question of the articles themselves. I may find little to read in a given issue of the journal (at least, little that I find really fascinating), but if the articles that are there are written and edited well, show mastery of subject and comprehensive research, and mastery of methods, then the quality criterion has been met. We're fortunate in Minnesota to have one of the best of the state journals. And although not every article in every issue intrigues every reader, on the whole, over the course of time, I genuinely think that most readers' interests are addressed, with the presentation of high quality research.

Third, state associations must define scholarship to include all forms of research, teaching, and even service. Such a realistic definition opens up the publishing opportunity to many that may have been put off by overly restrictive attitudes. A scholar is little more than an inquiring mind. I might make my inquiries in the form of helping campus-wide committees run more efficient meetings. Or, I might make inquiries in the form of updating my lecture materials to include recent research on detecting deception in interpersonal encounters.

The point here is that narrow definitions of scholarship serve to justify the narrow distribution of rewards, both real and perceived. After going unrewarded for so long, it is not uncommon for us to simply ask, "Why should I continue to work hard?" To put it more simply, if you kick me enough, eventually I'll just get out of the way. But I'll always wonder what it was that I did to merit your disdain. The examples are too numerous to dwell upon. They

include pay systems that offer more rewards for research than for teaching excellence, and more for research and teaching than for service; reward systems that advantage "scholarly" books over textbooks (some departments don't even offer merit money to authors of textbooks); and, obviously, those programs that don't include state journals as viable publication outlets.

Fourth, state associations must encourage college departments (primarily) to reward their faculty who publish in the state journal. This obviously is in line with the rest of this paper. When we enlarge our definition of scholarship, and when we promote quality work regardless of where it finds its outlet, the next logical step is to convince reward structures that those who participate in this newer vision deserve to be recognized.

Fifth, along with working to get departments to recognize the work of their own, state associations must lobby the national associations to give convention time and national journal space for coverage of state issues, and promotion of state journals. In other words, it is time for the national associations to make greater efforts at recognizing the valuable work of their own. Narrow, parochial, prolificacy-based definitions of scholarship can no longer be tolerated or understood. The opportunities for enhancing the work experiences of association members are too exciting, the outlets for research are continually narrowing, and the need for application is too important for national associations to continue to look the other way, as if state associations didn't exist.

Finally, state associations need to encourage applied research, and promote such by using the journal as an available outlet for such research. Such a vision is certainly consistent with a more realistic definition of scholarship, advocated throughout this paper. And, such a view is certainly not out of touch with the opinions of some of the most prolific, and well-respected scholars in this field and others. Consider what Redding (1992) had to say about the importance of applied research:

First, let it be understood that, in my view, skills-oriented instruction, whether in college classrooms or 'adult' workshops, is a perfectly honorable and defensible enterprise. Indeed, if we acknowledge the validity of the notion of 'empowerment' (pardon the current buzz-word!), can we derogate the social utility of work designed to help citizens to articulate their thoughts--cogently, responsibly, and persuasively? (p. 88)

Redding was echoing March (1991), who argued that consulting simply refers to the giving of advice to help the receivers improve their effectiveness at something. This includes people who consult for fees, those who write textbooks, and those who teach. Research simply refers to systematic data collecting, analysis, and reporting.

communication. Morita (1986) wrote, "I rushed home with the first Walkman and was trying it out with different music when I noticed that my experiment was annoying my wife, who felt shut out. All right, I decided, we need to make provision for two sets of headphones" (p. 80). This was done, but when first using the Walkman with two sets of headphones, Morita (1986) discovered that his friend, with whom he was listening, "smiled broadly and wanted to say something, but he couldn't because we were both hooked up to headsets. . . . I recognized this as a potential problem. My solution was [adding] a button-activated microphone so the two people could talk to each other, over the music, on the 'hot line'" (p. 81).

Ultimately, however, Morita (1986) seemed to acknowledge that Walkman users didn't mind the relative isolation. "Although I originally thought it would be considered rude for one person to be listening to his music in isolation, buyers began to see their little portable stereo sets as very personal. And while I expected people to share their Walkmans, we found that everybody seemed to want his or her own, so we took out the 'hot line' and later did away with one of the two headphone jacks on most models" (p. 81-82).

### Purpose and Significance

The personal stereo deserves more attention from researchers than it has received. The device differs in at least three important ways from related media. First, its size and portability make it possible to be used in virtually any circumstance. Second, the user listens in relative isolation. According to Gumpert (1987), "While the speakers of a portable radio or cassette player create a wall of amplified sound, earphones and earplugs create a silent wall, which separates the listener from those around him or her. The earphone mentality is based on privatization and isolation--on withdrawal from public sound and interaction" (p. 89-90). Meyrowitz (1985) also referred in passing to "personal mini-cassette players, which can create private spaces in the midst of crowded streets" (p. 324). Thus, communication between personal stereo users and others may be inhibited because perceptions are not easily shared, and casual conversation may be inhibited because of the relative amount of effort necessary to interact.

A third unique aspect of personal stereo use is the capability of the user to retain ultimate control over what is heard; the device allows one to alter one's acoustic surroundings. Gumpert (1987) called this "substituting a sound environment" (p. 90). For example, a jogger annoyed by the sounds of busy city streets may replace those sounds with, literally, any others. Workers in

offices and in factories may create an alternate acoustical environment. Even some dentists' offices come equipped with personal stereos as a means of relieving tension and masking the sound of the drill.

### Research Questions

The goal of this research is exploratory and descriptive: to discover whether personal stereo use affects college students' interpersonal communication, and to define college students' attitudes toward personal stereo use and toward those who are personal stereo users.

The first research question begins an important discussion regarding the potential impact of personal stereo use on interpersonal communication. Clearly, a device having the attributes discussed above has the potential to affect communication. Since the listening experience is so private, and because an existing sound environment can be replaced, others who may be physically close to the user do not experience the same environment. The failure to share a common environment may in fact separate personal stereo users from others.

The first research question has been divided into component parts and relates to reported perceptions of the relationships between interpersonal communication and personal stereo use:

(RQ 1) How, if at all, does personal stereo use affect interpersonal communication?

(RQ 1.1) Does the use of a personal stereo affect initiation of conversation by college students?

(RQ 1.2) Is the likelihood of personal stereo use by college students affected by the presence of an acquaintance?

A second research question represents an attempt to discover attitudes toward personal stereos and their users. In some ways, this research question is related to the first, since some of those commonly-held attitudes or opinions might influence whether or not an attempt is made to initiate interaction. However, this question is sufficiently distinct to merit consideration on its own:

(RQ 2) What, if any, commonly-held beliefs, opinions, or attitudes do college students have regarding personal stereo use?

### Variables and Definitions

The variables are defined as follows: **Personal stereo use**, is defined as the wearing of a small, portable device requiring headphones to allow the user to listen to prerecorded or broadcast material. This definition does not require the wearer to be listening to anything; the device is considered to be "in use" as long as the headphones are worn. That is, one cannot tell whether or not others are actually listening to anything while wearing headphones, but merely whether or not others are using a personal stereo. This acknowledges the importance of perception--that is, merely having the headphones on sends a message, which may be variably interpreted. **Interpersonal communication** is based on Rich's (1974) definition: "A process whereby a source elicits a response in a receiver through the transmission of a message, be it sign or symbol, verbal or nonverbal" (p. 4). **Initiation of conversation** is defined as the act of commencing verbal exchange with others. **College students** is defined as the people enrolled at the main campus of the large Midwestern university where the study was conducted. Further, the population is restricted to students who themselves reported using personal stereos.

### Methodology

#### The Sample

The study utilized a telephone survey of 127 randomly selected college students who use personal stereos, and was pre-tested with the target population eight months before the present survey was conducted.

**Phone Interviews.** The survey was conducted from January 7-22, 1989 by trained interviewers. Calls began with an introduction to the study, two screening questions (to determine if the person was a college student and a personal stereo user), assurance of confidentiality, and a request for participation. Interviews lasted approximately 12 minutes. "Call-backs" of five percent of the completed surveys revealed no problems.

**Response rate.** 127 surveys were completed, with 14 refusals, for a response rate of approximately 90% of all contacted persons. To determine how well the sample represented the population, demographic information given by respondents was compared to the demographics of the university student population. Gender distributions are identical. Age and class distributions, while categorized differently, are extremely close. For instance,



15.7 percent of the sample was aged over 31 years, while 16.6 percent of the University population was aged over 30 years.

### The Instrument

The survey utilized a mixture of open- and closed-ended questions. The forced-choice questions utilized four-point Likert-type scales having values of strongly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. These items can be seen in the tables. The valence of each item was varied to inhibit patterned response bias. In addition, two open-ended questions were included: "If you have sometimes felt reluctant to strike up a conversation with someone who was using a personal stereo, why was that?" and "What specific difficulties, if any, have you noticed as a result of your own, or other people's, use of personal stereos?". Finally, demographic information was requested.

### Data Analysis Procedures

Simple comparison of frequencies and rank-ordering of means of closed-ended responses comprised much of the data analysis. The open-ended responses were content-analyzed, using the typology described below.

## Results

**RQ 1.1** Does the use of a personal stereo affect *initiation* of conversation by college students?: Analysis of closed items.

Tables 1 and 2 show the results of the questions pertinent to RQ 1.1. In this instance, comparing the findings in Tables 1 and 2 seems to point out some interesting contradictions. For example, respondents leaned toward disagreement with the statement that "I don't want people to talk to me while I'm using a personal stereo" (meaning it is somewhat acceptable to talk with the user) but at the same time they tended to agree with the statement that "I generally don't initiate conversation with someone who's using a personal stereo." Additionally, they tended also to disagree that "It is acceptable to begin casual conversation with someone who is using a personal stereo." This contradiction might be explained in any of three ways: (1) the respondents feel social desirability pressures and state they do not mind being spoken to while using a personal stereo when actually they do; (2) the statements mentioned are not related, and do not measure the same construct (which seems

doubtful); or (3) the respondents actually do not mind being spoken to while using a personal stereo, but they assume other people do mind.

**TABLE 1: Means of responses to the statements regarding initiation of conversation with personal stereo users\***

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
It is acceptable to begin casual conversation with someone who is using a personal stereo.	2.41	.76
I don't want people to talk to me while I'm using a personal stereo.	2.26	.76

(\* Scale used for this and all subsequent tables: 4 = Strongly Agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly Disagree)

**TABLE 2: Means of responses to the statements regarding initiation of conversation with personal stereo users**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
The use of personal stereos has cut back on the amount of time people spend talking and being with each other.	2.55	.70
I generally don't initiate conversation with someone who's using a personal stereo	2.83	.66

**RQ 1.1** Is the likelihood of personal stereo use by college students affected by the presence of the use of a personal stereo affect initiation of conversation?: Analysis of open items.

One of the open-ended questions was designed to address the issue of whether or not personal stereo use inhibits the initiation of conversation: "If you have sometimes felt reluctant to strike up a conversation with someone who was using a personal stereo, why was that?" If reasons were not given, it was assumed that the respondent had not felt reluctant to initiate conversation with others who were using personal stereos. If reasons were given, they have been categorized according to a three-pronged typology that considers problems relating to personal stereo use and interpersonal communication to be of three basic types: **Difficulty**, **Impoliteness**, and **Loudness**. Figure 1 describes each of these and provides examples.

The **Difficulty** category includes problems related to the difficulty of communicating with someone who is using a personal stereo. The listener may not pay attention, may not be able to hear, or may "tune out." Further,

since verbal communication is difficult, non-verbal signals must be used, and this in itself may create problems. Also, listeners are expected to turn off their personal stereos, or remove the headphones, before communication can occur.

The **Impoliteness** category includes problems related to the arousal of negative feelings in one person who desires to communicate with another but cannot as long as the other is using a personal stereo. Feelings of frustration, uncomfortableness, of being insulted, etc., may be generated in the one who desires communication. Also, it is perceived that the listener does not wish to talk or to be disturbed, which may further amplify these negative feelings.

The **Loudness** category includes problems related to the breaking of certain social norms. If the listener does respond to communication attempts, she/he may talk overly loudly. In addition, listening to a personal stereo at high volumes may disturb others.

A fourth category of statements is not related to communication, but to perceived harms of personal stereo use. These are both physical and psychological in nature. Perceived physical harms include safety hazards created by the use of the device while driving, cycling, or jogging, and potential hearing damage. Perceived psychological harms include the device's reported tendency to remove the wearer from the realm of the real world and the potential for users to be distracted from some other presumably more constructive activity. Although not every aspect of the preceding discussion is pertinent to **RQ 1.1**, the model has been discussed here because other aspects will become pertinent in the discussion of **RQ 1.2** and **RQ 2**.

**Figure 1: Categories of Reported Problems Relating to Personal Stereo Use and Interpersonal Communication**

<u>Difficulty</u>	<u>Examples</u>
(A) The listener doesn't pay attention; can't hear; tunes out.	"tendency for them not to pay attention--to go off in to their own world."
(B) Verbal communication is difficult; non-verbals must be used.	"you have to get their attention by non-verbals--you have to distract them."
(C) Listeners are expected to turn off their stereos before communication occurs.	"they are not giving full attention to the interaction unless they remove the set;" "I ask them to take it off."

**RQ 2:** What, if any, commonly-held beliefs, opinions, or attitudes do college students have regarding personal stereo use? Analysis of closed items.

As noted, this research question is related to the first because the desire to initiate conversation with a personal stereo user is probably closely linked to attitudes, opinions, and beliefs. In this section, only those items not included in the preceding discussion will be included.

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of questions regarding attitudes toward personal stereo use and personal stereo users. The items relating to the potential physical harms of personal stereo use received the strongest level of agreement of any item on the questionnaire. Table 5 shows that personal stereo users perceive personal stereo use to be potentially dangerous. This danger comes in the form of potential ear or hearing damage as well as in the possibility of users creating a safety hazard when they drive, cycle, or walk.

As seen in Table 6, the opinion that personal stereo users are considerate of people around them is less overwhelming. Some disagreement occurs, probably because if a problem encountered with a personal stereo user is of the Loudness variety, the user may be labeled inconsiderate, while if that type of problem is not encountered, the user may more likely be deemed considerate.

**TABLE 5: Means of responses to the following statements regarding potential harms associated with personal stereo use.**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Using personal stereos can cause ear or hearing damage.	3.06	.65
Personal stereo use is sometimes a safety hazard when users drive, ride bikes, or walk.	3.52	.58

**TABLE 6: Means of responses to the following statement regarding relative "considerate-ness" of personal stereo users.**

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
People who use personal stereos are considerate of the people around them.	2.55	.59

**RQ 2:** What, if any, commonly-held beliefs, opinions, or attitudes do college students have regarding personal stereo use? Analysis of open items.

Additional factors relating to personal stereo use became clear when analyzing the open-ended question, "What specific difficulties, if any, have you noticed as a result of your own, or other people's, use of personal stereos?" Again, the three-category typology (Difficulty, Impoliteness,

Loudness) was applied, and the results may be seen in Table 7.

When comparing Table 7 to Table 3, which was concerned specifically with reasons relating to reluctance to initiate conversation with personal stereo users, many differences may be seen. The most obvious is the appearance of the "Other" category, described earlier as relating to reported physical and psychological harms of personal stereo use. Examples of the type of response considered to be in the "Other" category with a physical orientation include, "Bike riders don't hear pedestrians or cars around them," or, "had a Walkman and was hit by a car while riding a bike." Examples of "Other" types of problems having a psychological orientation include, "a generation of people plugged in, unable to stimulate themselves otherwise," "feel like you need to get a grip, it controls you," and "it sometimes distracts me from what I need to do."

A closer look points out the differing pattern of responses. Whereas Table 3 contained an overwhelming number of Impoliteness responses, and only four Loudness responses, Table 7 shows that Impoliteness responses now are the least cited and that (of the three main categories) Loudness responses are the second most often cited.

**TABLE 7: Number of respondents reporting problems in interpersonal communication relating to personal stereo use.**

<u>Problem Type:</u>	Difficulty	Impoliteness	Loudness	Other
	34	16	24	26

Discussion & Limitations

Though individual attitudes vary, this survey has discovered a powerful norm of not initiating conversation with a personal stereo user. A majority (73 percent) of respondents reported this attitude. However, there may be a contradiction much like the one involving the creation of private space and the desire to discourage interaction discussed earlier. Even though respondents reported a tendency not to initiate conversation with personal stereo users, they also said it was acceptable for others to initiate conversation while they themselves listened to a personal stereo.

Just as it has been possible to discover the existence of the norm of not initiating conversation with a personal stereo user, it has been possible to discover some of the reasons for not initiating conversation. These attitudes, especially those that consider it to be too hard to communicate with a personal stereo user, or that consider users to be rude, provide powerful perceived

reasons for not initiating conversation. Even if respondents do not consider a hesitancy to initiate conversation a "problem," a pattern of reluctance to initiate interaction has emerged, perhaps due at least in part to the uncertainty of the availability of the potential interaction partner. This pattern may have a powerful impact on the population and should not be ignored.

When communication involving a personal stereo user does occur, there seem to be strong user norms. The device must be turned off (or better yet the headphones removed) when interaction is about to begin. It also seems relatively unacceptable to use a personal stereo when one is with friends. Apparently, an individual is expected to *either* use a personal stereo *or* interact with others. Because of this prevailing attitude, the personal stereo user who encounters an acquaintance must choose whether or not to continue using the device. Since the likelihood of the acquaintance initiating conversation is slim while use continues, the result of the user's choice seems to have a direct impact on whether interaction occurs.

There are two main limitations to this research. First, the weaknesses of self-report data are often discussed and must be acknowledged. Even though it is unlikely that the content of this survey was considered threatening or controversial, it still is possible that responses were affected by social desirability bias. Other methodologies may be useful in future research efforts. Second, the survey instrument could be improved by adding questions relating to other variables, such as communication apprehension or degree of social integration. Perhaps individuals with high communication apprehension are both more likely to use personal stereos to discourage interaction and less likely to initiate interaction with someone who is using a personal stereo. It is equally possible, however, that the personal stereo might provide some beneficial relief from those stress-inducing "too quiet" moments. Another potentially useful variable would be the degree of dependence upon the personal stereo. Respondents could be asked how much they would miss a personal stereo if they could no longer use one.

Future research could address both of those limitations, as well as the interesting contradictions noted earlier. Also, further research efforts could survey other populations, such as high school students. Studies could investigate personality differences between people who will initiate conversation with a personal stereo user and those who will not. Further, this study has investigated only the *initiation* of conversation when a personal stereo is being used. Other related topics should be addressed, including length of conversation, topic of conversation, commitment to interaction, and depth of conversation. Finally, other variables of interest include communication apprehension, sensation-seeking, desire for companionship, etc.

The personal stereo is firmly entrenched in our existence. After 15 years of usage, the impact of this device on our society is noticeable, and merits continued investigation by communicators, sociologists, and psychologists, as well as others interested in contemporary society.

### References

- Berger, C. R. (1987). Communication under uncertainty. In M. E. Roloff & G. R. Miller (Eds.), *Interpersonal processes: New directions in communication research*. (Sage annual reviews of communication research, v. 14). pp. 39-62. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Gumpert, G. (1987). *Talking tombstones and other tales of the media age*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Katz, E., & Foulkes, D. (1962). On the use of the mass media as "escape": Clarification of a concept. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 26. 377-388.
- Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No sense of place: The impact of electronic media on social behavior*. NY: Oxford University Press.
- Morita, A., with Reingold, E. M. & Shimomura, M. (1986). *Made in Japan: Akio Morita and Sony*. NY: E. P. Dutton.
- Nofsinger, R. E. Jr. (1975). The demand ticket: A conversational device for getting the floor. *Speech Monographs*, 42 (1). 1-9.
- Rich, A. L. (1974). *Interracial Communication*. NY: Harper & Row.

**University of Minnesota  
Duluth  
Department of Communication**

**For More Information Contact:  
Dr. Jerry Pepper at (218) 726-7274**

**Jackson Huntley**

**Virginia Katz**

**Linda Krug**

**Howard Martz**

**Elizabeth Nelson**

**Jerry Pepper (Chair)**

**Deborah Petersen-Periman**

**Michael Sunnafrank**

**Interpersonal/Group Communication**

**Organizational/Public Relations**

**Mass Media/Rhetorical Studies**

**Special Interest courses in: Aging, Families, Persuasion,  
Advertising, Political Communication, Intercultural,  
Broadcast Regulation, Media Violence, and much,  
much more.**



## CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF METAPHOR IN RHETORICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

Roy Schwartzman, University of South Carolina

Traditionally, rhetoric and science have occupied positions at opposite poles of the discursive continuum between instrumentalism and realism. Aristotle contends that rhetoric deals with probability, so it shares with dialectic the territorial claim to the contingent (*Nic. Eth.* 1140a.10-15; *Rhet.* 1356b. 32-40). Rhetoric is concerned with discovering means of persuasion and has no subject matter of its own, since it serves to accomplish ends extrinsic to rhetoric (*Rhet.* 1355b.8-9, 1355b. 26-35). Science, on the other hand, is assigned the realm of necessity or contemplation of what actually is or must be the case (*Nic. Eth.* 1139b. 20-25). Scientists observe natural processes that are universal and systematic. The Aristotelian dichotomy between rhetoric and science becomes complete in the distinction between practical wisdom (*phronesis*), which apprehends particular facts, and theoretical wisdom (*sophia*), which concerns abstract generalities (*Nic. Eth.* 1142a. 12-19).

Other Aristotelian comments on rhetoric and poetics provide further insights which might allow for a rapprochement between the apparently disparate scientific and rhetorical domains. Aristotle remarks cryptically: "But the greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars" (*Poet.* 1459a.5-8; cf. *Rhet.* 1405a.8-9, 1412a.10-11). The "genius" of metaphor, the perception of similarity in difference, forms the foundation of this essay. My specific objective is to examine the role metaphor plays in scientific theorizing. The role of metaphor in articulating scientific theories had been explored elsewhere (cf. Cherwitz & Hikins, *Communication* 10), yet the relationship between metaphor and the construction of scientific theories has received little attention. There seems to remain an underlying assumption that rhetoric "plays no part" in scientific investigation itself (Johnstone 63). I attempt to counter this presumption by showing that the perception of metaphoric relationships among apparently dissimilar concepts or phenomena is a logical foundation of scientific understanding.

For the purposes of this discussion, *metaphor* is defined as the process of establishing a conceptual fusion between distinct entities on the basis of understanding the entities in terms of each other. *Metaphor* used in the singular designates the general conceptual process, while the plural *metaphors* indicates specific linguistic occurrences. This definition borrows

the interactionist notion that metaphoric tenor and vehicle (focus and frame, theme and *phoros*), which are the object and subject of the conceptual linkage, can shape and alter our comprehension by virtue of their linguistic and conceptual juxtaposition. The preceding definition has the added strength of allowing metaphoric transference to alter the ways we understand the tenor as well as the vehicle as a result of novel concatenation. The metaphoric process I describe is a logical as well as linguistic operation. Such an understanding accords with the treatment of metaphor as a "mental tool" (Marias 44-45) or "tendency of thought" (Sadock 49). I do not wish to address the issue of whether logic and language are coextensive. My objective is simply to elaborate on how metaphor infuses scientific activity in operations logically and temporally prior to the appearance of metaphors in scientific discourse.

The tendency to polarize science and rhetoric is misguided because it often relies on a limited conception of rhetoric's applicability to scientific endeavors. Attempts to bridge the gap between science and rhetoric have focused on sociological aspects of science. The argument usually proceeds by describing how confirmation and refutation in science rely on discussions among scientists (Cherwitz & Hikins, *Communication* 12-13). A corollary of this contention points out that scientific publications and convention presentations are social enterprises in which findings are discussed, so science is rhetorical insofar as it involves argumentation among proponents of different or competing theories (cf. Ziman). Even if the identification of rhetorical elements in scientific discourse establishes rhetoric as essential in knowledge diffusion, it does not explicitly connect rhetoric with the conduct of science from a conceptual standpoint. The thrust of this paper is to demonstrate how metaphor as a conceptual process is integral to certain aspects of scientific inquiry. The epistemological role metaphor plays in science will then be considered in the context of the rhetorical epistemology offered by Cherwitz and Hikins.

### Metaphor and Scientific Theorizing

One point of entry for metaphor in scientific activity is theory construction. Scientists can "infer a resemblance" between concepts or phenomena and connect them analogically in order to make the same investigative methods applicable to variety of circumstances (Perelman 36). Scientists might be confronted with a variety of phenomena which seem inexplicable if considered individually. Researchers can begin to resolve this confusion by establishing or recognizing shared characteristics explicable in terms of a theoretical construct, perhaps as yet undiscovered, that systematizes the similarities. For

example, Aristotle contended that objects fell to the earth because it was their nature to do so. If we were to maintain Aristotle's notion that heavenly bodies have a nature qualitatively different from earthly matter, we would have no reason to search for universally applicable mechanical laws.

The attempt to transcend previously accepted categories or hierarchies can occur only when we become willing and able to "break through" sedimented structures according to which we understand reality (cf. Pryor 32). Such a breakthrough would permit us to consider the possibility that phenomena heretofore deemed unrelated could be linked by their kinship as instances of a single process. Newton's identification of principles common to earthly and heavenly motion would be unthinkable without departing from an Aristotelian, hierarchical world view wherein every entity has its definite place in the chain of being (Bronowski 27, 33). Newton probably was not the first to make such a breakthrough; Copernicus might deserve credit for it. My point is that new discoveries can and often do result from attempts to depart from established conceptual categories and to postulate similarities linking distinct concepts or phenomena.

This postulation of similarity in terms of unifying principles is metaphoric (Casenave 146). "Metaphor opens up a new way of organizing reality. It disrupts the standard classification" both linguistically and conceptually (Casenave 145). Metaphoric concatenation forms the linchpin of the essential scientific activity of classification according to likenesses (cf. Bronowski 58-59). "The action of putting things which are not identical into a group or class . . . depends on recognizing a set of things to be alike when they are not identical. We order them by what it is that we think they have in common, which means by something that we feel to be a likeness between them" (Bronowski 23). Metaphor not only expresses these likenesses, but it is also a way of discovering or establishing similarity (Gill 221). The capacity to construct or recognize similarity in diverse phenomena might represent the "law of the human mind" Ralph Waldo Emerson sees operating in scientific theorizing (Emerson 125). If "science is nothing but the finding of analogy, identity, in the most remote parts" (Emerson 125), then metaphor would be the most likely candidate for the operation of finding such relationships.

The preceding account of scientific activity, with its oscillations between observation and conceptualization of resemblances, might seem too empirical (cf. Bronowski 32-40). Toulmin, for example, would point out that the natural sciences proceed by classifying particulars, but theoretical sciences such as physics are far less bound to empirical data (36-50). Even if we grant Toulmin's de-emphasis on empirical data in theoretical sciences, the prehensive apparatus of metaphoric linkage remains intact. Accepting Toulmin's argument that theoretical science operates on an abstract level

would mean only that the objects related metaphorically would not consist of empirical data. Metaphor could still serve intellectual functions, such as classifying concepts as fitting or not fitting within the parameters of a field or disciplinary matrix (cf. Kuhn, *Structure* 182). This classification would identify whether a problem bears sufficient relationship to practitioners' interests to constitute a prospective issue for that scientific community. The question of how these new situations are classified and related to scientific practice is the subject of the next section.

### Exemplars and Metaphors

The preceding section ended by posing the question of how scientists treat new situations, be they heretofore unobserved phenomena or theoretical conundrums, on the basis of previous scientific practice. Kuhn suggests that scientists accomplish this task by using exemplars, which are "concrete problem solutions" considered by a scientific community to be "archetypal applications of symbolic generalizations or theories to phenomena" (Kuhn, *Second* 463; Suppe 139). Exemplars are the standard examples shared by a scientific community, and new problems confronted by scientists can be approached by identifying them as analogous to exemplar problems already solved (Kuhn, "Second" 471). If a new situation bears resemblance to an exemplar, the scientist can (1) consider the problem as one falling within the domain of her disciplinary matrix, and perhaps (2) consider the problem as solvable given its similarity to solved exemplars (cf. Kuhn, "Second" 471). The question now arises, how is similarity to exemplars determined?

Though Kuhn never mentions metaphor explicitly, metaphoric prehension of similarity would help explain the nature of the "acquired ability to see resemblances between apparently disparate problems" Kuhn envisions as playing part of the role positivists had assigned to correspondence rules that function as stipulative guidelines for judging the 'fit' between language and reality (Kuhn, "Second" 471). The purposive concatenation of exemplars with new situations is the process of using the exemplars as what Max Black would call the frame through which scientists confront and interpret novelty "by creatively imitating examples" (Kuhn in Suppe 515; cf. Black 1-45). The process of discerning analogies between exemplars and actual situations (cf. Kuhn, "Second" 471) is not entirely dependent on rule-governed means for ascertaining similarity. Kuhn admits that resemblance relationships are not predetermined by criteria functioning as rules ("Second" 472, 477; Suppe 511). He balks, however when discussing the nature of resemblance relations,

describing such connections as the elusive yet "famous logic of discovery" (Kuhn in Suppe 515).

Including metaphor in the discussion of exemplars takes some of the mystery out of applying exemplars. Metaphors not only manifest or express similarity, they can establish similarity where none was thought to exist (Paivio 150). Stated more precisely, metaphor establishes not only similarity but identity (Yoo 84). The scientist sees specific problems as the exemplars, i.e., as susceptible to the same processes of problem-solving. By seeing the new problems as subject to resolution in the same way as the exemplars, scientists extend their range of knowledge to new circumstances. If such an extension is accomplished through apprehending resemblance metaphorically, then metaphor plays a key epistemological role.

The application of metaphor to Kuhn's theory of exemplars should not be interpreted as a wholehearted endorsement of Kuhn's position. Exemplars are by no means the final word in describing scientific activity (cf. Suppe, *Exemplars* 484-494). The objective of this section has been to demonstrate how readily metaphor can be incorporated productively into the philosophy of science. This incorporation lends a rhetorical turn to intellectual endeavors sometimes treated as antithetical to rhetoric.

### Metaphor As Epistemic: A Perspective on Perspectivism

The previous two sections explained the part metaphor plays in scientific inquiry. The conclusion of this analysis was that metaphor, as a component of theory formation and as part of the application of exemplars to new situations, has a cognitive role in science. The following section analyzes how the epistemological functions of metaphor accord or disaccord with a broader theory of knowledge, namely the perspectival theory proposed by Cherwitz and Hikins. The placement of metaphor within a wider epistemological context should reveal the complexities involved in assigning metaphor cognitive value. The ability of Cherwitz and Hikins' epistemological theory to accommodate metaphor also should suggest whether their theory should be modified to account for figurative modes of thought and language usage.

Kenneth Burke treats metaphor as perspective, an intellectual and linguistic "device for seeing something *in terms of* something else" (503). We already have seen how this perspective-taking could allow scientists to see new situations in terms of exemplars. If we construct the equation "metaphor = perspective" and maintain that recognizing and sharing perspectives is a precondition for meaningful discussion (Cherwitz & Hikins, *Communication* 149-154; "Perspectivism" 262-266), then metaphor would seem to provide

the fulcrum of rhetorical epistemology. If interlocutors share the same perspective, then discussion could proceed on common ground (Cherwitz & Hikins, *Communication* 151; "Perspectivism" 264). According to Kuhn's *Weltanschauungen* view of science, scientists who share exemplars also will share a certain perspective on procedures, theories, and data (Suppe 145). This common perspective is responsible for the tendency of practitioners within "normal" science to arrive at group-sanctioned solutions to problems (cf. Kuhn, *Structure* 37-42). If the criteria for evaluating scientific findings are relatively stable and consensual, then theoretical arguments can be settled so that the settlement seems to demand assent and theories acquire a tone of necessity (cf. Weimer 10).

Sharing a perspective seems to be a useful notion for understanding rational discourse. Once interlocutors identify their common perspective, they can agree on what would count as proving, refuting, and other procedures for deciding on matters of mutual concern. If we take Burke's suggestion and substitute "metaphor" for "perspective," could we claim that sharing metaphors is a basis for meaningful discourse? An answer to this question has ramifications for several fields of inquiry. In science, the question arises whether communication is possible across disciplinary matrixes. In history and anthropology, if an age is known by its metaphors (Embler vi), then can an ability to share metaphors bridge gaps between times and cultures? In hermeneutics, could shared metaphors provide a key to understanding texts?

The sharing of perspectives or metaphors does not seem to provide necessary or sufficient conditions for reaching agreement. Two or more viewpoints can be incommensurable even within a community having shared criteria for decision making. The problems of perspective sharing primarily hinge on the idea's vagueness. Even if all members of a discursive community share a single perspective on reality, such as Newtonian mechanics, the shared perspective need not increase the chances that each member of the community would apply the perspective to concrete situations in the same way or even analogously.

