Basic Communication Course Annual Vol. 21

2009

Basic Communication Course Annual Vol. 21

Follow this and additional works at: http://ecommons.udayton.edu/bcca

Part of the Higher Education Commons, Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Commons, Mass Communication Commons, Other Communication Commons, and the Speech and Rhetorical Studies Commons

Recommended Citation

Available at: http://ecommons.udayton.edu/bcca/vol21/iss1/16

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Communication at eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Basic Communication Course Annual by an authorized editor of eCommons. For more information, please contact frice1@udayton.edu, mschlangen1@udayton.edu.
BASIC COMMUNICATION COURSE ANNUAL 21

2009

EDITOR
Paul Turman
South Dakota Board of Regents

published by
american press
Boston, Massachusetts
www.americanpresspublishers.com
Editorial Board

Paul Turman, Editor
South Dakota Board of Regents

Stephanie Ahlfeldt
Concordia College

Rick Armstrong
Wichita State University

Matt Barton
Southern Utah University

Jacquelyn Buckrop
Ball State University

April Chatham-Carpenter
University of Northern Iowa

Robert Davilla
Western Illinois University

Karen Dwyer
Univ. of Nebraska-Omaha

Chad Edwards
Western Michigan University

Deanna L. Fassett
San Jose State University

Nancy Rost Goulden
Kansas State University

Trudy Hanson
West Texas A&M University

Steve Hunt
Illinois State University

Adam Jones
Missouri Western State Univ.

Denise Kaye
Southern Illinois University

Kevin Meyer
Illinois State University

David Novak
Clemson University

Paul Schrodt
Texas Christian University

William J. Seiler
Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln

Paul J. Siddens III
University of Northern Iowa

Cheri Simonds
Illinois State University

Scott Titsworth
Ohio University

Kristen P. Treinen
MN State Univ. Mankato

Beth Waggenspack
Virginia Tech University

Shawn T. Wahl
Texas A&M Corpus Christi

Samuel P. Wallace
University of Dayton

Leah White
MN State Univ. Mankato

David Worley
Indiana State University
Editor's Page

Now in its twentieth year, the Basic Communication Course Annual continues to serve as an important outlet within the discipline for scholarship related to the way we teach, manage, and evaluate the basic course. Each year the annual offers some of the best research on basic course pedagogy helping to position it as the primary source for teachers and scholars working to improve the quality of the basic course at their respective institutions. The Annual’s success has always been attributed to the community of scholars who continue to support the journal as contributors, editorial board members, and its readership. I wish to thank the efforts of the Annual’s previous editors Scott Titsworth, Deanna Sellnow, Craig Newburger, and Larry Hugenbergg. I would especially like to thank the members of my editorial board whose assistance has been instrumental as I have worked to complete my second issue.

Articles in this volume of the Annual attest to a growing body of scholarship that focuses on improving student and teacher experiences in the basic course. The initial article by Fasset and Warren asks the reader to envision how the introductory course would be influenced by taking a critical communication pedagogy approach. The manuscript offers an innovative look at how re-examining the way we structure the basic course can ultimately change the skills students can acquire.

The articles by Meyer, Hunt, Comadena, Simonds, Simonds and Baldwin and the other by Payne and Hasting examine the difficulties that Graduate Teaching Assistants ex-
perience as they begin their teaching efforts in the basic course. Meyer et al. continue their examination of the difficulties GTA face as they deal with unique classroom management problems, while Payne and Hastings uncover the differences in grade distribution across faculty rank. Each manuscript offers important practical and pedagogical implications for basic course directors to help manage and develop training procedures to overcome some of these critical instructional pitfalls. Investigations by Pearson and Child and Semlak emphasize instructional practices to promote student outcomes in the basic course. Pearson and Child’s manuscript uncovers how student gender affects public speaking grades after controlling for competency. Semlak examines the usefulness of peer feedback compared to instructor feedback as students prepare for future public speaking situations.

The final two manuscripts by Preston, Giglio, and English, as well as Fotsch both examine the broader implications of the broader environment in which the basic course is positioned. Preston et al. focuses their attention on redesigning the public speaking course at a research intensive institution. Fotsch attempts to identify student resistance to whiteness in the classroom and provides valuable insight into the importance of examining the basic course and its impact on the broader framework understanding race and resistance. I would like to conclude by thanking all those who have assisted in my efforts on my second volume of the Annual. My colleagues, authors, and the editorial board have helped make this volume of the Annual one that further contributes to the significance of the basic course.

Sincerely
Paul Turman
Editor
Contents and Abstracts

Uniquely Qualified, Distinctively Competent:
Delivering 21st Century Skills in the Basic Course. ....... 1
Stephen K. Hunt, Cheri J. Simonds, Brent K. Simonds

In this manuscript we argue that the communication discipline’s pedagogical content knowledge should be expanded to include educational strategies for advancing students’ critical thinking, information literacy, and political engagement skills. Further, we argue that the discipline should explicitly position itself as uniquely qualified to address these skills. By doing so, those affiliated with the basic communication course can leverage a substantial amount of political capital on their home campuses and go a long way toward delivering the critical skills students need in order to be successful in the 21st century.

Student Misbehaviors, Instructor Responses,
And Connected Classroom Climate:
Implications for the Basic Course................................. 30
Shereen G. Bingham, Robert E. Carlson, Karen K. Dwyer, and Marshall Prisbell

The concept of connected classroom climate focuses on student-to-student communication behaviors that are paramount in creating the climate of a class, especially in the basic course. While previous studies have focused on the positive and cooperative behaviors of students and instructors that may contribute to per-
ceptions of classroom connectedness, the role that incivilities may play in detracting from or undermining a connected classroom climate has not been investigated. This study examines perceptions of a connected classroom climate and its relationships to student misbehaviors and instructor responses. A total of 542 university students enrolled in 30 sections of the basic public speaking course completed the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI) and scales measuring student misbehaviors and teacher responses to student misbehaviors. Results showed that student perceptions of a connected classroom climate were inversely related to both inconsiderate and harassing student misbehaviors. The results also revealed a possible relationship between classroom connectedness and the manner in which instructors respond to students when they misbehave. These findings suggest that basic course instructors need to consider how to reduce student inconsideration and harassment misbehaviors in their classes, and how to positively respond to these behaviors when they do occur so that classroom connectedness is not diminished.

Speech Evaluation Assessment: An Analysis of Written Speech Feedback on Instructor Evaluation Forms
In the Basic Communication Course ...................................... 69
Cheri J. Simonds, Kevin R. Meyer, Stephen K. Hunt, Brent K. Simonds

As a critical component of many general education programs, the basic communication course is at the forefront of many assessment efforts. Five years after conducting extensive program assessment using student portfolios, and after implementing revisions to the instructor training program, course directors at Illi-
nois State University conducted another round of portfolio assessment. The present study reveals progress in the specific areas originally targeted for improvement. Additional areas for future revisions to the instructor training program are suggested. Implications for assessment efforts at other institutions are discussed.

Follow-up to the NCA Basic Communication Course Survey VII: Using Learning7

Sherwyn Morreale, David Worley, Lawrence Hugenberg

Respondents to the seventh national survey of the basic communication course at two and four-year colleges and universities identified administrative and pedagogical problems that challenge effective management and teaching in the course. This new study investigates how learning objectives in the basic course are related to one of the most salient problems identified in the earlier 2006 survey, consistency and reliability across multiple sections of the basic course at any institution. Data are presented from 37 randomly selected respondents, all members of the NCA Basic Course Division, regarding the use of learning objectives in the basic course in general and specifically in public speaking, hybrid, and interpersonal courses. Results suggest that although learning objectives often are in place, there may be divergence as to their application and thereby support of consistency across multiple sections of the course. The results also point to the need for additional research on related questions.
Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Student Engagement in the Public Speaking Classroom

Deanna Sellnow, Stephanie Ahlfeldt

Problem-based learning (PBL) is an instructional strategy designed to foster student engagement. This study examined the effectiveness of PBL to actively engage students in a basic public speaking course. An adapted version of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) was administered to students in 47 sections of the public speaking course at a medium-sized midwestern university. Students in the PBL-enhanced sections were significantly more engaged ($\mu = 33.6$) than those in the conventionally taught sections ($\mu = 32.2$). Further analysis examined three variables embedded in the survey: a cooperative learning variable, a cognitive level variable, and a personal skills variable. A multivariate analysis of the three variables revealed significant differences between the PBL-enhanced and conventionally taught section students with relation to cooperative learning, $p < .01$. No significant difference in cognitive level or personal skill development was revealed between the PBL-enhanced and conventionally taught courses, although the PBL means were slightly higher.

Connected Classroom Climate and Communication in the Basic Course: Associations with Learning.

Marshall Prisbell, Karen K. Dwyer, Robert E. Carlson, Shereen G. Bingham, Ana M. Cruz

Most research on the association between classroom climate and student learning has emphasized the instructor’s role in creating a positive learning environ-
ment. However, the role students play in fostering a classroom climate that promotes learning has received less attention, particularly in the basic course. This study examined the relationship between perceptions of a connected classroom climate and students’ cognitive and affective learning involving 437 freshman and sophomore university students enrolled in the basic public speaking course. Students completed the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI) and scales measuring affective and cognitive learning. Results showed significant relationships between student perceptions of connected classroom climate and cognitive learning, affective learning, and affective behavioral intent.

Desire and Passion as Foundations
For Teaching and Learning:
A Pedagogy of the Erotic

Sandra L. Pensoneau-Conway

In this narrative essay, I use my experiences as a communication educator to theorize the roles of desire and passion within the classroom. Extra-classroom encounters with several students inspire questions I feel are fundamental to the vocation of an educator in general, and a communication educator specifically. I argue for a shift in pedagogical practice from resisting desire and passion as feelings potentially destructive, to embracing such emotions as affirming, creative, and relationship-building pedagogical influences. I aim to illuminate the tensions and contradictions young and/or beginning communication instructors sometimes face when questions of personal and professional boundaries arise. I offer a pedagogy of the erotic as a pedagogical orientation that is fitting for the introductory hybrid course, as it promotes (1) the affirmation of
personhood; (2) the cultivation of creative capacities; and (3) the nurturance of relationships. These implications of a pedagogy of the erotic may be useful both within introductory communication course classrooms, as well as within orientation programs that train introductory course educators.

Author Biographies ..................................................... 207
Index of Titles Volumes 1-20 ........................................ 212
Index of Authors Volumes 1-20................................. 230
Submission Guidelines for Volume 22 ......................... 234
Uniquely Qualified, Distinctively Competent: Delivering 21st Century Skills in the Basic Course

Stephen K. Hunt
Cheri J. Simonds
Brent K. Simonds
Illinois State University

Over the past 20 years, the basic communication course has become a staple of many of general education programs (Cutspec, McPherson, & Spiro, 1999; Hunt, Novak, Semlack, & Meyer, 2005). The ability to communicate effectively is viewed as a prerequisite to interpersonal relationships, success in the workplace, and meaningful participation as a citizen in our democracy (Westphal-Johnson & Fitzpatrick, 2002). Also, as Dance (2002) notes, the basic course is communication’s “bread and butter” offering in that it “introduces new students to the discipline, provides continuing teaching opportunities for both permanent and adjunct faculty and often supports graduate programs through its staffing by graduate assistants” (p. 355). The role of the basic course in general education affords the discipline with substantial political capital on many campuses—administrators often look to the basic course as an ideal location for launching new initiatives given the course’s position in general education. To the extent that basic course directors are able to deliver those initiatives effectively, they may earn additional access to university
resources. We certainly agree with Dance (2002) that this is an important course.

In the last several years, communication education scholars have debated the merits of various formats and structures for the basic course (see, for example, Hunt, Ekachai, Garard, & Rust, 2001). Should the basic course focus on the development of students’ public speaking skills? Or, should the basic course present students with a combination of public speaking, group, and interpersonal skills? It is not our intent to resolve this debate. Instead, our objective is to bring to light particular trends in academia today that can and, we feel, should be reflected in basic communication course pedagogy. Indeed, our goal is to explore the core content of basic courses in communication and examine how those in the discipline might begin to advance our pedagogical content knowledge and assume a leadership role in significant national trends now sweeping across our campuses.

Our central contention is that the discipline’s pedagogical content knowledge (i.e., the collective knowledge the discipline has developed regarding the best ways to teach communication, see Friedrich, 2002) should be expanded to include educational strategies for advancing students’ critical thinking, information literacy, and political engagement skills. While many programs and teachers may already teach and nurture these abilities, we feel that the discipline should explicitly position itself as uniquely qualified to address these skills. Although these three skill areas may initially seem unrelated, we hope to show that they are, in fact, inextricably linked. And, throughout this essay we will detail the reasons why our discipline is distinctively competent to meet these challenges. Perhaps most importantly, these


21st Century Skills

skills are some of the most essential for students to acquire if they are to succeed in their relationships and occupations, and as citizens in the 21st century.

THE CASE FOR CRITICAL THINKING INSTRUCTION

Across the country, many institutions of higher education have recognized the need to integrate critical thinking instruction into general education programs (Halpern, 2001). Educators have come to the realization that, although most first-year students enter college with some previous critical thinking instruction, there is substantial room for improvement and further development (Jacobson & Mark, 2000).

Although there is some debate regarding the precise definition of critical thinking, virtually all definitions emphasize students’ ability to develop and analyze arguments based on available resources and knowledge (Angelo, 1995; Williams, Oliver, & Stockdale, 2004; Williams & Worth, 2001). Most scholars consider analysis, evaluation, and reflection as central to the process critical thinking (Williams, Oliver, & Stockdale, 2004). In addition, these abilities are included in the learning objectives of most basic courses in communication. In fact, virtually all textbooks for the basic course devote at least some attention to the topic of critical thinking and many operationalize critical thinking in terms of argumentation. The question we want readers to consider is whether we, as a discipline, are really doing enough with the basic course to foster the development of students’ critical thinking.
We believe that the basic communication course provides an ideal context for teaching critical thinking skills because they are intimately tied to communication skills (O'Keefe, 1986, 1995). While many basic courses require students to deliver oral presentations, a growing number have begun to value active learning strategies like instructional discussion to provide students opportunities to articulate and defend their ideas. When these classroom experiences are provided, deeper processing and meaningful engagement with the material is likely to occur (Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Mazer, Hunt, & Kuznekoff, 2008; Rattenborg, Simonds, & Hunt, 2005; Simonds, Simonds, & Hunt, 2004). Speaking and listening, whether through class discussion or more formal situations, allows students to question information, examine new evidence, and create linkages between the evidence and their lived experiences. As O'Keefe (1986) persuasively argues, “Oral communication improves not only students’ facility with language but their facility in maneuvering ideas as well. Speech allows ideas to be picked up and examined, set on shelves in categories, and eventually added to other categories, ideas, or words” (p. 6). Several scholars have documented the positive effects of communication skills training on students’ critical thinking development (Allen, Berkowitz, & Louden, 1995; Colbert, 1995; Hill, 1993). Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden (1999) conducted a meta-analysis of research concerning the effects of public speaking experiences on critical thinking and concluded that “critical thinking improved as a result of training in communication skills” (p. 27).

On many campuses educators have developed courses targeted specifically at first-year students. Of-
ten, such courses are designed to both ease the transition from high school to college and equip students with the kinds of critical thinking skills required for success in higher education and beyond. In fact, such a course (titled Foundations of Inquiry) was offered at our institution; however, FOI never really amounted to much of a success with students and assessment data revealed little transferability of the general critical thinking skills acquired in the course to new contexts (such as middle and outer core courses in the general education program and courses in students’ major). For these and other reasons, higher administration made a decision to remove FOI altogether and focus institutional efforts to improve first-year students’ critical thinking skills in our introductory communication and English courses.

One reason we feel our administrators made a sound decision is that research has shown critical thinking instruction is most effective when housed within a content course, such as the basic communication course, and applied to specific assignments (Royalty, 1995; Williams, Oliver, & Stockdale, 2004). Many of our students noted that the more generic, multi-disciplinary course (FOI) was problematic specifically because it was not linked to a particular discipline. As a result, these same students frequently voiced how difficult it was for them to envision the relevance of tasks like argument diagramming to other courses or to their future occupation.

Our students’ concerns were presaged by communication educators like O’Keefe (1986) who has noted that the more generic, multi-disciplinary approaches tend to “treat critical thinking as a separate entity...It makes much more sense to instead change the way we teach our present content courses” (p. 2). Students that are
afforded the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills tied to specific disciplinary course work, such as the creation of a persuasive speech in the basic communication course, learn the relevancy of those skills to specific tasks. Students enrolled in the basic communication are presented with a several meaningful opportunities to learn how to produce and consume arguments effectively.

Although we wholeheartedly endorse the basic course as a rightful home of critical thinking instruction, it is important to note that we cannot assume that students will experience significant gains in this area merely by composing, delivering, and critiquing speeches—especially if our emphasis in teaching communication is on the delivery of information. Research has shown that critical thinking skills improve as a result of specific and intentional instruction (Halpern, 1987a, 1987b). According to Dance (2002), the present model “for most basic courses focuses on public speaking skills. The course’s measure of success is the degree to which the student improves in platform abilities” (p. 355). Dance (2002) recommends that we revive one of our discipline’s oldest paradigms, the speech and thought paradigm, by adopting a braided pedagogical approach that helps students to become better thinkers by improving their public speaking skills. In other words, basic course instructors should devote as much time and effort to improving students’ thinking abilities as they devote to improving students’ public speaking abilities.

We agree with Dance (2002) that such techniques are deeply embedded in our disciplinary pedagogical content knowledge. When we were asked to incorporate
the critical thinking skills of the FOI course into our basic course (COM 110), our first reaction was that we were already teaching critical thinking skills—so, we reasoned, such “reform” would be relatively easy. A cursory glance of any COM 110 syllabus would lead the casual reader to the same conclusion. After all, we had chapters assigned to students on critical listening and thinking that included discussions of how to construct and evaluate arguments, as well as recognizing fallacies in reasoning. In addition, students in the course were required to compose, deliver, and critique multiple speeches. However, a closer inspection of our lesson plans revealed that our efforts were not as “intentional” as we initially thought. We found that, although many instructors were requiring students to read the aforementioned chapters, very few of them were actually incorporating argument development, analysis, and evaluation into class discussion. As we looked over the evaluation criteria in our peer evaluation forms we noticed they focused almost exclusively on delivery skills—few instructors were asking students to evaluate the quality of supporting materials and overall argument development of their peers. In short, we were not doing a very good job of operationalizing and intentionally teaching critical thinking skills in COM 110.

As we “redesigned” our course, we embraced Dance’s (2002) speech and thought paradigm by bolstering the articulation and evaluation of arguments in the COM 110 curriculum in a number of ways. For example, we revamped our instructions and evaluation criteria for written and oral assignments, making sure to emphasize the development and support of claims. We worked with our instructors to develop fresh lesson plans de-
signed to teach students how to identify and avoid fallacies of reasoning and to construct quality arguments using Toulmin’s (1958) argument model (in our experience this model is an excellent way to operationalize critical thinking in the context of the basic course). In addition, we substantially overhauled our approach to teaching information literacy skills by developing a number of activities that help students learn how create research strategies and evaluate sources using three tests of evidence: bias, timeliness, and credibility (a point we will return to in greater detail in the next section). A detailed overview of all of the changes we made to COM 110 is beyond the scope of this paper (for more information please contact the first author); however, we feel comfortable in stating that we have gone a long way in the last few years towards institutionalizing a commitment to meaningful critical thinking instruction and, as a result, have moved closer to the speech and thought approach advocated by Dance (2002).

Our own assessment data lend credence to the importance of intentional and specific pedagogy for critical thinking instruction. In the spring 2005 semester, we pilot tested eight sections of COM 110 containing enhanced instruction in critical thinking. These experimental sections were compared to a group of eight control sections—sections that featured no changes to our traditional way of teaching the course. Using a pretest/posttest design, we administered two critical thinking measures—an actual “test” of students’ critical thinking skills and a self-report of their critical thinking skills. Data analyses revealed that both groups demonstrated a significant improvement over time on the self-report measure. Most importantly, the control group did not
improve their performance on the critical thinking test while the experimental group experienced a statistically significant increase on this measure (see Mazer et al., 2008). So, while both groups thought they improved their critical thinking skills by the end of the semester, only the experimental group produced a statistically significant increase on the critical thinking test. We are happy to report that all sections of COM 110 now contain “enhanced” instruction for critical thinking. The descriptive statistics for this study are provided in Table 1.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Critical Thinking Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control</th>
<th></th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTSA</td>
<td>64.12a</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>67.40a</td>
<td>5.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Scores on the Critical Thinking Self Assessment (CTSA) range from 17 to 85 and scores on the critical thinking (CT) test range from 0 to 10. Means with the same subscript are significantly different.