Cherwitz and Hikins claim that "perspectivist rhetoric may allow us to see whether the disputants are arguing on the same level and are talking about the same aspect(s) of the problem" (*Communication* 153). The determination of whether interlocutors are arguing on the same ground rests on the knowledge and use of some measure for distinguishing perspectives. If this measure for determining whether or not the perspectives are shared falls within the interlocutors' perspectives, then Cherwitz and Hikins must claim that different perspectives can be rendered commensurable without interlocutors departing from their own perspectives. This conclusion seems unlikely given Cherwitz

and Hikins' claim that bridging the gap between perspectives involves a type of conversion from one viewpoint to another, the ability to "stand inside the other's perspective" ("Perspectivism" 264). On the other hand, if the means for determining when perspectives are shared lie beyond the perspectives in question, then interlocutors can agree on the basis of common standards for proof, disproof, etc. But how do these standards come to be shared? Presumably, such agreement is based on other sets of standards to reach agreement. It is easy to see that this process may become an infinite regress of searching for grounds on which to base agreement.

Cherwitz and Hikins seem to believe that agreement between interlocutors dwelling within different perspectives is accomplished by deciding on which aspects of the issue the interlocutors agree or disagree ("Perspectivism" 264). In other words, we identify the grounds of each perspective to find the bases of agreement and disagreement. For example, suppose that two camps of scientists in a disciplinary matrix share the same exemplars. Despite this common basis of perspectives, the two camps cannot agree on how to interpret some newly discovered anomalous data. Camp A wishes to assimilate the data within the parameters of what can be explained by the disciplinary matrix. Camp B considers that the data warrant reinterpretation of the disciplinary matrix. Simply put, Camp A interprets the new data as bearing sufficient resemblance to the matrix's exemplars to be considered solvable. Camp B, using the same exemplars, believes that the perspective or set of perspectives offered by the exemplars cannot account sufficiently for the anomalous data.

Can such a dispute be resolved by appealing to an enumeration of the aspects of resemblance between the exemplars and the new data? Such a task probably would not prove fruitful. Cherwitz and Hikins assume the aspects of a perspective are specifiable. Recalling that metaphor is a means for establishing the resemblance relations in question, Cherwitz and Hikins would call for specifying the grounds for metaphoric attributions of identity between exemplars and new situations. This procedure falls into an infinite regress, with the grounds for identity understandable only on the basis of other metaphoric identities. Unless Cherwitz and Hikins would be willing to identify metaphor as a sufficient ground for knowledge claims, then perspectives seem analyzable only as further perspectives and no progress is made toward identifying perspectival components.

There are several problems with specifying the grounds of metaphoric extensions from exemplars to new occurrences. First, when is there a complete enough inventory of aspects to make a reliable estimate of the likelihood or possibility of agreement? We might have no "conscious access"

to the relevant grounds of focus/frame interaction to permit such a judgment (cf. Kuhn in Suppe 511).

Second, Cherwitz and Hikins give no indication of how the basis of metaphoric similarities might be specified. Do we rely on self-reports by interlocutors? If so, we obtain only a reiteration of the individual perspectives. Do we use judgment reached by an impartial observer? If so, then agreement among interlocutors would depend on invoking a third party, thus beginning another infinite regress. Besides, there is no discussion of what would count as a qualified or an impartial judge.

Third, no matter how carefully we delineate the focal aspects of dispute, we risk explaining grounds for similarity when no such grounds might exist or when the grounds are not specifiable (cf. Kuhn, "Second" 478). This difficulty poses particular problems in cases of metaphoric perspective, since the associational connections between concepts or terms conjoined metaphorically are not clearly understood or specifiable (Jordan & McLaughlin 189). I. A. Richards summarizes this ineffable element of metaphor: "A metaphor may work admirably without our being able with any confidence to say how it works or what is the ground of the shift" (117). It is not enough to respond that the grounds might be translatable into propositions (cf. Cherwitz & Hikins, *Communication* 41-42). If we are to decide whether or not an argumentative impasse has been reached, we must be able to formulate in practice the basis of how resemblance between exemplars and the anomalous data are established or discerned.

The difficulties involved in accounting for metaphor within Cherwitz and Hikins' rhetorical epistemology run deeper than the issue of deciding the basis for agreement. Cherwitz and Hikins offer five conditions rhetoric must meet if it is to be considered epistemic. Any "epistemologically productive rhetoric must" meet all five of these "qualifying conditions" (*Communication* 109-110). The criteria are necessary conditions for rhetoric to be epistemic (*Communication* 163-164). I focus on two conditions which seem to allow little opportunity for treating metaphor as epistemic. The discord between metaphor and Cherwitz and Hikins' criteria for epistemic discourse indicates that, if metaphor is to be treated as something other than stylistic ornamentation, rhetorical epistemology should be modified to account for sources of knowledge not covered by the criteria.

The first epistemological criterion is differentiation. Cherwitz and Hikins maintain that "the primary epistemological function of discourse that is rhetorical is to differentiate among relata constituting of the universe" (*Communication* 92). If all knowledge consists of relations (*Communication* 81), then the differentiation criterion establishes differences among relata as "the most basic function of meaningful units of language" (*Communication*



92). Although epistemic rhetoric "must differentiate among the relata constituting the universe" (*Communication* 109), Cherwitz and Hikins fail to acknowledge that meaningful configurations of relata can and do result as much from similarity as from difference. The similarity in metaphor is not copying, but the ability to understand something in terms of something else. Scientists, for example, see new problems under the aspects or according to the perspectives offered by exemplars (cf. Yoos 84).

The epistemological role of metaphors in science is twofold: to unify particular phenomena, thus permitting theoretical generalizations, and to link exemplars to new situations, thus allowing an extension of problem-solving skills to new circumstances. Both of these epistemological functions involve discerning unity amid diversity. Differentiation might allow choice among possibilities (*Communication* 93-94), but not all knowledge is a process of choosing among mutually exclusive alternatives. Cherwitz and Hikins use as an example of differentiation a hypothetical situation where a first-time visitor to the jungle hears a sound (*Communication* 93). The visitor can recognize the sound as that of a toucan not only because the sound differs from noises made by other animals, but because the visitor recognizes a resemblance between the toucan's call in the San Antonio Zoo and the sound of the jungle-dwelling bird. The eventual recognition of the sound's identity proceeds by the tandem processes of distinguishing the call from other sounds and linking the sound to the bird call in the zoo.

Cherwitz and Hikins offer another constituent of epistemic rhetoric, the description of perspectives (*Communication* 105-109). Although perspectivism has already been discussed at some length, perspectivism as a criterion of epistemic rhetoric makes the incorporation of metaphor into rhetorical epistemology particularly difficult. Cherwitz and Hikins state that "each person and each 'thing' in the universe stands in some particular relation to every other thing" (*Communication* 106, emphasis in original). The authors defend this claim by attacking "the opposite thesis, that something might stand wholly unrelated to anything else" (*Communication* 106). The claim Cherwitz and Hikins attack, however, is a straw man. The denial of the claim that each thing stands in a particular relation to other things is not that some things are wholly unrelated to others. The converse of the original claim would be: "Each person and each thing in the universe does not stand in some particular relation to every other thing." This formulation poses the possibility that relations between entities need not be singular. If we accept that all things stand in some relation to all other things, how can we posit relationships not already prehended? To put the matter more bluntly, how can any discovery of relations yield knowledge if there is only a single set of relations to be discovered?

Cherwitz and Hikins apparently model their epistemology on a univocal conception of meaning. The task of epistemic rhetoric is to describe states of affairs as accurately as possible, so rhetoric assumes a Wittgensteinian role of mapping the logical space in which objects are related (*Communication* 42; cf. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 3.4). Cherwitz and Hikins define rhetoric as "the art of describing reality through language" (*Communication* 62). Accurate description of states of affairs, however, is only one of many roles language can play (cf. Wittgenstein *PI* 304). Cherwitz and Hikins seem to envision description as the paradigmatic role for rhetoric. Although they grant that rhetoric plays a part in science, that role is limited to encouraging a closer approximation to states of affairs or to influencing how findings are diffused in the scientific community (cf. *Communication* 11-12, 64, 167). If rhetoric, specifically metaphor, is to play a part in science, its function could be seen as a structuring of reality instead of as an attempt to mirror reality (cf. Rorty). This conception would establish rhetoric firmly as rhetoric of inquiry, since metaphoric prehension formulates reality in such a way as to be amenable to scientific investigation. This structuring is logically prior to the discovery of reality, because the metaphoric frame in the form of exemplars or the organization of concepts and data in large part shapes what is to count as meaningful reality for the scientist.

## Conclusion

The preceding analysis of the difficulties raised by attempting to incorporate metaphor into a description of rhetorical epistemology highlights the obstacles still unsurmounted in considering metaphor as epistemic. Cherwitz and Hikins' model of rhetorical epistemology demonstrates the tendency to treat epistemological matters apart from metaphor. Juxtaposing metaphor with Cherwitz and Hikins' theories shows the issues at stake when epistemology does not account sufficiently for metaphor as a cognitive operation. Instead of choosing between epistemological analyses of rhetoric and metaphor as epistemological, it might be productive to reformulate a rhetorical conception of knowledge to include metaphor. This theoretical move transports rhetoric in a full circle back to Aristotle, whose recognition that metaphor taps into the basic conceptual skill of linking dissimilars provided the springboard for linking metaphor with scientific inquiry.

Another conclusion arising from this discussion is that the antipodal portrayal of science and rhetoric does not explain accurately how the activities are related. Such a dichotomy does justice to neither half of the metaphor/science symbiosis. The treatment of rhetoric as a component of the

transmission of scientific knowledge also relies on a limited conception of rhetoric's applicability to scientific endeavors, since metaphor has been shown to infiltrate the process of scientific inquiry at an epistemological as well as sociological level. The contiguity between science and metaphor demonstrates affinities between rhetoric and science obscured by dichotomies such as reason versus style or fact versus opinion. Conversion of metaphor from a stylistic embellishment to a mode of understanding integral to scientific inquiry fosters a characterization of rhetoric as fundamental to epistemology. What I have termed metaphoric consciousness is central to the formulation of what counts as scientific knowledge. This epistemological role of rhetoric is, as Cherwitz and Hikins (*Communication* 18) contend, logically prior to questions about the composition of the world scientific theories are said to describe.

The description of metaphor offered in this paper configures metaphor as a conceptual ability as well as a linguistic technique manifested in particular metaphors (cf. Sadock 46). The extension of metaphor from solely a linguistic trope to language plus thought resembles Aristotle's strategic positioning of rhetoric adjacent to dialectic, both activities being intellectual processes of discovery (cf. *Rhet.* 1354a.1-12, 1355b.26-27). Metaphor is not coextensive with literary stylistics, just as rhetoric is the ability to discover means of persuasion whether or not those means are actually employed in discourse (cf. *Rhet.* 1355b.9-12). Instead, metaphor could be described more aptly as a "necessary and instinctive act of the mind" (Murry 28).

The integration of scientific inquiry with metaphor renders metaphor a mode of cognition. Aside from the generalization that particular metaphors are cognitive, i.e. they tell something about the social and intellectual environment in which they occur (cf. Osborn; Stelzner), this essay offers a configuration of the metaphoric process as essentially cognitive. The knowledge offered metaphorically is a product of the process of metaphoric thinking itself. Metaphor is more than a vehicle for expressing knowledge; it is a way of arriving at knowledge.

#### References

- Aristotle. *Rhetoric and Poetics*. Trans. Ingram Bywater. New York: Modern Library, 1954.
- . *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. W.D. Ross. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. Ed. & intro. Richard McKeon. New York: Random House, 1941. 935-1112.

- Black, Max. *Models and Metaphors*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962.
- Bronowski, J. *The Common Sense of Science*. New York: Random House, n.d.
- Burke, Kenneth. *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969.
- Casenave, Gerald. "Heidegger and Metaphor." *Philosophy Today* 26 (1982): 140-147.
- Cherwitz, Richard A. & James W. Hixins. *Communication and Knowledge: An Investigation in Rhetorical Epistemology*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1986.
- . "Rhetorical Perspectivism." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 69 (1983): 249-266.
- Embler, Weller. *Metaphor and Meaning*. Fwd. S. I. Hayakawa. DeLand, FL: Everett/Edwards, 1966.
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. "The American Scholar." *American Public Addresses, 1740-1952*. Ed. A. Craig Baird. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956. 122-137.
- Gill, Jerry H. "Metaphor and Language Acquisition: A View From the West Pole." *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 24 (1986): 219-233.
- Johnstone, Henry W., Jr. "From Philosophy to Rhetoric and Back." *Rhetoric, Philosophy and Literature: An Exploration*. Ed. Don M. Burks. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1978. 49-66.
- Jordan, William J. & Margaret L. McLaughlin. "The Metaphorical Dimension in Descriptive Language." *Human Communication Research* 2 (1976): 182-197.
- Kuhn, Thomas S. "Second Thoughts on Paradigms." Suppe 459-482.
- . *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Marias, Julian. "Philosophic Truth and the Metaphoric System." *Interpretation: The Poetry of Meaning*. Ed. Stanley Romaine Hopper & David L. Miller. New York: Harcourt, 1967. 40-53.
- Murry, John Middleton. "Metaphor." 1927. *Essays on Metaphor*. Ed. Warren A. Shibles. Whitewater, WI: Language Press, 1972. 27-39.
- Paivio, Allan. "Psychological Processes in the Comprehension of Metaphor." *Metaphor and Thought*. Ed. Andrew Ortony. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. 150-171.
- Pryor, Robert. "On the Method of Critical Theory and Its Implications for a Critical theory of Communication." *Phenomenology in Rhetoric and Communication*. Ed. Stanley Deetz. Washington, DC: University Press, 1981. 25-35.

- Richards, I.A. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1965.
- Rorty, Richard. *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979.
- Sadock, Jerrold M. "Figurative Speech and Linguistics." *Metaphor and Thought*. Ed. Andrew Ortony. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979. 46-63.
- Suppe, Frederick. "Exemplars, Theories and Disciplinary Matrixes." Suppe 483-499.
- Suppe, Frederick. *The Structure of Scientific Theories*. 2nd ed. Ed. & intro. Frederick Suppe. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1977.
- Toulmin, Stephen. *The Philosophy of Science*. London: Hutchinson, 1967.
- Weimar, Walter B. "Science as a Rhetorical transaction: Toward a Nonjustificational Conception of Rhetoric." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 10 (1977): 1-29.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. 3rd ed. Trans. G.E. M. Anscombe. New York: Macmillan, 1958.
- . *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Trans. D.F. Pears & B. F. McGuinness. Intro. Bertrand Russell. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961.
- Yoos, George. "A Phenomenological Look at Metaphor." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 32 (1971): 78-88.
- Ziman, John. *Public Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968.



## **THE PAPER BAG PRINCESS: AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER**

Kristen Dahlen, Moorhead State University

Stories are a very fundamental and important part of growing up. Parents read and tell stories to children at a variety of times and in different places. These stories can include a variety of themes such as issues of conflict, relationships, and what the future may hold. Stories for children are designed to teach them ways to interact with others and how to appreciate and experience all that they can. The story most commonly used to teach is the fairy tale.

*Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary* defines a fairy tale as a narrative of adventures involving fantastic forces and beings such as fairies, wizards, and dragons. Fairy tales usually begin with "Once upon a time" and stress a happy ending. This type of story was handed down from generation to generation. Children of all ages enjoy hearing these familiar tales, grow up with them, and in turn, read them to their children. Whether the characters really did live happily ever after remains to be seen. As we approach the year 2000, new styles of fairy tales are emerging that break traditional stereotypes. These stories take a new approach to the ways society looks at the roles characters play in fairy tales and challenge the reader to look beyond stereotypes, focusing on the standards the traditional roles once played. One such story is *The Paper Bag Princess*.

*The Paper Bag Princess*, published by Annick Press in Toronto in 1980, was written by Robert Munsch with illustrations by Michael Martchenko. It is the story of a princess named Elizabeth, a prince named Ronald, and a dragon. I have always loved this story and must admit that it is one of my favorites. The story's theme and presentation make it very interesting and exciting to read. I feel the book is important rhetorically because it utilizes the traditional base of the fairy tale but changes its outcome.

The work of Robert Munsch has, over the last several years, become very popular among parents and elementary school teachers. Munsch's stories "reflect a jaunty belief in the power of children" (Ellis 343). Munsch encompasses what it means to be a child and celebrates the power and vitality that children have. "His books are popular not just in the sense that many children know them but in the sense of dealing with the familiar, recognizable surface of shared child culture" (Ellis 344). The stories that Munsch writes are universal. They have meaning in not one specific culture, but in the culture that is shared by children everywhere. *The Paper Bag Princess* is one of his works that has caught on with great significance. These factors lend themselves to make the book an interesting artifact for analysis.

I will use a feminist approach to rhetorical criticism because it allows me to look at specific questions of gender and apply them to the artifact. In *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice*, Sonja Foss presents a model which allows us to do this. By applying the following questions, we will be able to understand how gender is presented and how it deviates from the traditional fairy tale. I am interested in looking at how the artifact addresses a world view of women and men, how femininity and masculinity are presented, the behaviors, ideas, concerns, and communication patterns that exist apart from gender differences, and exactly how the artifact deviates from the societal definition of gender. I will also examine the audience's reaction to the way gender is presented, how the artifact can be used to better women's lives, and the impact the artifact has on rhetorical theory (Foss 151). In this paper, I will give a brief description of the traditional fairy tale and apply these questions and concerns to the artifact using the definition of the traditional fairy tale as a constant.

Before analyzing *The Paper Bag Princess*, it is important to create a picture of the typical fairy tale. *Cinderella* is very well known and exists in over 100 countries, including China, Greece, Egypt, Scotland, Italy, England, France, and Germany (Bottigheimer 102). *Cinderella* is the story of a young girl who is repressed by her wicked step-mother and step-sisters.

In the German version, written by the Brothers Grimm, *Cinderella* is forced out of the family by her jealous step-sisters and forced to work in the kitchen. News of a great ball is spread throughout the countryside and all the young ladies in the land are invited to attend. It is to last three days and three nights so that the prince may choose one of them to be his bride. The step-sisters prepare for the ball all afternoon and *Cinderella* is there to help them. There is a tree in the backyard which has magic powers and it is this tree that gives her gowns for the prince's dance. Eventually, *Cinderella* loses her golden slipper and the prince roams the country side looking for her. The step-mother, determined to have one of her daughters marry the prince, urges them to cut off sections of their feet. The prince notices their deceit, finds *Cinderella*, and they live "happily ever after." To punish the step-sisters for their deceit, the birds from the tree peck out their eyes (Gag 101-134).

This story is a bit gruesome, but it is a good example of how gender is exemplified in the fairy tale. This version is a rags to riches story in which *Cinderella* does not stand up for herself. She seems to be satisfied with the restrictions placed on her by society and does not deviate from them. The Prince is an interesting character in the fairy tale as well. The purpose of holding the ball is so that he may choose a wife, not so he may meet a nice girl, fall in love, and have a long engagement. The other women in the story spend hour after hour preparing themselves for show like a cattle auction. Stories



such as *The Paper Bag Princess* have broken the mold of the princess and prince finding each other and living happily ever after.

The first element of the story that I will explain is how the artifact addresses how the world views women and men. Published in the early 1980s at a time when women were emerging as leaders and fighting for equality in the workplace, *The Paper Bag Princess* addresses the fact that women are able to take charge and make effective decisions. In the story, it is not Elizabeth, the princess, who is captured by the dragon; Ronald, the prince is carried off. Elizabeth decides that since she and Ronald are to be married, she must save him. The first few lines of the story read:

Elizabeth was a beautiful princess. She lived in a castle and had expensive princess clothes. She was going to marry a prince named Ronald.

Unfortunately, a dragon smashed her castle, burned all her clothes with his fiery breath, and carried off Prince Ronald. (Munsch 2, 4)

The illustrations also help to create the image of the perfect couple. The first illustration shows Ronald looking away from Elizabeth with his nose in the air and Elizabeth, smiling, arms folded in front of her, with small hearts surrounding her head. The picture suggests that although these two characters are engaged to be married, the prince is generally disinterested. This is a reflection of the world's view of men and women because many times we expect the woman to adore her husband. It is the wife's duty to be there for him. In a fairy tale, we do not expect the prince to be captured because usually it is the princess who needs to be saved. Another interesting element that reflects how the world views men and women is the reference to the castle belonging to Elizabeth.

It is also important to look at Ronald when discussing the world's view. In the illustrations, he is portrayed as arrogant and conceited. He seems all powerful and has Elizabeth wrapped around his little finger. The image of the dominant male in society comes through. Once Ronald is saved, he criticizes the way Elizabeth is dressed and the way her hair looks. In society today, there is a great emphasis placed on how women look, there are certain expectations that must be fulfilled. Many of the television commercials that we are shown communicate that women have a strong desire to look good. This need is usually created by portraying a "beautiful" woman surrounded by equally "beautiful" men. A woman sees these images and feels that in order to be surrounded and adored by men, she too must be "beautiful."

The second element that I will address is the issue of femininity, stereotypical female characteristics, and masculinity, traditional male characteristics, in the story. I have already addressed some of these issues

when looking at how the world views males and females. Elizabeth and Ronald are an interesting couple and they seem to take on male and female characteristics. Elizabeth portrays courage and strength, traditional masculine qualities, when she fights the dragon, for example:

Finally, Elizabeth came to a cave with a large door that had a huge knocker on it.

She took hold of the knocker and banged on the door.

The dragon stuck his nose out of the door and said, "Well, a princess! I love to eat princesses, but I have already eaten a whole castle today. I am a very busy dragon. Come back tomorrow."

He slammed the door so fast that Elizabeth almost got her nose caught. (Munsch 8)

Elizabeth is determined to save Ronald and is fearless when she approaches the dragon. Traditionally, she would have trembled at the thought of talking to a dragon. Women are "soft-spoken, kind, and nurturing . . . they are immaculately groomed, and are vain" (Larson 222). Elizabeth does not take on any of these characteristics. She uses her wit to defeat the dragon, she has a great deal of self-confidence, appealing to the dragon's vanity to deplete his power (Serling 110).

Likewise, Ronald displays some interesting characteristics. In the beginning, he is very arrogant and essentially, the dominant character in the story. Ronald does not change from the beginning of the story to its conclusion. He is the one who is vain and immaculately groomed, demanding that Elizabeth look and act like a princess "should." When compared with the traditional fairy tale character, the prince in this story takes on a new role. Prince Charming fights until the bitter end for the Princess while Ronald gives up.

A third element to examine is the behaviors, ideas, concerns, and communication patterns that are present in the story. I have addressed many of these issues previously as well. What makes *The Paper Bag Princess* unique is that the story presents the fairy tale in a new light. Elizabeth is the dominant character and Ronald the subordinate. The behaviors, ideas, concerns, and communications patterns that exist between Elizabeth and Ronald, apart from those associated with gender, are very interesting.

When Ronald is captured by the dragon, the only thing that Elizabeth is concerned about is getting him back safely. Her home has just been destroyed and all of her clothes burned. She has nothing to wear and the only thing she can find to cover herself is a paper bag (Munsch 6). This relates to the image that women are expected to be immaculately groomed. Elizabeth does not fit into this category and does not feel less capable because of it. She sets aside her own safety to go after the dragon in order to get Ronald back. She is able

to persuade the dragon to show her some of his tricks. Munsch writes:

"Is it true," said Elizabeth, "That you can burn up ten forests with your fiery breath?"

"Oh yes," said the dragon, and he took a huge, deep breath and breathed out so much fire that he burnt up fifty forests.

Fantastic," said Elizabeth, and the dragon took another huge breath and breathed out so much fire that he burned up one hundred forests.

"Magnificent," said Elizabeth, and the dragon took another huge breath, but this time nothing came out.

The dragon didn't have enough fire left to cook a meatball.  
(Munsch 12, 14)

Elizabeth asks the dragon a question and is able to get the dragon to use up all of his fire. This makes it easier for her to be around the dragon because she doesn't have to worry about getting burnt up. She is able to persuade the dragon to show her his tricks appealing to his need for ego gratification, his need to feel self-worth and to feel special (Larson 154). This makes her tactics unique and very effective.

Ronald is very single minded and seems to worry about the same thing all of the time, himself. When Elizabeth conquers the dragon, his only response is,

... "Elizabeth, you are a mess! You smell like ashes, you hair is all tangled and you are wearing a dirty old paper bag. Come back when you are dressed like a real princess." (Munsch 22)

The language that he chooses to use is not effective. He does not take into account that Elizabeth just risked her life to save him. Had he been more aware of her needs, he would have chosen to rephrase his thoughts. He is concerned with how Elizabeth looks, not about her safety or how she is feeling. He feels that she should still be the pretty little princess she was when he was carried away. From the illustrations, we see that Ronald is still the same clean, dignified prince he was when the dragon kidnapped him. He expects the same of Elizabeth, wanting her to be the "ideal woman."

The fourth element that I am concerned with is how the story deviates from society's definition of gender. By using the traditional fairy tale as support, the story has broken new ground regarding how women are perceived. Elizabeth is not like Cinderella, she does not seek to find her prince at the ball. She does not want to marry to get back at her step-mother and step-sisters. Elizabeth is the hero in *The Paper Bag Princess* and the story has an interesting turn of events:

"Ronald," said Elizabeth, "your clothes are really pretty and your hair is very neat. You look like a real prince, but you are a bum." (Munsch 24)

The presentation of Elizabeth as a strong leader is very different compared to Cinderella. Where Cinderella was willing to accept the prince and marry him, Elizabeth decides to give Ronald "the boot." The story ends with, "They didn't get married after all" (Munsch 24). It does not say anywhere that "They lived happily ever after." Elizabeth, based on the situation and Ronald's treatment of her, decides that marriage is not what she wants.

In some way, through her experience with the dragon, Elizabeth found out that she could make it on her own. As a reader, we wait to see a happy ending in which the prince and the princess are reunited and married. In this case, the reader sees that Ronald is a jerk and they do not want to see Elizabeth and Ronald marry. The result is a story with a different kind of happy ending. The final illustration is of Elizabeth, skipping off into the sunset, happy.

In reading *The Paper Bag Princess*, it is also important to look at the book's effect on the audience. I feel that it is safe to say that the audience who reads this book finds it favorable. When I observe women reading the book, they are empowered with the knowledge that Elizabeth doesn't need to have a prince in order to be happy. When men read it, they accept the fact that Ronald and Elizabeth are not suited for each other. The book appeals to the audience of the 90s because it does not fall into the category of the traditional fairy tale. People realize that relationships don't always work and that sometimes you just have to say, "See ya!"

Essentially, the question is how can the artifact be used to better women's lives? The answer is rather simple. Mothers often tell their daughters that one day their prince will come. But what happens when they find him and he turns out to be a bum as in the case of Elizabeth and Ronald? This way of thinking brings up issues of marriage and courtship. *The Paper Bag Princess* is a good example telling women that it is okay not to be married.

The book is important to read because it centers on the woman as the hero. It describes how the woman can accomplish things. She no longer has to wait for Prince Charming to come along and rescue her. There are many situations in which women must take charge and do what they feel is necessary (Zipes 218). Much like Elizabeth did when she rescued Ronald from the dragon. I feel that this story is an excellent example for proving that women are capable of taking charge. They do not need to rely on tradition and the way things have been defined in the past. They are able to step out of the mold into new areas.

Finally, we must look at the impact of the artifact on rhetorical theory and how we can apply this artifact. Rhetorically, the artifact is significant because

it introduces the reader to an old school of thought with modern applications. *Cinderella* is an example of the traditional fairy tale, traditional values, and traditional situations. Our society is in constant change. Because of this change, new schools of thought and ways of doing things must be developed. *The Paper Bag Princess* is a new way of looking at an old school of thought.

I feel that this analysis is important because it has allowed me to look at *The Paper Bag Princess* in terms of how gender presentations deviate from those presented in the traditional fairy tale. I feel that using the feminist approach has allowed me to look at specific questions of gender and its position in the fairy tale.

Children read and enjoy being read to. I wonder how the things they are reading affect them and the ways that they communicate. If fairy tales are an important part of teaching children, what other sources of literature are they being exposed to and what effect have they had on society's perception of gender? Finally, what implications will publications such as *The Paper Bag Princess* have on the relationship between men and women and the roles they undertake in the future?

### References

- Bottigheimer, Ruth B. "Fairy Tales and Children's Literature: A Feminist Perspective". *Teaching Children's Literature*. Glenn Edward Saddler, ed. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1992. 101-108.
- Ellis, Sarah. "News from the North." *The Horn Book Magazine*. May-June 1985: 342-345.
- Foss, Sonja K. *Rhetorical Criticism Exploration and Practice*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1989. 151-186.
- Gag, Wanda. *Tales from Grimm*. New York: Coward, McCann, & Geoghegan, 1939. 101-134.
- Larson, Charles V. *Persuasion: Reception and Responsibility*. 6th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992.
- Munsch, Robert. *The Paper Bag Princess*. Michael Martchenko, Ill. Toronto: Annick Press LTD., 1980.
- Serling, Barbara Peklo. "The Paper Bag Princess." *School Library Journal* September 1983: 110.
- Zipps, Jack. *Don't Bet on the Prince*. New York: Methuen, 1986.

# **Concordia College**

## **Speech Communication and Theatre Art Department**

**Concentrations in:**

advertising  
general communication  
mass media  
organizational communications

**Co-curricular Programs:**

advertising club  
forensics (debate and i.e.)  
radio and television stations  
theatre



**For Further Information Contact:  
Cynthia Carver at (218) 299-3154**

## BARBARIAN AT THE GATE

Jim Graupner, CTAM President, Stillwater High School

*"Beam 'im up Scotty." In the instant it took to materialize the intruder, Captain Kirk reflected on the previous occasions when a seemingly innocuous interplanetary drifter had brought amusement, then danger to the mission of the Starship Enterprise. Whether the more prudent action Spock had advised--to keep raised the deflector shields guarding against Klingonian intrigue--should have been followed in this case, Kirk's intuition dictated otherwise.*

*Curiosity had prevailed; his lone visitor was not a drifter, but an emissary, and, judging from that troubled aspect and serious demeanor, Kirk was disposed to believe this foreigner's mission was more sincere than portent to the mischief of some alien Tartuffe. And so, in a language inherently structured with ancient paradigms, a singular dialogue began.*

The Communication and Theater Association is wisely organized to ensure that its Board of Governors, and especially its Executive Board, cannot be completely controlled by one or another of the component constituencies. During the three-year life-cycle of the presidency (Elect, President, Past), a certain continuity and integrity of program is maintained even though the perspective of the leadership may change. The challenge for each successive President, therefore, is to pass over the threshold and through the Gate into a largely inexperienced world.

Imagine a social studies teacher taking a watch on the ship of the communicative arts discipline during a time of unwelcome change in every reach of its world. That *visitor* might be viewed with some concern, lest those sacred perspectives which define and promote the present regime be not fully appreciated. And, so, this *philistine* indulged in a 1,700 mile trip during a beautiful autumn week to a dozen post-secondary institutions to listen to and learn from the voices of speech communication and theater professionals.

### Traveler's Log: Impressions From Beyond the Gate

The following impressions garnered during the *Tour d' Minnesota* formed the basis for a plan of action which is described in this paper. In some respects these *Sic et Non* observations are the *wisdom of the innocent*:

1. *College teachers*, said one perspective professor nearing retirement,

*highly value their independence; independence enjoyed without being independently wealthy. Academicians feel close to scholarship, teaching, professional and community involvement, but also a high degree of autonomy. Like their counterparts in other levels of education, there may be a natural resistance to outside interference and misgivings about assessment. We do not prepare people to live with ambiguity. There is not one set of skills that determines that one will be an effective communicator, he reflected. Understandings and attitudes, despite skills, can make a connection with an audience.*

2. There is a fear that assessment will lead to a loss of *academic freedom*, a usefully vague concept that has emerged as a defensive shield against intellectual barbarism in politics, the community, and administration. Under the mantua of academic freedom, however, useful review may be avoided: a brutally honest assessment of the status quo; a review of the relationship between research and tenure; an aggressive market analysis exploring emerging opportunities in the field; a reevaluation of the importance of pedagogy in the academy; and a need to establish a continuing dialogue with professional colleagues on other levels.

3. There are as many perspectives of assessment as there are levels of endeavor. Assessment is essential, but it is also problematic in that the benefits may not be commensurate with the investment of resources, there may be some loss of autonomy, and assessment may be based on a technical value set rather than an *organically* developed approach which evaluates contextually. One compelling teacher, favoring the organic approach to assessment, observed that *society has linked itself to empiricism*. But, he believed that *independent inquiry is a necessary component to maintaining appropriate perspectives*. And, he was unabashedly secure with having *performance dimensions in every course, providing a balance between skills and theory*.

4. Although post-secondary institutions, particularly private colleges with a greater stability of resources, are very resilient. Many approach change reactively, rather than proactively. Perhaps, given enough time for the waves of change to crash upon the shore, one has seen them all before as they surged, retreated into the amalgam, then gathered up its elements for yet another wave. The pervasive aura of *hunkering down* and surviving in *niches* carved out over time stems from bread-and-butter issues, from disillusionment of unfulfilled past promises, and from a cynical view that the agenda is initiated from the outside, largely out of one's control. Concerns include: the business sector usurping the educational role of the academy; all elements of merger; the transfer curriculum inefficiently imposing requirements on existing curricula; licensure redesign compelling new interdepartmental certification



models; all manifestations of assessment; adjuncts replacing teachers in Community Colleges; finance disputes; extant curricular requirements; and declining professional status. A result is that unfortunate conflict like the jurisdictional "educationland-vs.-vocationland" debate ensue.

5. In the development of curricula, institutional memory may be the prime determinant for departmental course lists. Often there is a lack of a unifying departmental vision or mission, with many members essentially going it alone. At the University of Minnesota, there is concern whether the critical mass exists to sustain an organic vitality in the department. There, the environment is tremendously driven by the scholarship interests and expertise of the individuals on board and the overriding concern is with preserving the diversity of the program which currently exists.

6. Minnesota is fortunate to have consistently excellent post-secondary leadership in the profession. There would be no state association without the dedicated and visionary core of college professionals. A number of professors are significantly involved on regional and national levels, as well as prime movers on the state level. In addition, there is more than tacit recognition that bridging to the K-12 levels is absolutely essential for the survival of the discipline and that greater dialogue needs to be initiated. But, despite the promise of technology in facilitating networking within departments and among institutions, there continues to be a sense of isolation and disconnectedness as institutions struggle to build bridges to each other.

7. The "ivory tower" concept may be as endangered as the species which produced it. Some departments confess to an identity crisis; tenure issues breed conflict; inefficiencies frustrate productivity; and lost confidence diminishes the spirit needed to thrive in a challenging environment. It is ironic that, in an age of ever increasing interest in the communicative arts, in some institutions the vision has not been communicated to attract the resources needed to expand existing programs and initiate new ones.

### Internal Workings of the System

Even before the 1994 CTAM Conference had ended, the college and university people determined to address the immediate need to respond to the Minnesota Board of Teaching proposal for the redesign of teacher licensure rules. These rule changes follow legislation, called the Pogemiller Amendment, which effectively ended current teacher licensure by 1996. A flurry of activity ensued between the time of the Executive Board Meeting on October 16 and the November 1 deadline for public comments on the licensure redesign proposal.

Meetings were arranged with the three principal agencies responsible for directing education reform: the Minnesota Department of Education Board of Teaching, the State Board of Education Graduation Standards Committee, and the Assessment Committee and with the Minnesota Center for Arts in Education, a pilot school for the development of a number of assessment packages. Letters responding for comment were sent to the Board and to the Committees from the President and various groups within CTAM. In addition, following contact with the Minnesota Council for Teachers of English, a joint response to the changes was developed and sent to the MDE, principally dealing with concerns related to: lack of information about the proposed changes; whether the title change would reflect the broader content area; the nature, quality, and types of assessments; questionable overlaps in the Scope of Practice; that basic skills included only math, reading and writing; that a year-long residency might be untenable; the impact that standards had on certification of teachers; the implications of tremendous local district autonomy in decision making; the lack of a unifying vision or responsibility for directing the reform, and others. Letters were sent to the Senate and House Education Committees urging that staff development moneys, which were allocated to support efforts to increase student achievement, be more closely tied to staff training in preparation for the broader-based licensure titles. That frenetic experience produced some fundamental understandings and perceptions:

\* CTAM was in a situation where its energies were spent *reacting* to events rather than *shaping* them. Worse for the organization was that the President was torn over which approach to pursue: several strong voices advised that efforts should be directed toward legislative repeal of the Pogemiller Amendment and that the organization should essentially put up a strong resistance to any changes that would affect oral communication education. On the other hand, some of the changes appeared to provide compelling opportunities for the discipline.

\* The state political environment inherently has a fluid dynamism that tugs and pulls and recircles so that nothing is ever as it appears at first glance. Nevertheless, a strong sense of accountability to the public exists which, over time, incorporates reactions and recommendations in the process. In the case of education reform, particularly, the cycle of development, feedback, revision, and evaluation are being utilized. This is not to suggest that wisdom necessarily prevails as the changes unfold or that sufficient efforts are made to inform and include the parties concerned.

\* The importance of having an enthusiastic representative of CTAM "in-the-know" at the Capitol cannot be underestimated, especially with the magnitude of this vision of education reform and the current conservative

inclinations of the state legislature on issues of education finance. Without some type of executive secretary for the organization, keeping an "eye" on the Legislature is problematic.

\* Despite the broad mission of CTAM, the organization neither has the resources nor the wisdom to direct from the top. It is still incumbent upon the component groups to act aggressively on their own self-interests and to utilize the leadership of CTAM to speak out on those concerns which are of universal interest to the communicative arts. CTAM should address, articulate, and advocate the fundamental interests of the organization and go beyond to anticipate new developments, to incite enthusiasm for the promotion of the communicative arts, and to celebrate the achievements of the organization.

\* Because of its broad mission, CTAM has emerged with the potential to speak with a very big voice where common interests of the organization are evident. This means that the organization speaks for the colleges and universities and for the secondary teachers engaged in co-curricular activities. But, CTAM's voice is also the voice of the elementary and middle school teacher; it is the voice of the classroom teacher of oral communication; and the voice of all levels of the theater arts. CTAM's voice mirrors the day-to-day frustrations of teachers fighting to survive in inhospitable instructional climates, even as it challenges the vitality of vested interests in its own house.

\* In order for CTAM positions to have validity, the Board of Governors really needs to come alive with an independent resourcefulness, so that they not only *govern* the decisions of the Executive Board, but also help to create the agenda of the organization. Each Governor, for example, should already have a clear sense of the interests of their constituent group at the annual fall conference; subsequently, a brief report of the group's concerns should be given to the CTAM President. Intervening activities of the group should be followed and a mid-year report should be delivered at the biannual meeting of the Board of Governors in February. The Governors should have their areas in mind when programs are developed for the next annual CTAM conference. Outside of this direct contact with CTAM, the Governors should actively network within their own groups by submitting important information to their newsletters, by helping to set up a network if one does not exist, and by taking a direct interest in the achievements and concerns of their colleagues.

\* Because of relatively little experience on the regional and national levels, one may wonder where the center for organizational action should primarily lie. The attraction of the *higher* levels understandably is in the benefits of collegial networking, the opportunities for sharing scholarship, the greater resources which promote the development of materials that could not be produced at the state level, the projection of our state voice on the national level to help shape national policies, and the provision of a window into our

diversity as well as into our shared experiences. Having recognized this, there is a profound sense of what needs to be done in our own neighborhood and in our professional community. Every member of CTAM expects to experience direct value from their association; that this connection will have a significant and beneficial impact on their professional life.

### A Turn at Watch: Charting a Course

#### Education Reform: A Comprehensive Strategy for CTAM

With regard to education reform issues, taking a proactive course was hardly a leap in the dark. Minnesota's changes appear to be part of an inexorable movement nation-wide toward broader-based licensure titles that address the graduation performance standards inspired by the Goals 2000: Educate America Act. CTAM can only fully understand the substance and interrelatedness of educational reform in Minnesota by modeling the components involved. These components include: Standards, Assessment, Licensure, and Staff Development. A comprehensive strategy would include work on the following:

1. Understand the big picture surrounding Graduation Standards; communicate with the agents of reform
2. Learn about assessment by getting CTAM involved in developing *assessment packages* that could be scrutinized and possibly approved by the organization as well as by the MDE
3. Identify graduation standards and K-12 oral competencies for the communicative arts
4. Develop *benchmark indicators* at Grades 3, 5, and 8 that measure student progress toward achieving the standards
5. Conceptualize a broad-based, comprehensive language arts licensure title, with or without *endorsements* and *specialties*
6. Match learner competencies K-12 with teacher performance requirements for certification
7. Develop assessments to determine teacher preparedness

8. Develop pilot models of broad-based comprehensive language arts certification designs

9. Develop assessments for the pilot models with application for any competing licensure title teaching the oral communication discipline

10. Develop criteria for certifying teacher preparation coursework and certification programs state wide. *This is not to suggest that CTAM would or should, in fact, certify programs.*

11. Encourage staff development funding tie-in to teacher training and in-service workshops; CTAM could serve as agents of reform in their own institutions

Much of the strategy is under way: (1) CTAM enjoys a good working relationship with Judith A. Wain (Board of Teaching), Iris McGinnis (Assessment Committee), and Michael Tillmann (Graduation Standards); (2) the Board of Teaching has affirmed a change in title from *English Language Arts Education* to a comprehensive language arts title i.e., *Communication Arts and Literature*; (3) there is support for changing the list of basic skills under licensure's Scope of Practice from math, writing, and reading, to math and *communication* skills; (4) the oral competencies identified by the Speech Communication Association publications can be endorsed by CTAM; (5) three colleges and universities have expressed an interest in developing interdepartmental certification models, consistent with the broad-based licensure title and that prepare teacher candidates to teach toward the graduation standards and oral communication competencies; (6) assessment packages have been developed for the areas of *Inquiry* and *Speaking* using speech communication activities and debate as vehicles to achieve student performance levels beyond the standards; and (7) contacts have been made with the Senate and House Education Committees urging that staff development money tie in more closely toward providing the necessary training to teach effectively toward the standards.

### The Speech Leadership Colloquium

The post-secondary speech communication departments represented at the 1994 Colloquium, held in early December at The Minnesota History Center in St. Paul, presented perspectives on a broad range of issues and discussed problems in inter-institutional networking and bridging to the K-12 levels. Specific outcomes include: (1) a *Handbook on Speech Communication and*

*Theater Coursework in Minnesota*, (2) a Directory of all post-secondary speech and theater departments, (3) a survey on work climate issues, (4) a draft of the standards for the qualifications required in the area of communication for individuals certified in a comprehensive language arts licensure title, and (5) work on three certification models for teacher preparation institutions, and (6) the development of a CTAM Position Paper on research and scholarship. In addition, the sentiment for initiating bridging activities toward the elementary, middle, and secondary levels was strongly stated.

### The Holiday Tea: An Extraordinary Gathering

The Saint Paul Hotel with its fine reputation for serving holiday tea was the perfect setting for a gathering of two dozen retired teachers, honored members of the organization, and the Executive Board. Participants renewed acquaintances, listened to a reading of Truman Capote's *A Christmas Memory*, refreshed themselves with seasonal cakes and tea, and talked a bit about the creation of CTAM Foundation as a permanent, secure, funding source for the promotion of the communicative arts and communication scholarship. The importance of maintaining active connections with our colleagues beyond their active teaching and directing careers was greatly reinforced at the Tea.

Planning for the next Holiday Tea began even as the plates were being cleared away. The first Tea was scheduled on the first Monday in December (coincidentally, St. Nicholas Eve) so that those college speech and theater people who attended the Colloquium in the morning, could remain for the Tea in the afternoon. We might consider, however, having the Tea on Sunday afternoon, with the Colloquium the following Monday. More could attend the Tea and the Colloquium would have a bit more time. Funding for the Holiday Tea might come from an optimal mix of donations, CTAM Foundation funds, and the CTAM treasury.

### CTAM Foundation

As the important work of CTAM has grown beyond the ability of membership fees, alone, to sustain it, the need for a permanent, secure funding source emerged. CTAM's Treasurer and President met with the Executive Director of Minnesota Foundation to discuss a non-profit fund affiliated with a reputable state-wide public charity like Minnesota Foundation. Subsequently, the Board of Governors unanimously endorsed the creation of CTAM Foundation. The enthusiasm for the foundation was demonstrated by

the announcement of three \$1,000 gifts to the fund, with two, \$1,000 challenge grants encouraging contributions with dollar-for-dollar matches.

The Board also proposed a three-year, \$15,000 challenge grant from The Saint Paul Foundation, the requirements of which provide for a broad base of individual and organizational support. A subsequent funding drive was designed to celebrate the creation of CTAM Foundation and to recognize the gifts of its Charter Contributors at the 1995 Holiday Tea. The CTAM Engagement Calendar was developed to be distributed to all who made donations to the foundations.

### *Building Bridges Forum*

Probably the most important initiative yet to unfold is the meeting of speech communication and theater leaders from all levels of education. The purpose of the meeting, or forum, is to begin the dialogue across the levels to identify areas in which human and material resources could be shared, to explore areas of staff development and in-service interest, to strengthen the communication network, to carry out shared, site-based scholarship projects, to facilitate attendance at professional conferences, and to promote, as early as possible, the importance of the communicative arts through all levels of instruction.

### *Bringing Promotion Out Front*

Having an additional funding source will facilitate efforts to promote the communicative arts and communication scholarship. Ideas under discussion include: producing a CTAM video, a CTAM brochure, Position Papers, Calendars, bringing programs out to the schools, the Holiday Tea, special meetings, workshops, in-service training clinics, and others. Greater efforts have been made to publicize the work of CTAM in local newspapers, journals, and specialized newspapers like *Education Update* and Minnesota State High School League materials. Always central to any of the promotional efforts is the reflection of the primary mission of CTAM: to celebrate the communicative arts and theater in education, scholarship, and in community.

*Captain's Log, Star Date: 91695: Spock ordered to prepare routine post-watch assessment to evaluate the integrity of the system.*





## UTILIZING THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE IN RHETORICAL THEORY PEDAGOGY

Victoria Tait Coffman and Daniel D. Gross  
Montana State University

"Acting," like all simple Anglo-Saxon words, is ambiguous--it can mean doing things in everyday life, or performing on the stage or in a temple. It can take place in ordinary time or in extraordinary time. It may be the essence of sincerity--the commitment of the self to a line of action for ethical motives perhaps to achieve "personal truth."--Victor Turner

Any society that hopes to be imperishable must carve out for itself a piece of space and a period of time in which it can look honestly at itself. This honesty is not that of the scientist, who exchanges the honesty of his ego for the objectivity of his gaze. It is, rather, akin to the extreme honesty of the creative artist who, in his presentations on the stage, in the book, on canvas, in marble, in music, or in towers and houses, reserves to himself the privilege of seeing straight what all cultures build crooked. All generalizations are in some way skewed, and artists with candid vision labor well the minute particulars . . .  
--Victor Turner

Victor Turner captures for us, in these brief statements, an implicit call for a kinship between intellectual inquiry and creative expression. Yet from antiquity, even rhetorical studies, and its related art form "poetics," have experienced a schism. Rhetorical theory has been taught as a content subject and as a method of intellectual inquiry or offshoot of dialectics (Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, p. 1354a), while "poetics" has been defined as mimesis or the "mere" practice of imitation (Aristotle, *Poetics*, p. 1447). While rhetoric has experienced some credibility in the academy as a worthy intellectual endeavor, drama (if receiving any acclaim of an intellectual theoretical nature) has done so within the rhetorical realm. Such division and subordinated relationships reveal partisanship in the academy, not the spirit of creative intellectual inquiry or our need to know.

Such partisanship impoverishes both scholar and student alike. Thus, moved by the spirit of Victor Turner's words, we intend to demonstrate how a merging of rhetorical theory and dramatic performance enhances both the depth and nature of theoretical knowledge. In so doing, we hope to support others in the academy interested in providing a curriculum that fosters unity and not unnecessary division.

We are not alone in our desire for a blending of theory and performance. In fact, in recent years the line between these emphases has become increasingly fine and perhaps unnecessary. For example, scholars like Perelman (1969) and Burke (1969) have argued for a new perspective on rhetoric that incorporates drama and other forms of social influence. O'Banion (1992) claims that narrative, traditionally a poetic form, is a means of thinking as important as logic and that as narration goes, so goes rhetoric. Farrell (1993) explains how misreading of Aristotle's *Poetics* have influenced contemporary scholars to view drama as devoid of "cognitive value" (p. 110). He adds that Aristotle's works may be viewed as a dialectical counterpart to Plato's. And even "Plato's dialogues must admit the possibility that some art is conducive to knowledge" (p. 110). Thus, there is a thematic base to both rhetoric and drama. Perhaps the entire division between rhetorical theory and drama occurred as McKeon (1954) observed: Plato was a poetically gifted philosopher with little sympathy for poetry, while Aristotle was "a literal-minded scientist with an understanding and appreciation of art" (p. 108). We describe how in content and form the merger of rhetorical theory with traditional dramatic form can be utilized to enhance the concept of "knowing" rhetorical theory. Or stated more strongly, we unite forms of communication (rhetorical theory and dramatic performance). Their union suggests a common theoretical base concerning our understanding of human communication and learning. First, we describe the course, its purpose and content. Second, we describe the performance events; and finally, we critique the pedagogical implications of performance in a content course.

### The Course

The course, as it currently stands in our curriculum in the Communication Arts Departments at Montana State University, Billings, is Persuasion 330. Though the title may indicate a contemporary perspective, the course begins with the notions of persuasion as first envisioned in ancient Greece and moves on to contemporary conceptions.

The course is designed to give students a comprehensive understanding of the leading theories of persuasion/rhetoric and argumentation, including the nature of rhetoric, its history, and contemporary perspectives on the ancient science and art form. In addition, practical experience with various genres of persuasion add to the students grasp of persuasion--such experience may include assignments like designing an advertising campaign, a classroom learning experience, a persuasive speech, the trial of Socrates, or perhaps a debate.

There are five recommended texts for the course:

- (1) George A. Kennedy's *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- (2) Sonja K. Foss's *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration & Practice*, Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland, 1989.
- (3) Richard L. Enos's *Greek Rhetoric Before Aristotle*, Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland, 1993.
- (4) Herbert W. Simons's *Persuasion: Understanding, Practice, and Analysis*, second edition, New York: Random House, 1986.
- (5) Patricia C. Matson, Philip Rollinson, and Marion Sousa's *Readings for "Classical" Rhetoric*, Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.

These texts were recommended not required. They were on reserve in the library and students were encouraged to purchase those they found especially helpful. Students were encouraged to read secondary sources as well as primary sources. The secondary sources provided pre-reading acquisition experiences vital to primary comprehension (Baack & Gross, 1993). The content of the course was divided into four major categories: the classical tradition emphasizing the Sophists, Plato, and Aristotle; the Middle Ages and the rhetoric of religion; the Enlightenment and the rhetoric of science; and finally, contemporary or postmodern perspectives, such as, feminist perspectives.

These categories were presented as paradigms of rhetorical worlds. The presumptions of each paradigm set the agenda for any persuasive attempts. The contemporary scene, with a postmodern emphasis, was presented as a return to ancient Greece in which numerous perspectives vied for preeminence. The rhetoric of science was presented as one, though perhaps the most influential, perspective on the contemporary scene. Within the context of science, various social-science theories of persuasion were discussed. In this manner, the leading major influences of the western mind were rehearsed.

Throughout the course, the students were asked to identify with those rhetorics that touched them most personally. They were asked to question why a particular rhetoric moved them either theoretically, or perhaps as they experienced it in the original writings. From these moments of personal insight, they were then asked to share, dialogue, or perhaps build a final project. The three dramatic events were the result of individual and group reflection. The fact that the students were given the freedom to choose their own form of expression for a final project and that most of the students chose a

dramatic form in a content course is itself support for our argument that theory and drama may not be separate forms of thinking.

Finally, the class atmosphere was filled with lively dialogue. Such an atmosphere is due in part to a commitment to Krashen's (1991) and Cambourne's (1988) notions of language acquisition. They believe that two issues enhance a learning environment: affective filter and comprehensible input. The affective filter involves the creation of a non-threatening environment where mistakes can be made without the threat of punishment. Comprehensible input involves discussion and reading assignments that meet the students where they are developmentally. The issues surrounding language acquisition were accomplished by providing levels of reading assignments and focusing class discussions on questions raised by the students following short lecture-presentations of the content material. The lecture-presentations were designed not as mere information transfer but as rhetorical material with the purpose of stimulating thought and discussion. Dialogic experiences following such lectures were usually automatic.

### The Performance Events

Each student was responsible for a project. Several chose dramatic presentations. These presentations and their impact on the class and instructor (the audience) is the focus of this paper. The three performance events utilized by the students were the "Trial of Socrates," "A Conversation with Aristotle," and "The Power of Rhetoric for Good or Evil." Each of these is presented regarding the purpose, performance, and participation.

### *Plato's Apology*

The *Apology* written by Plato, is an after-the-fact version of a speech for Socrates at the trial in 399 B.C. which led to Socrates' conviction on charges of atheism and corrupting the youth of Athens (Kennedy, 1980). The trial led to Socrates' execution where he chose to die by drinking poison hemlock.

The tension between truth and flowery conventional speech is presented in dramatic form for rhetorical theory in the *Apology*. Socrates claims that he is not clever in speech "unless they label clever one who speaks the truth" (17b 4-50). Socrates says he trusts the "excellence of a jurymen, and of an orator . . . to speak the truth" (18a 5-6). Ultimately, Socrates blames rhetors, not the jury for the state of affairs in Athens.

With the *Apology*, Plato draws a line between philosophy which seeks truth and rhetoric which involves flattery and tricky (Plato, *Gorgias*). This

line has influenced notions of speech and truth issues from then to now. The phrase "empty rhetoric" is the residue of Plato in contemporary perspectives. Thus, the *Apology* has been the focus of discussion surrounding rhetorical theory in most rhetorical pedagogy.

A slightly paraphrased version of Plato's *Apology* was presented by class members in the MSU-Billings Petro Theatre. The students who chose this project were allowed some liberties with the text in order to identify with contemporary university students. Actually, they took few liberties except in an opening speech which set the scene for the contemporary audience. A setting of the scene was followed by a selection from the student audience of the jury members. The three speeches by Socrates were delivered by one student in a spontaneous manner in full ancient costume. The roles of prosecution and jury were also played by students and the instructor was chosen by members of the prosecution to sit on the jury.

Participation in this dramatic/rhetorical-theory experience was enhanced by the inclusion of the audience in the opening speech, student performers, and the instructor on the jury.

### "A Conversation with Aristotle"

The instructor was chatting with some students, when two shared concern over their impending class project. The instructor shared that while in graduate school studying similar material he wrote a play in which he imagined having a conversation with Aristotle. The students expressed interest in reading the play. The reading led to a performance.

The play involved two characters: Dan, the graduate student, and a reincarnated Aristotle. Dan encountered Aristotle while walking along the beach near Florence, Oregon. They began to talk about rhetoric, the course of study Dan was pursuing in graduate school. However, the conversation covers many other topics which impact rhetorical theory from physics to metaphysics to Aristotle's relationship with Plato.

Generally, the conversation revolves around the testing of an hypothesis: "When anybody says anything about anything they are saying more about themselves than the truth." Dan and Aristotle test out the implications of this conversational hypothesis on Aristotle's own words and those of Dan. In the end, they conclude that a conversation with someone is really a parallel process that amounts to a conversation with that part of oneself in the other. As Dan concludes, "That means, generally, we are talking with ourselves or I'm talking with the me in you. Or I'm talking with . . . Aristotle, where are you going? (He starts to disappear.) Stop, wait . . . Holy crap, I'm talking to myself" (Gross, 1988, p. 18). Two female students performed the forty-

minute play on a stage in a set that moved back and forth from an office to a beach front.

Though only two class members participated in the performance, every class member was present for the performance. Their presence was particularly evident following the play when the instructor came on stage to greet the performers and to answer questions regarding his play. The audience began to question the instructor and the actors regarding a wide range of issues. Did you really smoke during graduate school? Was it grass? Did Aristotle really perceive Plato as his father? Among other things, the questions indicated a deep commitment to the content which was previously taught in the course and now played out on stage. The actors, the instructor (author), and the class members (audience) were all committed to the play's coherence and fidelity (Fisher, 1989, p. 5).

### "The Power of Rhetoric for Good or Evil"

Randall Burns, a junior Communication Arts major, delivered the speech named in the heading as his class project. His purpose was a call to responsible speech. He said:

Today, I am going to speak with you about the immense power rhetoric has for creating the destiny of humanity--for good or evil. I shall demonstrate this with film clips of an evil king and good princess. I will give examples of the rhetoric of a good king, and I will provide a caveat on the risks and responsibilities of being a rhetor in a democracy. (Burns, 1993, p. 1)

In the next thirty minutes he drew from a wide range of oratory. He acted out excerpts from speeches delivered by Hitler, John F. Kennedy, Hemingway, Socrates, the movie *Field of Dreams*, and a fairy tale entitled *The Prince of Magicians*. He tied them all together by stating:

[H]istory shall record how we led the dilemma of our shifting paradigm and the path we chose. Shall we choose a path in which rhetoric is neglected and its magical quality misunderstood, a path in which our ancestors will cry out in collective echo of anguish? Where were the voices when the fragile rose of democracy was crushed by the clutching hands of those who would control our hearts and minds? Where were the rhetors? (Burns, 1993, p. 12)

He goes on to add,

Or shall we choose a path that reflects our own best destiny, one in which we will teach our children, and they their children's children's children of the magical rhetoric, a path on which if one of us falls to the slings and arrows of calumny and assassins, a host of

others will rise to carry the torch once more; a path on which we will be ever vigilant to the uses of rhetoric for good or evil; and we will choose the path because we are rhetors. (Burns, 1994, p. 12)

In style and tone, he was dramatically and rhythmically mimicking a form popularized by the Sophists (Enos, 1993). The content incorporated in a monologic, passionate, and dramatic form the conceptual highlights of the course's content. The class members saw it as a fitting benediction to the climate felt throughout the course. Burns' perspective on rhetoric was representational which modeled one of the perspectives presented in class. The impact was spontaneous as the class members rose for sustained applause.

After the instructor made a short comment regarding the performance, Randall Burns presented a book to the instructor signed by all the class members as a gesture of gratitude for the experiences shared. Thus, in the end, all the members of the class joined as participants in a ceremonial performance surrounding the rhetorical theory.

### Interpretations and Implications

Aside from the very eccentric or cavalier professor, the classroom of the rhetorical theorist is generally a calm one where words, stories, and texts are processed but not performed.

Yet, as Schechner (1985) observes, whether it be permanently as in initiation rites or temporarily as in aesthetic theatre, performers are changed by the activity of performing (p. 4). In the categories that follow, we trace patterns that may aid in interpreting how performances changed/transformed a rhetorical theory course from mere content rehearsal into a rich, multifaceted learning experience in Persuasion 330.

### Performance and Learning

Too often rhetorical theory seems far removed from its practical roots when read or discussed in an academic context. By uniting performance and content, learning is enriched. Beck and Malina (1970) worked to fashion such a rich, provocative learning environment by unifying art and politics. In so doing, they created a pedagogical model where rhetoric and theatre work in unison. In such an environment, performing works can internalize even the most abstract theoretical notions. Thus, performance merges the abstract and the concrete. This merger and the dynamics of performance and learning has attracted several interpretations.

First, Schechner (1985) tells us that in all kinds of performances a "threshold" is crossed. No theatre performance functions detached from its audience. In fact, spectators are immediately aware the moment a performance takes off. A presence is manifested, something has happened. It is holy work. Performances gather energies almost as if time and rhythm were concrete, physical, pliable qualities. Thus, performance in a rhetorical theory course, where the audience is immersed in content, and the content is then performed, offers a means of taking the whole class/audience over the threshold of learning.

Second, Pelias (1992) believes that performance aids students in "translation" (p. v). He asks students to use performance as a means of understanding the artistic utterances of others. He states that performance is a way of learning that encourages students to translate their literary insights from the "page to the stage," and in so doing, to increase their knowledge of literature. So, if rhetorical theory is a kind of literature, then performing it provides a vehicle for students to translate the abstract concepts into personal experiences. Such process translation enriches learning.

Third, Stern & Henderson (1993) add that performance excites emotions which can arouse us to action. If the emotions are aroused in a learning context this in turn enhances instructional objectives. Performance is a "daring act." (p. 4). Such daring invokes a powerful experience that brings dimension and life to content. Rhetorical theory that is felt in performance is theory with an emotional attachment.

Fourth, Stern & Henderson (1993) claim that performance highlights the "interactional" nature of the communication event (p. 3). Performance functions interactionally between symbolic forms and live bodies. It provides a way to constitute meaning and to affirm individual and cultural values. Thus, performance is like a catalyst in a brew containing theory and humans.

In addition, Stern & Henderson (1993) state, "These performative events require a performer, a text, an audience, and a context" (p. 16). In the typical communication class a text and a context exist, the performer is the professor, but most often the professor does not perform the material. Also, there is a classroom of students, but they do not see themselves as audience to a performative act, rather they envision themselves as neutral vessels waiting to acquire knowledge--a somewhat detached, non-empathic (but appropriately) efficient way to learn the content. Yet, there is more to rhetorical theory content as revealed through interaction with performance theory.

By themselves each of these observations is insightful. In particular, the "interactional" interpretation echoes the words of Aristotle's own notions concerning speakers/performers and audience/class members. As Farrell (1993) writes interpreting Aristotle, "The short answer . . . is that rhetoric is a



relational art . . . through the direct participation of suitably involved audience . . ." (p. 76). Performance in a rhetorical theory class, therefore, engages all the participants in an interactional event consistent with the essence of the content.

### Performance and Self

Performance changes and transforms learning, and in addition, it changes the conceptions we have of self and thus choice. Self has been presented as the essence of the human being. Even Stanislavski (1946) said, "Never lose yourself on the stage. Always act in your own person, as an artist." (p.167). His suggestion represents the traditional perspective that performing is mere imitation. From this perspective the performer or real self is imitating other selves. The following discussion offers a perspective that revolutionizes the traditional notion.

Christoffersen (1993) argues that the value of the theatre is that in the recreation of life, it always reminds us of what is perishable in life's inconsistency, and eventually of death. In addition, Myerhoff (1982) acknowledges that performance is not merely a vehicle for being seen. Self definition is attained through it. He states, "Enactments are intentional, not spontaneous, rhetorical and didactic, taming the chaos of the world, at one asserting existence and meaning" (p. 5). These writers support the notion that performance creates a communication event in which humans can experience themselves from a privileged vantage point.

Second, performance offers an opportunity to gaze at the other that is self. Christoffersen (1992) writes that Eugenio Barba says actors and the spectators must be able to talk to the part of us which is in exile. In addition, Christoffersen writes that Eugenio Barba draws parallels to the previous function of the church as a place where one can find God, who was actually another part of oneself. They submit that performance may be a place where one can find another part of oneself (Christoffersen, 1993). The performer does not stop being, at some level, her ordinary self when she is playing the role of Ophelia (Schechner, 1985, p. 6), but she is afforded a perspective for examining the ordinary self.

Cohen (1994) says that when we go to the theatre we believe in the character, but at the end of the play we applaud the actor. Our appreciation of performance rests largely on our dual awareness of actor and character and our understanding that they live inside the same skin. How powerful it is then to see a student take on the role of Aristotle, the class applauding both the character and the actor. Actors in this case, students of Persuasion, are aware

of the same duality. For them, the art of acting is a sublime combination of the freedom that comes from anonymity and the ego gratification that comes with exhibitionism.

Cohen (1994) adds that actors report that they both "lose themselves" and "find themselves" in theatrical performance (pp. 10-14). Performance based pedagogical experiences provide the possibility for such a feat. In a performance, the actor goes well beyond merely imitating this character: they embody them and seem to actually become them. Cohen tells us that Socrates, noting that the rhapsodic poets of his day were overcome by feeling when they recited their work, considered these performances more inspired than rational, as if to be carried out of themselves.

Finally, Pelias (1992) suggests performance is a self criticism experience, because it allows the actor another's voice and body to become another person. It also allows the one to be seen as performing the other. Both selves are present. All the selves are present in performance. The unique flavor of this in a theory course is that the ordinary-self can perceive self as scholar-self. For example, the instructor could view and experience author-self, actor-self, audience-self, instructor-self, etc., both separately and in combination. Such experiences afford perspectives that can build the confidence necessary to begin the process of embracing discourses that once may have been intimidating, for example, in case of the student, theory texts.

Finally, if performance affords the participants a re-creation event and perspectives of self, it then implies a unique opportunity for choice. Performances, according to Stern & Henderson (1993), provide an opportunity to extend self and art in ways that may be unfamiliar or uncharacteristic (p. 8). After we have experienced such extensions, we may be able to more wisely choose in the future, having felt self in alternate events.

In other words, as Barringer (1994) claims, drama's most enduring achievements serve as reflections of ourselves, or what potentially could be ourselves in different times and circumstances. Drama's best moments lead us to discoveries and reflections about our personalities, circumstances, desires, anxieties, hopes, and dreams (p. 7). Artaud (1958) adds that theatre is like a plague and like a plague it releases conflicts, disengages powers and liberates possibilities. Once again such experiences broaden the repertoire of choices for the actor/rhetor in real life as a practitioner of rhetorical theory.

So, performance mingled with rhetorical theory in pedagogical practice affords re-creation events, perspectives of self, and broadens choice. Once again, these beneficial changes reflect Aristotle's notions of tragedy in the *Poetics*. The tragic effect is "an appeal to our Humanity" (1456a 20-22). Aristotle's use of dramatic criticism of Oedipus affords a panoramic view of contingent choices open to all willful humans (Farrell, 1993, p. 115). Oedipus

acts with the best evidence available to him, but we as his audience are afforded an even broader panorama of choices. At the heart of rhetorical tradition is choice theoretically conceptualized in the *inventio* process. Drama enriches the potential of that process in rhetorical theory pedagogy.

### Performance and Play

Performance changes the role of play in pedagogy. Play is often thought of as an activity reserved for times away from work or formal learning experiences. Yet, with the addition of performance events in a theory class, even play seems present in a context traditionally reserved for serious, sober, inquiring processes. In other words, performance adds play to that which may be experienced at other times as drudgery. Cohen (1994) claims that performance/drama is a living art form, a process, an event that is fluid in time, feeling, and experience. It is not simply a matter of plays but also of playing, and in the context of the class, performance becomes the playing of text, the playing of content. The members of the Persuasion 330 class played with rhetorical theory. Thus, the impression left is that theory can be enjoyable not simply drudgery. Play experiences with rhetorical theory may enhance cognitive re-visiting rather than avoidance. Incidentally, many of the classes members continued meeting after the class had formally terminated. They formed a "Rhetoric Club."