In the next section we discuss the relationships between critical thinking and information literacy instruction and develop the case for the inclusion of both within the basic communication course.
THE CASE FOR INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTION

As with critical thinking instruction, library instruction is a key component of many general education programs (Jacobson & Mark, 2000). In large part, this component of general education is based on the premise that information literacy is important, and that instruction in this area should begin in the first semester of a student’s college experience (Jacobson & Mark, 2000; Samson & Granath, 2001). Breivik (1998) agrees that “the best place to start information literacy planning is with general education or core curriculum, where concerns for competencies that all students should acquire provide a natural home for the discussion of information literacy abilities” (p. 44). Information literacy involves finding sources, analyzing the material, evaluating the credibility of the sources, and using and citing sources ethically and legally (Eisenberg, Lowe, & Spitzer, 2004; Mackey & Jacobson, 2004).

We have engaged in many conversations with other basic course instructors regarding students’ needs in this area. It is unlikely that anyone affiliated with the basic course, especially those whose focus is public speaking, would disagree with the statement that many first-year students are not information literate, due to poor proficiency in database searches and critical thinking skills (Jacobson & Mark, 2000). Many students, as Jacobson and Mark (2000) note, know how to use the Internet to access needed information; however, most do not know how to build and expand effectively
upon this knowledge. Additionally, few students enter college with a firm grasp on how to develop an effective research strategy for a given assignment. The massive proliferation of information resources that we have experienced in the last several years further complicates matters for students (American Association of College and Research Libraries, 2000; Swanson, 2004). As a result, it is likely that many students will enter the basic course with a “need to know how to focus their topics, where (in addition to the Internet) to search, and how to evaluate and use the information they retrieve” (Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, 1996, p. 15).

We believe that the basic communication course provides an ideal environment to teach information literacy, since students apply what they learn about library information through the construction of speeches and presentations. In this way, the basic course provides students the opportunity to practice information literacy skills in an applied manner. In addition, an emphasis on information literacy instruction compliments efforts to develop students’ critical thinking skills (Samson & Granath, 2001).

In basic courses that feature several tasks requiring research (e.g. speeches and written assignments), there are multiple opportunities for interaction with library staff and/or information literacy instruction. The problem is that most universities attempt to teach information literacy skills at the surface level by taking students to the library for a one-time tour and possibly a follow-up assignment (Phillips & Kearley, 2003). Phillips and Kearley (2003) claim that students leave these one-shot approaches to information literacy instruction
without the ability differentiate between a library catalog and an index, scholarly journal and a magazine, or web sources and library databases. It seems clear that more can and should be done to develop students’ information literacy skills.

At the same time we completed the critical thinking revisions to our basic course, we also worked with library staff to redesign our information literacy instruction. We began by replacing the one-shot approach we were using (this one contact point occurred early in the semester and included a 50 minute lecture on the databases available in the library). Our course requires students to complete three different speeches (informative, group, and persuasive) and each assignment contains unique research requirements. As a result, the first change we made was to establish three contact points with the library—one for each major speech. The nature of these contacts also changed substantially. Rather than the passive model we had been using, we worked with our librarians to create student-centered approaches that actively engaged students as they developed research strategies for the speeches. During each contact point with the library, students now complete worksheets that guide them through every step of the research process including how to create research questions, generate a list of search terms, search various information sources, and evaluate their search results. In addition, we developed and provided in-class assignments for all sections of the basic course on evaluating information in terms of timeliness, credibility and bias. These core information literacy instructional strategies overlap with and reinforce our efforts to embed critical thinking instruction throughout the course.
We pilot tested these information literacy enhancements alongside our critical thinking enhancements in eight sections of our basic course. These experimental sections were compared to eight control sections that used the passive approach to information literacy instruction described above. As was the case with the critical thinking test, our data revealed that only the experimental sections (pretest $M = 6.27$, $SD = 1.67$; posttest $M = 6.76$, $SD = 1.73$, the range of this instrument is 0 to 10) experienced statistically significant gains on the information literacy test over time (Meyer et al., 2008). The mean for the control group on the posttest ($M = 6.24$, $SD = 1.49$) was not significantly different than the pretest mean ($M = 6.14$, $SD = 1.67$). We also observed a statistically significant positive correlation between students’ critical thinking and information literacy scores ($r = .27$, $p < .04$) which provides additional evidence for the claim that these two sets of skills are integrally related (Meyer et al., 2008). The fact that the control group did not improve significantly over the course of the semester speaks volumes about the importance of intentional instruction. Put simply, we cannot assume that students will improve in these areas simply as a function of conducting research for speeches—our efforts need to be well-designed, substantive, and intentional.

In the final section of this essay we discuss the ways that critical thinking and information literacy instruction form the foundation for the pedagogy of political engagement.
THE CASE FOR PEDAGOGY FOR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

While it is may be clear to most students that communication skills may enhance their interpersonal relationships or their career aspirations, it may not be immediately clear to them what their responsibilities are as citizens in a democracy. For some instructors, educating for citizenship may be a quaint or archaic idea. However, implicit in the philosophy of general education is shared experience and hence mutual responsibility. Beyer and Liston (1996) point out that common, community, and communication all share the same linguistic root and that without these it would be impossible to “establish a widely held social good” (p. 88). Therefore, it is important that basic communication courses, especially those that are part of a general education curriculum or those housed at public institutions, should teach and engender political engagement among their students.

Several scholars have persuasively argued that political disengagement among the youth of this country is an issue that should concern all of those in higher education (Beaumont, Colby, Ehrlich, & Torney-Purta, 2006; Colby, Beaumont, Ehrlich, & Corngold, 2007; Hillygus, 2005; Spiezio, Baker, & Boland, 2005). This is a problem worth addressing because, as Galston (2003) argues, the withdrawal of a cohort of citizens from our political system places democracy at risk. Unfortunately, the reality today is that few colleges and universities offer programs that are designed to intentionally develop students’ political engagement (Beaumont et al., 2006). We agree with Beaumont et al. (2006) that this
lack of interest represents a missed opportunity to the extent that such institutions are “well positioned to promote democratic competencies and participation” (p. 250).

In an attempt to strengthen undergraduate education for engaged citizenship, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) partnered with the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and The New York Times to create the Political Engagement Project (PEP) (see the following website for additional information: http://www.aascu.org/programs/adp/initiatives/engagement.htm). Currently, twelve institutions are active participants in this national initiative; however, the creators of PEP are looking to dramatically expand the institutions participating in the project. Given the essential role of communication in political engagement, those affiliated with the basic course are perfectly situated to take full advantage of this opportunity.

In our own efforts to include pedagogy for political engagement in COM 110, we have learned that such strategies compliment our existing communication pedagogy. For example, we know that critical thinking skills are essential if students are to become critical consumers and producers of information in a democratic society (Browne & Stuart, 2004; O’Keefe, 1995; Tsui, 2000). In other words, it is very difficult for members of our democracy to participate effectively if they cannot think critically. Similarly, students’ must be information literate in order to be political engaged. As DeMars, Cameron, and Erwin (2003) argue, information literacy is “central to the practice of democracy” (p. 253). As a result, our lessons addressing critical thinking and in-
formation literacy are also geared to enhance students’ political competence. For example, our discussions of argumentation and fallacies include an in-class analysis of recent political advertisements (believe it or not, such advertisements contain several examples of fallacious reasoning). Ultimately, we believe that our emphasis on political engagement is not mutually exclusive with traditional communication pedagogy. Instead, teaching students how to communicate, think critically, evaluate information, and become politically engaged are mutually reinforcing and certainly consistent with the long-standing goal of liberal education to produce well-rounded and engaged citizens.

It is quite clear that if students are to become engaged citizens they must possess the ability to work with others (Ehrlich, 2000). In order to enhance students’ group communication and political engagement skills, we modified our group presentation assignment to include the development of a grassroots-style campaign. Students are asked to research multiple, sometimes competing, perspectives on a current and controversial topic. Students then work together to develop a communication campaign that both raises public awareness and presents policies designed to address the root causes of the problems they isolate.

As a follow-up to the spring 2005 assessment of COM 110 mentioned earlier, we collected data in the fall 2005 semester to further explore the impact of our pedagogy on students’ critical thinking development. In this study, however, we were also concerned with the relationships between critical thinking and important communication variables such as argumentativeness (a positive communicative behavior rooted in a disposition
to argue about controversial topics constructively) and verbal aggressiveness (a negative communicative behavior relying on such antisocial tactics as name calling, personal attacks, and maledictions). Data analyses revealed a significant positive correlation between the critical thinking and argumentativeness measures ($r = .19, p < .05$) and a significant negative correlation between the critical thinking and verbal aggressiveness measures ($r = -.31, p < .01$) (Hunt et al., 2006). In other words, as students' critical thinking skills improved, they became more likely to report the use of prosocial communication strategies and less likely to report the use of antisocial tactics like name calling and personal attacks. Again, we view such skills as fundamental to meaningful political participation.

As students progress through our basic course, we regularly ask them to consider how they might utilize their communication skills to participate in our democratic system. We also present them with the skills for political engagement provided in Figure 1. As they look over this list, they quickly come to the realization that all of these political engagement skills rest on the foundation of the communication, critical thinking, and information literacy skills covered in the course. In short, as students become more competent communicators, they become better prepared to participate in our democracy. We agree with Hillygus (2005) that politics is a game of communication. In order to engage in political persuasion, an individual must have the verbal and argumentation skills to communicate a position. In her study of the effects of higher education on students' political engagement, Hillygus (2005) found that the best predictor was training in communication skills. She
• Work together with someone or some group to solve a problem in the community where you live.
• Contact or visit a public official—at any level of government—to ask for assistance or to express your opinion.
• Contact a newspaper or magazine to express your opinion on an issue or issue a press release detailing your issue.
• Call in to a radio or television talk show to express our opinion on an issue.
• Attend a speech, informal seminar, or teach in about politics.
• Take part in a protest, march, or demonstration.
• Sign a written or e-mail petition about a political or social issue.
• Work with a political group or for a campaign or political official.
• Boycott something because of conditions under which the product is made, or because you dislike the conduct of the company that produces it.
• Buy a certain product or service because you like the social or political values of the company that produces it.
• Work as canvasser going door to door for a political candidate or cause.

Figure 1: Skills for Political Engagement
goes on to state that the findings “suggest that an educational system geared towards developing verbal and civic skills can encourage future participation in American democracy” (p. 41).

We pilot tested this new PEP pedagogy in four sections of the course in the spring of 2007. Two of these PEP enhanced sections contained a video requirement for the group speech, the other two sections developed a more traditional grassroots campaign for the group assignment.\(^1\) These experimental sections of the course were compared to two control sections that lacked any political engagement instruction. We then administered measures of political skills, political efficacy and motivation, and affective learning.

The political skills measure included items assessing students’ general interpersonal communication skills as well as specific political skills. As shown in Table 2, data analyses revealed significant pre- to posttest gains on the general interpersonal communication skills measure for all three groups; however, the gains were larger in the experimental PEP sections. This finding is particularly salient in that it provides support for the claim that the pedagogy of political engagement does not crowd out or compete with traditional basic course pedagogy. In fact, the largest gains in communication skills occurred in the PEP sections of COM 110. In addition, our analyses revealed significant pre- to posttest gains on the skills of political influence and action measure for the experimental groups only.

\(^1\) We designed the two experimental sections to test for any unique effects associated with the different group assignments. Our data analyses revealed no significant differences on any of the dependent variables between the experimental groups.
Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Political Skills Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Grassroots</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPC</td>
<td>27.72</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>32.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Skills</td>
<td>21.32</td>
<td>6.35</td>
<td>27.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means with the same subscript are significantly different.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Efficacy and Motivation Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Grassroots</th>
<th>Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>Pre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>68.23</td>
<td>16.50</td>
<td>68.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Means with the same subscript are significantly different.
As Table 3 demonstrates, data analyses revealed significant pre- to posttest gains on the political efficacy measure (e.g., perceptions that respondents could actually influence the political process) for the experimental groups only. In addition to political efficacy, we administered a measure of general course motivation at the end of the semester to all three groups. Our analyses indicated that the two PEP sections reported significantly more motivation for the course (operationalized by items such as “want to study,” “inspired,” “challenged,” and “enthused”) compared to the control sections.

We also administered a measure of affective learning (e.g., students’ perceptions of the instructor and course content) at the end of the semester to all three groups. As noted in Table 4, students in the two PEP sections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics for Affective Learning Measure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content of Course</td>
<td>24.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviors Recommended</td>
<td>25.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>25.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engage in Behaviors</td>
<td>24.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll in Similar Course</td>
<td>20.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Affect</td>
<td>122.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Means with the same subscript are significantly different.*
reported significantly more affect for the course compared to students in the control sections. A closer inspection of the subscales indicated that students in the PEP sections reported significantly higher affect for the content of the course, the instructor, the behaviors recommended in the course, and likelihood in enrolling in a similar course in the future compared to students in the traditional sections of COM 110. In short, students in this sample liked the PEP version of COM 110 better than the traditional version of COM 110.

Taken together, these results are consistent with previous research indicating that instructors can successfully promote students’ political engagement. For example, Beaumont et al. (2006) found that even students who enter higher education with little interest in politics benefit substantially from strategies designed to encourage political engagement. Also, Spiezio et al.’s (2005) research illustrates that general education courses can feasibly serve as the platform for institutional commitments to the promotion of political engagement. Perhaps most importantly, our analyses revealed no significant pre- to posttest differences for any of the groups on a measure of political ideology (e.g., a general measure of conservatism and liberalism). This finding supports previous research reporting that instructors can successfully implement the pedagogy of political engagement without altering students’ political ideology (Colby et al., 2007). In short, explicit, visible, and intentional efforts to promote students’ political interests, knowledge, skills, and motivation have been shown to be both feasible and efficacious.

In summary, the basic course in communication can play a substantial role in preparing students to be more
critical producers and consumers of information. We are also convinced that such skills are absolutely necessary at the present time. Beyond equipping students for personal success, we have an obligation to prepare them to be engaged citizens. One look around our current political environment should give any reader pause—our democracy is not especially healthy. If our country ever needed a new generation of savvy critical thinkers that know how to access, use and evaluate information, and how to use their communication skills for the common good, we need them now. For all of you associated with the basic course, you are uniquely qualified and distinctively competent to help students develop communication and political competence. It is not a stretch of the imagination to come to the conclusion that what you do in your classes for this generation of students will substantially impact the future of our democracy. In the end, you and the courses you teach can be the vehicle for positively affecting the attitudes and lives of thousands, or perhaps hundreds of thousands of students, and ultimately the political fate of our country.

REFERENCES


Volume 21, 2009


Westphal-Johnson, N., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (2002). The role of communication and writing intensive courses
in general education: A five-year case study of the
University of Wisconsin-Madison. *Journal of Gen-
eral Education*, 51, 73-102.

Williams, R.L., Oliver, R., & Stockdale, S.L. (2004). Psycholog-
ical versus generic critical thinking as predictors and outcome measures in a large undergraduate
human development course. *The Journal of General

Williams, R.L. & Worth, S.L. (2001). The relationship of
critical thinking to success in college. *Inquiry: Criti-
cal Thinking across the Disciplines*, 21, 15-16.
Student Misbehaviors, Instructor Responses, and Connected Classroom Climate: Implications for the Basic Course

Shereen G. Bingham  
Robert E. Carlson  
Karen K. Dwyer  
Marshall Prisbell  
University of Nebraska, Omaha

The development of classroom environments that optimize the educational experience for students has been the focus of considerable research (e.g., Chory, 2007; Fraser, Teagust, & Dennis, 1986; Myers & Rocca, 2001; Schaps, Lewis, & Watson, 1997). Within this wide-ranging body of work, one goal of instructional communication researchers is to discover communication-related factors that affect the college classroom climate. Scholars continue to call for more research and instruments that focus on the kinds of communication behaviors that create a positive climate in the college or university classroom (e.g., Myers, 1995; Lippert, Titsworth, & Hunt, 2005). This goal is especially important for instructors in the basic communication course because many students enroll in this course at the beginning of their college careers. The basic course therefore provides an enhanced opportunity for instructors to help students experience social support and connection, thereby increasing the potential for their well-being and success.

While much of the literature on classroom climate has focused on teacher behaviors and instructional strategies that enhance a positive and supportive climate
Student Misbehaviors and Connected Classroom 31

(e.g., Myers, 1995; Stuart & Rosenfeld, 1994), recent work on “classroom connectedness” emphasizes the role of students in the creation of the classroom atmosphere. Connected classroom climate, defined as “student-to-student perceptions of a supportive and cooperative communication environment in the classroom” (Dwyer, Bingham, Carlson, Prisbell, Cruz, & Fus, 2004, p. 5), places students’ communication behaviors at the center of classroom climate inquiry.

A review of previous studies on connected classroom climate suggests that two assumptions are fundamental to the concept. One assumption is that student-to-student connectedness is desirable; the other is that a connected classroom climate is created through the supportive and cooperative communication behaviors of students in a class. In support of the first assumption, two studies have found student perceptions of connectedness in the basic course to be associated with desirable educational outcomes, including reduced communication anxiety among public speaking students (Carlson, Dwyer, Bingham, Cruz, Prisbell, & Fus, 2006) and increased cognitive and affective learning (Prisbell, Dwyer, Carlson, Bingham, & Cruz, 2009).

Research examining the second assumption has been supported by positive correlations found between the behavioral items which compose the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI) and responses to global items measuring feelings of connection, friendliness, and liking among students in a class (Dwyer et al., 2004). That is, students who report engaging in the communication behaviors which compose the CCCI, such as praising and supporting one another, showing cooperation, sharing stories, and engaging in small talk
Student Misbehaviors and Connected Classroom

(Dwyer et al., 2004), also tend to report global feelings of connectedness with the students in their class.

If positive, supportive communication behaviors by students are associated with perceptions of a connected classroom climate, it should follow that negative and destructive student behaviors or misbehaviors (Plax, Kearney, & Tucker, 1986; Royce, 2000) are detrimental to classroom connectedness. However, the role that these student incivilities may play in detracting from or undermining a connected classroom climate has not been investigated. To further explore the assumption that student behaviors shape a connected classroom climate, this study examines the association between connected classroom climate and student misbehaviors.

Positive and supportive behaviors by instructors also appear to be related to students’ sense of connection with other students in their class. Specifically, previous research has found that students’ perceptions of a connected classroom climate are associated with the instructor’s use of verbal and nonverbal immediacy (Bingham, Carlson, Dwyer, Prisbell, Cruz, & Fus 2004). In contrast, negative and unsupportive instructor behaviors may weaken students’ perceptions of a connected classroom climate. Specifically, the ways instructors respond to student misbehaviors in the classroom (e.g., Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991) may be associated with student perceptions of student-to-student connectedness.

A third and previously unacknowledged assumption in the literature on connected classroom climate is that individual students in a class may perceive the connectedness between students differently. Even though it is assumed that a connected classroom climate is created
through the communication behaviors of students in a class, individual students may interpret those behaviors differently and draw varying conclusions about the climate. Therefore, it is important to treat individual students, in addition to entire class sections as units of analyses when examining this variable.

In an effort to learn more about the behaviors that are associated with and may undermine a connected classroom climate in the basic course, this study explores associations between students’ perceptions of classroom connectedness, student misbehaviors, and instructor reactions to student misbehaviors.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND RATIONALE**

**Student Misbehaviors**

Disruptive behaviors by students in a class may detract from a positive classroom climate. For example, Royce (2000) identified 23 student “incivilities,” including behaviors such as arriving late to class, letting cell phones go off, and making vulgar comments in class (Royce, 2000). Kearney, Plax, and McPherson (2006) described such incivilities and misbehaviors as “things students say or do to impede learning” (p. 236). According to Kearney et al. (2006), “[J]ust one or two students who misbehave can substantially impact the classroom culture or environment” (p. 236).

Researchers (Bellon, Doek, & Handler, 1979; Burroughs, Kearney, & Plax, 1989; Plax & Kearney, 1999; Plax, Kearney, & Tucker, 1986; Richmond, Wrench, & Gorham, 2001) have classified student misbehaviors in terms of being either active or passive. Richmond et al.
Student Misbehaviors and Connected Classroom

(2001) classify student behaviors as negative and active to include examples such as cheating, coming to class unprepared, asking counterproductive questions, using inappropriate language, challenging instructors or questioning their credibility, and making unusual noises. They further classify behaviors as negative and passive to include examples such as sleeping in class, apathy, reading the school newspaper in class, and listening to music. Although all these behaviors may be viewed as intentionally negative, some of them may be unintentional such as looking at one’s watch, looking down during a lecture, or rustling of papers (Richmond, et al., 2001).

Researchers also have suggested a number of reasons why students misbehave. For example, students may desire attention, want to rebel against classroom policies, have a need to release psychological energy or exhibit apathetic behavior, and overtly refuse to comply with the instructor’s request (Richmond, et al., 2001). Students may also engage in an uncivil manner because they have observed their teachers engaging in misbehaviors (Boice, 1996).

To date, student misbehaviors have typically been measured in instructional communication research using hypothetical scenarios as a stimulus for student perceptions (e.g., scenarios depicting a student who sits passively in class; counter-productive challenges to a teacher) (Plax, Kearney, & Tucker, 1986). A review of the instructional communication literature on student misbehaviors suggests that an instrument measuring student perceptions of student misbehaviors in an actual classroom is not available. Research using a self-report instrument to measure student perceptions of
misbehaviors occurring in actual classroom interactions is needed to increase the ecological validity of the research.

**Instructor Intervention in Student Misbehaviors**

The manner in which instructors intervene in student misbehaviors appears to play a role in the development of a positive classroom climate. For over 30 years, instructional researchers have studied how teachers respond to student misbehaviors in the classroom and have conventionalized the interventions in many ways. The goal of such research is to help instructors “establish and maintain positive teacher-student relationships,” and thus “facilitate academic growth while creating a positive environment conducive to learning” (Cooper & Simonds, 2007, p. 204).

The literature on classroom management suggests how teachers should intervene in student misbehaviors and the outcomes of those interventions. Classroom management refers to instructor behaviors that “produce high levels of student involvement in classroom activities, minimal amounts of student behaviors that interfere with the teacher’s or students’ work, and efficient use of instruction time” (Emmer & Evertson, 1981, p. 342). It appears that effective classroom management is conducive to a positive classroom atmosphere, whereas ineffective classroom management promotes a negative environment in the classroom. When classrooms are managed well, students have high levels of cognitive, affective and behavioral learning, high affect for the teacher, and good interpersonal communication skills (Richmond, et al., 2001). On the other hand, poor
classroom management results in negative reactions by students. Specifically, students respond with misbehaviors and challenges when teachers do not communicate classroom rules and expectations in ways that students clearly understand (Simonds, 1997).

Considerable research has examined the specific ways instructors influence students, especially the techniques and messages teachers use to influence students and manage their misbehaviors. One prominent line of research identified a final typology of 22 behavioral alteration techniques (BATs) and representative behavioral alteration messages (BAMs) that are used by instructors (McCroskey, Richmond, Plax, & Kearney, 1985; Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, & Richmond, 1986; Richmond & McCroskey, 1984). These studies found a significant relationship between instructors’ use of particular BATs/BAMs and affective learning among students. Pro-social BATs and BAMs were positively associated with affective learning, whereas anti-social BATs and BAMs were negatively associated with affective learning. Similarly, other researchers distinguish between instructors’ use of confirming and disconfirming behaviors. Confirming behaviors (e.g., endorsement, recognition, acknowledgment) are believed to help students respond positively to teacher influence whereas disconfirming behaviors (e.g., rudeness, belittling, embarrassing remarks) do not help students respond positively (Ellis, 2004).

Kounin (1977) queried how teachers handled student misbehaviors and found that it can have a ripple effect on other students. He reported those instructors who display “with-it-ness” (awareness of classroom behaviors), overlapping (capability of doing several tasks
at once), momentum (ability to keep the pace of the class moving), and group alerting (ability to keep all students focused on the class) experienced fewer misbehaviors in their classrooms.

Cooper and Simonds (2007) urge teachers not to react to student misbehaviors with anger. Instead, Good and Brophy (2002) advise teachers to employ simple nonverbal and verbal interventions when a student misbehaves by: (1) establishing eye contact and nodding, (2) pointing or gesturing (e.g., put fingers to lips), (3) moving close in proximity to the student, and (4) asking a question or calling on the student for a response. The instructor should always try to maintain appropriate degrees of immediacy (Boice, 1996).

In contrast, when teachers respond with aggression or hostility to student misbehaviors, the effect on the classroom environment is likely to be harmful. Teacher misbehaviors have been categorized into three dimensions: incompetence (e.g., gives unclear, boring, not up-to-date lectures, gives unfair tests, or uses poor grammar), indolence (e.g., arrives late, deviates from syllabus, or is disorganized and unprepared), and offensiveness (e.g., uses sarcasm, put downs, or verbal abuse) (Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991; Kelsey, Kearney, Plax, Allen, & Ritter, 2004). It is the dimension of offensiveness that may be most associated with a negative classroom atmosphere. Offensiveness includes mean, cruel, and ugly communication toward the students that could impact perceptions of classroom climate. Offensive teachers humiliate students. They may yell out of anger and are verbally abusive, rude or sarcastic, especially in response to student misbehaviors.
Not all instructors are familiar with the research or have been trained in how to successfully respond to students who misbehave in class. Classroom management training (CMT) has been advocated by many to help instructors learn to intervene positively in student misbehaviors. When instructors decide in advance on how to respond to student misbehaviors, there is less instructional time spent dealing with disruptions (Evertson & Harrison, 1992; Orenstein, 1994). Meyer (2005) reported that when classroom management training, including reacting immediately and firmly to disruptions, is a part of new college instructor preparation programs, instructors find fewer instances of student misbehaviors and have more confidence to manage them.

In summary, previous research on connected classroom climate suggests that the communication behaviors of students and their instructors shape students' sense of connection with other students in their courses. Less is known, however, about the kinds of behaviors that may impede students' perceptions of student-to-student connectedness. The literature on student misbehaviors and teacher responses to student misbehaviors suggests that negative and anti-social behaviors by students and teachers are associated with a negative or harmful classroom environment. These same kinds of behaviors may weaken students' perceptions of student-to-student connectedness. In an effort to learn more about the behaviors that may contribute to or undermine classroom connectedness, this study explores associations between students' perceptions of a connected classroom climate, student misbehaviors, and instructor reactions to student misbehaviors.

We propose the following research questions:
RQ1: What is the relationship between student perceptions of student misbehaviors and student perceptions of a connected classroom climate in the basic course?

RQ2: What is the relationship between student perceptions of teacher responses to student misbehaviors and student perceptions of a connected classroom climate in the basic course?

**METHOD**

**Participants**

Participants in this study were 542 undergraduate students (230 males, 308 females, 4 missing data) at a large Midwestern university enrolled in 30 total sections of the basic public speaking course (maximum enrollment of 25 students per section). Since this course fulfills a general education oral communication requirement, a wide variety of majors were represented. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 35 with a mean age of 19.66 and SD of 2.57. Respondents represented a cross-section of class rankings (320 freshmen, 123 sophomores, 65 juniors, 20 seniors, and 14 missing data).

The course used a standard syllabus as well as the same textbook and student workbook in all the sections. All students were required to deliver at least four formal speeches, engage in classroom activities, and take two exams. Instructors were given a course manual that included weekly lesson plans, class policies, and additional instructional training materials.
Student Misbehaviors and Connected Classroom

Procedures

Packets of instruments containing the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI) (Dwyer, et al., 2004), 12 items measuring student misbehaviors (Table 1 has the scale items in abbreviated form), 12 items measuring instructor responses to student misbehaviors (Table 2 has the scale items in abbreviated form), and demographic items (gender, age, year in school) were distributed to the students during the last two weeks of the semester by their instructors. All questionnaires were completed during class time. Instructors read a script that assured students of confidentiality and invited them to voluntarily participate in a research project that would ultimately help professors improve instruction in the basic course. Students were asked to answer the questions in reference to their present public speaking class and instructor. Students placed the instruments in an envelope which the instructor returned to the basic course director.

Instrumentation

Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI). The CCCI is an 18-item Likert-type instrument (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) measuring students’ perceptions of student-to-student behaviors and feelings that create a supportive, cooperative classroom environment. Sample items include, “The students in my class are supportive of one another,” “The students in my class cooperate with one another,” and “The students in my class respect one another.” Research has found the CCCI to be a unidimensional scale with a high
overall reliability of \( \alpha = .94 \) and evidence of validity (Carlson et al., 2006; Dwyer et al., 2004).

Student Misbehaviors. Student misbehaviors were measured with 12 items adapted from the works of Kearney, Plax, Sorensen, and Smith (1988) and Richmond, Wrench, and Gorham (2001) who had created general categories of misbehaviors based on qualitative data. We used these categories as the basis for developing survey items measuring perceptions of student misbehaviors. Participants responded on a Likert-type scale, including 1 = almost never (or never), 2 = infrequently, 3 = sometimes, 4 = frequently, and 5 = almost always (or always) (see Table 1 for abbreviated survey items).

Teacher Response to Student Misbehaviors. Teacher response to student misbehavior items were developed based on descriptive terms abstracted from classroom management literature (e.g., Boice, 1996; Good & Brophy, 2002; Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991). The 12 items included appropriate and inappropriate ways to manage classroom behavior (see Table 2 for abbreviated survey items). Students responded using a scale of 1 = almost never (or never), 2 = infrequently, 3 = sometimes, 4 = frequently, and 5 = almost always (or always) (see Table 2 for abbreviated survey items).

RESULTS

Factor analyses and item analyses were performed on the student misbehavior items (Table 1) and the teacher response to student misbehavior items (Table 2). Factor analysis of the student misbehavior items re-
sulted in a 2-factor scale, with each factor composed of five items. Two items were eliminated because they did not meet the .60 - .40 criterion (McCroskey & Young, 1979). Similarly, factor analysis of the teacher response to student misbehavior items resulted in a 2-factor scale, with each factor consisting of five items. One item was eliminated because it did not meet the .60 - .40 criterion; another item was eliminated because it had the lowest loading of the remaining items and was conceptually ambiguous.1

Principal components analyses indicated that the two factors in each of these two scales could be combined to obtain overall scores for student misbehaviors and for teacher response to student misbehaviors. Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, principal component extraction loadings, and factor loadings after varimax rotation for the Student Misbehavior Scale items; Table 2 presents the same information for the Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale items.

For the Student Misbehavior Scale, total scores ranged from 10 to 38 (μ = 15.36, SD = 4.33). The two factors in the scale were inconsideration (Eigenvalue = 3.70, 37.03% of the variance, range 5 to 21, μ = 9.64, SD = 3.46) and harassment (Eigenvalue = 1.78, 17.80% of the variance, range 5 to 19, μ = 5.72, SD = 1.66). For the Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale, total scores also ranged from 10 to 38 (μ = 21.01, SD = 5.83). The two factors in the scale were constructive interven-

---

1 The ambiguous factor loadings for the original item, “My instructor uses humor to minimize and stop the student misbehavior” may be due to the ability of an instructor to use humor in either constructive or offensive ways.
Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students in my class engage in ...</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Principal Component Extraction Loadings</th>
<th>Varimax Rotation Factor Loadings¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. physical disruptions...</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. verbal disruptions...</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. teacher challenging...</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. harassment disruptions...</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. passive disruptions...</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. leave-taking disruptions...</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. time-taking disruptions...</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. side-conversation disruptions...</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ethical disruptions...</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. inattentive disruptions...</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹Factor 1 was labeled *Inconsideration* and contains the non-underlined, unbolded question numbers; Factor 2 was labeled *Harassment* and contains the underlined, bolded question numbers.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. points out student misbehavior...</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. uses verbal aggression...</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. politely asks...to stop...</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. embarrasses the student...</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. threatens to punish...</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. approaches...silently...</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. makes sustained eye contact...</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. nonverbally displays frustration...</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. calls on...to participate...</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. yells or raises voice...</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factor 1 was labeled Constructive Intervention and contains the underlined, bolded question numbers; Factor 2 was labeled Offensive Intervention and contains the non-underlined, unbolded question numbers.
Reliability for the overall Student Misbehavior Scale was \( \alpha = .80 \); the inconsideration factor, \( \alpha = .81 \) and the harassment factor, \( \alpha = .75 \). Reliability for the overall Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale was \( \alpha = .75 \); the constructive intervention factor, \( \alpha = .77 \) and the offensive intervention factor, \( \alpha = .67 \). For the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI), reliability was \( \alpha = .94 \), range 18 to 90, \( \mu = 70.95, SD = 9.96 \).

We examined our research questions in two ways. Initially we analyzed the data using the individual student as the unit of analysis. Then, because the data were collected using an intact class design, we used the class section as the unit of analysis to reduce statistical dependency in the sample. When class section was the unit of analysis, class averages were computed for all the variables and these averages were used in the analyses. Tables 3 and 4 report the results used to answer the research questions as well as correlations between the Student Misbehavior Scale, the Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale, and their factors.

Table 3 presents the Pearson product-moment correlations using the individual student as the unit of analysis between the CCCI; the Student Misbehavior Scale and its two subscales, Inconsideration and Harassment; and Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale and its two subscales, Constructive Intervention and Offensive Intervention. Classroom connectedness (CCCI) was negatively correlated with Student Misbe-
### Table 3

Pearson Correlations between Classroom Connectedness (CCCI); Student Misbehavior Scale—Total, Inconsideration Factor, and Harassment Factor; and Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale—Total, Constructive Intervention Factor and Offensive Intervention Factor (unit of analysis = individual student; N=542)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CCCI</th>
<th>Student Misbehavior Scale</th>
<th>Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Inconsideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCI</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Misbehavior Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.93**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsideration</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.92**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01, *p<.05
### Table 4
Pearson Correlations between Classroom Connectedness (CCCI); Student Misbehavior Scale—Total, Inconsideration Factor, and Harassment Factor; and Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale—Total, Constructive Intervention Factor and Offensive Intervention Factor (unit of analysis = individual class section; N=30)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CCCI</th>
<th>Student Misbehavior Scale</th>
<th>Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Inconsideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCI</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Misbehavior Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.93**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inconsideration</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.93**</td>
<td>.75**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructive Intervention</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.45**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offensive Intervention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.00**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( **p<.01, *p<.05 \)
behavior total score (r = -.27, p < .001), the Inconsideration factor (r = -.25, p < .001), and the Harassment factor (r = -.18, p < .001). The CCCI was not significantly correlated with the Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior total score, but was negatively correlated with the Offensive Intervention factor (r = -.13, p = .003) and positively correlated with the Constructive Intervention factor (r = .16, p < .001).

Table 4 reports the Pearson product-moment correlations between all of the variables in the study using the class section as the unit of analysis. The CCCI was negatively correlated with the Student Misbehavior total score (r = -.46, p < .05), the Inconsideration factor (r = -.38, p < .05), and the Harassment factor (r = -.34, p < .05). The CCCI was not significantly correlated with the Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior total score and was not significantly correlated with the Offensive Intervention factor or the Constructive Intervention factor.

**DISCUSSION**

This study extends the research on classroom climate and student-to-student connectedness by exploring one of the assumptions underlying the concept of connected classroom climate. Previous work supports the assumption that a connected classroom climate is created through the supportive and cooperative communicative behaviors of students in a class (Dwyer, et al., 2004). The present study queries this assumption by examining its inverse. That is, if positive and supportive communicative behaviors constitute a connected class-
room climate, then negative and destructive misbehaviors may undermine it.

Our findings support the assumption that negative and destructive behaviors by students do undermine perceptions of student-to-student connectedness. We found that student perceptions of inconsiderate and harassing student misbehaviors are inversely related to classroom connectedness. Specifically, students’ perceptions that the students in their class engage in inconsiderate misbehaviors such as passive disruptions (e.g., coming to class unprepared), leave-taking disruptions (e.g., making book bag sounds), time-taking disruptions (e.g., arriving late for class), side-conversation disruptions (e.g., whispering to another student during a lecture), and inattentive disruptions (e.g., ignoring or not turning in assignments) are inversely related to student perceptions of classroom connectedness. We also found that student perceptions that their classmates engaged in harassing misbehaviors such as physical disruptions (e.g., throwing things), verbal disruptions (e.g., using foul language), teacher challenging disruptions (e.g., asking counter productive questions), harassment disruptions (e.g., making vulgar, racist, or sexist comments), and ethical disruptions (e.g., lying or cheating) are inversely related to their perceptions of a connected classroom climate. These results were obtained both when the individual student and the class section were used as the unit of analysis.

We also investigated instructor responses to student misbehaviors in relation to classroom connectedness. Previous research on connected classroom climate suggested that student perceptions of verbal and nonverbal teacher immediacy are positively associated with per-
exceptions of student-to-student connectedness (Bingham et al., 2004). This suggests the possibility that certain instructor behaviors may enhance the development of connectedness among students in a class. In the present study, we further investigated this possibility by examining the relationship between instructor responses to student misbehaviors and connected classroom climate. We reasoned that if positive instructor behaviors are positively associated with student-to-student connectedness, then negative or offensive instructor behaviors might be inversely related to this variable.

Regarding whether the manner in which instructors intervene in student misbehaviors makes a difference in student perceptions of classroom connectedness, our findings were inconsistent. Using the individual student as the unit of analysis across sections of the course, we found that student perceptions of offensive interventions by their instructor (e.g., embarrassing the student, yelling, making threats, verbal aggression, and nonverbal displays of frustration) were weakly correlated inversely with student perceptions of classroom connectedness while student perceptions of constructive interventions by the instructor (e.g., pointing out the misbehavior, asking the student to stop, making sustained eye contact, calling on the student to participate, and silently approaching the student) were weakly correlated positively with student perceptions of classroom connectedness. However, these results were not supported when the class section was used as the unit of analysis. Thus, the constructive or offensive nature of an instructor’s intervention in student misbehaviors could possibly be a key to understanding the relationship between instructor intervention and student per-
exceptions of classroom connectedness, but this relationship needs further investigation and confirmation.

**Pedagogical Implications for the Basic Course**

These findings have implications for basic course instructors and basic course directors. Student misbehaviors do occur in basic course classrooms (Meyer, et al., 2007) and the frequency with which they occur is related to student perceptions of a connected classroom climate. In addition, perceptions of increased connected classroom climate in the basic course have been related to desirable educational outcomes including reduced communication anxiety (Carlson, et al., 2006) and increased cognitive and affective learning (Prisbell, et al., 2009). Consequently, instructors need to consider how to reduce student inconsideration and harassment misbehaviors in their classes and how to positively respond to them when they do occur. While our findings do not definitively show whether the nature of a teacher's response to student misbehaviors is associated with connected classroom climate, it is still important for instructors to manage student misbehaviors effectively.

Meyer, et al. (2007), who qualitatively examined graduate teaching assistants' (GTAs) concerns for managing student misbehaviors as well as typical student misbehaviors they face, call for classroom management training (CMT) to be an integral part of GTA training programs. They suggest that CMT for GTAs in basic course programs should target three areas, including (1) the use of videotapes (to demonstrate student misbehaviors and ineffective and effective reactions), (2) official campus guest speakers (to recommend campus poli-
cies and procedures for handling student misbehaviors), and (3) training packet handouts (to explain possible student misbehaviors, advice on appropriate management of the incivilities, and literature related to the instructional communication concepts).

We echo the recommendation from Meyer, et al. (2007) that basic course directors need to include increased focus on CMT in GTA training programs. We also recommend offering CMT in workshops for adjuncts and instructors. GTAs and instructors alike want to be effective classroom teachers and classroom managers; CMT may help them foster a classroom climate that is conducive for student learning. Incorporating CMT into instructor workshops would also help basic course directors, who, for assessment purposes, are increasingly asked by their universities to maintain consistency in instruction across all sections in a basic course. CMT can promote consistent responses to student misbehaviors and continued use of behaviors that may enhance the classroom climate.