### Performance and Physical Knowledge

Finally, performance changes the conception of knowing. By adding performance to a course usually focusing on cognitive processes, theoretical concepts begin to be felt. To elaborate, rhetorical theory is more than a mere rote information class, it thrives on impressions of life. So, pedagogical experiences that broaden the base of knowing nearly touch the essence of rhetorical theory. Performance of rhetorical theory content touches concept to body. Once again, Aristotle's rhetorical theory discusses the place of emotion and effective rhetoric at length (1378b).

The notion of physical knowledge needs further exploration, and several scholars have alluded to the notion. Artaud (1958) tells us that no one in Europe knows how to scream anymore, and particularly actors in France no longer know how to cry out. Since they do nothing but talk (primarily a cognitive process) and have forgotten they ever had a body in theatre, they have naturally also forgotten the use of their windpipes. Abnormally shrunk,

the windpipe is not even an organ but a monstrous abstraction that talks; actors in France no longer know how to do anything but talk. Now, thirty-five years later we acknowledge that professors and students only talk; we must provide opportunity for screaming. Performance in theory is such an opportunity.

Beck & Malina (1970) answer the question "Why do we go to the theatre?" To crack your head open and let in the oxygen. To revivify the brain, inform the senses, awaken the body. To go beyond watching into action. Thus, utilizing performance in the classroom allows the student to experience what may be referred to as physical learning, holistic learning, all encompassing learning.

In addition, Beck & Malina (1970) add that intellectual awareness is not enough. We have been intellectually aware for thousands of years. We have to be physically aware. Furthermore, Beck reminds that could we feel the pain, we would not tolerate it and would find the means to eliminate it. Employing the use of performance in the classroom allows the student to move beyond mere intellectual awareness into the realm of personal and collective knowing. Perhaps, feeling rhetorical theory as performed will open up new approaches to theoretical development, improvement, comprehension, and practice.

## Conclusion

Adding performance to a course that usually focused on mere abstraction merged traditional forms of knowing and enriched the experience of the learners. If the pedagogical goal in a rhetorical theory course is a broadened perspective of prudent rhetorical theory and practice, then performance dimensions are crucial.

By merging performance with rhetorical theory in a traditional content course, the learning experience was changed dramatically. Performance emphasizes the superiority of participatory learning, the vantage point of self-in-alternate-settings, play in relationship to learning, and a place for the physical in cognitive process.

All of these notions if not mentioned explicitly are implied in the first monumental theory of rhetoric or persuasion: Aristotle's (Farrell, 1993, p. 15). A pedagogical perspective that merges theoretical forms in order to create learning experiences consistent with the essence of the target knowledge (in this case rhetorical theory) is superior. Uniting performance with rhetorical theory results in such a superior form as evidenced in Persuasion 330. Performance privileges the opportunity to experience the other and maximizes the opportunity for constructive reflection. This is

crucial in a course emphasizing the honing of inquiry faculties. In other words, by merging rhetorical theory with performance, students gain experiences that merge theory to experience, thereby deepening understanding.

### References

- Artaud, A. (1958). *Theatre and its double*. New York: Grove.
- Aristotle. (1954). *Rhetoric*. Trans. W. R. Roberts. New York: Modern Library.
- Aristotle. (1954). *Poetics*. Trans. I. Bywater. New York: Modern Library.
- Baack, S. & Gross, D. (1994). Language acquisition: A unifying theory for college composition. *CCTE studies*, 59, 75-82.
- Barranger, M. (1994) *Understanding plays* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Beck, J. & Malina J. (1970). Messages. In T. Cole & H. Chinoy (Eds.), *Actors on acting: The theory, techniques, and practice of the great actors of all times as told in their own words*. New York: Crown.
- Boal, A. (1992). *Games for actors and nonactors*. Trans. A. Jackson. Routledge, NY: Chapman & Hall.
- Burke, K. (1969). *A Grammar of motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burns, R. (1994). The power of rhetoric for good and evil. Unpublished Speech, Montana State University-Billings, MT.
- Cambourne, B. (1988). *The whole story: Natural learning and the acquisition of literacy in the classroom*. New York: Ashton Scholastic.
- Christoffersen, E. E. (1985). *The actor's way*. Tran. R. Fowler. New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, R. (1994). *Theatre*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.
- Enos, R. L. (1993). *Greek rhetoric before aristotle*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland.
- Farrell, F. B. (1993). Norms of rhetorical culture. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Fisher, W. R. (1987). *Human communication as narration: Toward a philosophy of reason, value, and action*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.
- Gross, D. (1988). A conversation with aristotle. Unpublished play, Montana State University-Billings, MT.
- Kennedy, G. A. (1980). *Classical rhetoric and its christian and secular tradition form ancient to modern times*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.

- Krashen, S. D. (1991). The input hypothesis: An update. *Georgetown university round table on languages and linguistics*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.
- McKeon, R. (1954). *Thought, action, and passion*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Myerhoff, B. (1982). Life history among the elderly: Performance, visibility and re-membering. In J. Ruby (Ed.), *A crack in the mirror: Reflexive perspectives in anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- O'Banion, J. D. (1992). *Reorienting rhetoric: The dialectic of list and story*. University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Pelias, R. (1992). *Performance studies: The interpretation of an esthetics text*. New York: St. Martins.
- Perelman, C. (1969). *The new rhetoric: A treatise on argumentation*. Trans. J. Wilkinson & P. Weaver. Notre Dame, ID: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Plato. (1935). *Apology. Dialogues*. Trans. B. Jowett. Two Vols. New York: Modern Library.
- Plato. (1935). *Gorgias. Dialogues*. Trans. B. Jowett. Two Vols. NY: Modern Library.
- Schechner, R. (1985). *Between theatre and anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press
- Stern, C. & Henderson, B. (1993). *Performance, Texts and Contexts*. White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Stanislavski, C. (1946). *An actor prepares*. New York: Methuen.
- Turner, V. (1982). *From ritual to theatre: The human seriousness of play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.

# PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS AS A GUIDE TO ACTING PEDAGOGY

Barbara Mackey, Bowling Green State University

Since it began publication in 1984, the *Journal of Psychological Type*, the official research journal of the Association of Psychological Type, has published numerous articles detailing the distinct personality profiles of various different vocational populations as measured by the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator. Some of the populations studied have been: bankers, educational administrators, nuns, seminary students, chess masters, real estate agents, tax preparers, computer technicians, retail store managers, Fortune 500 Founders, physicians of different specialties, and various different social scientists. Yet, to my knowledge, no work has been done on measuring the Myers-Briggs profile of those in the arts. As an acting instructor, I have wondered if there is a distinct psychological profile for those who are drawn to acting; in particular, those who are drawn to college acting classes. If so, what does this imply as far as the most effective acting pedagogy?

In this paper, I first briefly survey the current research on vocational profiles; second, project what I would expect to find in a population of student actors; third, summarize the results from Myers-Briggs inventories given to student actors; and finally, deduce what these results imply about teaching methods in college-level acting classes, projecting avenues of future research.

## Review of Current Research

The Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator, based on Jungian psychology, breaks personality components into four continuums. In brief, the Extravert--Introvert dichotomy shows whether we prefer to renew our energies from those around us or from our own inner world. The Sensing--iNtuitive scale shows whether we prefer to gather information from specific realities or from over-all patterns and possibilities. The Thinking--Feeling continuum shows whether we prefer to make decisions through objective methodology or through personal reactions. And the Judging--Perceiving dichotomy shows whether we prefer to conclude issues or leave them open-ended.

Since 1984, a variety of studies detailing the personality profiles of specific vocational populations has been published in the *Journal of*

*Psychological Type.* They reveal that professionals in many fields exhibit distinct and consistent Myers-Briggs profiles.

People in highly structured professions and lifestyles turn out to be solidly Judging types. It is not surprising that nuns and Roman Catholic seminarians turn out to be consistently Judging (Cabral, 1984, Holsworth, 1984). This is clearly understandable when one looks at the highly regulated lifestyle within a traditional convent or seminary. In addition, those who need to make endless small daily decisions also tend to be Judgers, as: educational administrators (Hoffman, 1986), computer technicians (Westbrook, 1988), bankers (Mosley, 1985), business managers (Reynierse, 1993), retail store managers (Gaster, 1984), tax preparers (Descourzis, 1989), chess masters (Kelly, 1985), and real estate salesmen (Waldo, 1988). An interesting study by Henderson and Harris (1991) shows that whereas physicians as a whole are Judging and have the qualities of being orderly and thorough, emergency room physicians are highly Perceiving and need to be spontaneous, action-oriented, calm under stress, and in other ways immediately responsive in dealing with an environment which can be more chaotic than predictable. The only one of the four Myers-Briggs scales where this study shows both clinical and emergency room physicians scoring the same is on the Thinking--Feeling preference. Both prefer Thinking as both need to be analytical and logical in their diagnoses.

Many of the previously mentioned business types who scored high on Judging also scored high on Thinking, as: retail store managers, business managers, bankers, computer technicians, educational administrators, Fortune 500 founders (Ginn, 1988), and chess masters. However, in a study of psychologists (Schacht, 1989) and another one of pathologists and audiologists (Descouzis, 1988), the researchers found that those scientists who dealt more with detailed diagnostics and impersonal analysis (as the analytic psychologists and audiologists) were Thinkers, and those who dealt more with client-centered therapy (as the pathologists and clinical psychologists) were Feelers. The studies with nuns and seminarians showed that all the subjects were highly Feeling. This may be expected with the women's population, who have tested out as more Feeling, but it is unusual to have a men's population score so high on Feeling.

In the Sensing--iNtuitive scale, many of the business types mentioned above are predominantly Sensing: real estate salesmen, educational administrators, bankers, and retail store managers, while 100% of the tax preparers studied were Sensing. This shows their preference for, and attention to, detail. The group of physicians also differed here, with emergency room physicians being more Sensing, as they need to quickly observe and process many tiny details in order to make rapid decisions. Other



more iNtuitive physicians have the time to take a history, make more considered generalizations, and see more deeply into their diagnosis. The study on "Distribution and Flow of Managerial Types through Organizational Levels in Business and Industry" by Reynierse (1993), interestingly shows that Sensing types predominate at lower levels of management, losing in frequency to iNtuitives in mid-management, and that iNtuitive types take over entirely at upper management levels. This illustrates that although a lower level manager needs to be more aware of the many concrete details of the business, upper level types need to be able to see the company operating as a whole and project future direction. A preponderance of iNtuitives was also found among computer technicians, Fortune 500 founders, chess masters, psychologists, audiologists, and pathologists.

There was less difference between specific vocational types and the general public on the Introvert--Extravert scale. In most cases, Extraverts were more numerous, as in the general population (75%). Real estate salesmen, as one might predict, came out highly Extraverted, as did educational administrators, retail store managers, and emergency room physicians. Groups such as psychologists, audiologists, pathologists, chess masters, and nuns, were more highly introverted.

### A Projection of Acting Student Preferences

Using the above studies as guidance, what Myers-Briggs profile would one predict to find among student actors? To begin with, one would expect to see more extraverts among actors. Many actors are gregarious, "party-people," who are people-intensive and people-dependent. However, there are also Introverts who like to conceal or disguise themselves in character roles.

Second, one would expect most actors to be iNtuitives. Much of acting seems to be an intuitive entering of the actor into the being of another and an instinctual understanding of how that other feels. This is not to say that character portrayal should not be based on observable details. The iNtuitive--Sensing dichotomy may actually be one of the factors involved in the traditional dispute between the "technical" and the "emotional" actor. One tends to think that this difference is solely between Thinking and Feeling, or between an objective, rational approach and an emotional approach. But the dichotomy seems to be just as much the difference between a sensing approach (searching for external details) and an instinctual approach (an entering into the persona.)

Third, I would expect actors, at least American actors, to be more Feeling than Thinking. Referring again to the difference between the "technical" and

the "emotional" actor, English actors have traditionally been regarded as being more from the "technical" school. I would be interested some day in seeing if this is a reflection of a personality difference between the American and English people as a whole. It would seem that the "technical" actor is both more Sensing and more Thinking, while the "emotional" actor is both more iNtuitive and more Feeling. This is a study to be taken up at a later date.

Last, actors who are more Perceiving may be better at responding to one another and interacting together as an ensemble. Actors who are predominately Judging might have a tendency to simply prepare their own parts and not interact as much with the other members of the ensemble.

I would therefore predict that persons drawn to acting, whether as a vocation or simply as a volunteer for the local community theatre, would tend to be predominately ENFPs. This type is described in Isabel Briggs-Myers' *Introduction to Type*, as "enthusiastic innovators," "imaginative," "liking a succession of new projects and challenges," "perceptive," and "skillful and insightful in handling people" (1987, p. 23). ENFPs would thus make actors who relate tirelessly to one another, are open and responsive, spontaneously creative, and understanding and sympathetic to the part they play and to the other members of the ensemble.

### Description of the Study and Results

The Keirsey Temperament Sorter (Keirsey and Bates, 1984, pp. 5-10), a short informal version of the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator, was taken by undergraduates in two college acting classes. There were 34 responses. Out of the sixteen possible personality types, eleven, or 42%, were ENFPs or Extraverted iNtuitive Feeling Perceivers. Thus, the results show that ENFPs predominate among acting students, with the Introverted correlation (INFP) and the Judging correlation (ENFJ) both coming in second.

The most surprising outcome of the instrument was that 100% of the respondents in this admittedly small sample indicated that they were iNtuitives (see chart). This result is even more remarkable when we realize that only 25% of the over-all population is iNtuitive (Keirsey and Bates, 1984, p 17). However, the numbers of iNtuitives in liberal arts schools is much higher than in the general population. As reported in *Gifts Differing* (Myers, 1980, pp. 40-41), 59.1% of college liberal arts students were iNtuitive, and 40.9% were Sensing. This shows that the number of iNtuitives in liberal arts colleges is considerably more than twice that of the over-all population. However, in the sample of acting students this number nearly doubled again, as all the respondents studied were iNtuitives.

ITEM	General Pop. Students	Lib Arts Students	Acting Students
-----	-----	-----	-----
Extravert	75%	54.30%	67%
Introvert	25%	45.70%	33%
Sensing	75%	40.90%	0
iNtuitive	25%	59.10%	100%
Thinking	50%	54.40%	28%
Feeling	50%	45.60%	72%
Judging	50%	52.40%	42%
Perceiving	50%	47.60%	58%

In the Extravert--Introvert dichotomy, it was surprising to discover that only 67% of the respondents were Extraverted, as compared with 75% of the general population. I had anticipated a higher percentage of Extraverts. However, when compared with the figures Isabel Myers found for the liberal arts students, the results look more favorable. She found that liberal arts colleges contain nearly double the number of Introverts than in the general population or 45.7%. Extraverts thus form only 54.3% of college populations. This means that although my study had fewer Extraverts than the average population, it was about 13% more than could be expected for a normal college class. So a group of college actors also tends to be Extraverted, although not as overwhelmingly so as one might expect.

Thinking and Feeling are roughly each 50% in the general public, although there is a gender bias on this scale only: 60% of men preferring Thinking as a way to make decisions and 60% of women preferring Feeling (Keirseey and Bates, 1984, p. 40). I regret that I did not think to have gender indicated on the form, and were I to do it again, I would ask the respondents to indicate gender. The figures for liberal arts students quoted by Myers relate only to males, and they are reported as being 54.4% Thinking and 45.6% Feeling, which means that liberal arts males are about 15% more Feeling than the general population. The sample of acting students showed 72% Feeling, which is 22% higher than the general population and 26.4% higher than the liberal arts students. Even making allowance for the lack of gender specificity, the percentage of Feeling respondents is still high.

In the last scale, Judging vs. Perceiving, the answers show an 8% difference from those of the general population, being 58% Perceiving and 42% Judging. Since Myers tells us that Judging types have a slight edge in

higher education (52.4% of her liberal arts students were Judging), perhaps it is significant that the acting students come out 10.4% more Perceiving than the liberal arts students in her study.

### Implications for Teaching Acting.

Accepting that the majority of students in acting classes are likely to be ENFPs, how do we structure our acting classes so learning is favorable to ENFPs?

Beginning with the iNtuitive trait, as the strongest and most consistent one among the student actors, iNtuitive people do not necessarily neglect reality, they see beyond it. They see the whole forest instead of each individual tree. They compare, generalize, and see future possibilities. They are less tied to the practical and routine and like new situations and new enthusiasms. In "A Synthesis of Learning Style Research Involving the MBTI", Gordon Lawrence (1984, p. 5) found that iNtuition is associated with imagination, independence, and creativity. This is confirmed not only by the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator, but also by a battery of other tests. Golantry-Koel (1977, as quoted in Lawrence 1984, p. 7), found that iNtuitives dislike doing programmed learning by computer because it ties them down to a specific response and they can't take off on a tangential idea. However, they like participating in the give-and-take of class discussion where they can contribute their own ideas, and they like reading where they can imaginatively enter into the world of the book.

In a study by Eggins (1979, quoted by Lawrence 1984, p. 7), Sensings and iNtuitives were taught the same subject matter in two ways: both by an open-ended inductive approach and by a highly structured didactic approach. While the iNtuitives (especially those with Judging factors) learned well with either method, they preferred the inductive approach because it called for them to make comparisons, see relationships, deduce generalizations, and discover possibilities. A class predominately of iNtuitives would prefer this open-ended problem-solving approach. For acting students, the type of exercises already frequently given in acting classes, where one has a pantomime problem, a visualization, a conflict situation, or an interpersonal relationship to work out creatively and experientially with no absolute answer, seems ideal.

Also, it is important for the iNtuitives to see how everything fits together, to see the whole picture. Therefore, it is important for them to see how the improvisation work relates to performances of the written play. This need could be satisfied by script analysis where scenes are broken up into

motivation units, and, after being worked on improvisationally, are put back together into larger scenes. This would also relate to a study of the playwright's purpose and the actor's through-line.

iNtuitives also tend to be more interested in reading. They "find self-instruction helpful" and they like courses that "throw them on their own initiative" (Lawrence, 1984, p. 8). They might therefore like doing their own research on theories of acting or on the life journeys and performance discoveries of great actors. And if these iNtuitives are also Extraverts, the assignments could be in the form of oral reports to the rest of the class.

Tests for iNtuitives should be open-ended essay, rather than recall of specifics. They might prefer examinations where a stage situation is described and they must solve the acting problem. Better yet, the latter example could be given as a tested improvised problem.

The survey of student actors found that there were two Extraverts to every Introvert. Extraverts are energized by being with other people and are lonely when left solitary for too long. Thus, group work is ideal for them. They also prefer to think out loud on their feet, since the speaking process helps them to clarify their thoughts. Talkativeness is highly associated with both male and female Extraverts in a survey of many tests. They also seem to be better in motor drive skills and physical activities (Lawrence, 1984, p. 7). Again, group improvisations excel in giving Extraverts the opportunity to think and talk on their feet. Whereas Introverts tend to want to wait a bit before entering an improvisation to figure out what they want to do, Extraverts tend to enter with their minds blank and make it up as they go along. Bush (1968, as quoted in Lawrence, 1984, p. 4) also found that Extraversion was associated with reality-closeness while Introversion was associated with reality distance. This could be another reason why Extraverts tend to do better at group improvisations where they can get into the center of the action. However, instructors need to be just as sensitive to the Introverts. While giving the Extraverts the freedom to think on their feet, they need to be sensitive to the Introverts' need to enter the improvisation when they feel they are ready for it.

In the student survey, a large majority of students were Feeling types over Thinking. Feelers make decisions based on their over-all impact on people. They have gut reactions to events and are not afraid to let their emotions show. Feelers, like Extraverts, tend to prefer group work over individual work and tend to contribute more to the group they are engaged in (Lawrence, 1984, p. 9). They are more sympathetic to the situations of others, so they are likely to be more responsive to the attitudes and emotions expressed by other actors in group improvisations. They also like a close personal relationship with their teachers.

Lastly, Perceiving people tend to live life in a more spontaneous way, responding to their options as they go, rather than planning beforehand. When given a choice between a program of traditional learning and one of innovative study, Perceivers will choose the latter. They are playful people, often making their work into a game. They are naturally adept at and easily learn through theatre games. They are excellent at relating to others in class improvisations, working with the reactions that they perceive in others, and they make excellent ensemble players. Judging people may need to be taught to work off their fellow actors more, but Perceiving types do it naturally. They are more adaptable than Judgers, being better able to tolerate interruptions and changes in their schedules. And, as with Extraverts, they are at their best in the improvisational nature and looser structure of acting classes.

To sum up the preferences of ENFPs: Extraverts prefer discussion, psychomotor activity, and working with a group. INtuitives prefer tasks that call for insight and grasping general concepts. They like to find their own way in new material and use their imagination and creativity. They also enjoy intellectual pursuits and reading. Feeling types prefer learning through relating with others and a close rapport with the teacher. Perceiving types like to follow their own impulses and work in a flexible format (Lawrence, 1984, p. 12). Isabel Briggs Myers (1987, p. 23) says ENFPs are,

[a]lways seeing new possibilities and new ways of doing things. They have a lot of imagination and initiative for starting projects and a lot of impulsive energy for carrying them out. They are stimulated by difficulties and are most ingenious in solving them. . . . They are skillful in handling people and often have remarkable insight into the possibilities and development of others. They are extremely perceptive about the attitudes of others, aiming to understand rather than to judge people.

Clearly, students find it beneficial when they can participate in a class where the pedagogical method is carefully matched to the dominant personality type. As an acting instructor, my goal was to measure the personality types of students in two undergraduate acting classes and then to ascertain the preferred pedagogy from the results. Although the sample was small, the use of the Kiersey Temperament Sorter, a short, informal version of the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator, resulted in the emergence of a definite personality profile for the acting students. 100% of the respondents were iNtuitives on the Sensing--iNtuitive scale, as compared to only 25% of the general population. Extraversion, Feeling, and Perceiving also ranked higher than would be expected for either a general population or for a population of liberal arts students.

Since the publication of Viola Spolin's *Improvisation for the Theatre* and

the experiments of avant-garde theatre groups in the 60s, improvisations and theatre games have been increasingly used in actor's training. There are currently many books in this field available to assist the acting teacher. Many of the pedagogical techniques either in these texts or as described above, that have already been discovered experientially to be effective in acting classes, are indeed those tools most appropriate to the personality profile as described by this instrument. The use of the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator in analyzing the personality profiles of student actors has begun to give empirical confirmation and logical corroboration to the effectiveness of the techniques currently in practice.

Further work needs to be pursued in this area and in other related ones. I have for years included a unit on the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator in my classes in Small Group Discussion, as a method of approaching personality differences and decision making in the small group. In directing plays, Myers-Briggs is a helpful tool in analyzing characters and in assisting actors by delineating clearly the differences between the actors' and the characters' personalities. In each of the situations in which I have used this tool, the students were both delighted and amazed to see the relevance to themselves and to the work at hand.

**Note:** Seminars on the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator used to relate that women populations tended to test out at 75% Feeling while men were only 25% Feeling. Recent studies have shown that this may be a result of cultural conditioning, and that the two groups may actually be closer in this respect.

### ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cabral, Sister Gail. (1984) Psychological types in a Catholic convent: applied to community living and congregational data. *Journal of Psychological Type* 8, 16-22. The study shows that the community is composed of ISFJs and ESFJs.
- Descouzis, Denise P. and Lear Ashmore. (1988) Psychological types of speech-language pathologists and audiologists. *Journal of Psychological Type* 14, 40-45. Both groups were Introverted, but the speech pathologists tended to be iNtuitive and Feeling, while the audiologists tended to be Sensing, Thinking, and Judging.
- Descouzis, Denise P. (1989) Psychological types of tax preparers. *Journal of Psychological Type* 17, 36-38. All tax preparers were Sensing; there was a significantly larger representation of Judgers over Perceivers.

- Gaster, Walter, Jerome Tobacyk, and Lyndon Dawson. (1984) Jungian types in retail store managers. *Journal of Psychological Type* 7, 19-24. Store managers were 65% Extraverted, 83% Sensing, 93% Thinking, and 92% Judging.
- Ginn, Charles W. and Donald L. Sexton. (1988) Psychological types of INC. 500 founders and their spouses.<sup>4</sup> *Journal of Psychological Type* 16, 3- 12. Both male and female founders tend to be Thinkers (87%) and iNtuitives (60%), but the spouses tend to be of opposite types.
- Gladis, Stephen. Are you the write type? *Training and Development Journal* (7/93): 32-36. The article describes the different personality profiles for four different types of writers: correspondants (SF), technical writers (ST), creative writers (NF), and analytical writers (NT).
- Henderson, Richard S. and Dona L. Harris. (1991) Psychological types of emergency physicians as measured by the MBPI. *Journal of Psychological Type* 21, 59-61. Emergency room physicians showed a significantly higher representation of ENTPs, while other doctors tend to be ISTJs.
- Hoffman, Jeffrey L. (1986) Educational administrators: Psychological types. *Journal of Psychological Type* 11, 64-67. This type is overwhelmingly Judging and primarily ESTJ. The same is true for doctoral students in the field.
- Holsworth, Thomas E. (1984) Type preferences among Roman Catholic seminarians. *Journal of Psychological Type* 8, 33-35. There is a high percentage of ISFJs and ESFJs, similar to the study of nuns (Cabral).
- Keirsey, David and Marilyn Bates. (1984) *Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types*. 4th ed. California: Gnosology Books Ltd. A popular description of the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Indicator, containing an informal personal test.
- Kelly, Edward J. (1985) Chessmaster personality and type: Comparative analyses with average players and non-players. *Journal of Psychological Type* 9, 95-101. Chess masters showed significantly more INTJs.
- Kroeger, Otto and Janet M. Thuesen. (1988) *Type Talk: The 16 Personality Types That Determine How We Live, Love, and Work*. New York: A Tilden Press Book. A fairly recent, readable, and authoritative book on type theory.
- Lawrence, Gordon. (1984) A synthesis of learning style research involving the MBTI *Journal of Psychological Research* 8, 2-15. This very helpful study examines and correlates the findings of thirty-six studies on learning style.



- Mosley, Donald C. and Paul H. Pietri. (1985) Type profiles and managerial styles of bankers. *Journal of Psychological Type* 10, 41- 45. Among banking executives, the greatest proportion are STJs.
- Myers, Isabel Briggs and Peter B. Myers. (1980) *Gifts Differing*. California: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. This book is still primary and authoritative, although some of the research is a bit dated.
- Myers, Isabel Briggs. (1987) *Introduction to Type*. 4th ed. California: Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.. This booklet is used at MBPTI conferences.
- Provost, Judith A., Barbara H. Carson, and Peter G. Beidler. (1987) Teaching excellence and type. *Journal of Psychological Type* 13, 23-33. A description of CASE nationwide Professor of the Year finalists shows how teachers with different types utilize their talents in the classroom.
- Reynierse, James H. (1993) The distribution and flow of managerial types through organizational levels in business and industry. *Journal of Psychological Type* 25, 11-23. Although TJs predominate at all levels, Ss tend to be on the lower ranks, with Ns being promoted to the upper levels.
- Schacht, Anita J. (1989) Psychologist theoretical orientation and MBTI personality types. *Journal of Psychological Type* 18, 39-42. Although psychologists showed an 89% preference for N, F was over-represented in client-oriented psychology, while Ts dominated in analytical psychology.
- Waldo, Charles and Susan Reschetz. (1988) Psychological type and real estate sales. *Journal of Psychological Type* 16, 67-77. Preferences for ESJ and effective use of these qualities may enhance real estate sales.
- Westbrook, Paul. (1988) Frequencies of MBPI types among computer technicians. *Journal of Psychological Type* 15, 49. INTJs and ENTJs are over-represented and tend to rise in the hierarchy.

a variety of courses on two campuses  
year-round production of plays, films, and videos  
five plays produced each year

- one classic work
- a new play
- a play by a woman
- a musical or opera
- a summer children's show

**BRILLIANT TRACES**  
by Cindy Lou Johnson

**The MISSING BEAST & the Bubble Bandit**  
an outdoor production by Tim Barrett

**ANTICONE SOPHO**

**sleep tight and don't let the bedbugs bite**  
a performance by and about women  
a premiere production by maximo klein

**ROMEO & JULIET**

**CAMELOT**

**I Saw Another Butterfly**  
by Celeste Raspanti  
Foley Theater, University of St. Thomas  
October 13-16, 1993

the college of st. catherine  
O'Shaughnessy Auditorium  
March 11-14, 1993

facilities include

- 3 theaters (the 1800 seat O'Shaughnessy plus two smaller, experimental stages)
- audio and television studios

majors

- theater
- music theater/opera
- theater education

minors

- performance
- theater history/theory
- film

**THE COLLEGE OF ST. CATHERINE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS  
SHARE A JOINT THEATER DEPARTMENT LOCATED IN THE TWIN CITIES, ONE  
OF THE COUNTRY'S MAJOR THEATER CENTERS.**

## THE LACK OF POLITICAL CARTOONS IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Jim Schnell, Ohio Dominican College

The influence of cartoons in society has been analyzed from various theoretical perspectives. Focus on the role of political cartoons is a specific area of study. This article deals with the lack of political cartoons in The People's Republic of China and how this void is filled through other means. Analysis will include description of the relevance of cartoons, the political situation in China, the lack of political cartoons, excerpts from Chinese media, and the promotion of a government subsidized hero (as a form of political cartoon).

The author has visited China on three occasions. In 1987 he was a visiting professor at Northern Jiaotong University (Beijing), in 1988 he visited south China, and in 1991 he returned to Northern Jiaotong University as a visiting professor. Cross-cultural communication is his primary research area. He is a Major in the Air Force Intelligence Agency (as a reservist) and is assigned to the Pacific Command.

Cartoons have long been recognized as a form of mass communication. "Since the comics affect the culture in a variety of popular expressions. . . they merit study as active forces in the development of national ethos" (White and Abel, 1963, p. 3). The influence of cartoons, or art-parables, has been emphasized by a variety of scholars.

"Art-parable can catch a strong man's conscience" (Short, 1968, p. 12). Denis de Rougemont stated, "Art-parable is a baited hook; a tender trap; a calculated trap for meditation" (Scott, 1964, p. 63). Picasso viewed art-parable as "a lie that makes us realize truth" (Hazelton, 1967, p. 16). "Art-parable then always has something to say; and for this reason it will always be more significant for mankind than mere entertainment ever could be" (Short, 1968, p. 15).

In a *Journal of Educational Psychology* article entitled "Comics as a Social Force," S.M. Greenberg (1944) wrote, "Comics as a social force came upon us silently and grew to considerable proportions before the 'guardians of culture' were aroused by them" (p. 205). "The comics, in the first place, are potent communicators . . . When Superman in 1940 zipped overseas and destroyed the Westwall, the Third Reich, in an abusive article in *Das Schwarz Korps*, branded the super-mundane comic hero a Jew" (White and Abel, 1963, p. 4).

The aforementioned example evidences how writers can use cartoons to

convey desired meanings. Charles Schulz (1965), author of "Peanuts," writes, "I preach in these cartoons, and I reserve the same rights to say what I want to say as the minister in the pulpit" (p. 46). Thus, it is clear cartoons can be used as political propaganda. In a politically oppressive society such as The People's Republic of China, the author expected to find government use of political cartoons to persuade the masses and, to a lesser degree, less overt forms of political cartoons used by dissidents to oppose the government. However, political cartoons, as we know them in the west, are not common in China. An overview of Chinese society will provide needed context for understanding political communication in China.

Chinese civilization has a 5,000-year history that is grounded in feudalism. Feudalism emphasizes that personal expression, interests, and objectives are secondary to your position in society. Confucianism exemplifies feudalist thought. Confucianists argue "the first step toward good government and the realization of a harmonious society was for each person to know his role and perform it well according to the strictest interpretation of that role" (Pye, 1984, p.40). Feudalism was emphasized, especially since China's beginnings (roughly 3,000 B.C.), until 1911 A.D.

In 1911, the Nationalist Party overthrew the Ching Dynasty, the last dynasty in China. This began 38 years of turmoil during which China was forcibly opened politically and economically to the outside world. During this period the Communist Party was founded, the Japanese occupied China, and a civil war occurred between the Nationalists and Communists. The communists, led by Mao Tse Tung, won the civil war in 1949 and they established the present political structure (The People's Republic of China).

China was closed to the outside world from 1949-1979. They did this primarily to reject foreign domination. Chairman Mao initiated a decade long cultural revolution in 1966 that led to massive persecution of Mao's real (and imagined) political enemies. Since 1979, China has engaged in a variety of reforms to help it compete economically with the west. These reforms have included very minor political reforms regarding rights of the individual.

The concept of feudalism has been constant throughout the history of China. One Chinese student told the author "it is who we are." Feudalism must be considered during analysis of Chinese society.

On June 3, 1989, the Chinese government ordered troops to stop a six week long mass protest on Tienanmen Square (the 100 acre public plaza in Beijing). It is estimated over 3,000 people were killed. The student led protest was for an end of corruption in the communist party and greater rights for the individual. Since the massacre, the Chinese government began a massive crackdown against dissent and a re-education campaign is underway. There is considerable opposition to the government, especially in the cities.