All basic course instructors and GTAs need a plan for handling student misbehaviors so that they do not respond with anger, frustration, and ridicule, or use other negative verbal or nonverbal behaviors that contribute to perceptions of diminished classroom connectedness. We make the following suggestions to instructors based on communication and educational scholarship (Boice, 1996; Cooper & Simonds, 2007; Emmer & Evertson, 1981; Evertson & Harrison, 1992; Feldman, 2001; Good & Brophy, 2002; Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991; Kearney, Plax, & McPherson, 2006; Kearney, Plax, Richmond, & McCroskey, 1984; Kearney, Plax, Sorensen, & Smith, 1988; Kounin, 1977; Rich-
Student Misbehaviors and Connected Classroom

mond, Wrench, & Gorham, 2001; Sorcinelli, 1994; Thompson, 2007). These suggestions can serve as basic guidelines for new instructors or as starting points for dialogues about responding to student misbehaviors among new and seasoned instructors:

1. Develop a personal communication response plan to follow when a student behaves in an inconsiderate or harassing way. For example, walk a bit closer to the student, point to your lips or shake your head, ask a question, or use humor. For minor disruptions, any of these responses will often diffuse misbehaviors.

2. If misbehaviors continue, call the student by name. Using a courteous, kind, and respectful manner and remaining as calm as possible, ask the student to stop the misbehavior. Try not to take the misbehavior personally and never respond in an angry or disrespectful way. Point out the misbehavior and the classroom expectation the student is violating. Explain how the misbehavior affects you and others, using “I” and “Our” terms. Ask for a verbal commitment from the student to change the behavior (e.g., “Will you please stop talking while others are speaking?”) and if needed, explain the consequence (e.g., “If you continue to talk while others are speaking, you will be asked to leave the room”). Lastly, thank the student for changing the behavior and continue with your instruction in a calm way.

3. For serious disturbances with students who engage in violent actions or emotional outbursts, look to your college administration or department for a specific plan and guidelines. For example, you could go to the nearest phone or departmental office and
ask the secretary to call campus security and/or student affairs. You could take a break from the class and ask another faculty member to come to your class. If you are in your office, do not stay alone with a student who you believe could behave in a violent manner.

4. Read the instructional communication literature on student misbehaviors, teacher misbehaviors, effective use of BATs and BAMs, teacher immediacy, instructor perceived caring and effective classroom management techniques (such as those discussed in this article) so that you understand and can apply the concepts.

5. Convey in your syllabus and clearly explain during the first days of class all expectations and policies for considerate student behavior, how the policies will benefit students, and possible consequences for misbehaviors (e.g., students who engage in side conversations or who allow a cell phone to sound in class will lose points on their next assignment).

6. Try not to engage in teacher misbehaviors such as incompetence, offensiveness, and indolence. These misbehaviors precipitate student misbehaviors. Instead, focus on your students, come prepared to class, and teach in a way so that your presentational style is interactive, dynamic, expressive, and motivating.

7. Use a variety of instructional activities so that all learners with various learning styles have an opportunity to learn in a variety of ways.

8. Display immediacy and caring to your students. Know their names and use them. Maintain appro-
Priate eye contact with each student during class, smile, and use an open body position, close proximity, and nodding.

9. Use pro-social BATs and BAMs (e.g., “It will help you to find a good job or to prepare for future assignments or classes,” “You are capable, you can do a good job,” “The class depends on you and you have to do your share of the work”).

10. Ask students for feedback and respond to their feedback (e.g., “How am I doing?”) They may tell you what will help them learn.

In addition to these recommendations for handling student misbehaviors, basic course instructors should continue to focus on ways to give students opportunities to develop a sense of connectedness. Based on the CCCI items that measure student perceptions of a connected classroom climate, basic course instructors should continue to incorporate instructional strategies that encourage students to engage in small talk, share stories, support and praise one another, take part in class discussions, and communicate mutual respect.

Limitations and Future Research

Results from this study were obtained using participants in multiple sections of a basic public speaking course. A question of interest is whether these results can be replicated using public speaking classes at other universities. Future research should collect data at other institutions and from a larger number of class sections when the class section is used as the unit of analysis in order to increase statistical power.
In addition, other courses should be investigated. Students in the present study were asked to focus on the instructor in their current public speaking class when completing the questionnaires. This limited the variety of courses and instructors assessed and, thus, limited the generalizability of results. Future research could ask students to focus on the class and instructor of their previous or subsequent class when completing the survey (Plax, Kearney, McCroskey, Richmond, 1986).

The reliability for the offensive intervention factor of the newly created Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior Scale needs further inquiry. With a reliability of .67, the scale was deemed “minimally acceptable” for this study (Wrench, Thomas-Maddox, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2008, p. 195). A reliability of .67 may have “obscure[d] differences or relationships that would be revealed by use of more reliable instruments” (p.184). However, unreliability does not increase the probability of obtaining spuriously significant results (Cohen & Cohen, 1983, p. 70). Therefore, our study represents a conservative examination of relationships between offensive intervention in student misbehaviors and other variables. Nunnally (1978) considers a reliability of .70 to be acceptable, and future research using the offensive intervention measure should aim to surpass that standard. Adding additional items of a similar nature is likely to increase reliability (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 415).

Future research also needs to explore the predictive validity of the Teacher Response to Student Misbehavior instrument used in this study. For instance, is instructors’ use of verbal and nonverbal immediacy behaviors associated with their use of offensive versus constructive intervention strategies? As previous re-
search notes (Kearney, Plax, & Burroughs, 1991; Thweatt & McCroskey, 1998), teacher misbehaviors and teacher immediacy are inversely related. Thus, it may be that teachers who use constructive intervention strategies are perceived as more immediate than teachers who use offensive intervention strategies.

Another area for future research is the study of classroom connectedness over time. Researchers should explore how classroom connectedness changes over the course of a semester and what factors are associated with those changes. Given the results of this study, one could determine if and when during the semester perceptions of classroom connectedness increase or decrease as a result of student misbehaviors (inconsideration and/or harassment) and teacher responses to student misbehaviors (constructive and/or offensive intervention).

The findings on the relationships among student-to-student connectedness, student misbehaviors, and teacher responses to student misbehaviors add to the body of literature on classroom climate. Other measures of teacher responses to student misbehaviors such as the use of behavior alteration techniques (Roach, Richmond, & Mottet, 2006), interactional classroom justice (Chory, 2007), teacher expressions of anger (McPherson, Kearney, & Plax, 2003) and other measures of student-to-student behavior such as immediacy (Richmond, Lane, & McCroskey, 2006) and affinity-seeking (Myers, 1995) deserve more attention in the instructional communication literature.

One important way teachers may be able to foster student perceptions of a connected classroom climate is to develop classroom management skills in an effort to
decrease student misbehaviors and respond appropriately when students misbehave. For now, we urge basic course instructors to continue to consider ways to help students experience connectedness in the classroom, thereby potentially increasing their well-being and success in the course.

REFERENCES


Carlson, R., Dwyer, K., Bingham, S., Cruz, A., Prisbell, M, & Fus, D. (2006). Connected classroom climate and communication apprehension: Correla-
Student Misbehaviors and Connected Classroom

tions and implications for the basic course. *Basic Communication Course Annual 18*, 1-27.


Student Misbehaviors and Connected Classroom


Student Misbehaviors and Connected Classroom

classroom management training for basic course instructors. Basic Communication Course Annual, 19, 1-26.


APPENDIX A

Student Misbehaviors Survey

Directions: Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which you see these behaviors occurring in this speech 1110 classroom this semester.

1 2 3 4 5
Almost Never Infrequently Sometimes Frequently Almost Always
(or Never) (or Always)

____ 1. Students in my class engage in physical disruptions (such as throwing things, spitting, fighting).

____ 2. Students in my class engage in verbal disruptions (such as speaking with foul language, name calling, yelling, blaming others for poor performance, communicating in an unfriendly, aggressive, or intimidating behavior).

____ 3. Students in my class engage in nonverbal disruptions (such as eating during class, making ugly or obscene gestures).

____ 4. Students in my class engage in noise disruptions (such as beepers or cell phones sounding, sighing out loud, smacking, making unusual sounds).

____ 5. Students in my class engage in teacher challenging disruptions (such as active resistance
of teacher’s wishes, asking counter productive questions, refusing to do what the teacher requests, complaining about grades to the teacher).

6. Students in my class engage in harassment disruptions (such as making vulgar, racist, or sexist comments to others).

7. Students in my class engage in passive disruptions (such as coming to class unprepared, sleeping, day dreaming, reading unrelated materials, listening to headsets).

8. Students in my class engage in leave-taking disruptions (such as making book bag sounds or packing up prior to dismissal).

9. Students in my class engage in time-taking disruptions (such as arriving late for class or leaving class early or monopolizing class discussion).

10. Students in my class engage in side-conversation disruptions (such as whispering or talking to another during the lecture or when another student is speaking).

11. Students in my class engage in ethical disruptions (such as lying, cheating, stealing, or plagiarizing).

12. Students in my class engage in inattentive disruptions (such as ignoring or not turning in assignments, not attending class, not prepared for class).
APPENDIX B

Teacher Response to Student Misbehaviors Survey

Directions: Please indicate in the space provided the degree to which you see these behaviors occurring in this speech 1110 classroom this semester.

Whenever a student misbehaves in this class:

_____ 1. My instructor points out the student misbehavior and asks it to stop.

_____ 2. My instructor ignores the student misbehavior.

_____ 3. My instructor uses verbal aggression to confront the misbehaving student.

_____ 4. My instructor politely asks the student to stop the misbehavior.

_____ 5. My instructor uses humor to minimize and stop the student misbehavior.

_____ 6. My instructor embarrasses the student engaged in the misbehavior.

_____ 7. My instructor threatens to punish the misbehaving student.
8. My instructor approaches the misbehaving student silently.

9. My instructor makes sustained eye contact with the misbehaving student.

10. My instructor nonverbally displays frustration toward the misbehaving student (sighs, rolls eyes, shakes head, etc.).

11. My instructor calls on the misbehaving student to participate in class discussion, lecture, or activity.

12. My instructor yells or raises voice at the misbehaving student.
Speech Evaluation Assessment: An Analysis of Written Speech Feedback on Instructor Evaluation Forms in the Basic Communication Course

Cheri J. Simonds
Illinois State University

Kevin R. Meyer
Illinois State University

Stephen K. Hunt
Brent K. Simonds
Illinois State University

Assessment is an important concern in higher education, particularly for general education courses. The educational reform movement of the 1980's gave rise to explicit mandates from institutions which expected assessment of the quality of instruction and student learning on a regular basis (Hay, 1989). Subsequently, state, regional, and national commissions, educational organizations and agencies, and journal articles have stressed the need for colleges and universities to provide clear measures of what they do and how well they do it. As Gardiner (1994) noted, “assessment is essential not only to guide the development of individual students but also to monitor and continuously improve the quality of programs” (p. 109). Operating from the most sanguine perspective, general education instructors and administrators realize that they must be prepared to respond to calls for comprehensive assessment of program objectives and student outcomes.
As an integral component of many general education programs (Allen, 2002; Cutspec, McPherson, & Spiro, 1999), assessment in the basic communication course is one of the most important issues facing basic course directors (Allen, 2002; Hunt, Simonds, & Hinchliffe, 2000; Morreale, Hanna, Berko, & Gibson, 1999). As Allen (2002) argued, assessment is the key to communication’s place in general education, and the development of our discipline. Furthermore, assessment efforts provide critical insight into basic course pedagogy. As such, assessment can offer a response to calls by Sprague (1993) and Book (1989) that research regarding pedagogical practices unique to the communication discipline should be at the forefront of the research agenda.

Assessment has become a particularly salient issue at Illinois State University as a result of significant changes to the general education program. Beyond providing an indication of program quality, programmatic assessment efforts can play an important role in reinforcing the stature of the basic course within general education. The present study reports on a particular aspect of an ongoing large-scale assessment program. Specifically, this study focuses on the speech evaluation training program that was modified based on our previous assessment. It is important to note that this study does not attempt to measure student outcomes; rather, it focuses on the effectiveness of the training program and the measures used to evaluate student performance. Before assessment of student learning can take place, it is necessary to assess the quality of the program and the measures we use to assess students.
BACKGROUND AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Portfolio Assessment

Student portfolios are a rich source of assessment data that can inform course directors about the quality of instructor training and student learning. In fact, student portfolios represent a combination of instruction and assessment. According to Farr and Trumbull (1997), a portfolio is “a process tool to link instruction and assessment that entails both teacher and student selection and evaluation of student work against criteria known to both and results in a structured collection of such work, gathered over time” (p. 258). In part, a portfolio is a collection of data about a student's progress over time (Aitken, 1994). Portfolios provide a snapshot of student performance at a specific point in time, thereby enabling students to improve their communication skills through an assessment of their performance (Jensen & Harris, 1999). Specifically, students report that the public speaking portfolio is helpful in developing communication skills because instructor comments guide future presentations (Jensen & Harris, 1999). Additionally, a portfolio is a reflection of how instructor training has translated into classroom instruction and practice. The developmental portfolio is pedagogically valuable because it provides a mechanism to systematically evaluate student learning outcomes (Jensen & Harris, 1999). Additional research is necessary to determine the utility of the speech evaluation materials from the portfolios for assessment purposes. According to Forrest (1990), “there is widespread intuitive belief among those interested in assessing general education that using portfolios might lead to better information about those pro-
grams. However, most colleges and universities have little knowledge about or experience in using such an approach” (p. 1). The present study reveals important information about the use of portfolios for assessment of general education that should be of interest to faculty and administrators across institutions and various academic disciplines. In addition, because oral communication assessment has long been performance based, “it has considerable expertise to contribute to the present movement for alternative assessment” (Rubin, 1996, p. 2). Clearly, the present study could be beneficial to institutions and disciplines wishing to develop their own portfolio-based assessment strategies.

The Illinois State University portfolio project analyzed in this continued assessment effort is a collection of material accumulated over the semester that represents students' insights, observations, experiences, and reflections on communication. This portfolio includes students' speech materials (informative and persuasive speech outlines and evaluation forms), application essays (short written papers that link course concepts to communication phenomenon outside of class), and two short papers that require students to identify their goals for the course (Communication Improvement Profile) and reflect on their progress over the semester (Synthesis paper). The speech materials, and in particular the instructor evaluation forms, are the focus of the present study.

Previous Assessment Efforts

In order to develop an effective, authentic tool for course assessment, Hunt et al. (2000) analyzed the use
of student portfolios in the Illinois State University basic course and determined them to be an efficacious tool for assessment. In addition, portfolios were found to provide a multi-faceted view of student performance, experience, and reflection which reveal patterns of effectiveness and/or areas of concern in the basic course (Hunt et al., 2000; see also Jones et al., 2005). For example, the Hunt et al. (2000) study revealed concerns of grade inflation as well as inconsistencies between speech feedback, performance, and grades received. As a result, the basic course directors at Illinois State University implemented a comprehensive training program utilizing criterion-based grading with model performances via videotape as part of the Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) training program.

Evaluation fidelity. In a subsequent study, Stitt, Simonds, and Hunt (2003) found that the 2001 training program yielded significantly higher rater reliability on speech evaluations post-training. Specifically, instructors were able to grade speeches more consistently and more conservatively, as evidenced by lower grades, following training (Stitt et al., 2003). Since students in different sections of the basic course are likely to compare grades and feedback from various instructors (Stitt et al., 2003), evaluation fidelity is an essential goal for course directors managing large multi-section general education courses. After this study revealed improvement in rater reliability, the course directors made additional improvements to the instructor training program. First, the criteria were modified to include more low inference judgments for each behavior listed on the evaluation form. Second, a new training video session, which served as a model of expected performance, was
produced in light of the new criteria. The present study assesses the effectiveness of this new training by analyzing instructors’ written feedback.

**Written speech feedback.** Another study resulting from the initial portfolio data collection (Reynolds, Hunt, Simonds, & Cutbirth, 2004) examined instructor feedback on student speeches in light of Brown and Levinson’s (1967) facework theory. Reynolds et al. (2004) discovered that instructors tended to temper student feedback with positive politeness statements and that they should be trained to include more negative face threats which give students future direction for improvement. Students felt that instructors were too polite in their feedback and, instead, needed to specifically state what students should do to improve for the next speech (Reynolds et al., 2004). Importantly, students presumably demonstrate learning when they improve from one speech to the next (Reynolds et al., 2004). Written feedback provides the necessary means of assisting students in making improvements to and learning from speechmaking (Reynolds et al., 2004). Based on the results of these studies, the basic course directors at Illinois State University determined that more attention should be devoted to effective feedback during the instructor training program. Thus, the new training program focused on the type of feedback instructors provide and its relationship to student scores using criterion-based grading.

**Criterion-Based Training Changes**

Following the initial round of portfolio data collection, several changes were made to the instructor
training program. As many basic communication courses are quickly becoming integral to general education programs across the country (Allen, 2002; Cutspec et al., 1999), course directors are finding themselves in the position of offering multiple sections taught by multiple instructors. Illinois State University offers approximately 75 sections of the basic course each semester taught by over 50 different instructors. Some instructors arrive on campus with experience in grading speeches, but most do not. Thus, instructor perceptions of what an “A” or “C” speech looks and sounds like varies. This leaves basic course directors with the challenge of creating an evaluation system that is fair, consistent, and reflective of actual student performance—regardless of who is grading the speech. At Illinois State University, multiple steps were followed to create a systematic speech evaluation process. The basic course directors started with an evaluation form, developed a criterion or level of expected performance for each skill, and created models of expected performance for both the students and instructors involved in the evaluation process.

Criterion-based assessment is defined as a tool that “measures the performance against an agreed set of criteria” in contrast to norm-referenced assessment which compares each student’s performance with the student’s peers (Miller, Imrie, & Cox, 1998, p. 110). Thus, criterion-based assessment provides a grading process that is consistent and fair across multiple sections of the basic course. As Stitt et al. (2003) maintain, criterion-based assessment facilitates a shared understanding between what is expected and what is performed. That is, instructors and students alike understand the differ-
ences between an A and C speech. With this in mind, qualitative low-inference judgments are provided for each behavior listed on the instructor evaluation form. In addition to training instructors to use the evaluation criteria, the instructors also train their students to use the evaluation criteria. Therefore, through criterion-based assessment, students are able to participate in their own learning since they know exactly what work is required to earn a particular grade (Dominowski, 2002).

An important step in the process following the initial round of portfolio assessment was to create a model of expected performance for both students and instructors based on the criteria. With the help of graduate students and mass media faculty, the basic course directors wrote and videotaped “A” and “C” speeches on an informative speech topic about the Roman Coliseum (we used the same presenter for both speeches). The C speech is intended to model an average level of performance for each behavior in the criteria. The same is true for the A speech. The A speech, however, is qualitatively different from the C speech. Whereas the C speech meets minimal expectations for the requirements of the assignment, the A speech is more creative, powerful, and effective along all behavioral sets. For example, a C speech might use language that is informal whereas an A speech uses language that is vivid, imaginative, and powerful. Outlines with references were produced for both speeches. These videotapes were used to train both instructors and students to see the qualitative differences between A and C speeches for each of the behaviors.
Types of Feedback

The next phase of our training process for the instructors was to discuss the types of feedback they should provide students. We wanted instructors to provide comments which give students a plan for improvement. In our initial analysis of a large number of instructor evaluations (based on the same data used in Reynolds et al., 2004), we found that instructors generally relied on the following four types of comments: positive non-descriptive, positive descriptive, negative, and constructive (see Appendix).

Positive non-descriptive comments indicate that the student did a good job but do not describe or detail how the task was accomplished. Examples include: good eye contact, nice references, excellent visual aids, plus marks (+). Positive descriptive comments are those that demonstrate that the student did a good job, and specifically describe or detail what was liked about how the student accomplished their task. Examples include: good job of engaging your audience through the use of facial expression and direct eye contact, nice job of incorporating full source citations into the flow of your presentation, your visual aids are very professionally produced and incorporated smoothly into the presentation.

Negative comments criticize the speech without providing suggestions for improvement. Examples include: poor eye contact, weak sources, visual aids need work, minus marks (-). Constructive comments acknowledge the need for improvement in the speech and provide specific direction or detail on how to improve. Examples include: you need more direct eye contact, try using fewer note cards and gaze more directly with more of your audience, try to provide more complete information for
each source, I would suggest putting complete information on your note-cards, your visual aids need to be larger and bolder, practice incorporating them into the flow of your speech.

Instructors were also trained to use feedback to determine scores. For example, C speeches are those that meet all of the requirements for the assignment and the criteria for a C speech. As a result, C speech evaluations should contain more constructive comments than positive descriptive comments. Conversely, A speeches are those that exceed the requirements for the assignment, meet the criteria for an A speech, and will contain more positive descriptive comments than constructive comments. Using language from the criteria form to provide elaboration, instructors were trained to examine the relationship between the types of comments provided (constructive/positive descriptive) and the score for each graded category (outline, introduction, body, conclusion, deliver, impression). Finally, instructors were trained to use the grading scale for each category to determine student speech scores.

**Research Questions**

A primary concern for basic course directors should be the ability of instructors to effectively evaluate speeches (Stitt et al., 2003). Certainly, one aspect of effective evaluation is the written feedback provided by instructors. While previous studies have assessed the consistency of instructor grades (Stitt et al., 2003) and the influence of written feedback on students (Reynolds et al., 2004), the intersection of written feedback and
speech grades has yet to be explored. Thus, the present study seeks to examine the previously unexplored link between instructor evaluation training and actual instructor feedback as well as the link between instructor feedback and student performance. Consequently, the present study represents a continuation of previous assessment efforts begun by the course directors, as well as an exploration of the effects of the instructor training program on speech feedback and the effects of that feedback on student improvement. Importantly, it is necessary to assess the effectiveness of instructor training prior to assessing student outcomes since effective programmatic assessment must not only hold students accountable for learning outcomes, but must also hold instructors accountable for their role in the learning process.

Ideally, instructor feedback would serve as a springboard for student learning. Certainly, instructors hope that students take previous feedback into account as they prepare for future speeches. If criterion-based training programs aimed at improving instructor feedback work as they are intended to do, it seems logical to conclude that a relationship should exist between instructor feedback and student performance. Portfolio assessment specifically provides a mechanism through which to measure both the nature of instructor feedback as well as student performance. Thus, the following research question is posed for the present study:

RQ1: What is the relationship between the type of instructor feedback and students scores on the informative and persuasive speeches?
Second, following the revision of specific criteria for instructor evaluation of student speeches, the creation of videotaped example speeches, and the implementation of speech evaluation training, we sought to determine if instructors were using the language in the criteria as part of their written feedback to students:

RQ2: Are instructors using language from the criteria for evaluating speeches in their feedback to students? If so, how are instructors using language from the criteria?

**METHOD**

**Portfolio Sample**

Speech evaluation materials were collected at the close of the Fall 2004 semester from all students ($N = 360$) enrolled in communication courses taught by all first-year GTAs ($n = 16$) who were the recipients of the latest version of the criterion-based speech evaluation training program. Approximately 50% ($n = 180$) of these students gave us permission and informed consent to use their portfolios for analysis. Speech materials were then pulled from those portfolios for the current study. Some of the speech materials were not present in all the student portfolios; thus, only complete sets of speech materials (including instructor evaluation forms for both the informative and persuasive speeches) were included in this study ($n = 154$).
Coding Procedures

Speech evaluation. Speech evaluation materials were content analyzed using the objective and systematic procedures described by Kaid and Wadsworth (1989). Accordingly, the researchers defined the categories by which the data were analyzed using the types of comments described earlier in this manuscript. To answer the first research question, a code book was designed to record the number of each type of comment (positive non-descriptive, positive descriptive, negative, constructive) for each category of evaluation (outline, introduction, body, conclusion, delivery, overall impression) for each speech (informative and persuasive). Scores for each category of evaluation and total scores for each speech were recorded on a code sheet for speech evaluation.

Next, a group of coders was trained by the researchers to implement the coding process. Specifically, nine coders (in three groups of three) were trained by the researchers. The coders were all taking part in a graduate seminar on communication assessment during the Spring of 2005. As this course offered an educational experience where students needed to learn the process of using content analysis to conduct portfolio assessment, it was important to group the coders in order to offer the pedagogical benefits of learning in groups as well as to avoid the limitations associated with having too many coders. While the groups could discuss decisions made within their group, no discussions took place across the three groups. As such, the groups of coders independently analyzed 10% of the sample sets ($n = 16$) to assess intercoder reliability for all categories. Reliabilities for individual categories ranged from .80 to .94.
with an overall reliability of .84. Importantly, a coding reliability coefficient, measured with Cohen’s kappa, of .75 or greater is considered excellent (Fleiss, 1981; Neuendorf, 2002). Pearson product moment correlations were then calculated for each type of comment and overall score.

Language from the criteria. To answer the second research question, a separate analysis of the language used in instructor feedback that came from the grading criteria was conducted. For this portion of the study, three coders, who were not involved in the speech evaluation analysis, were trained by the researchers. The coders were provided with a code book for language from the criteria and a code sheet to record the results. The three coders met initially to discuss the rules for unitizing and categorizing the data. The coders agreed on the substantive words from the criteria for evaluating informative and persuasive speeches that would be considered when coding instructor feedback. For this analysis, we used the categories of descriptive and prescriptive. Descriptive comments used language from the criteria to indicate the student’s current level of performance (this is what student did); whereas, prescriptive comments used language from the criteria to offer advice for future direction (this is what student could or should do). A total of 15 sets of informative and persuasive speech instructor evaluation forms were coded for intercoder reliability. Reliabilities for individual categories, using Cohen’s kappa, ranged from .36 to 1.00 with an overall reliability of .80. A total of 69 sets of informative and persuasive instructor speech forms then were coded independently by the three coders from 17 differ-
ent sections of the basic course, representing a total of 15 different instructors’ classrooms.

**RESULTS**

*Speech Evaluation*

The first research question examined the relationship between the type of instructor feedback and student scores on informative and persuasive speeches. The results indicated a positive linear relationship between positive (non-descriptive and descriptive) instructor comments and students’ speech scores. That is, as the number of positive comments increased, so did the student scores. Likewise, a negative linear relationship was found to exist between negative/constructive instructor comments and students’ speech scores. Thus, a greater number of negative instructor comments was correlated with lower speech scores (see Table 1 for all correlation coefficients).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Informative Speech Score</th>
<th>Persuasive Speech Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Non-Descriptive</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Descriptive</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Constructive</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All correlations were significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).*
The second research question examined instructor use of language from the criteria in feedback to students. Instructors averaged 4.81 total comments from the criteria on the informative speech (SD = 4.58) and 4.19 total comments from the criteria on the persuasive speech (SD = 4.80). Table 2 provides the descriptive statistics for instructor comments by type. When instructors used language from the criteria, more descriptive comments were made than prescriptive comments. Descriptive comments were operationalized as simply reflecting behaviors of the speaker. Examples include: cited the required number of sources, used gestures, provided counterarguments, used statistics. Prescriptive comments provided clear courses of action for the students to take to make improvements. Examples include: add qualifications of authors to your oral citations in order to enhance the credibility of your evidence, use descriptive gestures that help illustrate your points, take a couple steps between your main points to help the audience visualize your outline, remove one hand from your note cards and use it to make gestures. Indeterminate comments used language which lacked a clear tense or linking verbs. Examples include: fluency, direct eye contact, APA style, signposts. In cases of indeterminate language use, the coders could not determine if the instructor comment referenced a student behavior that the speaker actually did during the speech or if the comment referenced a recommendation for future speaker behavior.
Table 2
Descriptive Statistics for Instructor Written Speech Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech Comment Type</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prescriptive</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perscriptive</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Mean scores represent the average number of instructor comments.

**DISCUSSION**

The results of the present study suggest several implications for student assessment, instructor training programs, and overall course assessment. Importantly, our findings indicate that criterion-based training is an effective means of preparing instructors, but should be continuously refined to better meet course outcomes. While we did find that the nature of the comments were related to students’ grades, results suggest that training could be improved to stress the importance of providing more prescriptive comments. Additionally, our findings suggest that the speech evaluation instrument is a valid means of measuring student performance in meeting learning objectives. Thus, based upon these results, the
next step in our programmatic assessment efforts will focus on student outcome assessment.

**Speech Evaluation**

The first research question examined the relationship between the type of instructor feedback and student scores on informative and persuasive speeches. The results indicate that instructors were able to apply the types of feedback appropriately to determine student scores. That is, negative and constructive comments were associated with lower scores, and positive-non-descriptive and positive-descriptive comments were associated with higher scores. However, the results also suggest that instructors could be more descriptive and constructive in their comments. Instructors use feedback to inform students of changes that are necessary for improvement in future speeches (Reynolds et al., 2004). Thus, instructor comments that were coded as negative are problematic for students, since the feedback is vague about what to do in order to improve. Likewise, comments that are positive but non-descriptive do not provide any future direction for what students should continue to do for similar success next time. We also need to train our instructors to write their feedback in the future tense to enhance the descriptive and constructive nature of their comments.

**Language from the Criteria**

The second research question examined instructor use of language from the criteria in feedback to students. Criterion-based rubrics communicate to students...
what is to be valued in a speech performance. By using language from the established criteria, instructors signal to students the extent to which their performance matched the expected performance. While the results indicate that instructors are using language from the criteria, we would like to see it more prominently used in the overall evaluation. The findings for research question two also indicate that clarity of feedback is a concern. Instructors should clarify whether a given comment is in reference to a behavior that the speaker did during the speech or if the comment is in reference to a recommendation for future behavior that the speaker should try to implement. Previously, Reynolds et al. (2004) found that vague comments by instructors were perceived as confusing and frustrating by students. According to students, the more specific the feedback, the better. For example, instructors can be more prescriptive than descriptive by offering specific recommendations for how students can alter or change elements of their speeches. Thus, the criterion-based training program could be further refined to stress the importance of using and, to model the practice of, writing prescriptive comments.

**Recommendations for Training and Written Feedback**

This study assessed the effectiveness of our current speech evaluation training program and explored areas in need of improvement. Specifically, the results indicate that instructors need to be more constructive and descriptive with their feedback, write comments that provide future direction and purpose, and rely more on
the language from the criteria. Taken as a whole, this assessment effort indicates areas for future emphasis in speech evaluation training and the instructor training program. Armed with the results of the data from this round of portfolio assessment, the course directors plan to address issues related to quality of feedback to help students improve their presentations. Based on the results of our long term assessment efforts, we offer the following systematic speech evaluation training program:

- Start with an evaluation form,
- Decide on a criterion or level of expected performance for each skill,
- Develop models of expected performance using the criteria,
- Train instructors to use positive descriptive and constructive comments to determine student scores,
- Train instructors to use the language from the criteria to provide future direction for student improvement.

**Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

As the course directors continue to make modifications to the basic course curriculum and instructor training program, future assessment efforts will be required to monitor the progress of instruction and student learning. The course directors developed new evaluation training based on qualitative data from two previous studies in hopes of increasing the quality of speech evaluation language (Hunt et al., 2000; Reynolds et al., 2004). Previous portfolio data revealed that there
was a discrepancy between instructor comments and student scores. For example, Reynolds et al. (2004) found that less than 50% of the students interviewed felt that their evaluations provided them necessary explanations for improvement. In this study, the researchers were pleased to note high correlations between the type of instructor comments and student scores. However, since the evaluation criteria did not exist in its present form in the previous studies there is no way to make direct comparisons with the earlier portfolio data. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests that the low rate at which students submitted their portfolios to the researchers (approximately 50%) was due in part to positive affect for their portfolio work. For example, two entire sections chose not to participate because the students valued and wanted to keep their portfolios. The course directors also noted that the GTAs in these sections received abnormally high student evaluations. Perhaps the portfolios examined in this study have an inherent bias that skews the results in some way. The effects of this possible bias are unknown and should be considered in future studies.

Hopefully, researchers at other institutions can make use of the lessons learned at Illinois State University when conducting their own large-scale program assessments. Some important notions to keep in mind when conducting an evaluation of any program is to begin with specific, measurable criteria that will be markers of excellence, and to realize that research results are not meant primarily to “prove” success or failure, but to guide future decisions for improvement. Assessment results and program revisions based on these results
communicate to administrators a commitment to curricular improvement.

Research methodologies of the communication discipline such as content analysis are well-suited to the task of university program assessment and evaluation using portfolios. Perhaps communication researchers can continue to share their expertise throughout the university community and help other programs with their own assessment and accountability efforts. Research is needed at other institutions to demonstrate a more universal validation of our discipline’s vital role in the education of undergraduate students. For instance, future lines of research could be constructed to assess the development of students’ information literacy, critical thinking, and civic engagement skills—all of which are highly valued by higher education administrators, directors of general education, and basic course instructors.

Critical theorists might argue that assessment should be driven by the perspective of students. Since the end result of the present analysis is to improve the clarity of feedback to students, it is reasonable to contend that the present assessment effort seeks to empower students. However, expanding the present assessment effort to include the perspective of students would help to better understand learning in the basic course. While Reynolds et al. (2004) found that students reported instructor feedback to be helpful, students felt that the feedback lacked explanatory power. Future rounds of portfolio assessment ought to revisit student perceptions of instructor feedback to determine if the quality of feedback has improved as a result of changes in the instructor-training program.
REFERENCES


Jones, A.C., Simonds, C.J., & Hunt, S.K. (2005). The use of application essays as an effective tool for assess-
ing instruction in the basic communication course. *Communication Education, 54,* 161-169.


Sprague, J. (1993). Retrieving the research agenda for communication education: Asking the pedagogical
questions that are “embarrassments to theory.” *Communication Education, 42*, 106-122.

## APPENDIX

### TYPES OF SPEECH FEEDBACK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructive</strong></td>
<td>- You need more direct eye contact. Try using fewer note-cards and gaze more directly with more of your audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Try to provide more complete information for each source. I would suggest putting complete information on your note-cards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Your Visual Aids need to be larger and bolder. Practice incorporating them into the flow of your speech.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Read less.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Be confident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positive Descriptive</strong></td>
<td>- Good job of engaging your audience through the use of facial expression and direct eye contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nice job of incorporating full source citations into the flow of your presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Your Visual Aids are very professionally produced and incorporated smoothly into the presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Cool quote to close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Nice energy and enthusiasm in your closing remarks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Speech Evaluation Assessment

Positive Non-Descriptive
Positive Non-Descriptive comments say that the student did a good job but do not describe or detail how the task was accomplished. These comments generally identify which behavior is performed well, but lack any specificity. When feedback is high inference in nature, it is non-descriptive.

- Good Eye Contact
- Clear Thesis
- Thorough Development
- Excellent Visual Aids
- Plus Marks (+)
- Happy Faces (☺)
- Yes
- Funny (high inference)

Negative
Negative comments criticize the speech without providing suggestions for improvement. These comments generally identify which behavior is present, lacking, or performed poorly, but lack any specificity (or are high inference in nature).

- Poor Eye Contact
- Only heard 2 sources
- Conclusion not stated
- Visual Aids need work
- Minus marks (-) or Check marks
- No
- Neutral statements (present, adequate, fine, ok, sufficient, appropriate)
Follow-up to the NCA Basic Communication Course Survey VII: Using Learning Objectives in the Course

Sherwyn Morreale  
University of Colorado, Colorado Springs  

David Worley  
Indiana State University  

Lawrence Hugenberg  
Kent State University

A meta-analysis of an array of national articles, commentaries, and publications calls attention to the importance of the study of communication in contemporary society (Morreale & Pearson, 2008). Thematic analysis of 93 journal and newspaper articles, reports, and surveys provide evidence of the centrality of communication to: developing as a whole person, improving the educational enterprise, being a responsible social and cultural participant in the world, succeeding in one’s career and in business, enhancing organizational processes and organizational life, and, addressing emerging concerns in the 21st century including health communication, crisis communication, and crime and policing.

1The authors acknowledge the support of research assistant, Terry Sears (M.A., M.PA.) of University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. We extend our thanks to those colleagues who responded to the learning objectives survey and to the reviewers who enhanced this writing.
Learning Objectives

While little argument now exists regarding the importance of communication instruction, administrators and professors in higher education do face challenges to the consistent delivery of high quality communication instruction in the basic course. Consistency of quality instruction, across multiple sections of the basic course at any given academic institution, could be enhanced by the development and adherence to the accomplishment of a similar and consistent set of critical learning objectives. The importance of establishing and then accomplishing clear learning objectives in the basic course is heightened by the fact that the basic course often is the only communication course the vast majority of students complete in their undergraduate studies.

In the most recent iteration of a national survey of the basic communication course (Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006), respondents clearly identified consistency in the basic course (reliability across sections in common content, grading, and rigor) as one of the most salient challenges to administering and teaching the course. Related to this challenge is a need to better understand how basic course learning objectives may be used to help achieve desired consistency. Indeed, many factors, such as teacher training and background, teaching style, methods of grading, administrative leadership, use of part-time faculty, and preference for teacher autonomy, all may contribute to a lack of consistency across sections of the basic course. However, collaborating to discuss, develop, and then make a commitment to adhere to a common set of learning objectives for multiple sections holds promise for directly and indirectly addressing these factors, achieving greater
Learning Objectives

consistency, and enhancing student learning in the basic course.

Therefore, building on the results of the 2006 national basic course survey and follow up discussions with basic course directors at national and regional conferences, the purpose of this study is to investigate and develop a better understanding of the type, content, and use of learning objectives in multiple sections of the basic communication course at two and four-year colleges and universities in the U.S.

Pertinent Literature

In this section, we review literature related to learning objectives in higher education, in communication studies, and in the basic communication course. However, first, we provide clarification of the conceptual definition of the key term, learning objectives.

Conceptual Definitions

Respondents were asked to keep the following description of learning objectives in mind when completing the survey: “Learning objectives—sometimes referred to as learning outcomes—are clearly stated expectations of what students will achieve, learn, and/or be able to do as a result of taking a given class or exposure to a course of study.” This description, developed by the authors, differs somewhat from those provided by other researchers, though other definitions were helpful in the development of the definition used in this study.
Kibler, Cegala, Watson, Barker, & Miles (1981) stated that instructional or learning objectives are “statements that describe what students will be able to do after completing a prescribed unit of instruction” (p. 2). Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2004) similarly noted that learning objectives describe what the student should be able to do once the teaching is completed. These two definitions tend to limit learning to the behavioral component of communication competence, which was not the desire in the present study.

Some scholars use the term instructional objectives, while others use learning outcomes. Gronlund (2004) shed light on this distinction by suggesting that a “useful way to state instructional objectives is in terms of the intended learning outcomes of the instruction” (p. 4). This semantic choice between terms—instructional objectives or learning outcomes—may suggest a difference in pedagogical focus. Those who use the term instructional objectives may focus more on teaching processes, while those who use the term learning outcomes may focus more on student learning. Regardless of preferred terminology, education researchers in higher education have discussed the matter of learning objectives extensively.

**Learning Objectives in Higher Education**

The importance of learning objectives in higher education is highlighted by a multiyear dialogue conducted with hundreds of colleges and universities by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (2007). The ensuing report, entitled *College Learning for the New Global Century*, articulated essential learning out-
Learning Objectives

comes for students based on an analysis of recommendations and reports from educators, administrators, the business community, and accreditation requirements for engineering, business, nursing, and teacher education.

Some in higher education, in fact, suggest that learning objectives ought to be the starting point for all instructional and course planning. Gronlund (2004) pointed out that when planning for instruction, “teachers frequently focus on the selection of content, teaching method, and instructional materials” (p. 4). Gronlund indicated that, alternatively, starting with instructional objectives is more effective. Instructors first need to clarify specifically what students will know and be able to do as a result of any course before considering any other aspects of instruction.

Others in education discuss a range of ways that instructional objectives may be useful. These scholars state that proper use of learning objectives can enhance teaching, student learning, assessment, and the evaluation of instructional effectiveness (Gronlund, 2004; McDonald, 2002; Morrison, Ross, & Kemp, 2006).