The author has reviewed Chinese print media (Chinese and English language) for examples of political cartoons but has found nothing that strongly resembles political cartoons found in the west. The press is owned and controlled by the government; thus, one can deduce political cartoons are more a function of a free press (why would a government criticize itself?). One can find good-natured cartoons about Chinese life but these do not carry any type of political message. The government, as owner and operator of Chinese media, is far more interested in providing politically correct instruction for Chinese citizens than providing criticisms of the government. One example of politically correct instruction, conveyed through the visual communication mode, deals with the life of Lei Feng (a government subsidized hero). He will be discussed later in this article.

The author has reviewed major Chinese print media (newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets), from three recent periods, in search of materials directly related to political commentary via visual communication. These three periods (1987, 1989, and 1991) represent different political climates in China. The year 1987 is seen as a good reform year, that is, political expression was freer in comparison to other years. In the spring of 1989, newspapers offer unique examples of political expression because this was during the massive pro-democracy movement that was supported by many segments of Chinese society (including journalists). In 1991 media exemplifies a return to strict government control as the severe political crackdown is in full swing.

During March-June, 1987 the author was a visiting professor at Northern Jiaotong University (Beijing). He subscribed to the English language newspaper *China Daily* throughout this period and analyzed it for various types of cartoons. As previously indicated, 1987 is recognized as a good year regarding improvements with freedom of expression. Of course, this period ended abruptly in June, 1989 with the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

In 1987, artists and writers were encouraged to be socially responsible and politically correct with their art and literature. Wang Shen, Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Advisory Commission, stated, "if writers want to achieve anything, they must, first of all, have a correct stand and be dedicated to the people's cause" ("Mao's talks . . .", 1987). Similarly, Zhang Xianliang, from the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, expressed "literature and arts should serve the people and socialism" ("Struggle makes writers . . .", 1987).

A typical cartoon that was promoted by the Chinese government was an educational cartoon series, directed at children and adults, that included the following characters: Wise Grandfather, Little Tiger, Dear Sister, Well-Informed Boy, and Little Hedgehog. This series often dealt with social

problems and the correct solutions to these problems ("Children's paper wins trust . . .", 1987). This researcher never saw a cartoon in this series that dealt with a significant political issue.

Political warnings were found in Chinese media that gave writers and artists general guidelines to consider when dealing with political issues. The English language magazine *Beijing Review* carried such messages. "Some writers, however, have forgotten their social responsibility, producing bad and even vulgar works, spreading corrupt ideas, blindly worshipping foreign culture and copying foreign things mechanically. This has been resented and criticized by the masses" ("Guidelines for literature . . .", 1987). The final sentence from the aforementioned quote is a high context threat regarding the government's resolute position to oppose such expression.

A 1987 editorial in the *South China Post* (a major newspaper in Hong Kong) provided a glimpse of what was to come two years later. "Students, who feel suffocated by an educational system that determines where and what they study and assigns jobs after graduation, are acquiring a taste for greater freedom. Officials are devoting much energy and editorial space to attacks on the very notion of individualism, calling it pernicious western import. They are demanding altruistic allegiance to a system that has lost almost all of its moral credibility" (Hood, 1987).

In mid-April 1989, students in Beijing began a protest movement that soon gained support from many segments of the Chinese population throughout the country. The movement was crushed six weeks later on June 3. Students staged a hunger strike on Tiananmen Square in May that fueled much of the support from non-student organizations (workers, farmers, professionals, retirees, etc.). Freedom of the press was strongest during this period. If liberal political cartoons were to exist, this would be the time to find them.

The May 19, 1989 *China Daily* can be analyzed as an issue that represents journalistic reporting at the height of the movement. This issue is full of stories dealing with, and sympathetic towards, the protest. Five of seven cover page stories deal with the protest. The editorial page includes an editorial quoting Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's support for political reform in China. The closest example of a political cartoon this researcher has ever seen in a Chinese publication was below the editorial. It is a 6 x 10-inch photograph of a line of students holding hands and a small boy stretching between their legs to see what the excitement is all about. The photo's caption merely reads "Revelations" (*China Daily*, May 19, 1989, p. 4). The issue also includes a full page collage of eight photographs, with mildly sympathetic captions, from protest activities at Tiananmen Square.

Freedom of the press, or at least the Chinese version of it, left as quickly as

it came after the June 3 crackdown. Indiscriminate shooting occurred throughout Beijing, intense persecution of dissidents began, and the media became a tool of the government to manipulate Chinese citizens. The crackdown continues. The crackdown gained considerable momentum a year and a half after the June 3 massacre when the world's spotlight was on the Gulf War. Thus, international scrutiny was less pronounced, allowing for greater political oppression by the government.

The author was in Beijing, as a visiting professor at Northern Jiaotong University, during the ground war offensive into Iraq. Review of Chinese print media during this period evidenced the government clearly controlled the dissemination of information (government propaganda). The March 5, 1991 *People's Daily* exemplifies government emphasis on the aforementioned government subsidized hero Lei Feng. The *People's Daily* newspaper is published throughout China and has the largest circulation of any newspaper in that country. Four Lei Feng stories were featured on the cover page that particular day (*People's Daily*, March 5, 1991, p. 1).

Lei Feng, who is now dead, is a "quasi-mythical model of the perfect communist man . . . who spent his days overachieving and his nights reading Mao thought" (Willey, et al, p. 40). He is frequently held up by the government as an example for Chinese citizens to follow. As previously mentioned, a random issue of *People's Daily* (March 5, 1991) carried four cover page stories about Lei Feng: 1) an editorial about Lei Feng as a model citizen/soldier, 2) names of selected Chinese citizens whose lives best exemplify the virtues of Lei Feng, 3) a conference held to study the virtues of Lei Feng, and 4) a travel agent who exemplifies Lei Feng virtues in her dedicated work with tourists. The visual omnipresence of Lei Feng is perpetuated through billboards, films, newspapers, books and pamphlets.

In closing, the lack of political cartoons in China is directly related to the lack of a free press in China. The closest thing to political cartoons are the "politically correct" cartoons dealing with Lei Feng. The author expects if the government loosens its grip on the media, resulting in a less restrained media, this will result in more politically-oriented cartoons with themes unpreferred by the government (as happened in 1989).

#### References

- Berkman, A. (1936, June) Sociology of the American comic strip. *American Spectator*.
- Children's paper wins trust from millions. (1987, April 18) *China Daily*, p.5.
- Untitled. *China Daily* (1989, May 19), p. 4.

- Eble, K.E. (1963) "Our serious comics" in White, D.M. and Abel, R.H. *The Funnies*. New York, NY: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Greenberg, S.M. (1944, December) Comics as a social force. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 18, 204-213.
- Guidelines for Literature. (1987, May 25) *Beijing Review*, p. 4.
- Hazelton, R. (1967). *A Theological Approach to Art*. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
- Hood, M. (1987, June 14). A new spiritual crisis lights a culture in transition. *South China Post*, p. 13.
- Mao's talks about art reaffirmed. (1987, May 13) *China Daily*, p. 3.
- Untitled. (1991, March 5) *People's Daily*, p. 1.
- Pye, L. (1984) *China: An Introduction*. Boston: Little, Brown Publishers.
- Schulz, C. (1965) Happiness is lots of assignments. *Writers Yearbook: 1965*.
- Scott, N.A. (1964) Religion and the mission of the artist. *The New Orpheus* ed. New York, NY: Sheed and Ward.
- Short, R.L. (1968) *The Parables of Peanuts*. New York, N.Y.: Harper and Row.
- Struggle makes writers more realistic. (1987, April 8) *China Daily*, p. 1.
- White, D.M and Abel, R.H. (1963) *The Funnies*. New York, NY: The Free Press of Glencoe.
- Willey, F.; Elliott, D.; and Bogert, C. (1987, March 16) The long shadow of Mao. *Newsweek*, p. 40.



# THE BOOK STOPS HERE: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND THE DEMISE OF THE SEARS CATALOG

Thomas G. Endres, University of St. Thomas

In February of 1993, the popular cartoon *Dunagin's People* depicted an elderly woman sleeping peacefully in a hospital bed, despite being attached to an array of IV tubes and monitors. In the foreground, a doctor provided the following report to the woman's husband: "She's going to be fine, but I don't think she's strong enough to hear about the Sears catalog yet."

And so it was with much of the nation when, on January 25, 1993, the Sears, Roebuck and Co. issued a press release announcing that, after approximately one century of providing the country with everything from corsets to Craftsman tools, the "big book" was coming to an end. The decision to cancel the catalog, and the corollary announcements that accompanied that decision, provided Sears with unique and difficult communication challenges. This essay shall attempt to further investigate the demise of this American icon, beginning with an historical chronicle of the catalog itself. Following this, O'Hair and Friedrich's (1992) model of Strategic Communication for business and professions will be used to produce a descriptive analysis of the decision and its attendant messages. Of primary import to the analysis is whether or not Sears made a logical choice, and how effectively they managed to communicate this to their various stockholders. Of secondary importance is a pedagogical assessment of the O'Hair and Friedrich model itself. Of concern is the model's interpretive breadth and depth, and its adequacy for shedding insight into organizational phenomenon.

## The Life and Death of the Sears Catalog

The story of the Sears catalog begins in 1886 in North Redwood, Minnesota, a small town two miles north of Redwood Falls, Minnesota, which is yet another small town approximately 115 miles south of Minneapolis-St. Paul. In it, "a young train station agent named Richard Sears got his start . . . by peddling a shipment of watches rejected by a local jeweler" (Meryhew, 1993, p. 5B). Using printed mailers, the twenty-three year old entrepreneur soon sold the watches for a tidy profit. Shortly thereafter, he teamed his sales abilities with the skills of a quiet watchmaker named Alvah Curtis Roebuck, and a small mail order business specializing in fine jewelry and silverware was created. The businessmen soon relocated to Chicago, and in 1896, "Sears produced its

first large general merchandise catalog, featuring 753 pages of merchandise targeted to America's farmers and their families with a variety of merchandise from apparel to farm implements--in addition to watches and jewelry" (Sears Catalog, 1993). By this time, it was clear that Sears "was possessed of a peculiar strain of genius that rendered him capable of convincing otherwise skeptical individuals to buy things they'd never even heard of from a man in Chicago, Illinois, whom they'd never even seen" (Katz, 1987, p. 9).

Though the catalog idea was immediately successful, the monumental years of the Sears, Roebuck & Co. catalog--during the early 1900s--took place without the continued guidance of either Richard Sears or Alvah Roebuck. In fact, Roebuck had actually sold out his share of the business for \$25,000 in 1895--the year before the release of the first major catalog.

Richard Sears' new partner was Julius Rosenwald. According to Donald R. Katz (1987), in his organizational historiography *The Big Store: Inside the Crisis and Revolution at Sears*, their relationship was marred by conflict between the founder's zest for the sales game and the power of a well turned phrase, and his partner's concern for candor and the bottom line. In 1905, Rosenwald made Sears drop the "Heidelberg Belt," an electronic device strapped around the waist alleged to cure impotency and a variety of stomach ailments, because it was burning the clients. Richard Sears left the company in 1908, sold his stock in 1913, and died the next year at the age of fifty-one.

"Under Rosenwald, Sears became a catalog empire . . . By the end of the second decade of the century, Sears arguably encompassed more of the basic functions of a capitalist economy--from extraction, to fabrication, to distribution and consumption, from finance to communications--than any company before it" (Katz, 1987, p. 10). During this time, it was said that many rural homes had two books: the Bible and the Sears catalog (Bernstein, 1991). As Landsberg added, "The Bible ministered to the soul, but the Sears catalog, it sometimes seemed, took care of every other human need" (1993, p. 1D). Landsberg continued his portrayal with the following:

The catalog taught some Americans to read, and gave others their most authoritative sense of modern taste and fashion. Its lingerie ads were the closest thing to pin-ups for generations of American boys. Its Christmas "wish books" were the Saturday morning TV ads of their era. And, last but not least, the catalog--which once advertised "the finest De Luxe silk" toilet paper--WAS toilet paper in many a rural outhouse. (1993, p. 1D)

Similar sentiments were expressed by Gray (1993), who described the early 1900s catalog as "an annual and unfailingly upbeat report on the American horn of plenty. All this stuff for sale, more in heaven and earth than was dreamt of in even the maddest consumer's philosophy" (p. 66). Following

on the heels of the aforementioned Heidelberg belt, products of that era included violins (a Stradivarius for \$6.10), bust creme for "breast enlargement", fruit trees, harnesses, plows, pistols, rifles, and, until 1924, covered wagons. Before the Food and Drugs Act of 1906, Sears distributed several opium-based products including Soothing Syrup for children's coughs, and Laudanum, an addictive headache remedy (Bernstein, 1991; Gray, 1993; Landsberg, 1993).

Not only did Sears sell everything for the home, for awhile the catalog even sold the homes themselves. "By 1927, more than 35,000 people had constructed 'Honor Bilt' kit homes, complete with paint and cupboards" (p. Bernstein, 1991, p. 14). The public looked to the Sears catalog for everything, from looms and lightbulbs, to a 1905 publication entitled *Lovers Guide and Manual*. Landsberg (1993) shared stories of a Tennessee farmer who wrote Sears, Roebuck asking for a wife, and an Idaho schoolteacher who tried to order a handsome man depicted in one of the catalog's illustrations.

Ironically, the legacy of the Sears catalog was over almost before it began. Rosenwald passed the company on to former General Robert Wood in 1922 and, according to Katz (1987), "the Golden Age of the American catalog was already in decline" (p. 11). Populations were becoming more urban, and with the availability of the car, more mobile. Wood decided to convert some of the mail-order plants for the catalog into supply bases for retail stores. In 1928 there were twenty-seven Sears stores; by 1929 there were 324. "In 1932, the volume of the General's retail store sales surpassed those of the catalog for good" (Katz, 1987, p. 11). From the 1930s on, Sears was a store with a catalog, not the other way around.

From this point, a quick overview will be provided from the Katz' historiography covering the 1940s through the 1980s. During the World Wars, Sears developed a mythologized reputation as a truly American institution. Following the wars, former military members flocked to work for the retired General. "By 1949, five of every one hundred dollars spent on merchandise" went to Sears (p. 12). Though outsold by the stores, the catalog still thrived, and Franklin Delano Roosevelt suggested it be air-dropped all over the Soviet Union as a testament to the rewards of capitalism.

Throughout the 1950s and 60s, the General began to back out of the picture and redistribute the power to a core of highly trained and hand picked managers, a tradition which continues today. He remained in the less prominent, but still powerful, position of Chairman of the Board. "By the mid-1960s, Sears, Roebuck was a superpower, as invincible a business as the nation it served" (p. 15). At this time Sears also began to diversify beyond the scope of retail and merchandise. Expansions over the years included Allstate Insurance, Tire and Auto Centers, Coldwell Banker real estate, Dean Witter

financial Services, and the development of the Discover credit card.

While this expansion should have benefited Sears, Roebuck, the overall impact was not as expected. Following the completion of the Sears Tower in Chicago during the 1970s, "the incredible pride Sears people always talked about had become pridefulness; . . . the great march of the providers for the American masses had become a strut" (p. 23). In addition to image problems, Sears was faced with increasing competition from J.C. Penney, Montgomery Ward, and the Kresge stores (later renamed Kmart), leading then Sears president Arthur Wood to call in outside consultants for help.

During this time period, special meetings were held to discuss the "catalog problem." In addition to personal and political conflicts existing between Sears' managers and the head of catalog sales, everyone had to admit that the "days of small-town parades including entire floats piled with Sears big books was over" (p. 152). Though Sears still dominated the catalog business--sales were three times that of the strongest competitor--it had lost its domination in the market.

The 1980s marked a time of restructuring for Sears, with a focus on saving the retail end of the business. Aggressive ad campaigns were developed with an eye to the future. The "Challenge '81" campaign was created to bring the company up to speed. The most notable change for the public was the new, sleek corporate logo which replaced the old typefaced logo in a letterbox. This repackaging became manifest in the catalog. While the previous covers had traditionally depicted illustrations of Norman Rockwell-ish Americana, the new catalog carried a photograph of supermodel Cheryl Tiegs, and a splash of slogans promising quality, low prices, convenience, and satisfaction guaranteed.

While the revisions carried Sears through the 1980s, the Big Store did not enter the final decade of this century on top. In the 1993 *Hoover's Handbook of American Business*, Sears was reported in 3rd place behind Wal-Mart and Kmart. The handbook stated that "sales have declined in recent years as discounters and malls have drawn customers away, while many analysts believe that Sears has lost touch with its customer base" (p. 499). The catalog began showing a loss. Ironically, the only profit at Sears, Roebuck came from the non-retail end. As reported in *Time* magazine, the company "was better at selling stocks, bonds, credit cards and insurance policies than it was at satisfying its core retail customers" ("Trimming frills . . .," 1992, p. 29). In essence, the successful non-merchandising ventures were subsidizing the failure of the retail stores and the catalog.

In a unique move, Sears began to dismantle its empire, selling off most of its financial investments, and refocusing its attention to the stores, the catalog, and its original offshoot, Allstate Insurance. In response to Sears' renewed

interest in its merchandising group, *Advertising Age* magazine offered the following observation: "Sears needs to completely rethink and reposition its identity if it's going to survive. And not all analysts believe anymore that it will" (Hume, 1992, p. 4).

Enter Arthur Martinez, former Saks Fifth Avenue executive, brought in by Sears President Edward Brennan in August of 1992 as the Big Store's new CEO. Less than half a year after his installment the Sears Catalog--the big book, the "Farmer's Bible"--came to an end. On January 25, 1993, it was announced that Sears would cease to produce the catalog as part of a larger package of budgetary changes, including the closing of 113 stores; the loss of over 50,000 full and part-time jobs; the elimination of certain auto-repair services; and the selling of Pinstripes Petites, a chain of women's clothing stores ("Sears to cut jobs," 1993, p. 1A).

Ironically, the Sears catalog seemed to be the focus of attention more in death than in life. Immediately, competitors began to assess the ways in which they could capitalize on Sears' decision. Fingerhut Companies Inc., a Minnesota-based catalog retailer who offers general merchandise on payment plans to lower-income families, seemed in a position to benefit the most. By January 26, the day after Sears' announcement, Fingerhut stock rose over 14% (Apgar, 1993, p. 3D). Speculations were also made about what Sears would do with its invaluable 30-million name customer database which, unlike most catalogers, had never been sold or rented to competitors (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 43). But the biggest irony took place in the halls of the catalog order center itself. As part of the announcement, Sears promised that orders could be placed through the catalog until May 30, 1993. Peterson (1993) reported that customers made over one million calls a day, "double the traffic usually handled during the frantic Christmas season" (p. 34), and that 2,000 temporary operators were added to handle the heavy load.

And finally, with the death, came the eulogies. During the catalog's final days, Bernstein (1992) observed that America was in danger of losing a "mass-market link to its rustic past" (p. 14). The day following the announcement, Landsberg (1993) wrote that the demise of the catalog took with it "a trove of Americana, perhaps our best record of American material culture from the turn of the century to the present" (p. 1D). In "An ode to the big book," Gray acknowledged that the announcement:

[p]robably didn't mean much to couch potatoes cradling their touch-tone phones while watching the Home Shopping Network on cable. But for most people over a certain age--say 35, maybe 40--the news was slightly unnerving. Even those who hadn't seen the big book since their childhood recognized a loss, not necessarily of a shopping aid but of an innocence and optimism and

simplicity of desire that the catalog both thrived on and fed. (1993, p. 67)

Gray concluded: "Still, as serials go, it had a terrific run. The catalog was never long on plot. But it was generous, munificent, in its details" (1993, p. 67).

### O'Hair and Friedrich's Model of Strategic Communication

The remainder of this essay will focus specifically on the Martinez decision regarding the catalog. The framework for analysis will be O'Hair and Friedrich's model of Strategic Communication. This author uses their text, *Strategic Communication for Business and the Professions* (1992), in an introductory course titled Communication in the Workplace. The model was developed and applied by the O'Hair and Friedrich in both the classroom and real world settings in order to "maximize the opportunities for communication" in the business environment (p. 26). Though the model is maintained throughout the text in relation to interpersonal, group, and public situations in the work force, it is not applied consistently across a singular example or case study. This essay is an attempt to do just that. Only those factors of the model deemed most relevant to the Sears' decision and announcement will be incorporated.

According to O'Hair and Friedrich, "(s)trategic communication means achieving your potential in four areas: (1) Goal setting . . . , (2) Situational knowledge . . . , (3) Communication competence . . . , and (4) Control of anxiety (pp. 26-27). These areas will be addressed in turn.

#### Goal setting

O'Hair and Friedrich maintain that communication success is more likely if one has set clear and challenging goals (p. 26). An organization must map out strategies to solve problems, while setting, assigning resources to, and obtaining feedback on performance goals (p. 37-38). The areas of discussion they present that are most relevant to the Sears' decision are leadership vision and the management of change.

**Vision:** An organization must have a clear and original vision in order to be successful. *Business Week* provided the following synopsis of the strategic vision proposed by Sears:

--Focusing on women customers and increasing apparel offerings

--Saving \$300 million a year by closing money-losing catalog operations and stores, and cutting 34,000 part-time and 16,00 full-time staffers

--Recruiting outsiders to bring in new ideas, starting with merchandising group chief Arthur Martinez

--Spending \$4 billion to renovate 500 of its stores

--Training sales staffers to improve service, long a sore spot for customers (Kelly, 1993, p. 85)

Martinez seemed to know the importance of a clear vision from the beginning: "I felt a sense of urgency even before the restructuring . . . We have to get this company turned around" (Kelly, 1993, p. 82). The justification for the extremity of some components of the vision were articulated by Martinez in Sears' press release announcing the changes:

The restructuring program we are announcing today is a painful but necessary step to correct a number of chronic business problems for Sears Merchandise Group and to accelerate progress in our cost reduction goals. Sears will now focus on core retail businesses and locations where we are either winning today or have the capacity to do so in the near future. Our objective is simple: To provide customers with good values and superior service in merchandising businesses that will provide an attractive return to our shareholders. ("Sears Announces," 1993)

Regarding the catalog specifically, Martinez stated, "This was a very difficult decision because the catalog is our heritage. It's how Sears started" ("Sears Announces," 1993). He followed this, however, with the recognition that the catalog had suffered three years of losses, and that the market position could not be improved to a sufficient level of acceptable return. Taken together, the vision, though radical, is clearly articulated and justified, with no room for capitulation or backsliding.

**Managing change:** In the implementation of a vision, O'Hair and Friedrich posit that several steps are required to successfully manage the change. Among these are attempts to focus the organization on the change and build a supportive network of people committed to the process (p. 88). This may have posed unique challenges for Martinez. As McCormick (1993) observed, the Martinez vision is analogous to the strategies often negatively associated with takeover artists: "cut the work force, throw losing businesses overboard and to hell with tradition" (p. 51). McCormick went on to describe Martinez' style as "short on grandiose biz-speak about changing the corporate culture, longer on ideas for getting the cash registers to sing" (p. 51).

Martinez seemed to overcome the potential conflict between his bottom line goals and his need to gain and maintain advocates. In the Sears press release (1993), he stated, "The restructuring program is diverse, complex and comprehensive and will require several months to complete. We are committed to its careful and thoughtful implementation to ensure proper

communication and understanding with associates, customers, and venders." In this statement, Martinez managed to establish the idea of commitment, both to the vision itself, and to the people whom it would affect. Martinez' level of commitment to the vision was reaffirmed in his statement to *Business Week*: "We have a consistent strategic message . . . We will not flop around like a fish" (Kelly, 1993, p. 82).

*Business Week* also reported on post-announcement efforts by Martinez to manage the change by developing a commitment to the vision. These included new ad campaigns; increased training for salespeople in the areas of greeting shoppers, offering help, and closing sales; and shifting tasks like restocking to nonsales staff, so salespeople can spend more time on the floor assisting customers. The catch phrase behind the vision was "pure selling environment," and it all was consistent with the Martinez philosophy: "No matter whether you're selling lettuce or lawn mowers, retailing is theater" (McCormick, 1993, p. 51).

### Situational Knowledge

This component of strategic communication refers to "the information you have (or can collect) about the requirements for successful communication in a particular context" (O'Hair and Friedrich, p. 26). Relevant factors to this analysis are organizational structure and the leader's organizational knowledge.

**Structure:** According to O'Hair and Friedrich, the structure of an organization includes its actual, physical environment; its procedural structure, e.g. policies; and its patterned structure, which can include informal methods of communication such as the grapevine. What makes the Sears scenario unique is the deviation from the procedural and patterned structures; namely, that these major changes were made by a literal outsider. Sears has a long reputation of lifetime employment and promotion from within. To bring in someone from outside the network is almost unheard of in Sears' history.

Bear in mind, Martinez was not brought in as a temporary consultant; he was brought in as the new CEO, and rumor had it that he was given full authority to do as he pleased. As Thomas Tashjian of First Manhattan Co. speculated, "Martinez is a smart man who probably wouldn't have accepted the job without the ability to walk in with a hatchet" ("Sears to cut jobs," 1993, p. 10A). Of course, it is exactly this deviation from the norm that allowed Martinez to be so successful with the implementation of his radical vision. As noted by McCormick (1993), "a newcomer can make big changes without alienating the employees" (p. 51).

The need for outside intervention was particularly strong in regard to the



catalog. Maxwell Sroge, president of a catalog consultancy company, accused the catalog in 1992 of being "a cold fish; it's like a gigantic bureaucracy in print" (Fitzgerald, 1992, p. 13). His solution: "They need to put someone in charge who has a dream" (p. 13).

This approach is consistent with O'Hair and Friedrich's discussion of the use of "outside experts." They present this as a situational knowledge strategy for dealing with the politics within a structure, and a way to help "organize and distribute power, resources, and rewards in the pursuit of specific goals" (p. 46).

**Organizational Knowledge:** In addition to understanding the internal structure and functions of a company, O'Hair and Friedrich argue that one must have a broader base of organizational knowledge. "Leaders and workers must also be receptive to the environment to know what the competition is doing, what the customers want, what the national economy is doing, and how the global market is performing" (p. 90).

Martinez' plan looked to the larger consumer environment, and devoted substantial resources to re-target Sears' actual clientele: women. McCormick (1993) reported that female customers account for 70% of Sears' retail business overall. Kelly (1993) expanded the picture, describing the typical shopper as "a woman from 35 to 64 years old with a median household income of \$33,000" (p. 84). The problem, both analysts reported, is that women don't look to Sears for fashion. The clothes are viewed as too dowdy, and petite and large sizes were not readily available.

With Martinez at the helm, 1993 saw a 20% increase in the apparel ad budget, revived fashions, and increased selections of cosmetics, jewelry, and accessories. His strategy was unique, according to *Newsweek*, as he did not attempt to win back upscale customers who left to shop at trendier stores. Citing the aforementioned target audience, Martinez stated, "There are plenty of families in America who fit those characteristics," to which he added, "We don't want to be cutting edge . . . We do want to be in line with mainstream fashion trends at terrific prices" (McCormick, 1993, p. 51).

As he analyzed the consumer environment, Martinez also realized that the catalog specifically was not accomplishing what it set out to do. In its last year, two 1,600 page catalogs-the "Spring/Summer" and "Fall/Winter" editions-as well as the Christmas "Wish Book," were distributed to approximately 14 million households ("Sears Catalog," 1993). But the market had turned to ordering from smaller, specialty catalogs such as L.L. Bean, Victoria's Secret, and Domestications. As early as 1991, Bernstein warned that the catalog was "losing the game it helped to create" (p. 14). As Gray stated in his ode to the catalog, "The big book's children finally devoured their parent" (1993, p. 67). With this knowledge, Martinez decided to cancel

production of the big books, but continue with the publication of approximately 50 smaller seasonal, monthly sale, specialized, and promotional catalogs.

### Communication Competence

This component of O'Hair and Friedrich's (1992) model refers to making appropriate decisions regarding the presentation of the communication, as well as correctly adapting to situational demands. Regarding the catalog decision, relevant factors include a comparison of internal and external messages and an examination of channels used.

**Internal/External Messages:** O'Hair and Friedrich differentiate between internal messages "sent and received within the organizational boundaries of the company" (p. 54), and external messages "exchanged between the organization and its environment" (p. 58). When asked about differences or similarities in how the catalog decision was disseminated to these audiences, Dan Fapp (Public Affairs office, Sears Merchandise Group, Hoffman Estates, IL), said that the Sears administration sent "a consistent message: 'We don't believe in saying one thing to one group, and something else to another. It comes back to haunt you' "(personal communication, March 25, 1994). Both insiders and outsiders received a version of the press release ("Sears Announces Restructuring") that has been cited throughout this paper. The primary difference between them was the method of dissemination and the channels used, which are discussed in the next section.

O'Hair and Friedrich describe the typical internal message as downward communication in which the message originates near the top of an organization, and "is sent down the chain person by person" (p. 57). Bill Blackwood, Regional Manager for Sears Home Delivery Centers in Kansas City, sees this as the process used to distribute the information in-house. At the time of the decision, Blackwood worked for one of the catalog distribution points. His regional manager was called in to the Chicago office and was sent home with the news. Each regional manager was to tell their local managers face-to-face, then each local person was to pass the news to their subordinates. Blackwood described the internal message from the corporate office as a "prepared script." When asked to provide an assessment of the emotional tenor of the message, he described it as "more neutral than anything" (personal communication, March 25, 1994).

Externally, the press received a six-page document on January 25, detailing the decisions made at the January 23 board meeting. It was accompanied by a three-page background supplement providing information regarding the catalog itself. The tone of the announcement was very

straightforward and matter-of-fact, as found in these first two paragraphs:

Sears, Roebuck and Co. today announced a major restructuring program to streamline its Merchandise Group by focusing on profitable core retail operations, further implementing its September 1992 decision to concentrate on its retail and insurance businesses. The restructuring program will require a \$1.7 billion after-tax charge in the fourth quarter of 1992.

Sears said that over the next year it will discontinue its U.S. catalog operations, close unprofitable U.S. retail and specialty stores, streamline or discontinue various unprofitable activities, offer a voluntary early retirement program to certain salaried associates, and write down various real estate properties. (1993)

The detail and history provided in the releases is noteworthy. As O'Hair and Friedrich note, a great deal of external communication is anticipated, even perfunctory, but some messages are "exchanged in order to reduce organizational uncertainty" (p. 58). This was clearly the case regarding the external messages sent by the Sears corporation.

**Channels:** As noted above, while the internal and external messages were similar in content and tone, they differed in the ways in which they were sent. O'Hair and Friedrich define channels as "the media that carry messages to receivers" (p. 59), and they rate channels as to their degree of media richness, using a continuum moving from high media richness to low: face to face speaking, telephone, E-mail, personal written correspondence, formal written correspondence, public speaking, and statistical numerical reporting (p. 61).

The channel used for the external communication, i.e. the formal press release, was quite appropriate given O'Hair and Friedrich's comments regarding the use of low media richness, which includes "when large numbers of people have to be reached at once; when immediate feedback is unnecessary; and when formal communication is more appropriate" (p. 60). The channels and strategies used for the internal communication were more problematic.

As noted earlier, the internal communication began face to face with regional managers at the Chicago home office. Other messages, stated Dan Fapp of the Sears Public Affairs office, were sent E-mail (personal communication, March 25, 1994). On the plus side, these methods represent rich media channels that are most warranted when "the message is designed for specific people" and "when the situation is stressful" (O'Hair and Friedrich, p. 60). The downside, especially for the communication scholar attempting to locate textual artifacts, is that no documents are available for later analysis; there is no "paper trail."

This was confirmed by Vicki Cwiok, Archivist for the Sears Merchandise

Group in Chicago. The only existing documents in the corporation's archives regarding the catalog decision are the press release and the catalog background memo. Of course, Martinez and his colleagues may have hard copy materials, but these are not available for public consumption, and Cwiok observed that it may be years before they end up in the archives (personal communication, March 25, 1994).

A separate problem brought about by the method used for internal communication is that some information and individuals are allowed to slip through the cracks. O'Hair and Friedrich note the potential negative effect such serial communication has on message accuracy, and later add that informal networks, or the grapevine, will substitute for the formal messages. Bill Blackwood (personal communication) said that the goal of the internal strategy used was to tell employees "before they heard it on the news." Ironically, this author's wife, who works for a Sears in a metropolitan mall, first heard the catalog announcement from a customer. Following that, the department floor was abuzz, not with formal downward communication regarding corporate thinking, but with informal horizontal communication as to how best take advantage of the catalog's closing prices.

### Anxiety Management

The fourth and final component of O'Hair and Friedrich's model of strategic communication is the control of anxiety, i.e. the ability to stay below the "threshold of anxiety", or the point above which communication effectiveness is destroyed (p. 27). Looking at the Sears' case, relevant factors include the relative load of the information, and the behaviors of leaders.

**Relative load:** The relative load of information refers to the amount of information provided in light of the receiver's processing capability. O'Hair and Friedrich distinguish between communication overload, which results from too much information, and communication underload, which "refers to the underutilized processing capacity of a unit or person that results when too little information is received from the system or environment" (p. 64). If there was any downfall to the Sears' strategy, it was from providing too little information in advance, followed by the potential overload of the announcement itself.