Instructors can use clear objectives to guide the selection and development of appropriate instructional methods and selection of pertinent teaching materials. Students need clear and understandable objectives to motivate them to actively participate in and assume responsibility for their own learning processes. Kibler et al. (1981) concluded that when instructional objectives are stated clearly, students feel more secure and will not become frustrated by trying to guess what the instructor expects of them. In addition, clear objectives help instructors and administrators determine the most appropriate method and type of assessment of student learn-
Learning Objectives

102

Learning Objectives

ing (Gronlund, 2004). Similarly, clear objectives also help instructors determine the effectiveness of their teaching and whether or not the instructional program is accomplishing the goals articulated in the objectives. Given these varying uses of learning objectives, some attention has been paid to their usefulness in the communication discipline and the basic communication course.

Learning Objectives in Communication and the Basic Course

The importance of learning objectives in the communication discipline is indicated in the approval by the National Communication Association of a set of “Suggested Guidelines for Undergraduate Programs in Communication.” These guidelines cover broad areas of accountability for the administration of communication programs. Issues addressed include the establishment of projected learning outcomes in communication programs and courses (National Communication Association, 2007).

Docan-Morgan (2007) emphasized the importance of using learning objectives in the basic communication course by stating:

Preparing and teaching the basic course in communication, whether it is public speaking, introduction to communication, interpersonal communication, or a hybrid course, is similar to cooking an elaborate meal for the first time. The cook must have a vision of the outcome he/she wishes to achieve....As instructors, well before we step into the classroom, we must have a vision of what will occur by the time each class ses-
Docan-Morgan, who used the term instructional objectives, also provides directions for developing and communicating learning objectives to students effectively. Accordingly, this scholar says that instructional objectives should be: learner-focused and learner-centered rather than teacher-focused; attainable and achievable; targeted toward particular learning domains (cognitive, affective, and/or psychomotor learning); focused on specific behavior and be observable; and, indicate conditions under which students should perform certain tasks and the degree or standard the student must achieve as acceptable performance.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive/Knowledge Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students will:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonstrate, orally and in writing, understanding of the principles of intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, and public communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identify the fundamental elements of the communication process and how they work together to promote understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognize the power, role, and function of verbal and nonverbal elements in the communication process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn and understand the complex and ubiquitous nature of human communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe how the self concept and self esteem influence communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain how perception affects communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 (continued)

Behavioral/Psycho-Motor Objectives

Students will:
• Demonstrate effective speaking and listening habits and skills
• Apply communication theories and skills effectively in a variety of contexts and relationships
• Identify and manage the verbal and nonverbal dimensions of communication in a variety of contexts
• Manage the influences of self concept, perception, and culture on communication in various situations
• Apply the fundamentals of audience analysis, message construction, development, organization, and presentation including electronically
• Display competency in public speaking by preparing and presenting informative and persuasive speeches effectively and ethically

Affective/Attitudinal or Motivational Objectives

Students will:
• Show appreciation and value of the centrality and complexity of communication in their personal, professional, and academic lives
• Reflect an empathetic attitude toward cultural and contextual factors that impact communication
• Develop more self-awareness as communicators and increase their level of self esteem
• Show an increase in appreciation of the role of empathy and equality in human communication
• Understand both the sender and receiver’s ethical responsibilities in all communication transactions
• Manage communication apprehension and/or public speaking anxiety and lessen its negative impact on any communication event
Learning Objectives

A selection of learning objectives, while not perfect based on Docan-Morgan’s directions for developing objectives, is presented in Table 1. These objectives were drawn from the syllabi of the three orientations to the basic course submitted by survey respondents in this study. The objectives are categorized based on cognition, behaviors, and affect.

Background to This Study

Formal, consistent investigation of the basic course began in 1968 with a study conducted by members of the Undergraduate Speech Instruction Interest Group of the Speech Association of America (Gibson, Gruner, Brooks, & Petrie, 1970). At the time of that initial study, it was determined that subsequent studies should be conducted approximately every five years. The goal was to keep information current as such data are valuable to basic course directors, department faculty, and administrators at the departmental and college levels. Besides, as the discipline changes, so too should the basic course. The study was replicated in 1974 (Gibson, Kline, & Gruner), 1980 (Gibson, Gruner, Hanna, Smythe, & Hayes), 1985 (Gibson, Hanna, & Leichy), 1990 (Gibson, Hanna, & Huddleston), 1999 (Morreale, Hanna, Berko, & Gibson), and 2006 (Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley).

In the 2006 study, respondents were asked to identify and describe the top problems they face in administering and teaching the basic communication course. Table 2 presents the top problems in rank order. The two most frequently reported problems, consistency and use of part-time faculty, are the same as the most frequently cited problems in the 1999 study (Morreale et
It is intuitively obvious that these top two problems may be related to one another; that is, it may be more difficult to attain consistency and commonality of course content, grading, and rigor, when part-time instructors don't have an opportunity to interact with one another regularly.

These top two problems also confirm other results on the 2006 survey related to standardizing the basic course. In response to other survey questions about course standardization, the challenge of using common learning objectives with diverse and part-time faculty in order to achieve consistency was identified as a central problem. This problem is no doubt complicated in some instances by the lack of a basic course coordinator. Approximately 30% of institutions responding to the latest national survey reported that no one in their department is assigned responsibility for the basic course (Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006). The problem is yet further complicated by issues of personal preference and academic freedom, all of which may contribute to the challenge of maintaining consistency and using common learning objectives across multiple sections.

Another concern is that the basic communication course often is included in general education requirements and likely to be the first interaction students have with the communication discipline. As such, how learning objectives for the course are designed and implemented becomes critical. Because the inclusion of the basic course in general education requirements occurs on campuses across the United States, standardization and consistency of learning objectives and a commitment to their implementation across sections within in
Table 2
Top Ten Administrative Problems
Identified by NCA Basic Course Survey VII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems by rank</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>reliability across sections in rigor, grading, common content</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time faculty</td>
<td>qualifications, communication, recruitment, responsiveness</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>academic preparation &amp; performance, attendance, motivation</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General administration</td>
<td>coordination, supervision, communication, teacher evaluation</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology/ facilities</td>
<td>inadequate equipment &amp; training, access, physical space</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size</td>
<td>classes too large, not enough sections</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding/budget</td>
<td>insufficient resources</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching assistants</td>
<td>recruitment, training, motivation, international TAs</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty attitude</td>
<td>burn-out, motivation, coherence to policy, openness to innovation</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course design</td>
<td>amount of material, lecture/lab format, number of assignments</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Learning Objectives

Institutions, while respecting instructors’ autonomy, is an imperative.

This study focuses on these concerns by investigating who helps to develop learning objectives, how they are articulated and communicated to students, how they shape course content and pedagogy, and how their accomplishment is assessed. Specifically, the survey for this study investigated how learning objectives are implemented in the basic communication course generally and specifically across the three primary approaches to the basic course: public speaking, hybrid (public speaking, group, and interpersonal communication), and interpersonal communication. Are we consistent in the manner that we develop and design learning objectives across these approaches? Are we consistent in the manner that we assess the achievement of these objectives across the approaches? Who influences the design of learning objectives? In sum, to what extent are learning objectives a guiding and influential force in achieving consistency across multiples sections of the basic course within institutions?

METHOD

This study investigated current thinking and praxis in the communication discipline with regard to the use of learning objectives in the basic course. A survey on the use of learning objectives was developed and administered by mail to a random sample of the membership of the Basic Course Division of the National Communication Association. Members of the Basic Course Division were selected as the population for this study.
because of the members’ participation and/or interest in administering or teaching the basic course. Previous national studies of the basic course have been criticized because the researchers did not create a sample population to survey. So for this study, each member of a random sample of 94 identified in the population (current membership of the Basic Course Division) was mailed a survey. This random sample equated to approximately 25% of the membership of the division.

**Instrumentation**

The survey instrument for this study was created based on responses to the last national survey of the basic course (Morreale, Hugenberg, Worley, 2006). The instrument was designed to more deeply explore responses from the earlier survey regarding the use of learning objectives in the basic course. After its initial development, the survey was subjected to pilot study analysis and then revised to reflect the recommendations of the basic course administrators and instructors who reviewed the instrument. A purposive sample of nine basic course directors and instructors recommended minor edits to survey questions and requested that the survey provide a clear definition of learning objectives for the respondents.

The resulting survey examined the use of learning objectives in the basic course with an eye toward the manner in which learning objectives help address and ensure consistency across multiple sections of the course at the given institution. It contained 54 quantitative questions and three qualitative questions on how academic units develop, use, and evaluate learning objec-
Learning Objectives

tives in their basic communication courses. The survey began with 19 questions covering respondent demographics and their use of learning objectives regardless of the type of basic course on their campus. Respondents also were asked to indicate whether their basic course is: public speaking, hybrid (public speaking, group, and interpersonal) and/or interpersonal. Depending on their course type, respondents then were directed to another set of questions specifically focused on learning objectives for each course type.

Sampling and Data Collection

The survey was mailed to the sample population of 94 members of the NCA Basic Course Division. Thirty-seven members completed and returned the full survey yielding a response rate of 39.6%. Respondents were provided a postage paid envelope in which to return the surveys; and, they were asked to provide a copy of the syllabus for their course to the researchers. A follow up mailing to the same random sample encouraged additional responses. Respondents were offered the opportunity to receive the results of the survey anonymously prior to publication of the study.

Kazmier (1988) recommends that any actual sample size should be at least 30 events when estimating averages since the standard formulae for data analysis presume normal distributions. The stipulation is that the events themselves in the sample must be drawn at random, which was the case with the present survey.

Of the 37 respondents, 11 (29.7%) are at two-year academic institutions, ten (27.0%) are on campuses that offer master's degrees, and 16 (43.2%) are at doctoral
Learning Objectives

degree granting institutions. Twelve of the 37 respondents (32.4%) are at campuses with a student population of more than 20,000; 14 (37.8%) are at campuses of 10,000 to 20,000; eight (21.6%) are at campuses with 2500 to 10,000 students; and, three (8.1%) are at campuses of 1000 to 2500 students.

Each respondent was asked to indicate what type of basic course is offered at their institution. Since some of the 37 respondents indicated multiple course types, the result is that, of the 37 respondents, 19 (51%) identified public speaking, 19 (51%) identified hybrid, and seven (19%) identified interpersonal communication. By comparison, in the 2006 basic course national survey, of 306 respondents, 57.8% indicated that the most popular approach to the basic course was public speaking, followed by the hybrid course (35.3%), interpersonal (1.9%), and small group (0.3%). While the validity of the survey results related to the general use of learning objectives is provided by random sampling, disaggregating the data based on course orientation yields smaller samples for each orientation. Despite this issue, the results are presented later based on course orientation, to inform readers interested in these findings who will view them in light of this sampling limitation.

DATA ANALYSIS

Survey results were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine frequency responses to the quantitative questions and themes for the qualitative question responses. In addition, cross tab analysis was used to compare results based on course type, institutional type,
and size of campus in the initial section completed by all 37 respondents. The results were categorized as public speaking, hybrid, or interpersonal in course approach, as identified in the survey by each respondent. Since several respondents identified themselves within multiple course orientations, their results were analyzed for each of those orientations, for a total of 45 individual survey responses. For example, four respondents identified themselves as both interpersonal and public speaking; they completed both these sections, and their results were analyzed for both interpersonal and public speaking. In addition to frequency analysis of data for each course approach, the course syllabi were submitted to qualitative review. A thematic analysis of the syllabi was conducted in order to identify descriptive information about various types of basic courses, representative learning objectives (see Table 1), and representative statements that characterize the overall course and its learning objectives.

RESULTS

The following results, presented in narrative and table form, come from 37 respondents to the survey. First, results regarding the use of learning objectives in general, regardless of basic communication course type are presented. Then results are presented categorically based on the type of course indicated by the respondents; that is, public speaking ($n = 19$), the hybrid course ($n = 19$), and the interpersonal course ($n = 7$). Summative conclusions, recommendations for future studies, and limitations of this study then follow.
General Use of Learning Objectives

All respondents to the survey answered the same 19 questions about the nature of their basic course and the use of learning objectives in their course. Of the 37 total respondents, 24.3% \( (n = 9) \) offer more than 50 sections of the basic course each term; 27% \( (n = 10) \) offer 31 to 50 sections, 18.9% \( (n = 7) \) offer 21 to 30 sections; 13.5% \( (n = 5) \) offer 11-20 sections; and, 16.2% \( (n = 6) \) offer ten or fewer sections.

When asked if their basic course has a set of learning objectives, 91.9% \( (n = 34) \) said yes and 8.1% \( (n = 3) \) said no. Twenty-nine respondents (78.4%) reported that their basic course is part of the general education program on their campus. When looking at inclusion of the basic course in general education based on course type, the hybrid course responses were highest with 84.2%, followed by interpersonal (71.4%) and then public speaking (68.4%).

Respondents were asked where their learning objectives are articulated. All 37 respondents said objectives are included in their course syllabus; 67.6% \( (n = 25) \) said their learning objectives are contained in oral explanations provided by instructors during class; 51.4% \( (n = 19) \) said in grading rubrics, and 48.6% \( (n = 18) \) said in course assignment descriptions.

When asked if their learning objectives are linked to and help shape course content, instruction, and pedagogy, 94.6% \( (n = 35) \) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that objectives serve this purpose in their program. Although a high percentage of respondents from all course types strongly agreed or agreed that learning objectives help shape course content, the interpersonal course had over twice as many respondents indicating
they were unsure (14.3%) if learning objectives shaped course content. Comparatively, 5.3% of respondents from both public speaking and hybrid courses indicated that learning objectives play a key role in shaping course content.

Of the 37 respondents, 100% strongly agreed ($n = 29$) or agreed ($n = 8$) that their learning objectives emphasize communication competence as a course goal, with 100% concurrence across all three course types. Twenty-three respondents (62.2%) strongly agree or agree that their learning objectives describe minimum levels of communication competence expected of students successfully completing the basic course. Specifically, 94.7% of respondents for public speaking indicated that learning objectives describe minimum levels of communication competence, while 85.7% of respondents from interpersonal courses indicated that this was the case. However, a relatively high percentage of hybrid respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed (10.6%) or were unsure (36.8%) as to the significance of the role of learning objectives in describing minimum levels of communication competence.

When asked which components of communication competence are addressed in their course learning objectives, of 37 respondents, 100% identified knowledge and cognition, 97.3% ($n = 36$) identified behavior and skills, and 56.8% ($n = 21$) identified motivation and affect (attitudes).

When asked about topical content, respondents indicated that their learning objectives include these six topics: verbal communication 89.2% ($n = 33$); listening 89.2% ($n = 33$); nonverbal communication 81.1% ($n = 30$); the nature of human communication 75.7% ($n = 28$);
perception 70.3% \((n = 26)\); and models of communication 67.6% \((n = 25)\). In addition to these topics, ten respondents (27%) identified a range of other topics included as learning objectives. Five respondents (13.5%) identified delivery learning objectives that attend speaking in a variety of contexts. Two respondents (5%) identified issues of research and support in public speaking as learning objectives, while one each identified cultural sensitivity, leadership and organizational theory, and propaganda/media influence as significant learning objectives.

With regard to assessment, 89.2% \((n = 33)\) indicated that student achievement of learning objectives is assessed in ways other than performance on course tests and exams. Those other assessment processes include: preparing, delivering, and evaluating one’s own public speeches 97.2 % \((n = 36)\); written assignments 89.2% \((n = 33)\); evaluating public speeches 81.1% \((n = 30)\); group discussion 67.6% \((n = 25)\); group presentations 62.2% \((n = 23)\); and role playing activities 32.4% \((n = 12)\). In addition, three respondents (8%) indicated that they employed some form of interviewing as an assessment measure, while one respondent (2%) indicated that no assessment measures were employed.

When asked if their course’s learning objectives are supported by service learning assignments, 18.9% \((n = 7)\) said yes (strongly agree or agree); 64.8% \((n = 24)\) said no (strongly disagree or disagree), with 16.2% \((n = 6)\) unsure. Examining these results across the course types, the hybrid course percentages for strongly agree or agree were slightly higher (26.2%) than either the public speaking (15.8%) or the interpersonal (14.3%) respondents. As indicated in the overall results, the ma-
Learning Objectives

Majority of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed that their learning objectives were supported by service learning assignments: public speaking (68.5%), hybrid (57.9%) and interpersonal (57.2%).

Twenty-four respondents (64.9%) strongly agreed or agreed that their students clearly understand the learning objectives for their course. Two respondents (5.4%) indicated that their students do not understand the learning objectives (strongly disagree/disagree). Eleven respondents (29.7%) were unsure whether their students understand the learning objectives. Relatively high percentages in the hybrid course (42.1%) were unsure if their students clearly understood the learning objectives for their course as compared to public speaking (21.1%) and interpersonal (14.3%).

When asked who contributes to the development of their learning objectives, respondents answered as follows: 25 (67.6%) said full time faculty in the department contribute; 23 (62.2%) said the basic course director; 20 (54.1%) said the department chair; 11 (29.7%) said part-time faculty in the department; eight (21.6%) said a department curriculum committee and other faculty on campus; six (16.2%) said graduate teaching assistants; and five (13.5%) said the college dean.

Cross tabulations indicated no significant differences in whether the basic course has learning objectives and whether the learning objectives shape course content and pedagogy, based on type of institution (highest degree offered on the campus), highest degree offered in the department, or size of student population on the campus.
Learning Objectives in the Public Speaking Course

Of the 37 total respondents, 19 indicated that one of the basic courses they offer is a public speaking course. Those 19 answered 16 quantitative questions and one qualitative question on how the learning objectives are used in their public speaking course.

Fifteen of the 19 respondents (79%) said that they strongly agreed or agreed that instructors in their course pursue the same public speaking learning objec-

Table 3
Topical Content of Learning Objectives in Public Speaking Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic area included in learning objectives</th>
<th>% strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>N/total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conducting research for public speaking</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>18/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent verbal delivery skills</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>18/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively organizing a public speech</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>17/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent non-verbal delivery skills</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>16/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting and narrowing a topic</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>16/18*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of evidence in public speech</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>15/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical speechmaking</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>15/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection, creation and use of speaking aids (visual aids) other than PowerPoint during a speech</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>15/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of oral citations in a speech</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>14/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>14/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective methods for practicing the delivery of a speech</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>11/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of public speaking</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>10/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection, creation and use of PowerPoint during a speech</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>5/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*One missing response
Learning Objectives

tives and the same learning objectives for preparing persuasive and informative speeches. When asked about topical content of learning objectives for their public speaking courses, respondents indicated that their objectives include those topics listed by rank order in Table 3.

Respondents were asked what steps are taken to evaluate achievement of the learning objectives related to public speaking. Of the 19 public speaking respondents, six (31.6%) said no evaluation process is in place at this time. Ten (52.6%) said assessment takes place through the evaluation of speech performances. Six respondents (31.6%) reported the use of a standardized public speaking evaluation form or standardized rubrics to evaluate assignments across sections of the basic course. Six respondents (31.6%) pointed to the use of written tests and four respondents (21.1%) use some form of student self-assessment. Three respondents (15.8%) participate in campus wide assessment programs. In their comments, six respondents (31.6%) indicated that frequent faculty meetings, briefings, and other discussions focus on the achievement of learning objectives.

Learning Objectives in the Hybrid Course

Of the 37 total respondents, 19 indicated that one of the basic courses they offer is a hybrid course (public speaking, group, interpersonal). Those 19 answered 38 quantitative questions and one qualitative question on how the learning objectives are used in their hybrid course.
### Table 4
Topical Content of Learning Objectives for the Public Speaking, Group, and Interpersonal Components in the Hybrid Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1. Topic area I included in learning objectives for the public speaking component</th>
<th>% strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>N/total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conducting research for a public speech</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>18/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of evidence in a speech</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>17/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective use of oral citations in a speech</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>17/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent nonverbal delivery skills</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>17/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>84.2</td>
<td>16/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical speechmaking</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>15/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectively organizing a public speech</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>14/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective methods for practicing the delivery of a speech</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>15/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selecting and narrowing a topic</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>12/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of public speaking</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>11/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection, creation and use of speaking aids (visual aids) other than PowerPoint during a speech</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>11/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection, creation and use of PowerPoint during a speech</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>7/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 2. Topic area included in learning objectives for the group component</th>
<th>% strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>N/total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leading group discussion</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>13/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing group member skills</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>12/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision making skills</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>12/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing diversity in groups</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>11/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective thinking</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>10/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group presentation skills</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>10/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills in groups</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>9/19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of leadership</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>8/19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sixteen of the 19 respondents (84.2%) said that they strongly agreed or agreed that instructors in their course pursue the same learning objectives for public speaking; 14 respondents (73.7%) said they pursue the same learning objectives for group communication; and 13 respondents (45.1%) said they pursue the same learning objectives for interpersonal communication.