The fact that Sears was experiencing financial woes was public knowledge, but right up until the end it appeared that the catalog was not in danger. Bernstein reported in 1991 that the catalog may be dropped, but Sears denied the rumors (p. 14). In September of 1992, just after the Martinez appointment, *Advertising Age* quoted a Sears' spokesman voicing "ongoing support for the catalog for the long term" (p. 13). The spokesman did note

that he could not speculate on what Martinez might do, but concluded, "We can only say the company is committed to making the catalog profitable in the long term" (p. 13). A month later, as Sears began to announce divestment strategies, analysts and consultants still did not foresee the catalog as one of the "shoes" that was going to be dropped (Hume, 1992, p. 4).

When asked whether he foresaw the decision, Bill Blackwood of Kansas City said he knew of the company's financial problems, but the danger of the catalog closing seemed like a distant threat. "Nobody really believed it would happen," he stated, "It came as a very big surprise" (personal communication, March 25, 1994).

**Leader behaviors:** Despite the stressful abruptness of the announcement, Martinez demonstrated behaviors that are consistent with O'Hair and Friedrich's portrayal of a leader who is able to reduce anxiety. These include an individual who can "remain optimistic even in the face of adversity," and "overcome anxieties by being persistent in their actions and behavior in spite of pessimism and short-term setbacks" (p. 100).

Martinez' comments at the time were optimistic and future-oriented. Following the announcement of his new strategy, he assured both insiders and outsiders by stating, "We have tried to attack all our non-performing businesses, nonperforming locations and nonstrategic assets and to deal with them at one time . . . I would like to believe this is a full and complete resolution of all of our major problems" ("Sears to cut jobs," 1993, p. 1A). With this, Martinez portrayed his plan as being both necessary and sufficient. While shocking, it did not forebode later upheavals.

O'Hair and Friedrich also note that an effective leader dispels anxiety by being passionate about their message, while working to foster enthusiastic commitment from their managers (p. 100). Martinez was very emphatic at one point in the press release, promising that "Sears will remain a dominant retailer in key merchandise lines and related services." Several months after the decision, following an upswing in Sears profits, Martinez stated, "We have a long journey ahead of us" (Kelly, 1992, p. 82). Statements such as this helped manage anxiety by letting workers know that Martinez was not fly-by-night or a flash-in-the-pan executive; his plan was working, and he intended to stay the course.

## Discussion

The goal in these final pages is to provide a brief evaluation of the Martinez decision and announcement, followed by an analysis of adequacy of the O'Hair and Friedrich model of Strategic Communication.

## Sears' decision

From a business, bottom-line perspective, the Martinez decision to restructure Sears and eliminate the catalog was a logical one. The only real thing the catalog had going for it was the power of nostalgia. This was not enough to allow the big book to continually drain the corporation of its profits. Immediately following the decision, analysts lauded Martinez for his strategy. A week after the announcement, *Advertising Age* reported Wall Street's favorable reaction, and said of Sears' future: "It certainly has a better chance today than it did before last week's announcements" ("Sears makes the right move," 1993, p. 18).

Since that time, the strategy has continued to pay off. Within six months, Sears stores open a year or more showed double-digit increases, making it the only store beside Wal-Mart to log significant gains. Junior apparel sales showed a 30% increase. By the time of this writing, it is speculated that Sears will have saved \$300 million dollars, and will continue to do so annually (Kelly, 1993, p. 84).

While the actual decision was clearly sound, what of the method by which it was communicated? Again, Martinez seems to have come out on top. The press release given to external audiences, though shocking, had the desired impact on both shoppers and financial investors. Analysts in all major periodicals painted Martinez as a risk-taker, a visionary, and a savior, rather than as a destroyer of American icons.

The only real flaw in the communication was the handling of the internal messages. While the attempt to use high media richness serial communication is commendable in theory, it did not work well in practice. The message was traumatic to many, and the grapevine was allowed to run rampant. Even if the Martinez decision was not "in the works" for very long, more could have been done through both formal and informal means to forewarn employees of the catalog's potential demise. The "bombshell announcement" strategy tends to produce more anxiety than it alleviates.

Of course, that may have been part of the larger corporate strategy. Bill Blackwood of the Kansas City Home Delivery Center was one of many individuals who worked with the catalog who was quickly moved to another position. He noted that hourly people lost their jobs, management was restructured, and everything concerning the catalog was "shut down, cleaned out, or thrown away." The lack of paper trail, coupled with the fast restructuring and lack of time to build a defense, may help account for Blackwood's reflection as he looks back on the ex-catalog: "I think it has become a non-entity" (personal communication, March 25, 1994). Whether or not it was purposeful, the abruptness and totality of decision saved it from

being usurped by the stockholders in a sea of nostalgia-laden second thoughts.

### O'Hair and Friedrich Model

As a framework for analyzing organizational phenomena, the O'Hair and Friedrich model of Strategic Communication has both strengths and limitations. Its greatest advantage is its parsimony. If two theories each explain an event, the one that does so in the simplest and most concise fashion is generally preferred. For example, this analysis has identified Martinez' rhetorical style as candid, accessible, and well geared to external audiences. A scholar could reach the same conclusion using Allen and Caillouet's (1994) model of Legitimation Endeavors. They maintain that neo-institutional approaches to impression management by corporate actors forego earlier strategies of apologies, justifications, and excuses. In contrast, actors addressing external audiences should strive for ingratiation, in which the speaker expresses "belief, value, and attitude similarity; attempt to persuade the target of the organization's positive qualities, traits, motives, and/or intentions; and praise the target to gain approval" (p. 48). This says little more than the O'Hair and Friedrich analysis, despite its polysyllabic flavor.

A second advantage of O'Hair and Friedrich's model relates to its explanatory power. Since the model is presented within a text, and that text summarizes introductory organizational theory, it has almost 500 pages of potentially relevant terminology for shedding insight into a topic.

As with many strengths, this breadth of explanatory power can also be viewed as a limitation. Not all scholars wish to wade through an entire text looking for the appropriate terms. When they do find the terms, they are generally introductory versions of other's theories that can be traced to original, and more relevant and preferable, sources.

In many respects, the four points of O'Hair and Friedrich's model are more appropriate as a framework for organizing other theories, rather than as a framework for actually conducting a descriptive textual analysis. In the text, the chapters are divided into coordinate topics, e.g. leadership, listening, interviewing, group meetings, and public presentations. Then, within each chapter, the strategic model is used as subordinate subheadings. To reverse the coordinate/subordinate status of the headings seems to make the model less useful. In other words, to have Goal Setting, Situational Knowledge, Communication Competence, and Anxiety Management as the main heads, with subpoints in each related to leadership, interpersonal, group, and the like, leads to overlap and excess redundancy.

With that redundancy comes a lack of explanatory power. Just as the first factor extracted in many statistic programs accounts for a majority of the

variance within the analysis, so too could a thorough analysis of Goal Setting account for a majority of the insight generated in an organizational interpretation.

Finally, since O'Hair and Friedrich's model is part of an introductory text geared to expose students to a variety of perspectives, it loses the ability to be a perspective itself. While it provides a clear structure for such reporting, its heuristic value is limited.

As an introductory text, O'Hair and Friedrich's *Strategic Communication in Business and the Professions* is comprehensive and accessible to undergraduate students. However, despite its parsimony, other models can provide more interpretive depth. It is therefore recommended here as a pedagogical tool, not a scholarly one.

In summary, the Sears catalog lived a long and, for the most part, healthy life. In the end, it could not stand up against the mobility of an urban society and the competition from large discounters and specialty catalogs. Arthur Martinez, the Saks exec brought in to save the ailing Sears, Roebuck and Co., was justified in his decision to stop production of the big book as part of his restructuring strategy. As demonstrated by the parsimonious, though sometimes awkward, model of Strategic Communication, the Martinez plan was well communicated to its various stockholders. While the announcement surprised many, the strategy was sound and, although the big book is gone, the Big Store shall live to fight another day.

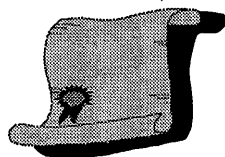
### References

- Allen, M.W., and Caillouet, R.H. (1994, March). Legitimation Endeavors: Impression Management Strategies Used by an Organization in Crisis. *Communication Monographs*, Vol. 61, No. 1, 44-62.
- Apgar, S. (1993, January 26). Fingerhut casts covetous eye on the \$3 billion in catalog sales that Sears, Roebuck is giving up. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, p. 3D.
- Bernstein, A. (1991, February 25). Wish Book. *U.S. News and World Report*, p. 14.
- Fitzgerald, K. (1992, September 7). Catalog woes face Martinez at Sears. *Advertising Age*, p. 13.
- Fitzgerald, K. (1993, February 8). Sears database dilemma: What to do with 30M-name list after catalog's demise? *Advertising Age*, p. 43.
- Gray, P. (1993, February 8). An ode to the Big Book. *Time*, pp. 66-67.



- Hoover, G., Campbell, A., and Spain, P.I. (eds.). (1992). *Sears, Roebuck and Co. Hoover's Handbook of American Business-1993*. Austin, TX: The Reference Press, Inc.
- Hume, S. (1992, October 5). Sears' next struggle: Finding new identity. *Advertising Age*, pp. 4, 43.
- Katz, D.R. (1987). *The Big Store: Inside the Crisis and Revolution at Sears*. New York: Viking Penguin Inc.
- Kelly, K. (1993, August 30). The Big Store may be on a big roll. *Business Week*, pp. 82, 84-85.
- Landsberg, M. (1993, January 26). Cataloging Sears. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, pp. 1D-2D.
- McCormick, J. (1993, February 8). Can the man from Saks save Sears? *Newsweek*, p. 51.
- Meryhew, R. (1993, February 12). Redwood Falls to turn the last catalog leaf. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, pp. 1B, 5B.
- O'Hair, D., and Friedrich, G.W. (1992). *Strategic Communication in Business and the Professions*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Peterson, T. (1993, May 10). Now the Sears catalog gets respect. *Business Week*, p. 34.
- Sears announces restructuring. (1993, January 25). Press release, Sears, Roebuck and Co.
- Sears Catalog: Backgrounder. (1993, January 25). Press release, Sears, Roebuck and Co.
- Sears makes the right move. (1993, February 1). *Advertising Age*, p. 18.
- Sears to cut jobs, drop catalog. (1993, January 26). *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, pp. 1A, 10A.
- Trimming frills at the Big Store. (1992, October 12). *Time*, p. 29.

**A Liberal Arts College  
With a History of Excellence  
in Speech and Theater**



**ST. OLAF COLLEGE**  
**Speech -Theater Department**

1520 St. Olaf Avenue  
Northfield, Minnesota 55057-1098  
Ph. 507-646-3240

# TEACHER'S WORKBOOK

## Spotlight on Teaching Methods

[The Teacher's Workbook section of the CTAM Journal contains articles on teaching philosophy, as well as innovative assignments. This year's new feature spotlights methodological issues in teaching. The following three articles present varying positions on the use of self-directed teams, especially as employed in the organizational communication course.]

### **RELINQUISHING POWER IN THE CLASSROOM: A CASE STUDY ON SELF-DIRECTED TEAMS IN THE CLASSROOM**

Gerald W. Driskill and Brian Polansky  
University of Arkansas, Little Rock

"It's like a haunted house, a bit scary but also fun."

"It's like a dictatorship masquerading as a democracy."

These two quotes reveal the diverse perceptions of two students in an upper level organizational communication class that utilized a self-directed teams approach. These comments were taken from a class exercise that sought student perceptions at one point several weeks into the semester and reflect the challenge placed before students and teachers engaged in using self-directed teams in the classroom.

The use of self-directed teams continues to be of interest in organizational development efforts (Gavin & McPhail, 1978; Kilmann, 1984; Lowenberg, 1985; Sashkin & Burke, 1987; Scherer, 1979). This approach represents a major investment of resources and considerable commitment from all involved. This commitment is perhaps most noticeable in the communication demands placed on organizational members. Beyond the potential need to manage higher levels of ambiguity related to such things as work expectations and evaluation processes, there are also greater interpersonal communication skill demands (Critchley & Casey, 1984; Gribas & Driskill, 1989).

The shift toward self-directed work teams in organizations is well documented (Galagan, 1988; Larson & LaFasto, 1989; George, 1977; Howe,

1977; Poza & Markus, 1980) and is further underscored by models that give teamwork an integral role in accomplishing organizational goals (Blake, Mouton, & Allen, 1987; Likert, 1961; Peters & Waterman, 1982). The traditional classroom, however, fails to mirror such shifts when it emphasizes instructor control and decision making with a premium placed on clarity in direction, assignments and evaluation. This traditional form of organizing seems inconsistent with trends in many organizations. This paper describes an effort to empower students by placing them in teams charged with determining course mission, goals, structure, policies, and procedures. This case study analysis reports the major phases of this effort by discussing: (a) the packet used to initiate the organizing process, (b) the creation and use of work teams, (c) the interventions used to encourage student "processing" of their teamwork, and (d) summary insights gleaned from this approach.

### Organizing the Class

#### The Packet

Based on the trend in organizations to use self-directed teams, a decision was made to "ditch" the traditional syllabus. In place of the syllabus, a "creativity and constraints" packet was developed to guide the development of teams. Based on the sub-title of Eisenberg and Goodall's (1993) organizational communication text, the notion of "balancing creativity and constraint" in the process of organizing was introduced to the students. Traditional syllabi focus on constraints that delineate instructor expectations regarding course policies and assignments. In contrast, the course packet included guidelines that encouraged "creative" ownership of major components of the class. By including both constraints and creativity guidelines, the packet attempted to model organizational processes. The major elements of this packet included:

1. Syllabus/Class Policies
2. Tentative Course Schedule
3. Goal setting Assignment
4. Developing Requirements Assignment
5. Developing Assessment Instrument Assignment
6. Additional Resources

The three assignments used to begin the semester are discussed next in order to depict the way the course utilized the creativity and constraints packet.

#### Setting Class Objectives

The objective of the first assignment was to improve student's goal setting and

semester, contained two sets of grading guidelines. The "Constraints" were developed by considering exigencies in the larger university and academic environment (e.g., the course description in the university bulletin), time limits (e.g., a limit on the number of goals that could be reached in a semester), and the need to appraise individual performance for grading purposes (i.e., students had to complete certain individual assignments in order to maintain equity across the class).

"Creativity" guidelines included suggestions or examples of areas that could be explored within the constraints. These were intended to remind students that constraints did not keep them from exploring new areas. They were reminded that such constraints like the course description left much room for creativity--a process usually left in the hands of the professor. For example, they were told that course objectives could reflect their "curiosities, questions, and learning ambitions."

The "Objective or Goal Setting" assignment was turned in during the first week. Students were given an evaluation sheet (Appendix A) in advance to remind them of the grading guidelines. For example, the evaluation sheet listed several constraints such as needing to "reflect specific measurable behaviors" or "not duplicating the goals of another class." In addition, a list of suggestions were given related to ways they could be creative. They could write in something they did to develop their list of objectives or check one of the suggested items like "Asking professionals whose expertise you trust."

The objectives devised by the students were used to create a master list. Ideas on the master were discussed so that advocates of certain objectives could explain their ideas more fully. Certain objectives were combined and others eliminated based on discussion. Finally, the class agreed on a statement of four objectives. These four objectives were placed into the following statement:

At semester's end, each member of our organization should have developed theoretic and applied insights in the following areas of organizational communication: (a) socialization process and cultural assumptions that influence our communication within the organization, (b) conflict management, (c) communication and the regulation or motivation of behavior, and (d) information management.

The process of developing the final set of objectives took the first week and half of class. The next stage was to devise requirements or assignments to reach these objectives.

### Developing Requirements

Prior to involving the class in making a final determination of the best way to

reach course objectives, time was given to training them in devising assignments. The objective of this activity was to improve their individual abilities to create methods for reaching specific objectives. This assignment also included guidelines based on constraints (e.g., "the assignment must include some type of evaluation/test of knowledge and skills that has an individual component") and encouraged students to add their own creative ideas. A final evaluation sheet was provided that summarized these guidelines.

Each class member was then asked to devise two assignments related to the course objectives. They were allowed to select from any of the four previously determined course objectives and encouraged to be creative in developing assignments. In order to maximize feedback and ensure that students developed their skills in meeting constraints and in being creative they were required to revise their assignment until it reached the guidelines.

A second step in devising assignments involved temporary teams. Students decided that the next step in devising assignments could occur if each team examined the various assignments completed for each of the objectives. Temporary teams were created because class members felt they needed more input and interaction in improving their "practice" assignments. Four teams were charged with devising one "best" assignment for reaching each of the four course objectives. This second step resulted in more synergistic efforts in creating assignments that might be used during the semester.

### **Devising a Pre-Assessment**

A third introductory assignment was that of devising an assessment instrument. The objective of this assignment was to help students define specific cognitive, behavioral and affective criterion on which to assess themselves at the beginning and end of the semester. A final version of this instrument was created from student input and used to focus on course objectives (Appendix B). For example, with regard to the conflict management, student's assessed themselves as to their level of knowledge of conflict management, their skills in managing conflicts, and finally their commitment to applying effective conflict management strategies in organizations. An analysis of these pre and post tests is provided later in the paper.

### **Creating Work Teams**

After students had turned in individual assignments on setting objectives, developed "practice" assignments for course objectives individually and in temporary teams, and completed the self-assessments, class time was devoted

to determining methods for reaching course objectives. The class made the decision to charge four different teams with using two weeks of the semester to guide the entire class toward one of the four goals. The temporary teams became permanent teams.

Three decisions were made in conjunction with getting these teams started. First, a decision was made to randomly assign the objectives to these permanent teams. This was done to encourage greater class synergy concerning assignment development. Thus, rather than allow the temporary teams to keep their original assignment and objective, each team was given a new objective along with the assignment idea that the temporary team had created. Second, time frames had to be determined. The class decided that two weeks time frames should be given to each team. The team would have the freedom to use this time in whatever way they believed would best met their assigned objective. Finally, the order of these two week blocks was determined through another random selection that resulted in the following sequence of course topics: (1) Organizational Culture, (2) Conflict Management, (3) Communication and Motivation, and (4) Information Exchange.

A revised course syllabus reflected these assigned two week time blocks but also included process days between the blocks. These process days are discussed in the next section.

### Processing the Process

An important part of typical class exercises involves processing or guiding the students in their efforts to make sense out of the exercise. The structure of this class prompted a need to "process the process" we were going through in developing self-directed teams. Uncertainty ran high during the first weeks of the semester. Assurances were repeated that assignments could be revised and that their grade in the class was to be determined by their willingness to respond to feedback and make required revisions. The time spent providing such assurances evolved into scheduled days for processing. These process days became a form of metacommunication--an effort to talk about the emerging communication roles and rules in the classroom. The following section highlights two instances of student instigated metacommunication, specifically (1) an emergent organizational rule and (2) a call for a formal mission statement. In addition, the instructor instigated (3) an analysis of the organizational culture and (4) an audit of their perceptions of communication by the teams. These process days proved invaluable.

## Identifying an Emergent Rule

The first day scheduled for teams to work on their assigned goals resulted in a conflict. A student asked whether or not each team had to use the assignment given to them by the temporary teams. Several in the class realized the possible conflict created as this question suggested that the assignment that group had been given was not up to "their" standards. An underlying tension was evident as we began to discuss the possible ramifications if a goal team rejected the use of the assignments created by a temporary team. Some of the underlying questions included: (a) Would this rejection reflect poorly on anyone's grade? (b) Would this rejection create difficult working relationships when they gave the new assignment? (c) Why should a goal team be stuck with an assignment they felt was incomplete or unclear? In short, they began to ask how they could manage this conflict in personal versus task communication challenges.

A new organizational practice and consequent rule emerged. In order to clarify the assignments provided by the temporary teams, liaisons were assigned from each team to provide additional explanation. Furthermore, since the permanent teams were ultimately responsible for the assignments they gave to the class, the class decided that they had the freedom to use, change, or ignore the assignment handed on to them. The need to discuss and devise this rule proved to be only one of many discussions and interventions related to the process of organizing.

## The Mission

As the "Organizational Culture" goal team began its work on helping the class understand the notion of organizational culture and its implications for communication, it became clear that the class desired a clearer focus on how the four goals fit the larger mission of the course. One process day was used to gather "mission statements" from members. An ad hoc team was created to examine these statements and then to propose two or three options for the class to adopt. The final version was:

We are an organization of students who have come together for the shared purpose of learning the dynamics of organizational communication. As an organization we are discovering how to balance the use of creativity and constraint, how to formulate concrete ideas out of ambiguous concepts, and how to work toward a goal collectively within a group as well as individually.

This formally adopted mission statement, however, was far from capturing the diversity of perceptions of what this "organization" was really about.



## The Culture

At about the 5 week mark in a 15 week semester, students were asked to write down a metaphor or a brief statement that captured their perceptions of the course. The richness and diversity of their responses resulted in a full class period that focused on both of the value of gaining such information in an organization as well as the implications of their comments for our work together. Three major areas were discussed.

1. A list of emergent rules and roles were listed. For example, it had become clear that the instructor's role included such duties as providing "creativity and constraint" guidelines as well as facilitating process days.

2. Six major metaphors were discussed. Three of the more intriguing metaphors that represent the diversity of perceptions included:

"Still thirsty after drinking a gallon of water." This idea referred to doing lots of work but not really feeling like their learning expectations were being met.

"A masquerading dictatorship." This metaphor was shared by students who felt constrained by the instructor's final say on grades. Several students had previous experience in self-directed teams in other classes in which the teacher provided fewer constraints on grades.

"A haunted house." Adjectives used to describe the course included such phrases as "fun and scary" and "lost but ok." These students had mixed feelings, but seemed to be enjoying the process.

3. Finally, assumptions about the nature of organizations implied in the metaphors were discussed. For example, Eisenberg and Goodall's (1993) ideas on ambiguity were discussed in conjunction with those perceiving the class as a "haunted house." Students were introduced to the importance of developing skills to manage the ambiguity involved in organizing through self-directed teams.

## The Audit

The tentative syllabus had included a list of possible topics that might be covered if time allowed. Several students desired to learn more about the audit process so the last week of the semester was devoted to a communication audit of the class. This audit was not designed to be comprehensive or measure perceptions related to every aspect of communication at all levels (e.g., interpersonal, group, and organization). Instead, surveys were designed with two goals in mind: (a) First, it was hoped that introducing them to the audit process would illustrate the value of an audit. (b) Second, the audit provided a basis for processing communication related to information management, conflict management, and motivational

communication used by the teams during the semester. These three topics were selected because they had not received focused attention as had the topic of organizational culture.

**Information Flow:** Based on the student team presentation of this topic, the instructor devised a survey with items related to student perceptions of information flow related to assignments given by each goal group. Four areas were examined: (1) information sources, (2) messages, (3) channels/media, and (4) receivers. Appendix C contains survey items with mean data organized by team along with general cautions given to the class for interpreting data. A guide sheet for discussion was prepared that explored three general trends from the analysis: (1) general agreement that information management was effective, (2) different perceptions across teams, and (3) perceived problems in information exchange.

The discussion concerning these findings yielded valuable insights. For example, one perceived problem was that the conflict team had a higher mean score ( $x=3.2$ ) on item #1 indicating that the class felt there were "competing sources" of information regarding the assignments this team gave. "Competing" information sources indicated a problem caused by team members who provided the class with assignments related to the course objective of conflict management. Apparently the rest of the class believed that the team was inconsistent in the explanations they provided students who came to them for additional direction. This problem with source competition was discussed in light of the way this team provided directions that allowed more room for creativity. The class discussed the tendency for members of this team to interpret these "creative" directions differently and to provide informal advice to students outside of class on how to complete assignments. This discussion resulted in valuable insights concerning the additional challenges placed on communicators when managing creative or ambiguous messages.

**Conflict Management:** Whereas the survey on information flow examined differences by teams, the conflict survey focused on overall class perceptions. Appendix D contains the survey along with mean data. Three summary observations were made and discussed: (1) Students tended to agree with one another on three of the items: #1 "Conflicts are managed at appropriate levels;" #2 "Appropriate levels of threat are maintained;" and #7 "I adopted appropriate strategies for managing conflicts." (2) The class was split in the perceptions of the other four items. For example, four of the nine students agreed that "conflicts were identified before they got out of hand," whereas the other five disagreed. (3) Finally, the need to explore the reasons for differing perceptions was highlighted. Class discussion made it clear that such survey data merited follow-up interviews in order to determine reasons for these differing perceptions. These diverse perceptions also underscored

the need to check the assumption that we hold the same perceptions of organizational events.

**Motivation:** The motivation survey also focused on overall perceptions of the class (Appendix E). Similar to the conflict survey: (1) Areas of agreement were noted (e.g., #2 "Goals were sufficiently challenging to motivate me;" #5 "Assignments appealed to members with differing motivational patterns"). (2) Areas of disagreement were explored and showed that the class was split in their perceptions of such basic issues as whether or not "expected behaviors" were clearly identified (#1) and whether or not "constructive levels of job satisfaction were maintained" (#4). (3) These differences indicated the diverse way members experience the same organization. Furthermore, we discussed the way a network analysis, if time allowed, might identify cliques that shared similar perceptions.

### Conclusions

Several conclusions were drawn from this case study of self-directed teams in the classroom. These conclusions include strengths, limits, and suggestions for future applications of this approach to teaching organizational communication or other classes using this approach.

#### Strengths

First, students' mutual dependency on each other to accomplish tasks mirrored life in other organizations. The typical classroom experience is balanced in favor of dependency on the instructor with students depending on each other to accomplish a particular assignment or project. In contrast, students in this class were challenged to work together from the first day of the semester. Audit results, as discussed earlier, showed the extent to which students perceived their dependency on classmates for information to complete assignments. As one student commented in their evaluation of the class, "It required interaction and cooperation."

Second, an almost limitless number of experiences encouraged metacommunication. The survey and culture audit were only two formal means used to "process the communication process." Outside of class, a high degree of interaction occurred as students sought assistance in understanding the "chaos." Student discussions with the instructor outside of the class dealt with such pragmatics as:

- (a) organizational politics--"how to deal with this class" since I came to school to "get away" from the politics of work; (b) diversity--"what to do about" the team members who seem to

assume I can not do my work just because I am an international student"; (c) perceived laziness--"You might as well know it, some of these guys are just looking to get out with as little work as possible"; and (d) uncertainty reduction--"well, I do not see our team as knowing much about this topic, what are we to do?"

These issues and others allowed for a many "teachable" moments that are not as frequently found when using a traditional approach.

Third, this approach challenges instructors to examine traditional class objectives and methods in terms of student retention of information. The traditional class has usually favored content over application or experiential demands. This team based approach clearly favored experiential learning and because of this a great deal of organizational communication theory/concepts were sacrificed. Students would probably not pass final exams given in many organizational communication classes due to this sacrifice. However, beyond the four major topics covered, there were indicators that the concepts that surfaced through our naturally occurring metacommunication resulted in greater information retention. One student commented that the information they learned could be applied outside of the class in the "real" world. Furthermore, the pre and post test evaluations of student perceived learning indicated positive changes. Means differences on knowledge and skill related items (c.f., Appendix B) on the self-assessment were statically significant, indicating students saw themselves as making significant process. However, the use of comparison groups as well as post assessments given at later intervals would have provided a more valid evaluation of this claim of greater information retention.

Fourth, students were empowered to devise their own teaching/training strategies that often went beyond what most instructors would consider. For example, student teams invited three guest speakers that would have not been considered by the instructor. These speakers included a recently hired director a new fitness center who spoke on the challenges faced in building a team in a new organization. In addition, students sought the assistance of other faculty members to gain resources for the class.

### Limitations

First, the exposure to various topics and literature in the field of organizational communication was limited. As already indicated in the discussion of balancing content/application demands, this course covered fewer concepts than traditionally covered. The textbook was rarely utilized by the students since it was not a requirement or "constraint" placed on the teams. Furthermore, the students had not had previous organizational communication classes and therefore were often at a loss on what to provide

the class during the two weeks they were charged with "teaching." Thus, while they were innovative, at times the content reflected "warmed over" material from other classes they had completed.

A contributing factor to the reduced amount of content was the hesitation to require work from peers. For example, even though each team provided content in lecture form and in some cases required students to integrate at least one other source in their out of class assignments, they rarely required students to delve into the text or research articles.

Second, and related to the previous limitation, the instructor observed that the quality of the work produced by the majority of the students tended to suffer. This observation was based on a sense that students turned in more average or below average assignments than when the course had been taught using a traditional format. There are several plausible explanations for this lower level of quality including (a) the limited training provided in creating assignments; (b) students who would not always believe that the criteria given by their peers would actually be used to grade papers; and (c) the tendency for peers to not want to provide challenging work for "fear" that the next team would get "revenge."

### Suggestions for Improving Team Based Approaches

Three suggestions for team based approaches are clear. First, additional time was needed for "processing the process." Like in other organizations, there was a tendency to cut short processing time and needful meta communication. The pedagogical strength of the self-directed team approach was the experiential nature of the course. Students who grasped this focus early in the semester tended to relax and enjoy the change of pace. These students tended to pick out relevant aspects of their communication behavior, such as how they managed conflicts, make efforts to apply them to their team interactions. For example, students who recognized that the material on conflict management was intended to assist them in their work with their teams, were the same students who expressed appreciation for the non-traditional approach. For others, intergroup conflicts only frustrated them and prompted them to feel they were not getting anything out of the class.

These differences between student responses to the class merited further attention during class time. The data gathered in the surveys and through informal visits with students could have been given additional class discussion time. Classes using self-directed teams might limit the number of goals even further and schedule larger blocks of time and assignments related to processing.

A second way to improve the use of teams would be to provide time for a discussion of power and control in the classroom. As indicated in the culture

survey, there were students who felt the instructor was a dictator who wore a "mask of democracy." Despite the creation of a packet that indicated constraints as well as areas they could be creative, there was not a clearly defined sense of "how far" they could go. One solution to this problem would be to include a segment at the start of the semester on organizations/classes as political entities. This discussion could provide a vocabulary for discussing control and power issues throughout the semester. For example, students could be encouraged to see that instructor efforts to "empower" by giving up control over aspects of the course should not be equated with the class being the same as a democracy.

A final suggestion is for initial training in working in teams. Team building theorists and researchers are in general agreement that teams differ with regard to the types of communication skills that will be needed for team success (Critchley & Casey, 1984; Gribas & Driskill, 1989). In this setting, the high degree of creative decision making, the equal power base of the team members, combined with time constraints, indicate that students may have benefited from having a prerequisite course that developed group communication skills or some type of team based training early in the semester.

### Summary

Teamwork has long been recognized as having an integral role in accomplishing organizational goals (Blake, Mouton, & Allen, 1987; Likert, 1961; Peters & Waterman, 1982). Many professional organizations have successfully integrated self-directed work teams into their organizational practices (Galagan, 1988; Larson & LaFasto, 1989; George, 1977; Howe, 1977; Poza & Markus, 1980).

The traditional classroom, however, fails to reflect these trends toward empowerment and involvement. The university classroom generally places emphasis on instructor control and decision making with a premium placed on clarity in direction, assignments, and evaluation.

This paper described an effort to empower students by placing them in teams charged with determining course mission, goals, structure, policies, and procedures. The major phases of this effort were outlined and the conclusions drawn by the instructor indicate ways to maximize the potential of self-directed teams as an educational tool.

## Appendix A

## EVALUATION SHEET FOR DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES

(Point Sheet)

Place a mark by the Constraints that you followed:

- \_\_\_ 1. Reflects at least one of the following major topic areas:
- a. Basic theories of organizational communication
  - b. Socialization, stress, ethical issues
  - c. Relational skills (including intercultural comm.)
  - d. Effective organizational communication
  - e. Assessing communication in organizations
- \_\_\_ 2. Reflect specific measurable behaviors
- \_\_\_ 3. No fewer than 2 and no more than 5 goals
- \_\_\_ 4. No duplication of the goals of another class
- \_\_\_ 5. Able to match with a method(s) for reaching the goal
- \_\_\_ 6. Does not focus on technical business writing

Place a mark by the Creativity options you used:

- \_\_\_ 1. Taps broad nature (ambiguity) of course topic
- \_\_\_ 2. Reflects your curiosities, questions, & learning goals
- \_\_\_ 3. Refers to the text and select areas of particular interest
- \_\_\_ 4. Asked professionals whose expertise you trust
- \_\_\_ 5. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

## FIRST ASSESSMENT: ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Directions: Complete the following by circling the number that best describes your current level of knowledge, skill, and commitment on each of the following items.

AS I BEGIN this course I would describe my KNOWLEDGE of . . .	Highly Develop	Moderately Develop	Needing Develop
1. how to define and apply org. comm. as		1 2 3 4 5	
2. major theories & approaches to org. comm. as		1 2 3 4 5	
3. ethical issues related to comm. in organizations as		1 2 3 4 5	
4. the importance of organizational culture as		1 2 3 4 5	
5. effective conflict management strategies in organizations as		1 2 3 4 5	
6. effective use of comm. for motivating self/others in organizations as		1 2 3 4 5	
7. effective information exchange practices in organizations as		1 2 3 4 5	

8. interventions to facilitate  
organizational comm. effectiveness as                    1   2   3   4   5

As I begin this course I would describe  
my **SKILLS** in...