For the public speaking component of the hybrid course, when respondents were asked about topical content, they said their learning objectives include those topics listed by rank order in Table 4, Section 1. For the group communication component of the hybrid course, when respondents were asked about topical content, they said their learning objectives include those topics listed by rank order in Table 4, Section 2. For the interpersonal communication component of the hybrid course, when respondents were asked about topical content, they said their learning objectives include those topics listed by rank order in Table 4, Section 3.
Learning Objectives in the Interpersonal Course

Of the 37 total respondents, seven indicated that one of the basic courses they offer is an interpersonal communication course. Those seven answered ten quantitative questions and one qualitative question on how the learning objectives are used in their interpersonal course. Five of the seven respondents said that they strongly agreed or agreed that instructors in their course pursue the same interpersonal communication learning objectives and the same objectives for developing interpersonal communication skills. Four of seven respondents said that instructors have the same learning objectives for theories of interpersonal communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic area included in learning objectives</th>
<th>% strongly agree/agree</th>
<th>N/total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing listening skills</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing conflict in interpersonal</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and maintaining</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal relationships and ending or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>terminating interpersonal relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to effective listening</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>6/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness in interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When asked about topical content of learning objectives for their interpersonal communication courses, respondents indicated that their objectives include those topics listed by rank order in Table 5.

Regarding assessment in the interpersonal course, of the seven respondents only one said that no evaluation process is in place at this time. Five of the seven use written tests, three use written assignments such as reflection papers, three use interviews with students, three use group projects of some kind, and one respondent uses role playing. Some standardization of assessment and learning objectives was evident in some respondents’ comments. One uses the same final exam across all sections; another uses a committee of instructors to periodically review objectives and their achievement; and, on one campus, sections of the basic course are randomly selected and their assessment portfolios are sent to the main campus for analysis.

Qualitative Review of Course Syllabi

Twenty-one respondents sent copies of their basic course syllabi along with their surveys. Of these, eight public speaking course syllabi, nine hybrid course syllabi, and four interpersonal course syllabi were received. Some similarities were observed across the syllabi; for example, they all tended to present a numbered or bulleted list of learning objectives, each describing what a student will learn or be able to do by the end of the course. The list of student expectations was varyingly referred to as course objectives (most frequently used term), core or student learning outcomes, or course learning goals. Some listed as few as four objectives
while others had as many as ten. Only one syllabus, for a public speaking course, listed no learning objectives at all.

In addition to the lists of objectives for student learning, some syllabi also presented statements about the learning objectives, the purpose of the course, or a course description. Statements for the public speaking courses commonly focused on speech preparation (research and composition), organization of ideas, delivery skills, and the presentation of various types of speeches. A typical statement for a public speaking course is: “Upon completion of the course, students will be able to effectively organize and deliver several types of speeches, from introductory through informative, to persuasive and commemorative.”

Statements for hybrid courses emphasized the application of basic communication theory and skills to a variety of contexts in communication, most typically intrapersonal, interpersonal, small group, and the public speaking context. A typical statement for the hybrid course is: “This course is designed to help you become a competent communicator in a variety of contexts. You will be introduced to principles and basic skills of interpersonal communication, small group and team communication, and public communication.”

Statements for the interpersonal course emphasized relational communication theory and skills. A representative statement for the interpersonal course is: “An introduction to the knowledge and skills of interpersonal communication. The course content includes facilitation of more effective and supportive behavior, reduction of communication barriers, and development of increased skill and confidence in relationships.”
DISCUSSION

The results of this survey indicate that the majority of basic courses represented in this sample have clearly articulated, shared learning objectives, regardless of course orientation. However, the presence of learning objectives for the course does not necessarily indicate that the objectives are consistently implemented across multiple sections. In addition, there is some divergence across orientations in the relative frequency of the topics included in the objectives and the manner in which assessment is conducted when comparing the three orientations.

All three orientations, public speaking, hybrid, and interpersonal basic courses, focus on communication competence as a major learning outcome. All three orientations adequately address the competence components of knowledge/cognition and behavior/skills; but less, 56.8% of respondents ($n = 21$), indicate that they include affective learning objectives, related to motivation and attitudes. Given the affective issues that attend communication competence, such as level of self esteem and communication apprehension, this percentage is of particular interest and raises some questions for future research regarding the role of affective learning objectives in the basic course.

Interestingly, respondents only mention members of specific departments or institutions as the primary resources for framing learning objectives for the basic course. While external organizations, such as the National Communication Association, could play a role in developing or refining learning objectives, these contributors were not clearly mentioned by respondents.
Such external sources either could provide expert advice or could serve as a gathering point for discussions of learning objectives; but, they do not seem to serve that purpose as yet.

Notably, service learning does not play a significant role in learning objectives for the basic course, even though this is a widespread trend in higher education. While attention has been given to the integration of service learning in the basic course (see Harter, Kirby, Hatfield, & Kuhlman, 2004), this form of pedagogy is not represented in the learning objectives examined in this study. However, the fact that service learning is not listed as a course objective is not necessarily an indication that these activities and projects are not used in the course.

While respondents indicate a variety of assessment methods in the various orientations to the basic course, performance assessment remains the most frequent method regardless of orientation, while tests and exams remain the least preferred method. Among the other methods of assessment identified by respondents, 67.6% ($n = 24$) indicated that group discussion was an assessment method. While the survey did not ask how group discussion was assessed, future researchers would do well to focus on understanding the nature of this assessment. At a recent Basic Course Directors Conference, there was relatively little agreement about how instructors ought to assess group interaction and processes in the basic course.

There were mixed responses to the question inquiring about student understanding of learning objectives. Eleven (29.7%) of all respondents were unsure whether students understand the learning objectives for the ba-
Learning Objectives

sic course, while 42.1% (n = 16) of respondents indicated that they were unsure if students enrolled in the hybrid basic course understand the learning objectives. This is an area that needs additional investigation in order to understand why a relatively large percentage of respondents are unsure as to whether students understand learning objectives. Given that learning objectives are often included in syllabi, grading rubrics, assignments, and oral explanations, this disconnect is worth additional consideration.

Another finding regarding the hybrid basic course is of interest. Respondents noted that only 45.1% of instructors (n = 17) pursue the same learning objectives for the interpersonal communication unit in the hybrid basic course, which is significantly lower than the learning objectives for either the public speaking or small group communication units. This difference suggests the need for additional inquiry into why learning objectives are more consistent for two components of the course but not for a third, the interpersonal component. What is it about interpersonal communication that does not lend itself to using the same learning objectives?

Comparative Observations

While all three orientations to the basic course share six common topics for learning objectives, the topics for the various orientations are, not surprisingly, somewhat divergent. Most particularly, the interpersonal communication orientation has fewer shared topic areas than the public speaking and hybrid orientations, although the interpersonal component of the hybrid orientation and the learning objectives for the interpersonal orien-
Learning Objectives

tation course are similar. This topical divergence points again to a question frequently voiced in basic course literature and conversations regarding the nature and focus of the basic course. It appears that the issue of consistency is not only a matter of concern across sections of the course, but also for the basic course in terms of its substance and content, in general. While each institution understandably has its own goals and reference points with regard to the basic course, does the basic course have or should it have some central reference points across the discipline? Because of articulation and transfer agreements, some states have developed statewide standards for learning in the basic course. For example, students attending colleges and universities in Ohio are now assured by both State law and Ohio Board of Regents policy that the basic course will transfer from one state-sponsored college or university to another state-sponsored college or university—whether two or four-year. Additionally, the emergence of such initiatives as the Spelling Commission raises additional questions about assessment and accountability, which are related to discussions of learning objectives. Additional research that explores these issues with regard to the basic course should be considered.

Finally, in a comparison of Table 3 and Table 4, Section 1, which focus on the topical content of public speaking in both the public speaking and hybrid orientations, it is notable that the two orientations emphasize the same list of topics but in very different rank order. This difference once more suggests an interesting research investigation, since one may anticipate a greater symmetry in public speaking learning objectives in the hybrid and the public speaking orientations. One
other interesting similarity between the data reported in Table 3 and Table 4, Section 1, should also be noted. The selection, creation, and use of PowerPoint are rated as the least important topical learning objective in both the public speaking and hybrid orientations. Given recent conversations at national and regional conventions and the review of many public speaking and hybrid basic course syllabi, the issue of PowerPoint in the basic course has created considerable discussion, as well as divergent views. Additional research that seeks to understand this particular issue should be pursued.

LIMITATIONS

One limitation of this study relates to the population from which the sample was drawn. Although the sample was taken from members of the Basic Course Division of NCA, their role in the basic course is not clear. For example, they may be basic course directors, graduate teaching assistants, department or college administrators, or interested faculty. Therefore, either a different sampling technique might be warranted or data identifying respondents’ roles in the basic course, as noted above, should be collected in the future. A second limitation, already referenced, relates to the size of the sample for disaggregated data across the three approaches to the basic course. As in most studies of this type, encouraging sufficient responses is problematic. A larger random sample for the entire study would yield larger samples for the three approaches to the course.
The need for this survey is evident in the content of some of the responses to a final survey question that invited open ended comments about the use of learning objectives in the respondent’s basic course. Several respondents expressed a concern for achieving consistency and “monitoring the application of learning objectives” across sections, particularly given their extensive use of part time and adjunct instructors. This concern harkens back to consistency across sections of the course being identified as a top administrative problem in the seventh national survey of the basic course and the notion that commitment to common learning objectives is one viable approach to achieving greater consistency.

Other respondents to the last question on this present survey indicated that their instructors hold degrees from other disciplines and often have little communication background, perhaps as little as 12 hours of undergraduate speech courses. Yet other respondents to this question said they have written learning objectives but most faculty are not aware of them or choose not to use them. Commitment to implementing common learning objectives across sections of the course at these institutions would speak, at least in part, to these two problems.

It is the hope of these authors that this study will encourage more dialogue about the effective and appropriate use of learning objectives in the basic communication course as a strategy for ensuring consistency of teaching and learning across multiple sections. While the causes of a lack of consistency across sections may be multi-faceted and relate to variations in course con-
tent, teaching styles, rigor, and other factors, we believe that well developed and effectively implemented learning objectives are a good start point for addressing these concerns. That said, we have learned that just having learning objectives in place is not enough. Rather all stakeholders—administrators and course directors, full and part-time instructors, and students—must help to develop and support the implementation of common objectives for the course. In fact, instructors could consider inviting students to participate in the process by setting their own personal learning objectives in addition to those articulated for the course itself. If administrators and all course instructors, whether full or part-time, collaborate to develop, honor, and implement the course objectives, variations in factors such as teaching style may not be as much of a deterrent to consistency across sections.

Some time worn clichés come to mind. Perhaps it is time for those involved in the basic communication course at any given institution to consider “dancing to the same drummer,” and “singing from the same choir book!” The goal of such consistency of instruction and future research would be the continued enhancement of the communication competency of all of our students.

REFERENCES

Learning Objectives


agents of social change: Engaging students in the basic course through service-learning. *Basic Communication Course Annual, 16*, 165-194.


Learning Objectives


Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Student Engagement in the Public Speaking Classroom

Stephanie Ahlfeldt
North Dakota State University
Deanna Sellnow
University of Kentucky

To be successful, colleges and universities must do a better job of producing graduates who are truly ready for life beyond the classroom (Huba & Freed, 2000). The United States Department of Education is encouraging educational reform, and educators are feeling pressure to meet these requests (Morreale & Backlund, 2002). More specifically, college educators are being called to employ new pedagogical strategies that help students learn in ways that promote lifelong learning skills and engagement. In other words, educators must explore strategies that will “develop students’ intellectual skills [and] career skills [in order to] reshape the values of society” (Sprague, 1999, pp. 16-17). Essentially, today’s college graduates must demonstrate higher levels of critical thinking and better teamwork skills (e.g., Allen, 1998; Allen & Rooney, 1998; Betchel, 1999; Duch, Groh, & Allen, 2001; Edens, 2000; Levin, 2001).

Problem-based learning (PBL) is one instructional strategy designed to address these goals (e.g., Duch et al., 2001; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998b). PBL is both “a philosophy and a methodological approach . . .
Problem-based Learning

which involves confronting students with problems derived from practice rather than the traditional didactic ‘systems’ approach” (Williams, 1999, p. 660). In essence, PBL relies on “students’ ability to learn in a self-directed mode and is considered to bridge the ‘theory-practice gap more effectively’” (Williams, 1999, p. 659). Students work in teams to research and, ultimately, to pose solutions to ill-structured real-world problems (e.g., Butler, 1999; Lohman & Finkelstein, 2000; MacKinnon, 1999; Major & Palmer, 2001).

Moreover, PBL “offers an attractive alternative to traditional education by shifting the focus of education from what faculty teach to what students learn” (White, 2001, p. 69). The instructor’s role shifts from lecturer to facilitator who “guide[s] the learners through their own discovery without teaching them in the traditional sense” (Biley, 1999, p. 587). The facilitators play a crucial role as groups look to them for guidance, which leads to richer, more holistic learning. Ultimately, when students are provided opportunities to learn concepts in this way and in the contexts where they will be used, they take on the role of “practicing professional[s]” (Butler, 1999, p. 136), who are more likely to retain the information and better prepared to handle life and its challenges (Albanese & Mitchell, 1993). Because students learn to solve problems on their own, they become better equipped to enter the professional community (Frederiksen, 1999).

One primary reason PBL is considered effective rests with the fact that it fosters high levels of student interactive engagement. Interactive engagement methods are those designed to foster understanding through heads-on (always) and hands-on (usually) activities that
result in immediate feedback from peers and instructors (Hake, 1998). Research suggests that classrooms that promote interactive engagement result in significantly higher levels of content comprehension and retention (e.g., Ahlfeldt, Mehta, & Sellnow, 2005; Bloom, 1984; Hake, 1998; Redish & Steinberg, 1999). Hake (2002) explains that interactive engagement strategies “can increase the effectiveness of conceptually difficult courses well beyond that obtained with traditional methods” (¶2). Although non-traditional interactive-engagement methods appear to be much more effective than traditional methods, there remains the need for more research to further refine strategies for the enhancement of student learning (¶ 14, 20, 22).

The communication discipline is a prime arena for PBL because critical thinking and teamwork are fundamental outcomes of the communication degree (e.g., Backlund, 2002; Morreale & Backlund 2002). The basic course has been suggested as a course through which to introduce PBL (e.g., Sellnow & Ahlfeldt, 2005). To clarify, communication teacher-scholars are “concerned with developing pedagogical strategies for extending students’ learning experiences in the basic communication course” (Hunt & Simonds, 2002, p. 60). Moreover, there is a consistent concern that the basic course should do more than teach structure and delivery skills to also tie such skills directly to students’ lived experiences and real world issues (Sellnow & Ahlfeldt, 2005). In doing so, these courses will better “meet students’ needs” (Hunt, Ekachai, Garard, & Rust, 2001, p. 3).

As colleges and universities reinvent themselves to address the needs of students and demands of employers, public speaking fundamentals scholars ought to
Problem-based Learning clarify what are “inappropriate or outdated assumptions and practices related to public speaking course content and pedagogy (Goulden, 2002, p. 2). PBL may, in fact, be an answer to these very concerns. This study examines the use of Problem-based learning (PBL) in the public speaking classroom as it affects student engagement. More specifically, since PBL has been shown to foster engagement, which is positively linked to increased comprehension and retention, we chose to examine the following hypothesis:

H: Levels of student engagement are higher in a PBL-enhanced public speaking classroom than in a conventionally taught public speaking classroom.

METHOD

Participants
Students in 47 public speaking sections participated in this study (N=561). Nineteen sections of public speaking were taught using conventional methods of instruction. Twenty-nine sections were taught using a PBL-enhanced approach. Since public speaking is a required general education course, student demographics were similar across sections. Faculty, lecturers, adjunct instructors, and graduate teaching assistants who earned at least a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale on Student Ratings of Instruction (SROIs) the previous semester participated in the study. All instructors taught from a master syllabus, which explicitly detailed similar required
speech assignments, due dates, and course expectations to maintain consistency across sections.

The distinct difference between the two courses was in the classroom structure and assignment themes. In the PBL-enhanced sections, cooperative learning groups were formed during the second week of class. These groups worked together on assignments throughout the semester that built on one another in terms of topic and skill level. That is, each group examined a real world problem from a variety of perspectives and each major speech (two informative speeches and two persuasive speeches) was related to the problem the group chose to examine. The students in the conventional sections had similar major assignments (two informative speeches and two persuasive speeches) and due dates, but they did not work in groups throughout the semester, with each group focusing on a real world problem. A detailed description of the replicable PBL-enhanced course design can be found in Sellnow and Ahlfeldt (2005).

Procedure

Prior to collecting data, all instructors spent one semester learning about PBL and preparing to use it in the public speaking course. All instructors then spent a semester teaching the course from a PBL-enhanced perspective. During that semester, all instructors were required to attend weekly teacher training meetings that provided them with the tools to teach the public speaking course using PBL. The data for the present study were then collected the following semester.

Two groups were established for the study, a control group and an experimental group. The control group
consisted of students who were taught in classrooms using conventional teaching techniques. The experimental group consisted of students taught in classrooms using PBL-enhanced teaching techniques.

Instructors self-selected the type of class (PBL-enhanced or conventional) they would teach for the study. The program director asked teachers their preferences and assigned them class sections that coincided with those preferences. The researchers hoped that honoring instructor preference would reduce instructor resentment that could contaminate the study results. Since all teachers earned above average teacher evaluations, the potential for selection bias was reduced. Each group of instructors (i.e., PBL-enhanced and conventional) attended weekly training meetings focused on assignments and expectations in the syllabus, as well as teaching strategies.

Instrument

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) assesses the extent to which colleges and universities participate in educational practices that are strongly associated with high levels of learning and personal development. The National Survey of Student Engagement data focus on how students use resources for learning (Kuh, 2001).

The first national report emphasized the important link between effective educational practices and educational quality by featuring five benchmarks of effective pedagogy. These benchmarks were created from student responses to 40 key items on the original survey. The benchmarks are: level of academic challenge, active and
collaborative learning, student interactions with faculty members, enriching educational experiences, and supportive campus environment (Kuh, 2001; “National Survey,” 2000). Russell Edgerton, director of the Pew Forum on Undergraduate Learning, claims that students, parents, policy-makers, and accrediting bodies should be asking colleges the same questions the NSSE asks them: “How much do students study and how rigorous are their assignments? How much writing is expected? How often do students interact with their teachers in meaningful ways?” (“Improving the College Experience,” 2001, p. 2).

The Survey of Student Engagement (SSE), adapted from the NSSE (“National Survey,” 2000), was used to measure student perceptions of engagement. This survey assessed the level to which each student reported being engaged in class interactions and in class material. Key questions from the original survey were adopted for the SSE based on their measurability of student engagement specifically at the classroom level. The SSE examined level of academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, and enriching educational experiences from the NSSE benchmarks of effective educational practice.

The modified version of the original survey used in the present study consisted of 14 questions. The factor groupings were taken directly from the original survey instrument. Questions one through four come from the section on the original instrument related to the cooperative learning variable. Questions five through nine come from the section related to the cognitive level variable. Questions ten through 14 come from the section related to the personal skills variable. All responses were ranked on a four-point scale with four being very
much or very often, three being quite a bit or often, two being some or occasionally, and one being very little or never. The alpha for the 14-item instrument is .84 (Ahlfeldt, Mehta, & Sellnow, 2005).