1. providing explanations of what you can do with  
a background in organizational comm. as                    1   2   3   4   5

2. determining the culture of an organization as                    1   2   3   4   5

3. identifying effective conflict management  
practices in an organization as                    1   2   3   4   5

4. identifying motivational patterns of members  
of an organization as                    1   2   3   4   5

5. determining effective information management  
practices in org. as                    1   2   3   4   5

As I begin this course I would describe  
my **COMMITMENT TO...**

1. serving as a model of competent org.  
communication as                    1   2   3   4   5

2. using information about org. culture in the  
socialization process as                    1   2   3   4   5

3. using conflict for productive outcomes as                    1   2   3   4   5

4. adapting my comm. strategies to fit the  
motivational patterns of org. members as                    1   2   3   4   5

5. improving the information management  
practices in organizations as                    1   2   3   4   5

**Appendix C**  
**Information Management Analysis**  
**Survey items, Means Scores, & Interpretation Guides**

**\*NOTE:** Lower means indicate stronger agreement.

<u>Information Sources &amp; Assignments</u>	<u>CULT   CONFL   MOTIV   INFO</u>			
1. There were (not) competing sources of information.	2.6	3.2	2.1	2.4
2. Information sources (did not) rely on one-way communication.	2.2	2.2	1.7	2.4



Information Messages & Assignment

3. There was sufficient direction to accomplish tasks.	2.0	1.8	1.8	2.2
4. Directions provided sufficient room for creativity.	2.0	1.4	1.6	1.9

Information Channels/media & Assignments

5. There was sufficient balance between oral and written forms of information.	2.1	1.7	1.8	2.0
6. The most effective types of media were used to convey information.	2.4	2.1	1.7	2.4

Information Receivers & Assignments

7. I had sufficient trust in sources of information.	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.8
8. Information was consistent with our class/org. culture concerning effective assignments.	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0
9. Information was consistent with my beliefs about effective class assignments.	2.0	1.9	1.5	2.0
10. I took sufficient initiative/responsibility to gain clarity on assignments.	2.1	1.7	2.1	2.0
11. My lack of confidence in being able to effectively complete assignments influenced the way I interpreted directions.	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.0

SUMMARY CAUTIONS IN DATA INTERPRETATION

1. Check frequency data since mean data may not reflect diversity.
2. Small sample, especially with 2 absences from one team may influence results.
3. Self-serving bias may influence results.
4. Primacy/Recency effect may influence results.

## Appendix D

## Conflict Management Analysis

## Survey items &amp; Means Scores

(Key: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree)

	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>X</u>
1. Conflicts were managed at appropriate levels.	1	7	2	1	2.4
2. Appropriate levels of threat were maintained.	1	7	2	0	2.1

3. Norms and rules for communication roles were clear.	1	5	3	1	2.4
4. Conflicts were identified before they got out of hand.	0	4	5	1	2.7
5. There was sufficient mutual dependency to motivate productive conflict.	0	5	5	0	2.5
6. I made an effort to adapt to the motivational pattern of org. members during conflict.	1	6	3	0	2.2
7. I adopted appropriate strategies for managing conflicts.	1	9	0	0	1.9

#### Appendix E

#### Motivation/Communication Analysis

#### Survey items and Means Scores

(Key: SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree)

	<u>SA</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>X</u>
1. Expected behaviors were clearly identified.	0	4	6	0	2.6
2. Goals were sufficiently challenging to motivate me.	4	5	1	0	1.7
3. Rules were consistent for motivating behaviors from team to team.	0	6	4	0	2.4
4. Constructive levels of job satisfaction helped maintain sufficient levels of motivation.	0	5	5	0	2.5
5. Assignments appealed to org. members with differing motivational patterns	2	6	2	0	2.0

## References

- Blake, R., Mouton, J., & Allen, R. (1987). *Spectacular teamwork*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- Critchley, B., & Casey, D. (1984). Second thoughts on team building. *Management Education and Development*, 15(2), 163-175.
- Galagan, P. (1988). Donald E. Peterson: Chairman of Ford and champion of its people. *Training and Development Journal*, 42, 20-24.
- Gavin, J. & McPhail, S. (1978). Intervention and evaluation: A proactive team approach to OD. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 14, 175-194.
- George, W. W. (1977). Task teams for rapid growth. *Harvard Business Review*, 55(2), 71-80.
- Gribas, J., & Driskill, G. (1989). Team building variables: Implications for theory, research, and intervention. Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association Conference, San Francisco, CA.
- Howe, R. J. (1977). Building teams for increased productivity. *Personnel Journal*, 56, 16-22.
- Kilmann, R.H. (1984). *Beyond the quick fix: Managing five tracks to organizational success*. San Francisco: Bass.
- Larson, C. & LaFasto, F. (1989). *Teamwork: What must go right/what can go wrong*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Likert, R. (1961). *New patterns of management*, New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lowenberg, R. (1985). Problem-solving teams: Building a healthier organization. *The Police Chief*, 52, 55-58.
- Peters, T. & Waterman, R. (1982). *In search of excellence*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Poza, E. & Markus, M. (1980). Success story: The team approach to work restructuring. *Organizational Dynamics*, pp. 3-24.
- Sashkin, M. & Burke, W. (1987). Organization development in the 1980s. *Journal of Management*, 13, 393-417.
- Scherer, J. (1979). Can team building increase productivity? Or how can something that feels so good not be worthwhile? *Group & Organizational Studies*, 4, 335-351.

## **SELF-DIRECTED TEAMS IN THE CLASSROOM: THREE STRIKES AND THEY'RE OUT**

John Gribas, University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire

Over the past few decades, American organizations have focused on organizational development and human resource training strategies which attempt to capitalize on purported benefits of group structure and functioning. These "team" strategies are being offered as alternatives to the more traditional bureaucratic philosophy incorporating extensive hierarchies, clearly controlled and primarily downward channels of communication, and the reduction of work responsibilities into the smallest possible task units with individuals assigned responsibility for regular and repeated performance of one such task.

Besides being seen as a way to increase organizational productivity, team approaches have been used to increase participation and to promote satisfaction among organizational members (Buller & Cecil, 1986; Dyer, 1977; Howe, 1977; Moore, 1978; Patten, 1979; Scherer, 1979; Woodman & Sherwood, 1980a, 1980b). One of the most recent variations on the team theme is the notion of autonomous or self-directed work teams. It has become a popular approach, seen by many to hold great potential for increasing employee satisfaction and empowerment, not to mention organizational flexibility, competitiveness, responsiveness, and overall effectiveness (Cummings, 1978; Orsburn, Moran, Musselwhite, & Zenger, 1990; Versteeg, 1990; Wellins, Byham, & Wilson, 1991).

Besides enjoying great popularity in the organizational world, the notion of team autonomy also is being embraced by educators who seek to apply self-management concepts in the classroom. Students are being organized into autonomous work teams as an alternative to the traditional model of having students function independently. This self-management approach attempts to go beyond merely having students work together on a project. Some student teams are given responsibility for designing assignments and evaluation standards, and even determining and teaching course content. A real self-managed student team approach is not merely an attempt to make students work together, but it is an attempt to empower students and offer them educational experiences that may better prepare them for "real world" expectations. According to Sadler (1994):

[T]eaching students about group dynamics gives them valuable skills they need in the work place. Organizations using participative decision-making philosophies such as Total Quality

Management (TQM) are increasingly relying on groups and teams to enhance quality and competitiveness. The group skills students learn in the college classroom will give many of them a head start on the job. (p. 1)

And, when one considers course content and student aspirations, college-level organizational communication classes seem a particularly appropriate place to integrate self-managed student teams.

This paper is written from the perspective of one who (a) has followed the interest and investigation into organizational teamwork over the past years, (b) has been a full-time student for two-thirds of his lifetime, (c) has been an educator at both secondary and post-secondary levels, (d) is currently teaching organizational communication as a university faculty member, and (e) has chosen *not* to utilize self-directed teams for purposes of instruction. Though the potential rewards of organizational team autonomy are great, it also has been shown to pose its share of difficulties. Volumes of practical guides have been, and continue to be, written specifically to assist organizations in overcoming the barriers to effective functioning of self-directed teams (e.g., Harper & Harper, 1994; Hicks & Bone, 1994). The following discussion combines my insights as a student, teacher, and scholar, and suggests that, in general, there are three inherent strikes against self-directed teams in the classroom. First, classroom assignments are generally not consistent with the kind of goals associated with effective team efforts. Second, the classroom setting does not allow time for the kind of interpersonal skill development required in effective team performance. And third, the pressures of concertive control severely limit the extent to which self-directed teams can lead to a true sense of student empowerment. These strikes quite likely will lead to frustration and failure.

### Three Strikes

**Strike One:** *Classroom assignments are generally not consistent with the kind of goals associated with effective team efforts.* The importance of goal-setting in team functioning is clear. Liebowitz and DeMeuse (1982) identified it as one of the three most common focuses of team development strategies. But not only must a team, self-directed or otherwise, have a clearly defined goal, it must have a goal that transcends individual agendas and eludes individual efforts. Team building experts, Larson and LaFasto (1989), claim that having a clear, elevating goal is a primary, perhaps *the* primary, characteristic of effective teams.

There is no doubt that a group effort requires time and coordination

unnecessary in individual efforts. Without a goal that inherently requires a collective effort, individuals working together quickly will see the "teaming" as an obstacle to efficiency and, perhaps, quality. I know this to be true from my experience both as a student and as a teacher. As a student, it was clear to me that, in virtually every case, I could do a better job on assigned group projects by myself than in a student group. Or at least I thought that I could have completed it more quickly. Even if students have less confidence in their academic abilities and believe that they might earn a better grade in a group than alone, the fact that an assignment is individually accomplishable makes it less than the elevating goal called for by Larson and LaFasto.

As a teacher, I have continued to struggle for innovative educational strategies and assignments. And I continue to assign group projects, hoping students pick up on the importance of teamwork and see the results of synergy. But when I consider my own group projects and those of other colleagues, I see that they are noble attempts to offer challenges requiring collective effort but all too often fall far short of the kind of task appropriate for self-managed teams. My experience suggests that the most common strategy used for designing assignments worthy of group effort is to simply require more work than one could reasonably expect a single individual to complete within a certain time frame. But that is not the kind of goal that organizational teams are designed to tackle. Proponents such as Francis and Young (1979), Ends (1977), and others have argued that teams are designed to accomplish objectives that require a breadth of skills, knowledge, and resources that would be impossible for one person to possess, and that the right mix of skills is an essential characteristic of effective teams. Teams do not take on assignments merely because the work load is too large and so each member must take a piece of the pie. Teams are made up of individuals with unique and complementary characteristics and abilities, each contributing an ingredient essential for the making of that pie.

So how can the classroom possibly produce a student composition necessary for teams? Student assignment to a particular class in any semester/quarter is essentially a random process. How can a teacher hope that there will be individuals in each class with the right variety of skills and competencies to organize into effective teams? In fact, since so many classes are taken by individuals with the same major, same interests, same previous courses and skills, the educational system seems to have a kind of built in class homogenization that is inconsistent with the requisite variety for teams.

The point is that, in spite of impressive attempts at innovation, developing assignments that actually require teamwork is exceptionally difficult at best. And, education being what it is, even if such assignments could be devised, finding the right mix of student skills in any classroom to tackle team

objectives is an unlikely gamble. But let us imagine that these issues are not obstacles, that assignments could be designed that are appropriate for self-directed teams and that students could be found with an adequate mix of skills to constitute such teams. Just having a qualified team with an appropriate goal does not guarantee true team functioning. A goal is only elevating to the degree that team members continue to see it as elevating. They must view the team goal as superordinate to their own individual goals. Larson and Lafasto (1989) described the typical ineffective team.

The goal had become unfocused; the goal had become politicized; the team had lost a sense of urgency or significance about its objective; the team's efforts had become diluted by too many other competing goals; individual goals had taken priority over team goals; and so on. (p. 27)

Let us be realistic. The potential for students to identify and pursue individual competing goals (e.g., seeking grades and personal academic success, doing the assignment with the least amount of effort or time commitment, engaging in image management strategies for developing or maintaining relationships with teammates) while functioning as a self-managed team is high. One might argue that that is not a problem, that such a situation is part of what members learn about when functioning, or dis-functioning, as a team. But let us remember that we are talking about the application of self-managing student teams as a pedagogical tool for increasing learning, creativity, and empowerment, not as an exploration into the ins and outs of self-managing team functioning. If the primary goal of applying self-managing teams in the classroom is to teach about self-managing teams, then team difficulties and even failure can be seen as a valuable learning experience. But if self-managing teams are intended to be useful for expediting and complementing learning, then effective functioning is essential. Unfortunately, the first step toward effective functioning, establishing an appropriate self-managing team goal, is typically inconsistent with the classroom setting.

**Strike two:** *The classroom setting does not allow time for the kind of interpersonal skill development required in effective team performance.* This paper has suggested that certain unique situational constraints make the educational context unfit for finding appropriate self-managing student team goals. However, even without such constraints, development of self-managing teams is a challenge. Even when pursuing the right goals, people do not naturally function as an effective team. Team literature sets up some pretty hefty competencies for effective teams (see Gribas, 1990, pp. 31-33). And, if the large and lucrative market for team building materials is any indication, we can assume that people and organizations recognize the need for assistance to develop these competencies. Effective teams require

individuals who are well trained in interpersonal skills. General interpersonal skill development is one of the three primary team development strategies identified by Liebowitz and DeMeuse (1982).

We cannot expect students to enter a classroom situation as trained interpersonal communicators. So can we expect that there is time to train students during the class and still have time to cover course content? According to Sadler (1994),

Probably the most common concern of instructors about using groups is that teaching students how to work in them takes too much class time. The basics . . . , however, can be covered in one or two class periods. (p. 4)

Despite Sadler's optimism, it must be remembered that teaching people *about* effective group functioning is different than teaching them *to* function effectively. Also, Sadler's article is merely proposing the use of groups in a very basic way. His recommendations do not even begin to suggest applied self-managing teams.

In reality, shaping most groups into even modestly effective self-managing teams takes a great deal of time and effort. As Manz and Sims (1993) noted:

[T]he evolution and development of mature self-managing teams are not smooth processes, despite occasional claims of instant success. On the contrary, unrealistic expectations or simplistic assumptions that the achievements of teams can be quick and painless can sabotage the long-term chances of success. The demands and rewards can be great for members and leaders alike, but if the participants are not emotionally prepared, patient, organizationally supported, and carefully trained for the challenges, disillusionment is a real danger. (pp. 78-79)

The fact that team development is a time consuming process should come as no surprise. Teams are clearly a kind of functioning group, and for many years it has been widely recognized and accepted that groups must proceed through fairly predictable stages of development before they are able to function with any degree of efficiency. Such an evolution takes not only time, but time together: a luxury not found within the classroom context.

Additional support for the idea that specialized and time-consuming training would be needed for effective application of self-managed teams in the classroom comes from research on short-term or temporary teams. Clearly, a class of students likely will not have had a history of functioning as a team, and time in a semester class is limited. Class time in schools organized into academic quarters is even more limited. Therefore, student teams must be considered a kind of short-term or temporary team, and these have



constraints that pose special problems above and beyond those faced by more long standing teams. According to Eddy (1985), members of a temporary system must be able to establish themselves as a functioning group quickly and to "develop comfort in operating in ambiguous situations where reporting lines are complex and authority overlapping" (p. 166). Eddy stated that, in such situations, specially designed training is necessary for effective functioning. In a similar vein, Curtin (1987) suggested that rapid clarification of individual roles is one of the major needs of temporary teams.

Another problem related to the temporary nature of student teams is that the ideas of short-term teams and true team autonomy may be inconsistent, or at least unworkable in the classroom. According to George (1977), flexibility and fluidity are necessary for effective functioning of short-term teams, and one key to team effectiveness is a clear leader. Since ambiguity of authority is an inherent dilemma with temporary teams, leaders must be good autonomous decision makers and organizers. George's ideas are supported in research. A study by Gribas (1990) suggested that shared or participative leadership may not be appropriate for temporary teams. Additionally, Boyle (1985) found that task team participative management led to ambiguity in procedures and structures. He concluded that, under participative leadership, the best solutions to team problems were sometimes sacrificed in order to maintain involvement of all team members. So it seems the only way for student teams to function under the inherent time constraints of the classroom is for a strong, decisive leader to guide the team. In most classroom settings, the instructor is the only individual potentially qualified for such a role, and if the instructor takes on such a role, the whole point of team autonomy becomes moot.

**Strike three:** *The pressures of concertive control severely limit the extent to which self-directed teams can lead to any true sense of student empowerment.* The first two strikes covered so far are based on the assumption that team autonomy in the classroom is, in theory, a good idea and, though perhaps not completely workable, a strategy with potential for achieving student empowerment. The third strike is based on different assumptions. It does not question pragmatic issues, whether or not self-directed teams can be made functional in the classroom, but it challenges the very nature of the autonomous team approach as a vehicle for human empowerment.

Many, and probably most, see the team approach as an abandonment of control techniques, a way to encourage high commitment and enthusiasm for task accomplishment while at the same time providing maximum freedom from conventional control mechanisms (i.e., Walton, 1985). This belief seems to be what is fueling the explosion of and excitement about self-directed organizational teams today.

Some are more apt to temper over-romantic notions about team autonomy and acknowledge some limitations and the importance of situational constraints. For instance, Manz and Sims (1993) noted that team self-management, when improperly applied or when mismatched to organizational needs, environment, etc., can actually lead to individual disempowerment. They cite the results of a particular team intervention with an insurance company, an industry that has had a long-term and inherent focus on self-management. The establishment of self-managing teams in this company seemed to backfire. Manz and Sims were led to ask the question, "In an industry having a deeply ingrained cultural norm of individualism, can team self-management come to represent a loss of personal control" (p. 116)?

In this company, self-managing teams were operating as vehicles for *limiting* autonomy . . . Again, a major reason for this outcome . . . may be the standard of comparison that the members brought to the teams. An individual's perception of autonomy is largely based on a relative, rather than absolute, standard of comparison. The producers who were members of these teams had been relatively autonomous under the old system, even though the agency itself was somewhat bureaucratic. Each producer, although not explicitly told that he was "self-managed" (all were male), was able to set his own priorities, work schedule, and the like, without first having to reach consensus with others. (p. 121)

How different are most students from the employees of that insurance company? Clearly, university students live and function as members of a grand bureaucracy, and they function according to the expectations and standards of others. However, they have a great deal of individual control when it comes to class work such as reading, studying for exams, and completing assignments. Despite new educational approaches, pedagogies, and philosophies, individualism pervades the university student culture. Like insurance company sales staff, when it comes to their work, students decide when, where, how, how much, and how well, without the necessity of reaching consensus with others. It is in this way that certain researchers, theorists, and practitioners see that team autonomy has the potential to disempower.

There are those who make an even stronger statement against team approaches as strategies for empowerment. Rather than a form of liberation from power, teams, even self-managed ones, can be seen as clear control mechanisms: ones that, due to their subtlety and elusiveness, actually may be stronger and more hegemonic than other forms of organizational control. Tompkins and Cheney (1985) outlined the development of organizational control mechanisms from simple autocratic control, to control through

technological designs such as the assembly line, to bureaucratic control, to what they termed "concertive" control.

With apologies for the introduction of a neologism, we mean to account for the emergence of a new and postbureaucratic type of control—one that stresses teamwork and coordination at all stages of production. . . In the concertive organization, the explicit rules and regulations are largely replaced by the common understanding of values, objectives, and means of achievement, along with a deep appreciation for the organization's "mission" . . . Further, we speculate that the multilateral nature of control in concertive organizations might actually increase the *total amount of control* in the system. (p. 184)

A full explication of the theoretical foundation for the notion of concertive control is not possible in or appropriate for this paper. But the work by Tompkins and Cheney demonstrates how individual decision making premises are based on organizational logics or enthymemes, and that certain organizational practices focused on shared values and identification can result in the inculcation of organizationally advantageous premises. Such practices are considered concertive control mechanisms. In a more recent work, Barker and Tompkins (1993) directly identify team approaches as clear examples of concertive control. If, as Tompkins and others suggest, teams are a strong though shrouded means of control, then it is impossible for the application of self-directed teams in the classroom to be a means of student empowerment. Imagined empowerment, yes. Actual liberation from control, no. Strike three, you're out!

### Final Considerations

I wish to conclude with some final thoughts for those of us who have considered or who are considering self-managing teams for classroom application. First, as educators, we must ask ourselves whether self-directed teams are primarily a pedagogical tool for applying other concepts and skills. If so, we must always remember to keep first things first, to know the real objective of the class experience. We cannot allow the potential obstacles of the learning tool stand in the way of accomplishing higher educational goals. If self-managing teams are a tool, they must work and work well if we are to use them. They should facilitate better learning. They should be efficient. Yet experience, research, and theory all tell us that students do not take to this naturally or easily. As educators, we cannot throw students to the wolves, so to speak. They need our assistance, our authority, our expertise. That is why

we are there in the classroom. We must be sure that allowing team autonomy is not an abdication of our primary responsibilities.

Now some might say that the application of self-managing teams is not merely a pedagogical tool. Some might argue that the goal is to develop the ability to function in team autonomy. In some cases, this might be an appropriate primary educational objective. However, even then, one must consider whether the best way to learn is to just start doing it, to sink or swim. Consider how much time, energy, and money goes into organizational application and development of self-managing teams. Can we assume that our students can even begin to have success at this without careful guidance and long-term training? Shouldn't knowledge precede application? Without careful guidance, students functioning in frustrating and ineffective teams could develop a kind of "group-hate" (Goodall, 1990) that could negatively color future team experiences.

The temptation to apply self-managing teams in the classroom is strong. Intuitively, it seems like such a good idea, and it surely is getting support from those who would like universities to become more of a training ground for entrance into business and industry. What an excellent way to kill two birds with one stone: teach subject matter and provide experience in a valuable type of applied group functioning useful in the marketplace. But we must first decide if these two "birds" are positioned in a way that would allow a single shot the remotest chance of a double hit. If, as I have suggested, the birds are too far apart for such a shot, we must be careful to remember what bird is our primary prey. Also, as Tompkins and others have intimated, if we are truly on a hunt for student empowerment, the bird called team autonomy just may be a completely inappropriate target in the first place.

### References

- Barker, J.R., & Tompkins, P.K. (1993, November). *Organizations, teams, control, and identification*. Paper presented at the Speech Communication Association Convention, Miami Beach, FL.
- Boyle, Richard J. (1985). Give the staff a rounded view: Shake up the business. *Director*, 39(4), 49-52.
- Buller, P.F., & Cecil, B. (1986). Effects of team building and goal setting on productivity: A field experiment. *Academy of Management Journal*, 29, 305-328.
- Cummings, T.G. (1978). Self-regulating work groups: A socio-technical synthesis. *Academy of Management Review*, 3, 624- 634.

- Curtin, M.J. (1987). *Decision Effectiveness and Group Cohesiveness in Temporary Task Forces: A Comparison of Two Team-Building Interventions*. Unpublished master's thesis, California State University, Long Beach, CA.
- Dyer, W.G. (1977). *Team building: Issues and alternatives*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Eddy, W.B. (1985). *The manager and the working group*. New York: Praeger.
- Ends, E.J. (1977). *Organizational team building*. Cambridge, MA: Winthrop.
- Francis, D., & Young, D. (1979). *Improving work groups: A practical manual for team building*. San Diego: University Associates.
- George, W.W. (1977). Task teams for rapid growth. *Harvard Business Review*, 55(2), 71-80.
- Goodall, H.L. (1990). *Small group communication in organizations* (2nd ed.). Iowa: W.C. Brown.
- Gribas, J. (1990). *Characteristics of temporary teams: Perceptions among community theatre casts and directors*. Unpublished master's thesis. University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.
- Harper, B., & Harper, A. (1994) *Succeeding as a self-directed work team*. Mohegan Lake, NY: MW Corporation.
- Hicks, R., & Bone, D. (1994). *Self-managing teams: Creating and maintaining self-managed work groups*. Melno Park, CA: Crisp Publications.
- Howe, R.J. (1977). Building teams for increased productivity. *Personnel Journal*, 56, 16-22.
- Larson, C.E., & LaFasto, F.M.J. (1989). *Teamwork: What must go right/what can go wrong*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Liebowitz, S.J., & DeMeuse, K.P. (1982) The application of team building. *Human Relations*, 35, 1-18.
- Manz, C.C., & Sims, H.P., Jr. (1993). *Business without bosses: How self-managing teams are building high-performance companies*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Moore, M.L. (1978). Assessing organizational planning and teamwork: An action research methodology. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 14, 479-491.
- Orsburn, J.D., Moran, L., Musselwhite, E., & Zenger, J.H. (1990). *Self-directed work teams: The new American challenge*. Homewood, IL: Business One Irwin.

- Patten, T.H. (1979). Team building part 1. Designing the intervention; Team building part 2. Conducting the intervention. *Personnel*, 56, 11-21; 62-68.
- Sadler, C. (1994). Making small groups work: Helping students negotiate group projects. *Teaching Forum: The Undergraduate Teaching Improvement Council/UW System*, 15(2), 1-4.
- Scherer, J.J. (1979). Can team building increase productivity? Or how can something that feels so good not be worthwhile? *Group & Organizational Studies*, 4, 335-351.
- Tompkins, P.K., & Cheney, G. (1985). Communication and unobtrusive control in contemporary organizations. In R. McPhee & P.K. Tompkins (Eds.), *Organizational communication: Traditional themes and new directions* (pp. 179-210). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Versteeg, A. (1990). Self-directed work teams yield long-term benefits. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 11, 9-12.
- Walton, R.E. (1985, March-April). From control to commitment in the workplace. *Harvard Business Review*, pp. 77-84.
- Wellins, R.S., Byham, W.C., & Wilson, J.M. (1991). *Empowered teams: Creating self-directed workgroups that improve quality, productivity, and participation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Woodman, R.W., & Sherwood, J.J. (1980a). Effects of team development intervention: A field experiment. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 16, 211-227.
- Woodman, R.W., & Sherwood, J.J. (1980b). The role of team development in organizational effectiveness: A critical review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 88(1), 166-186.

# **SELF-DIRECTED TEAMS AND CLASSROOM CULTURE: BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU ASK FOR, YOUR PROFESSOR JUST MIGHT GIVE IT TO YOU**

Carey H. Adams, Southwest Missouri State University

In Organization X, workers expect to be told what to do and how to do it. Management would like for workers to work hard and demonstrate initiative, but doesn't really expect them to. Performance, along with things such as attendance, tardiness, and neatness are closely monitored. Workers are aware of management's distrust and are apparently bothered by it, but they do little to overtly challenge it and tend to reciprocate by not trusting management very much, either. For the most part, bureaucratic rules and policies, as well as well-known ways of working those rules to one's advantage, govern day-to-day life in Organization X.

Organization X sounds like the typical classical, bureaucratic, Theory X-driven organization described in the early chapters of most organizational communication textbooks. It's also how a group of students described their traditional college classroom.

In their recent and popular organizational communication textbook, Eisenberg and Goodall (1993) point to the emerging importance of teams in the workplace, and they advocate implementing self-directed teams in the classroom to enhance learning as well as to prepare students for the world of work. This paper argues that the use of self-directed teams in the undergraduate classroom represents a significant cultural change for both teacher and student, drawing upon my own trial-and-error experiences with introducing self-directed teams in an organizational communication course.

## The Popularity of Teams

At least since the Hawthorne Studies touted the importance of informal work groups, American organizations have tried countless ways to capitalize on (and sometimes check) the power of groups and teams. Quality circles, matrix management, participative decision-making models, and Total Quality Management programs are but a few examples. Over the past several years, teams have become both buzzword and widespread practice in business and industry. A recent USC survey of FORTUNE 1,000 companies showed that 68% use "self-managed" or "high-performance" teams (Dumaine, 1994).

Along with their popularity, there is growing concern over teams. This

concern is not with the *idea* of using teams, but with the frustrations of making the idea work in practice. Human resources trade publications now are replete with articles on how to overcome problems in implementing team approaches (for example, Caudron, 1994; Urick & DeMont, 1993; Hoevenmeyer, 1993; Clemmer, 1993; Matthes, 1992; Allender, 1993). Eisenberg and Goodall (1993) suggest that teams often fail because of a lack of commitment and support from management. Drucker (1993) argues that organizations often don't know what they really expect from teams.

A recent *Fortune* article emphasizes that there are many different types of teams and that organizations must know what kind of team will meet their goals. These teams range from quality circles and project teams to the much-heralded self-managed, or self-directed teams. A self-directed team is responsible for day-to-day operations and is empowered with the authority to make decisions about how work gets done (Dumaine, 1994).

With the popularity of self-directed teams in business and industry, a good case can be made for using teams in college classrooms. According to a study conducted by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), teamwork is one of 16 basic skills that employers say are requirements for success in the workplace (Carnevale, Gainer, & Meltzer, 1991). Boyett and Conn (1992) predict that teams and group-based reward systems will become the norm in American business. A college education, then, should prepare graduates to work effectively in teams. In my case, a course in organizational communication seemed the perfect place to try out the idea. Not only would the experience prepare them for the "real world," but the benefits of self-directed teams would enhance their learning of the course material, as well.

### Self-directed Teams as Cultural Change

Organizational culture has been defined variously as comprised of any or all of the following: (1) values, both espoused and practiced (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Weiner, 1988); (2) underlying assumptions (Schein, 1989); intersubjective meanings and interpretations (Wuthnow, Hunter, Bergesen, & Kurzweil, 1984; Sypher, Applegate & Sypher, 1985); (3) practices (Wuthnow et al., 1984; van Maanen, 1991; Beyer & Triere, 1987); and (4) sensemaking (Weick, 1983). A shift to self-directed teams, whether in the workplace or in the classroom, requires changes in all of these areas.

Students readily espouse the values of autonomy, individual responsibility, teamwork, and empowerment. "Yes!" they say to me, "Treat us like intelligent adults. Empowerment is what we want." But a switch to



self-directed teams represents a cultural shift involving more than just the declaration of new values. Both students and professors have long-standing underlying assumptions about how education should occur. The acceptance of traditional classroom practices and patterns of sensemaking are deeply entrenched after years of educational experience.

Of course, I appreciated precious little of this insight when I first decided to try self-directed teams in my organizational communication class. Naively, my students and I enthusiastically agreed that teams would be a much more civilized and effective way of structuring our class, and it never occurred to us that it wouldn't work. Over the course of three semesters I have experimented with self-directed teams, trying to learn from my students how to make this approach useful. The remainder of this paper describes three such "experiments," followed by conclusions regarding the potentialities and challenges of self-directed teams in the classroom.

#### Experiment #1: Baptism by Fire

I had decided to use Eisenberg & Goodall's (1993) new text, *Organizational Communication: Balancing Creativity and Constraint*, and had been inspired by their suggestion to use self-directed teams as a class structure. Having received enthusiastic support from my students, we formed teams of 4-5 students early in the semester and assigned them certain responsibilities. These included team presentations of library research and an end-of-semester team self-assessment. The greatest (and regrettably vaguest) charge given to teams was to "take responsibility for their own learning," including such things as planning and leading their own review sessions, studying together outside of class, and helping to plan future class sessions. To a large extent, students were to decide for themselves how to make their teams work.

To begin with the good news, many things went well that semester. Most of the teams gelled and learned to work well together. Teams showed initiative in presenting their library research, which was also included on exams. Students reported learning to appreciate the difficulties of teams and their relevance to the workplace and, despite some problems, most students seemed to appreciate at least the attempt to deviate from the traditional classroom model.

On the other hand, there were several disappointments. Students never seemed able to articulate their *own* goals and reasons for working in teams, and I didn't give them enough reasons. In fact, students could (and did) actually work *around* working in teams and still accomplish both their individual goals and many of the course goals. At the end of the term, while most students were satisfied with the teams overall, they reported feeling like

they had been in teams for the sake of being in teams, and that simply wasn't enough.

### Experiment #2: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

Disappointed but determined, I reviewed the results of the trial run and set out to make the necessary adjustments for the next class. The fact that this class met one evening a week for three hours and had only nine students made it possible to try several new wrinkles. Once again, ongoing teams were formed early in the semester, and this time they were given more structure. Each week teams were given specific tasks to accomplish during class (such as analyzing case studies or doing application exercises) and no teamwork was assigned outside of class. Being so small, the class was very open and discussion-oriented. Early on, we tried to articulate more specific reasons for working together to meet course goals, and collaboration was an important part of the course. Teams were even given the responsibility of evaluating and responding to one another's take-home essay exam answers.

The greatest success in the course may have been those peer assessments. Students took them *very* seriously, so much so that I felt pressure to improve my own efforts at providing feedback on their work. It was clear that most of them had begun to set their own expectations for the course apart from mine. Although no assignments were given which required students to work in teams outside of class meetings, they worked together outside of class more than many of the students in the previous semester. As the course progressed, students relied less and less on me for definite answers about what they were "supposed to be doing."

Despite these successes, self-directed teams still were not working as I had hoped. At the end of the term I asked the class to evaluate our use of teams, and they pointed out several shortcomings. First, although they felt teams had aided their learning, most felt they probably could have learned the material just as well individually. Second, they complained that teams were often a time-liability. Early in the semester, especially, we spent too much time letting teams stumble around trying to decide on how to manage the mechanics of the class (how to write and administer quizzes, for example) when they would have been happy to let me make those decisions for them. Third, although the teams established goals for themselves, they felt the goals had been too scattered and abstract (e.g., "to learn the material better") to have been of much use to them. They suggested having a concrete project to work on would have given them greater focus and a way of measuring their effectiveness as a team. Finally, students always knew they weren't "really" self-directed. They didn't have total autonomy and could never get away from

expecting me to tell them what to do. As one student put it, "The problems we face in a classroom setting more than likely could be taken back, redone, changed, or given another chance," as opposed to a real job where mistakes could have more serious consequences. They could feel accountable for their own grades, but there was no responsibility for something produced by the class (organization) as a whole.

### Experiment #3: The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

In phase three, the course structure was significantly different from the first experiment. Realizing that in previous experiments students never really felt like they had "left" the traditional classroom culture, I attempted to simulate a new, non-classroom culture altogether. I created a mock organization in which the students were described as going through a training program to prepare them for careers in organizational communication research and consulting. Their "handbook" (syllabus) came complete with an organizational philosophy and mission statement, as well as training program goals and objectives. The program policies included both individual- and group-based incentives. Teams, formed the second week of class, were given a semester-long project to plan and carry out from the ground up. Projects involved doing research/consulting in outside organizations. During the first two-thirds of the term frequent and significant class time was designated for teamwork, and nearly all of class time in the last third was allotted for teams to be working on their research projects. The in-class working time was important because all of the teams' written work was submitted in a portfolio, with ongoing evaluations focusing on process and product improvement rather than one-shot performance. I spent much time working with teams on their projects and coaching them on how to work in teams to complete their assignments. Perhaps the most important change in the course was that students were now accountable to three different important authorities: their team, the outside organization, and me (and they have prioritized us in exactly that order).

A number of things went right this time. Students took ownership of their projects, which kept them focused and motivated for much of the term. In addition to the projects, students made pretty good use of their teams for studying (especially after less than stellar performances on the first exam). Teams recognized that the quality of their work would be important to someone besides me, much as a manufacturing team might feel a greater responsibility to their customers than to their supervisor. Class morale was good, with teams engaging in friendly competition. And, according to course evaluations, working in teams aided their learning and comprehension of the

material.

Still, I can't help feeling that our experiment with self-directed teams fell short. Except for their projects, students did not take very much initiative or responsibility for their own learning. The "culture" of the classroom felt very much like a traditional one. Most important, I don't know that we really had self-directed teams. They more closely resembled project teams, groups given a specific task to complete but without the degree of autonomy and empowerment characteristic of self-directed teams. In fact, I wonder if we did anything "new" at all. Group projects have been around for a long, long time.

### The Realities of Cultural Change

If true self-directed teams involve a radical change in classroom culture, are they feasible? I believe the jury is still out. Since changes in business and industry were the catalyst for this shift in education, we might look to examples of where such changes have occurred in those settings. Barker, Melville, & Pacanowsky (1993) provide an excellent analysis of one specific case. They examined the implementation of self-directed teams as a cultural change in a manufacturing organization (the XEL company), and their conclusions provide a framework of recommendations for using teams effectively in the classroom.

1. **Teams must have a reason to exist.** Barker et al (1993) observed that the switch to teams was a response to a pragmatic need (in this case, the need to be competitive in the market), not merely a philosophical mandate. This is probably the most difficult challenge for the classroom. For true self-directed teams to work, the entire class must be restructured to create a demand for teamwork.

2. **The roles of both teacher and students must undergo change for the team concept to work.** It was easy for me to see how my students were hanging on to their "old" expectations, but it has taken me a while to recognize how I have been reluctant to change, also. One serious question we must ask ourselves is to what extent can/should teachers let go of the responsibility for setting standards and measuring student learning? In a manufacturing setting, objectives can be negotiated: What will be our quality standards? What production level will we aim for? And employees have some expertise for participating in those decisions since they are the ones who know their jobs. But can students enjoy the same status in the classroom? At the bottom line, someone has to write exams (and grade them) and evaluate assignments. And it will be the teacher who is held accountable for whether the students have learned what they should have learned.

3. **The transition to a pure team approach is slow and sporadic.** Management experts (e.g., Drucker, 1993) advocate introducing such a change all at once rather than piece-meal. However, "making" the change and "achieving" the change are two different things, and you can't expect the payoff all at once. In a class we're talking about a period of 16 weeks or less. How much change can be accomplished in that amount of time?

4. **It is easier to build a new culture from scratch than it is to change an existing one.** On the one hand, because it is a new semester with new students, many of whom may not have had you for class before, you may feel that you are building a culture from scratch. However, both you and the students are already immersed in the larger traditional classroom culture, so your slates are not clean. It's more like moving from one department to another within a company than starting a whole new company.

5. **Team members will try to solve new problems with old solutions.** Examples of this abounded in all three of my classes. For example, when I gave students responsibility for evaluating one another's essay exams, they were continually checking with me to see if they were evaluating them as I would have. When students were given the responsibility for designing and conducting their own exam reviews, they simply planned to "come to class with questions."

6. **Cultural change is not linear, but looping.** Barker et al. (1993) argue that cultural change is a series of two steps forward, one step back. Just when you think your class has finally passed that watershed mark, they will revert to the familiar way of doing things. Often this regression is a way of dealing with their own insecurities; and sometimes those insecurities are caused by the professor sending mixed signals about the autonomy students are to exercise.

## Conclusions

Given the realities of cultural change, what can we conclude regarding the potential of self-directed teams in the classroom? The verdict doesn't need to be either/or. There are a number of things which can be retained from the self-directed team concept, and there some things which may not be appropriate. There are also situational contingencies which should be considered. Finally, we should note lessons for business and industry managers to learn from our classroom experiences.

Several aspects of self-directed teams seem to work well in the classroom. One thing a team structure can accomplish is to promote concertive over coercive control. When students realize that *they* are responsible for evaluating one another's work, or that they will be evaluated by someone other

than the teacher, they become quite effective at motivating and policing one another. Having students evaluate one another's work and the work of their team can open their eyes to the difficulties of agreeing upon standards, evaluating work, and providing feedback, skills which are valued in traditional managers as well as team members.

Students are not often asked, what should be *our* goals for *our* class? Yet with coaching they can learn to see the relationships among the teacher's goals, their personal goals, and the potential usefulness of the course. The challenge is to help them set *measurable* goals, something to which teachers are not always very attentive, either.

Finally, there are a number of ways in which individual and group-based rewards can be merged. There will always be individuals who outperform the group, just as there will always be those who will ride the group's coattails, but there are too many advantages to teamwork to reward only individual performance. In the most recent class, 50% of students' grades came from exams (individual), and 50% came from their team's portfolio. There were also group-based rewards which could only be achieved through individual performance. For example, students earned bonuses based on their team's average exam score and on the class' total attendance rate. It's also important that excellent students recognize the value of being able to elevate the performance of the group. Teams are opportunities for talented individuals to learn coaching and teaching, as well as leadership skills.

Aside from these areas of compatibility, there are at least two fundamental aspects of self-directed teams which must be modified, if not abandoned, for the classroom. First, students have limited capacity for determining the goals and procedures for a course. Even in industry, teams are not given complete autonomy, but they often do have control over things such as budgets, internal personnel decisions, discipline, job design, and scheduling. In other words, they are told, "By such-and-such a time, these overall objectives must be met. You have the freedom to find the best way to meet them." In most classes, students are much more dependent on the teacher for decisions about what material should be taught, how performance should be assessed, and what are the best ways to learn the course content. A focus on student participation will tend to facilitate the learning of process better than content, and this may be more appropriate for some classes than for others.

Second, as my students were aware, the teacher never does (nor can he/she) surrender ultimate authority. In the Barker et al. (1993) study, workers were told that they had the authority to make decisions, but they still tended to hear management's suggestions as orders. In a business, employees are held accountable for their performance and can be fired. In a classroom, it is the teacher who is held accountable. If a teacher grants authority to the

students and the class does not learn at an acceptable level, the class is still over at the end of the term. There is no second chance for those students to learn what they should have learned.

These limitations are broadly generalized. Certain contexts likely are more amenable to self-directed teams than others. For example, upper division classes are more appropriate for teams, as are advanced courses in a sequence. The content of the course also makes a difference. Applied projects in an organizational or small group communication class are a natural, for example. Students' prior experiences in working with teams are also relevant. Most students have worked on group projects (a student once told me he was taking five classes, and he was assigned to groups in four of them!), but those experiences may not have prepared them for working as a self-directed team. When students have not worked in self-directed teams before, much time must be spent teaching and coaching them on how to do so.

The fact that using self-directed teams in the classroom is so difficult has implications for employers, as well. First, it means that most college graduates, and certainly people without college education, will not have had much experience working in self-directed teams when they enter the work force. If the trend toward using teams in business and industry continues, this may become increasingly problematic. Second, employers should recognize that a change to self-directed teams does not occur in a vacuum. Whatever changes are introduced within the organization, employees bring with them experiences and expectations from traditional management models. Last, remember that "form follows function." The reason why teams worked in the XEL case (Barker, et al., 1993), and one explanation for why they often fail in classrooms, is that the team structure responded to a pragmatic need. As long as we are using self-directed teams in the classroom only because we think students should know how to work in teams or because we think that teams are better, students will never buy into them. And having members "buy into" them is the definition of a team.

#### References

- Allender, H. D. (1993). Self-directed work teams: How far is too far? *Industrial Management*, 35(5), 13-16.
- Barker, J. R., Melville, C. W., & Pacanowsky, M. E. (1993). Self-directed teams at XEL: Changes in communication practices during a program of cultural transformation. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 21(4), 297-312.
- Beyer, J. M., & Tricre, H. M. (1987, Spring). How an organization's rites reveal its culture. *Organizational Dynamics*, 76, 4-25.

- Boyett, J. H., & Conn, H. P. (1992). *Workplace 2000*. New York: Plume.
- Carnevale, A. P., Gainer, L. J., & Meltzer, A. S. (1991). *Workplace basics: The essential skills employers want*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Caudron, S. (1994). Teamwork takes work. *Personnel Journal*, 73(2), 40-48.
- Clemmer, J. (1993). The coming team crisis: Five stumbling blocks or stepping stones to success. *CMA-The Management Accounting Magazine*, 67(4), 30-31.
- Deal, T. E., & Kennedy, A. A. (1982). *Corporate cultures*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Drucker, P. (1992, February 11). There's more than one kind of team. *The Wall Street Journal*, p. 16.
- Dumaine, B. (1994, September 5). The trouble with teams. *Fortune*, 86-92.
- Eisenberg, E. M., & Goodall, H. L. (1993). *Organizational communication: Balancing creativity and constraint*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Hoevermeyer, V. A. (1993). How effective is your team? *Training and Development*, 47(9), 67-72.
- Matthes, K. (1992). Team building: Help employees change from me to we. *HRFocus*, 69(9), 6-7.
- Peters, T. J., & Waterman, R. H. (1982). *In search of excellence*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Schein, E. H. (1989). *Organizational culture and leadership: A dynamic view*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Sypher, B. D., Applegate, J. L., & Sypher, H. E. (1985). Culture and communication in organizational contexts. In W. B. Gudykunst (Ed.), *Organizational Processes* (pp. 13-30). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Urick, R., & DeMont, R. (1993). Feedback is often neglected in the midst of change. *HRFocus*, 70(10), 15-16.
- van Maanen, J. (1991). The smile factory: Work at Disneyland. In P. J. Frost, L. F. Moore, M. R. Louis, C. C. Lundberg, & J. Martin (Eds.), *Reframing organizational culture* (pp. 58-76). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Weick, K. E. (1983). The significance of corporate culture. In L. R. Pondy, L. F. Moore, M. R. Louis, C. C. Lundberg, & J. Martin (Eds.), *Organizational culture* (pp. 3381-390). Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Weiner, Y. (1988). Forms of value systems: A focus on organizational effectiveness and cultural change. *Academy of Management Review*, 13(4), 534-545.
- Wuthnow, R., Hunter, J., Bergesen, A., & Kurzweil, E. (1984). *Cultural analysis: The work of Peter Berger, Mary Douglas, Michel Foucault and Jurgen Habermas*. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.



**Way to Go  
Cobbers!!!**

**Congratulations to the Concordia Forensics Squad for an outstanding year:**

- ◆ **State Tournament Sweepstakes Champions for a 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year**
- ◆ **15<sup>th</sup> place in overall sweepstakes at the National Individual Events Tournament**
- ◆ **Winners of the Greg LaPanta State Tournament "quality" award for a third consecutive year**
- ◆ **National Championships in *both* impromptu and after dinner speaking**



**Concordia College**

MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA

---

paid for by  
Alumni Backers of  
Concordia Forensics  
Carol Sylvester,  
acting chair.

---

## Teaching Assignments

### **THE NETWORK PARTY: EXERCISE FOR THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COURSE**

Julie Day, William Jewell College

In the Interpersonal Communication course it is extremely valuable to provide exercises and experiences that transfer theory and principle into action or observation. I have recently been using what I call the Network Party as one such exercise. The objective of the Network Party is to simulate a situation where students interact with professionals in order to test out some of the theories of nonverbal communication. Placing the exercise after the lecture and discussion allows for a vocabulary to be established so that discussion after the even can be directly tied into theories of nonverbal communication.

The subject of nonverbal communication, by its very nature, is one that draws lively discussion from students. Nonverbal communication, to quote Freud, oozes out of us at every pore. That process of escaping information calls us to base perceptions, whether accurate or not, about a person's level of intelligence, socio-economic background, or education and make a decision whether or not he is credible, attractive, interesting, or employable. Since nonverbal communication is not always accurate or complete, those studying this form of communication can learn a great deal through experience and observation.

Students in an upper level course, such as Interpersonal Communication, are on the brink of pursuing career opportunities. Many have questions about interviewing and networking. An exercise such as the Network Party marries the theories of nonverbal with a basic, driving force for the student landing a job. There is a vast array of resources discussing the role of nonverbal communication in getting a job and progressing successfully in that environment. Julius Fast has long been known for his insight and publications into this unspoken language and how it translates in our work environments. Sources from newspaper and television can provide examples and studies to supplement the academic based resources. Personalities such as Hilary Clinton and those connected with the O.J. Simpson case have been the focus for articles discussing the role of appearance on issues such as credibility. Pulling from all of the available research can help set the stage for the exercise.

I make sure that part of our discussion centers on first impressions, posture, clothing, and proxemics. The class participates in role-playing situations designed to use and observe nonverbal communication to create a positive interaction as well as a negative outcome. I contact the Career Development Office on campus before the semester begins to help me coordinate this activity. They are often able to help target recruiters and alumni who would be willing to participate in such an event. It is important to provide a balance of male and female guests, as well as a variety of professions and years of work experience.

In the past, asking alumni to participate helps serve two-fold. As alumni they can help motivate students by illustrating what types of careers a graduate can go into and they are able to understand the foundational experiences the students are going through at this college. This semester, one alumnus talked at length to one group of students about the courses they should take in order to be prepared for the changing job market. As a faculty member and advisor, it certainly helps drive home a suggestion that I may have been making for months to an advisee or major in the department.

The students are informed in advance of who will be at the party. It works best not to provide much information about the individuals so that students are in a position to start conversation and seek out that information. Since this activity appears on the course schedule the class members know that they will need to dress in professional attire as if attending an interview. We meet in a room other than the regular classroom making it more of a special event. One semester I even served punch and cookies so people would have to manage conversation while handling refreshments. The room is set up for maximum interaction--chairs should be pushed to the sides. In a large class nametags are helpful and representative of such events. I have even given insight into where nametags should be placed on a person for maximum use.

When everyone has arrived I introduce the students to the format stressing again the objective and explaining that the party will last about 40 minutes (depending on the size of the group). I then step aside to observe. I usually take informal notes as students often ask what I saw in terms of a particular skill that a person might be working on or concerned about. After about 40 minutes, the group sits in a circle to process what happened during the party.

Professionals talk about their observations which may range from how nonverbal cues projected confidence or how recruiters look at the details of how someone is dressed that might communicate a great deal about that person. One professional recruiter from Hallmark discussed the importance of paralanguage in the interview situation. Students are encouraged to ask questions that may not have been addressed. A female student's question sparked an interesting discussion on handshakes. Since we had discussed the

dynamics of touch in the chapter, it was additional information for the class to build on.

This exercise goes beyond my expectations each time because of the atmosphere created by willing professional and interested students. With careful planning and assistance from the Career Development Office, it is an exercise that fits well into regular course schedule. The Network Party provides a recent, realistic experience for students to see the role of nonverbal communication in a professional situation. Feedback is energetic and positive because this activity addresses a concern most students have of being taken seriously as a professional and marketable individual. Since the content comes alive through doing, the theories and principles of nonverbal are immediately applied, analyzed, and remembered. As an educator that is the very best situation!

# VISITORS FROM ANOTHER PLANET: AN EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH TO TEACHING DELIVERY SKILLS

Laura K. Oster, North Dakota State University

The idea that higher education should provide applied experience is not original to the decade of the 1990's. John Dewey provided an argument for learning by doing in his 1938 book *Experience and Education*. Dewey (1938) stated, "A primary responsibility of educators is that they not only be aware of the general principle of the shaping of actual experience by environing conditions, but that they also recognize in the concrete what surroundings are conducive to having experiences that lead to growth" (p.35). This idea, advanced almost sixty years ago, has tremendous relevance for educators today.

The Speech Communication discipline recognizes the value of active learning in its approach to teaching the beginning public speaking class. One would not think of teaching the beginning public speaking class without requiring students to perform speeches. However, many of the concepts relevant to being a good public speaker are taught in the traditional lecture format with little application. This paper offers a rationale for the use of experiential methods in the beginning public speaking course. It then describes an activity designed to teach aspects of non-verbal delivery and finally discusses some possible outcomes of the activity.

Teaching the concepts of nonverbal delivery can be problematic. Students often understand the roles of vocal variety, facial expressions and gestures in effective delivery. They may also know how to identify these aspects of delivery in another speaker. However, few integrate this understanding into their own speeches. As Buerkel-Rothfuss, Gray & Yerby (1993) stated, "... having knowledge is different from being able to make conscious choices concerning communication strategies: in other words, the ability to know what is effective and being able to apply that knowledge effectively are different... [S]kill comes with practice and application" (p. 34). In order for students to try vocal variety, facial expressions and gestures they need an opportunity to practice these concepts in a non-threatening situation. The following activity was designed with this goal in mind.

## Activity

Divide the students into groups of three or four. Give each group a different

item from a collection you have gathered prior to class. The items could be unusual, tacky or ordinary (i.e. old shoe, stuffed pig, antique match box, one mitten, calculator, etc.) Tell the students that they will be required to act like they were visitors from another planet. They have just returned to their planet and are reporting to their fellow beings about the artifacts they gathered on earth.

Give each group a different planet name and characteristic (see below). Each group is required to describe their item using the emotion or non-verbal characteristic listed on their sheet. Encourage them to be creative in their descriptions and to exaggerate their characteristic. Be sure to emphasize that you are not looking for content, but delivery. It should not matter what they say, but how they use their voice, face, and body to describe the object. After each group presents, the classmates should guess at the nonverbal messages in the speakers' presentations.

### Group Instructions

#### Group One

Pretend you were visitors on earth from the planet Sathar. You have gathered artifacts on earth to bring back to your planet. Prepare a presentation to deliver to the leaders of Sathar (pretend your classmates are the leaders of the planet) describing the item and how it is used on earth. **Satharians do not have any emotions.**

These instructions can be varied for an unlimited number of groups with different characteristics. For example, planet Zolo has no spoken language. Zoloians communicate only with body language and facial expressions. Dionites express their emotions only in terms of happiness. Jypites are extremely sad all of the time. Vidmar beings express anxiousness at all times. Continue to create planet names as necessary.

#### Variation

This exercise could be adapted as a lead in to the topic of persuasive speaking by asking the students to sell the item rather than to describe it. In this case the students should create uses for the object other than its functional purpose. This time, the exercise focuses on content (creativity in uses) as well as nonverbal delivery (facial expressions, vocal variety and gestures).

### Application

Reflection is a critical element of experiential education (Hutchings & Wutzdorff, 1988, Lieberman & Connolly, 1992). These authors assert that students need opportunities to articulate what they are learning in order to integrate the knowledge. The application of this exercise is necessary in order to give students a rationale for this experience.

Following up this activity with a class discussion on delivery provides students a base of experience to apply concepts being discussed. This can be done using an inductive approach, whereby students describe what they did and what they felt they learned with the teacher framing it in terms of concepts being discussed. For example, a student may state, "Mary's voice was so enthusiastic. I had no trouble identifying that she was happy." The teacher then introduces the term vocal variety and goes on to define it. This approach creates a shared base of experience in order to help students attach meaning to the concepts.

### Outcomes

This exercise can result in several beneficial outcomes. First, students will know what it feels like to use facial expressions, gestures and vocal variety. The exaggerated manner of this exercise may act as ankle weights do for a runner. Perhaps it will be possible for the students to transfer this experience to their own speeches after having acted out this exaggerated version.

Another outcome from this experience is the opportunity for students to use critical thinking skills. Duley (cited Gowin, 1992, p.2) suggested that experiential learning helped students to "... gain confidence in the upper levels of the cognitive domain [application, integration and synthesis]". With the current emphasis on critical thinking in higher education, this is an appealing outcome.

Finally, this opportunity may serve to reduce speech anxiety by providing a cooperative speaking experience. The sink together/swim together nature of the group assignment makes it a shared risk (Johnson & Johnson, 1988). This sharing of risk may serve to provide anxious speakers a less threatening opportunity to practice their speaking skills.

This paper examined the rationale for using experiential methods to teach nonverbal delivery in the beginning public speaking course. It offered a specific activity which may prove useful in teaching nonverbal delivery and provided several outcomes from the activity. Future pedagogical research should continue to focus on developing experiential education techniques for

the communication classroom. In addition, public speaking teachers should be clear in their rationale of such activities to both students and colleagues in order to legitimize the unconventional methods.

### References

- Buerkel-Rothfuss, N.L., Gray, P.L., & Yerby, J. (1993). The structured model of competency-based instruction. *Communication Monographs*, 42, 28-36.
- Dewey, J. (1957). *Experience and Education*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- Gowin, J.S. (1992). *An environmental speaking corps as an experiential education opportunity in speech communication*. Unpublished master's paper, North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND.
- Hutchings, P. & Wutzdorff, A. (Eds.) (1988). *Knowing and doing: Learning through experience*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Inc.
- Johnson, R. T., Johnson, D. W. & Smith, K. A. (1988). *Cooperative learning: An active learning strategy for the college classroom*. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.
- Lieberman, T. M. & Connolly, K. (1992). *Education and Action: A Guide to Integrating Classrooms and Communities*. United States of America: Campus Outreach Opportunity League.



# THE SUBSTANTIVE BASIS OF SPEAKER CREDIBILITY

J. Clarke Rountree, University of Alabama, Huntsville

Teaching students how to thoughtfully assess speaker credibility (both their own and those they hear) can be a difficult matter. Textbooks talk about the elements of ethos, but separated from particular cases, I find that students come away from such readings with poor working knowledge of the concept. I developed the following exercise to help develop such a working knowledge. It can be given as a homework assignment, a small group assignment, or simply used as a spur to class discussion. I believe that it works best when there is an opportunity to debate the merits of various answers that might be given (they are hardly cut-and-dried, and that is the point). Students discover that knowledge of speakers, audiences, and speech topics is needed to adequately assess speaker credibility in each case.

## Assignment

Credibility is always relative to the topic; the same speaker may be very credible in speaking on one topic and have no credibility when speaking on another. Credibility also is influenced by the audience; audiences tend to favor some speakers over others. Complete the two exercises below in preparation for a class discussion on this topic.

**Part I:** Consider each of the speech topics below and determine which of the speakers listed for each of the topics would have the most credibility in delivering the speech on that topic to this speech class. Be prepared to give reasons for your choices.

### TOPIC

1. "The benefits of trade with the People's Republic of China"

2. "How to build a great body through weightlifting"

3. "Life on the front lines in the war with Iraq"

4. "The contributions of the Challenger seven"

### SPEAKER CANDIDATES

- a wealthy business person from China
- Ralph Nader
- an American union official from the clothing industry
- a professor of physical education
- Arnold Schwarzenegger
- an infantry soldier in the Persian Gulf conflict
- General Schwarzkopf
- President Bush
- President Reagan
- the Head of NASA
- fellow astronauts

5. "Sex discrimination in the workplace"

- a male personnel officer
- a female personnel officer
- a male secretary
- a female secretary

6. "The effects of acid rain on aquatic life"

- a biologist
- a Midwestern biologist
- a northeastern biologist
- a climatologist

**Part II:** Given the topic and the speaker below, choose which audience you believe the speaker would have the most credibility in addressing.

### TOPIC AND SPEAKER

7. The President of NOW on "The decline in women's access to abortion"

### AUDIENCES

- the U.S. Congress
- a convention of Democrats
- convention of Republicans

8. A political candidate on "The need to increase Medicare benefits"

- the U.S. Congress
- a local AARP chapter
- an AMA meeting

9. Mary Beth Whitehead on "Surrogacy: The need for restrictive legislation"

- a NOW meeting
- your state legislature
- an APA meeting

10. The U.S. Secretary of Commerce on "Stopping the migration of U.S. jobs to Mexico"

- a local union
- the U.S. Chamber of Commerce
- a political rally in southern Texas

11. A used car salesperson on "How to buy a good used car"

- a group of potential buyers at an auto dealer's business
- a group of the salesperson's friends at a party
- a \$25 per person, out-of-town seminar on how to buy a good used car

12. The head of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on "The plight of the homeless in America"

- a group of homeless people
- an organization of builders
- a gathering of suburbanites who commute to a large city

## BOOK REVIEWS

Gamble, Teri, and Michael Gamble. *Literature Alive!--The Art of Oral Interpretation*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1994. 472 pp.

Lenning, Maryanne. *Instructor's Manual/Literature Alive!--The Art of Oral Interpretation*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 1994. 117 pp.

Forensics coaches and oral interpretation instructors at both the secondary and collegiate levels are constantly in pursuit of resources which will enable them to better coach, train, and instruct their students. Gamble and Gamble's *Literature Alive!* and the accompanying instructor's manual written by Maryanne Lenning are two of the most valuable resources available to coaches and instructors. The text and manual provide a wealth of informative and instructional materials.

*Literature Alive!* is organized into three sections: harnessing your resources, exploring literary worlds, and widening the art of interpretation. This organizational scheme provides a framework for eleven information rich chapters. I will briefly discuss each section in turn.

The first section of the text on Harnessing Your Resources provides valuable direction for preparation prior to the act of interpretation. The three chapters included in this section focus on the use of and development of the body, voice, and "sense memory" in the art of interpretation. Elements of body movement which are pertinent to the act of interpretation are illuminated through a rich discussion of gestures, facial expression, physicalizing metaphors, and a number of other specific concerns. Levels of meaning, speech intelligibility, time, volume and force, pitch, and vocal quality are examined as essential voice development concerns in oral interpretation. The value of consciousness, alertness, and perceptiveness are discussed under the rubric of sense memory. Taken together, these first three chapters help demonstrate the essentials of preparation prior to performance.

The next four chapters of the text form the section entitled Exploring Literary Worlds. This section focuses on several central sources of literary material for oral interpretation. Chapter four deals with the interpretation of descriptive prose--the type of prose that uses literary close-ups. The next chapter focuses on the interpretation of narrative prose or storytelling as an interpretative process. Chapter six examines transposition, conflict, character, and other important elements of the interpretation of drama. This

section closes with a focus on the interpretation of poetry, including an examination of rhythm, meter, and tempo.

The final section of the text, *Widening the Art of Interpretation*, provides information regarding specialized and innovative approaches to oral interpretation. Chapter eight is concerned with the selection, preparation, and performance of literature for children. Literary material from a dozen nations provides the fuel for a discussion of literature from around the world in chapter nine. Innovations in regard to the interpretation of an essay, biographical and autobiographical works, diaries and letters, as well as video and audio tape are in chapter ten's discussion on the interpretation of documenting material. Chapter eleven examines the specialized concerns of ensemble and choral reading.

There are several special features which are common to all of the chapters in *Literature Alive!*. In addition to a number of complete works and literary cuttings, each chapter also provides a number of useful activities. "Getting Involved" activities are employed to help students discover and develop oral interpretation skills. "Reflections", which are questions designed to stimulate thought and discussion about student experiences with the oral interpretation process and literary selections provided, are also incorporated into each chapter's resource base. Beginning in chapter two, the text also employs a "Performer's Journal". This is a procedure which encourages use of a journal or notebook for the analysis and evaluation of interpretation.

The wealth of information in *Literature Alive!* is effectively supplemented by an equally informative *Instructor's Manual*. The manual goes far beyond the traditional provision of exercises and test items. It provides valuable introductory material, teaching instructions, evaluation forms, and a list of supplementary resources available to coaches and instructors.

The manual's introductory material is useful for both the novice and seasoned coach or instructor. The nature of the oral interpretation course, curriculum planning, assessment and evaluation, and other instructional procedures are discussed in a succinct and readable fashion.

Instructional material for each of the eleven chapters in the text are very efficiently and skillfully developed in the manual. Specific learning outcomes, suggestions for teaching, and a battery of supplementary exercises are provided for each chapter.

The manual also provides a large number of formats for and samples of evaluation forms for oral interpretation. A wide range of approaches to both teacher and student evaluation is presented.

The manual closes with a listing of other resources which are available to coaches and instructors of oral interpretation. A number of book and journal

article citations are provided, as well as a listing of available audio-visual materials.

Whether teaching or coaching oral interpretation and whether you do so at a high school or college, you should find both the text and manual to be invaluable resources. One could easily develop and conduct an oral interpretation course utilizing these resources. In addition, the exercises and other instructional aids can provide a valuable supplement to any other text which an instructor may employ. The forensics coach will find the text and manual to be of great assistance in preparing students for competition and providing them with guidance and additional direction as they actually engage in competition.

*Literature Alive!* and the *Instructor's Manual* which accompanies it, also function in an indirect, but nevertheless important way. They are heuristic. One cannot read these books without wanting to discover more about selecting literary materials, preparing cuttings, training and developing the body and voice, and all of the other features associated with oral interpretation of literature.

Michael W. Shelton  
University of Kentucky

Browne, Donald R. *Comparing Broadcast Systems: The Experiences of Six Industrialized Nations*. Iowa State University Press: Ames, Iowa, 1989. 447 pp.

Professor Browne offers a unique approach for comparing national broadcast systems. He compares France, the Netherlands, East Germany, West Germany, the Soviet Union, and Japan in his book but the same framework could be used to compare and contrast the broadcast systems of other countries. Browne is to be commended, not only for the examination he presents, but for the analytical process he employs that others can use for similar types of analyses.

His framework focuses on description of each country from twelve perspectives. These perspectives are: basic factors, brief history, financing, internal governance and administration, external governance and administration, programming, audience, problem areas, foreign influences on programming, relations with other media, international cooperation, and new media. A primary strength of this approach is that it offers cohesiveness throughout his study. The countries described are different but the reader is

consistently reminded of the common concerns (perspectives) that exist in each system.

This book is divided into seven chapters. Chapter one ("Comparing Broadcast Systems") deals with important areas to consider when evaluating and comparing broadcast systems. The next five chapters describe the broadcast systems of the six selected countries (East and West Germany are covered in one chapter). The final chapter ("What's Comparable, What Isn't, and What It Means") gives a treatment that clarifies the relevance of these comparisons and contrasts. Chapters two through six describe individual broadcast systems. Chapter seven draws from these descriptions to paint a picture of primary and secondary conclusions regarding what his findings mean for those interested in cross-cultural examination of broadcast systems.

It is thorough enough (447 pages) for the subject it covers. Browne speculates in a number of areas but is careful to substantiate the premises from which he writes. He includes 424 footnotes in 409 pages of text. The bibliography provides a list of resources helpful for the scholar interested in broadcast system research (bibliographies, general reference and background works, and periodicals).

The book is easy to read and has helpful transitions. However, this reviewer cannot figure out why Browne chose to examine the six countries he focuses on. Clarification of why he chose these countries, as opposed to other representative countries, would certainly enrich his analysis. In a related area, Browne frequently uses the United States broadcasting system to contrast approaches used in other countries. The reader begins to wonder why he didn't include the U.S. as a seventh country for review.

Another concern rests on how the broadcast systems in the Soviet Union and East Germany changed between the time the book was written and when it was distributed. The situation in East Germany has changed drastically. Thus, his analysis of these two countries lacks relevance at times. Browne obviously cannot be faulted for this shortcoming (who would've guessed the face of communism would change so quickly?) but it should be acknowledged nonetheless.

Professor Browne mentions the organization of the book parallels the organization of his course on comparative broadcast systems he teaches at the University of Minnesota (USA). This book could be especially beneficial for anyone teaching this type of course.

Jim Schnell  
Ohio Dominican College











**CTAM Journal** – Editor  
Department of Speech Communication  
and Theatre Art  
Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota 56562

JOURNAL

BULK RATE  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 237  
Fargo, ND