One of the questions (number five, memorization) correlated negatively and reduced the reliability of the instrument. Kuh (2002) notes:

The five items about the extent to which the institution emphasizes different kinds of mental activities represent some of the skills in Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy of educational objectives. The standardized alpha for these items is .70 when the lowest order mental function item, memorization, is included. However, the alpha jumps to .80 after deleting the memorization item. This set of items is among the best predictors of self-reported gains, suggesting that the items are reliably estimating the degree to which the institution is challenging students to perform higher order intellectual tasks. (p. 9)

For this survey, the cognitive level had an alpha of .54 when question five was included and .77 when it was removed. Hence, question five was removed from the analysis.

The alpha for the instrument with question five removed was .86. The alpha for each variable of the instrument was also calculated. The alpha for the cooperative learning variable was .61, for the cognitive level was .77, and for the personal skills was .84.

**Data Analysis**

To test the hypothesis, engagement scores were calculated by summing the responses to each of the 13 remaining questions on the SSE. A MANOVA was con-
ducted to compare the overall engagement scores of the PBL-enhanced and conventional classrooms, as well as to compare engagement levels of the PBL-enhanced and conventional classrooms for the three dependent variables (cooperative learning, cognitive level, and personal skills).

**RESULTS**

The hypothesis (levels of student engagement are higher in a PBL classroom than in a conventional classroom) was supported, multivariate F (3, 557) = 3.71, Λ = .980, \( R^2 = .022 \). Table 1 reveals students in the PBL-enhanced sections were more engaged than those taught in the conventional sections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>( n )</th>
<th>( M )</th>
<th>( SD )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PBL-Enhanced</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional;</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A MANOVA revealed a significant difference in the cooperative learning variable (F (1, 559) = 11.09, \( p < .01 \), \( R^2 = .019 \)). Students in the PBL-enhanced sections scored higher than students in the conventional sections on cooperative learning. There was no significant difference in cognitive level (F (1, 559) = 2.38, \( p = .12 \), \( R^2 = .124 \)) or personal skill development (F (1, 559) = 2.60, \( p = .124 \)).
= .11, \( R^2 = .108 \) between the PBL-enhanced and conventional sections, although the PBL means were slightly higher (see Table 2). Table 3 shows the correlations between the variables.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBL-Enhanced</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBL-Enhanced</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>10.59</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBL-Enhanced</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>13.46</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cognitive Level</th>
<th>Personal Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Learning</td>
<td>.397**</td>
<td>.439**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Level</td>
<td>.566**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<.01
DISCUSSION

A good deal of research has been conducted regarding the utility of a PBL approach in the fields of business, education, medicine, law, and physics (e.g., Albanese & Mitchell, 1993; Allen, 1998; Baker, 2000; Barbian, 2002; Betchel, 1999; Biley, 1999; Duch et al., 2001; Edens, 2000; Hake, 1998; MacKinnon, 1999; Major & Palmer, 2001; Redish & Steinberg, 1999; Williams, 1999). Few experimental studies to date, however, have focused on the role of PBL in communication courses (Ahlfeldt, Mehta, & Sellnow, 2005). Since PBL is designed to promote critical thinking and teamwork skills—two fundamental learning outcomes of most communication degrees—it follows that PBL might be an appropriate teaching methodology for communication courses.

Research has also been published about what ought to constitute an undergraduate communication program generally, as well as the basic communication course specifically (e.g., Backlund, 2002; Goulden, 2002; Hunt & Simonds, 2002; Hunt et al., 2001; Morreale & Backlund, 2002; Rosenthal, 2002; Sellnow & Ahlfeldt, 2005; Sprague, 1999). Such debate points clearly to concern about how best to teach undergraduate communication curricula.

This study contributes to the existing research, then, in two ways. Initially, it adds to our understanding about PBL as a useful methodology to foster interactive engagement in the basic communication course which, in turn, promotes learning (e.g., Hake, 1998; Kuh, 2001). Moreover, the study adds to our understanding
about possible ways in which to enrich the basic communication course.

This study revealed that levels of student engagement were, in fact, higher in a PBL-enhanced public speaking classroom than in a conventionally taught public speaking classroom. Students in the PBL-enhanced sections were more engaged than students in the conventional sections. If the conclusions drawn by others are true, then PBL can serve to improve not only engagement in public speaking classrooms, but consequently also comprehension and retention of material.

Several limitations of the study must be acknowledged. First, the data come from students enrolled in a Public Speaking Fundamentals course at one mid-sized Midwestern university. Although a census was used, the results may not be generalizable to other populations. Second, the data are based on student self-reports. Hence, the data are based solely on student perceptions of engagement. Third, although all instructors (a) were trained in PBL methods prior to data collection, (b) were allowed to choose which course-type they taught during the semester data were collected, (c) taught from a master syllabus, and (d) used the same textbook, the fact that multiple instructors taught the sections could have influenced the results. Moreover, the fact that the instructors self-selected the course approach they would employ could have introduced a selection bias error even though only instructors who had previously earned above average teaching evaluations were included. Finally, as with any quasi-experimental study, any number of confounding variables that emerge when studying people in natural settings could have influenced the results.
Nevertheless, this study should spark interest in future research on the effectiveness of PBL in the basic communication course, as well as in other communication curricula. Beyond the notion of interactive engagement, future studies ought to explore student performance on speeches and examinations in classrooms taught using a PBL approach compared to a conventional approach. Can a PBL approach be effective in an online environment? Are there some communication courses that ought not be taught using a PBL approach? Is a PBL approach inherently biased with regard to sex, learning style preference, ability/disability, ethnicity, or race? These and other questions ought to be examined to further understand what role PBL might play not only in the basic communication course, but also in the field of communication.

REFERENCES


Barbian, J. (2002). A new line of defense: Thanks to problem-based learning, new agents at the FBI Academy are more prepared than ever before to address then nation’s security concerns. Training, 39(9), 38-46.


Hunt, S.K., & Simonds, C.J. (2002). Extending learning opportunities in the basic communication course:
Exploring the pedagogical benefits of speech laboratories. *Basic Communication Course Annual, 14*, 60-86.


Establishing a positive classroom climate that fosters student learning is an important goal for instructors. It is particularly important in the basic course because students often take this course at the beginning of their careers in higher education. At this stage, students are more likely to drop out of college (McGrath & Braunstein, 1997) or may feel disconnected and isolated from others (Christie & Dinham, 1991; Harrison, 2006). The basic course provides an opportunity to foster a supportive environment that may assist with student learning, retention, and satisfaction in the course, as well as in college.

Previous research has found a positive relationship between classroom climate and student learning. However, most of this research has examined the instructor’s role in creating an environment that promotes learning (Finnan, Schnepel, & Anderson, 2003; Hyman & Snook, 2000; Nunnery, Butler, & Bhaireddy, 1993) and has not focused on the impact of student behaviors on the learning environment. A classroom in which students actively participate and develop a sense of cama-
raderie through communication behaviors may help to create a positive environment where learning is enhanced.

One classroom climate variable that may be associated with student learning is classroom connectedness, defined as “student-to student perceptions of a supportive and cooperative communication environment in the classroom” (Dwyer, Bingham, Carlson, Prisbell, Cruz, & Fus, 2004, p. 5). Greater connectedness among students may foster learning because when students work together and support each other, they become more academically engaged (Kuh, 2001). Therefore, this study explores the relationship between students’ perceptions of classroom climate in the basic course and perceptions of learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classroom Connectedness

In the 1970s, scholars began to adopt Gibb’s (1960) conceptualization of supportive versus defensive communication climate and apply it to the classroom setting (Hays, 1970; Rosenfeld, 1983). These researchers queried supportive classroom climate and student perceptions of their instructor’s communication behaviors. They found that a variety of specific teacher behaviors can be associated with supportive climate, including teacher humor (Stuart & Rosenfeld, 1994), affinity-seeking (Myers, 1995), and argumentativeness (Myers & Rocca, 2001). In addition, Nadler and Nadler (1990) examined student perceptions of instructor supportive and dominant communication behaviors and found that in a...
supportive communication climate, “students felt more comfortable participating in class, disagreeing with instructors, and meeting with faculty outside of class” (Nadler & Nadler, 1990, p. 61).

Educational researchers have also examined students’ sense of supportiveness and connection. For example, they have investigated the impact of teacher-to-student behaviors on classroom climate (Fraser, Treagust, & Dennis, 1986), student perceptions of being connected to the larger campus community (i.e., students’ feelings about belongingness, companionship, and affiliation) (Lee & Robbins, 1995), social supportiveness among college students in their social networks (McGrath, Gutierrez, & Valadez, 2000), and classroom community among elementary school students (Schaps, Lewis & Watson, 1997).

Based on the communication and educational literature, it is apparent that classroom climate is an important area to study. However, previous research has focused almost entirely on a teacher’s impact on climate and has rarely investigated student behaviors that foster a supportive classroom climate and learning.

To address the concept of a classroom climate that is created through communication among students, Dwyer et al. (2004) developed the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI). They conceptualized classroom climate as students’ perceptions that the students in a particular classroom are supportive and cooperative. As Dwyer et al. (2004) explained, the definition of a connected classroom climate integrates many constructs related to interpersonal support, including supportive climate (Gibb, 1960), cohesiveness (Fraser, et al., 1986; Malecki & Demaray, 2002), belongingness (Lee & Rob-
bins, 1995), social support (McGrath et al., 2000) and classroom community (Schaps, et al., 1997).

In previous studies, classroom connectedness has been found to be associated with lower communication anxiety levels in the public speaking course (Carlson, Dwyer, Bingham, Cruz, Prisbell, & Fus, 2006) and higher degrees of teacher verbal and nonverbal immediacy (Bingham, Carlson, Dwyer, Prisbell, Cruz, & Fus, 2004). However, the association between student perceptions of connected classroom climate and student learning has not been explored.

**Student Learning**

According to Hurt, Scott, and McCroskey (1978), “it is generally acknowledged that there are three broad domains of learning: a cognitive domain, an affective domain, a psychomotor domain” (p. 28). The two domains examined most often in the instructional communication literature are the cognitive and affective domains (Mottet & Beebe, 2006).

Based on Bloom’s (1956) taxonomy and Anderson and Krathwohl’s (2001), along with their colleagues, revised taxonomy, cognitive learning involves “the processes by which information is converted into knowledge and made meaningful” (Mottet, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2005, p. 8). Cognitive learning has been operationalized by communication researchers to include both how much students think they learned in a class and how much they could have learned if their instructor had been ideal. The difference between how much students perceived they learned and how much they perceived they could have learned is referred to as “learn-
ing loss” (Richmond, McCroskey, Kearney, & Plax, 1987).

Affective learning, on the other hand, focuses on “addressing, changing, or reinforcing students’ attitudes, beliefs, values, and underlying emotions or feelings as they relate to the knowledge and skills they are acquiring” (Mottet & Beebe, 2005, p. 8). When students engage in affective learning, they are self-motivated to learn and appreciate what they learn. Affective learning has been operationalized by communication researchers to include attitude toward content, attitude toward instructor, and attitude toward communication behaviors that are recommended in a course (Richmond, 1990).

Another component of affective learning is affective behavioral intent (Mottet & Richmond, 1998). Affective behavioral intent in the classroom has been operationalized by communication researchers to include the likelihood of enrolling in another course in the same subject area or a course with the same teacher, or using the behaviors recommended in the class (Richmond, 1990).

Previous research has found a positive relationship between classroom climate and student learning. However, most of this research has emphasized the instructor’s role in creating a climate that promotes learning (Finnan, Schnepel, & Andersen, 2003; Hyman & Snook, 2000; Nunnery, Butler, & Bhareddy, 1993). For example, cognitive and affective learning have been associated with teacher immediacy (Anderson, 1979; Christophel, 1990), perceived caring (Teven & McCroskey, 1996), clarity (Chesebro & McCroskey, 2001), humor (Gorham, 1988; Wanzer & Frymier, 1999), interest and engagement cues (Titsworth, 2001), affinity-seeking,
Connected Classroom Climate and Learning

(Richmond, 1990; Roach, 1991), and communicator style and disclosiveness (Nussbaum & Scott, 1979). The impact of student behaviors on the learning environment has been largely overlooked in the communication literature.

The purpose of this study is to examine the association between student-to-student classroom connectedness and student learning. We address the following research question:

Are student perceptions of classroom connectedness related to student perceptions of cognitive learning, affective learning, and affective behavioral intent?

METHOD

Participants

Participants in the present study were 437 undergraduate freshman and sophomore students at a large Midwestern university. These students were all enrolled in the basic public speaking fundamentals course representing a total of 30 different sections (maximum enrollment of 25 students per section). The course used a standard syllabus and the same textbook and student workbook in all the sections. It required all students to deliver at least four formal speeches, engage in classroom activities, and take two exams. All instructors were given a course manual that included weekly lesson plans, class policies, and additional instructional training materials.

This study was part of a series of studies designed to examine the impact of the basic course on relationships among several variables that potentially could affect...
student retention and overall success in college. Since the basic course fulfills a general education requirement of the university, a wide variety of majors was represented. Participants in the present study included 177 males, 259 females (1 missing data). There were 313 freshmen and 124 sophomores ranging in age from 17 to 35 with a mean age of 19.09 (SD =1.97).

Procedures
Basic public speaking course instructors were asked by the course director to participate in this study. Participating instructors administered the survey during the last two weeks of a fall semester. The survey consisted of demographic items (gender, age, year in school) and instruments designed to measure perceptions of classroom connectedness, cognitive learning, affective learning, and affective behavioral intent. All questionnaires were completed during class time, and students were instructed to focus on their fundamentals of public speaking course when completing the instruments. Instructors read a script that assured students of confidentiality and invited them to voluntarily participate in a research project that would ultimately help professors improve instruction in the basic course. The students placed the surveys in an envelope and instructors returned it to the basic course director. Approval from the University Institutional Review Board was obtained.

Instrumentation
Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI). The CCCI is an 18-item Likert-type instrument (1=strongly
disagree to 5=strongly agree) measuring students’ perceptions of student-to-student behaviors and feelings that create a supportive, cooperative classroom environment. Sample items include, “The students in my class are supportive of one another,” “The students in my class cooperate with one another,” and “The students in my class respect one another.” Research has found the CCCI to be a unidimensional scale with a high overall reliability of alpha =.94 and evidence of validity (Carlson et al., 2006; Dwyer et al., 2004).

Cognitive learning. Perceptions of cognitive learning were measured using student responses to two items (Richmond, McCroskey, Kearney, & Plax, 1987). The first item asked students to indicate on a ten-point semantic differential-type scale how much they felt they learned in their basic public speaking class (i.e., 0=learned nothing to 9=learned more than in any other class you’ve had). The second item asked students to indicate how much they believed they could have learned if they had the ideal instructor for the class. A learning loss score was calculated by subtracting the scores on item one from the scores on item two.

Affective learning and affective behavioral intent. Perceptions of affective learning were assessed by asking students to complete three subscales which measured student attitudes toward 1) the class content, 2) the instructor, and 3) the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course. Each subscale consisted of four seven-point semantic differential-type items (i.e., good/bad, valuable/worthless, fair/unfair, negative/positive). Reliabilities for these subscales have been reported above alpha = .90 (McCroskey, 1994; Richmond, 1990).
Perceptions of affective behavioral intent were assessed by asking students to complete three subscales measuring intent to 1) enroll in another course of related content, 2) enroll in another course with the same teacher if time and schedule permit, and 3) use the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course. Each subscale consisted of four seven-point semantic differential-type items (i.e., unlikely/likely, impossible/possible, improbable/probable, would not/would). Reliabilities for these subscales have been reported above alpha = .90 (McCroskey, 1994; Richmond, 1990).

Previous research has examined the three subscales of affective learning (12 total items) and the three subscales of affective behavioral intent (12 total items) separately as well as by summing across all six subscales to obtain an overall instructional affect score (Richmond, 1990). For the overall instructional affect score, Richmond (1990) reported a reliability of alpha = .96.

**RESULTS**

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and alpha reliabilities for the Connected Classroom Climate Inventory (CCCI); the three subscales of affective learning (measuring class content, the instructor, and the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course); the three subscales of affective behavioral intent (measuring intent to use the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course, intent to enroll in another course of related content, and intent to enroll in another course with the same teacher if time and schedule permit).
permit); and overall instructional affect (which is the sum of the 24 total individual items that made up the affective learning and affective behavioral intent subscales). All these scales had acceptable reliabilities greater than alpha = .88.

In addition, Table 1 contains the means and standard deviations for the three items which comprised cognitive learning. The first item (how much the students felt they learned in their basic public speaking class) and the second item (how much the students be-

### Table 1

| Classroom Connectedness (CCCI, Affective Learning, Affective Behavioral Intent, Overall Instructional Effect, and Cognitive Learning Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities (N=437)) |
|-----------------|-------|-------|------|
|                 | M     | SD    | Alpha|
| **CCCI**        | 72.22 | 10.12 | .94  |
| **Affective Learning** |       |       |      |
| Class Content   | 23.86 | 3.68  | .88  |
| Instructor      | 25.31 | 3.98  | .94  |
| Public Speaking Behaviors | 24.36 | 3.72  | .95  |
| **Affective Behavioral Intent** |       |       |      |
| Enroll in related course | 23.74 | 4.60  | .96  |
| Enroll in another course with same instructor | 17.68 | 6.25  | .97  |
| Use Public Speaking Behaviors | 20.44 | 7.27  | .96  |
| **Overall Instructional Affect** |       |       |      |
| Learned in class | 6.26  | 1.61  |      |
| Learned if had “ideal” instructor | 6.24  | 1.87  |      |
| Learning Loss   | −.02  | 1.83  |      |
Table 2
Pearson Correlations between Classroom Connectedness (CCCI) and Affective Learning, Affective Behavioral Intent, Overall Instructional Affect, and Cognitive Learning (N=437)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Affective Learning</th>
<th>Affective Behavioral Intent</th>
<th>Overall Instructional Affect</th>
<th>Cognitive Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Class content</td>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>Use public speaking</td>
<td>Enroll in related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>behaviors</td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCCI</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>.12**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class content</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.69***</td>
<td>.52***</td>
<td>.24***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.51***</td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Speaking</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>.24***</td>
<td>.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Intent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use public speaking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll in related</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll with same</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned in class</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td>.71***</td>
<td>.43**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learned with &quot;ideal&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning loss</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.51**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** p < .001, **p < .01, *p < .05
lieved they could have learned if they had the ideal instructor for the class) each had a range of 1 to 9. The third item (learning loss) ranged from −7 to +7.

Table 2 presents the Pearson product-moment correlations between the CCCI, the three subscales of affective learning, the three subscales of affective behavioral intent, overall instructional affect, and the three measures of cognitive learning.

For cognitive learning, the item measuring how much the students felt they learned in their basic public speaking class was positively correlated ($r = .24, p < .001$) with the CCCI. The item also was positively correlated with all of the affective learning, affective behavioral Intent, and overall instructional affect measures, and the item measuring how much the students believed they could have learned if they had the ideal instructor for the class, but was negatively correlated ($p < .001$) with learning loss.

The cognitive learning item measuring how much students believed they could have learned if they had the ideal instructor for the class did not correlate with the CCCI. This item also was not correlated with affect toward the class instructor, but was significantly correlated ($p < .001$) with all of the other affective learning, affective behavioral intent, overall instructional affect measures, and with learning loss.

Learning loss was negatively correlated with the CCCI ($r = -.13, p < .001$). It was also negatively correlated with the three affective learning items, desire to enroll in another course with the same instructor, and overall instructional affect, and was positively correlated with how much students believed they could have learned if they had the ideal instructor for the class.
Learning loss was not correlated with intended use of the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course or intent to enroll in another course of related content.

For affective learning and affective behavioral intent, the CCCI was positively correlated with the three affective learning subscales, including student affect toward the class content \( (r = .34, p < .001) \), the instructor \( (r = .29, p < .001) \), and the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course \( (r = .24, p < .001) \); and with the three affective behavioral intent subscales, including intent to use the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course \( (r = .24, p < .001) \), intent to enroll in another course with related content \( (r = .12, p < .05) \), and intent to enroll in another course with the same instructor \( (r = .22, p < .001) \). The CCCI was also positively correlated with overall instructional affect \( (r = .30, p < .001) \).

**DISCUSSION**

This study examined the association between student-to-student classroom connectedness and student learning. The results showed that there is an association between university students’ perceptions of student-to-student connectedness in the classroom and cognitive learning, affective learning, affective behavioral intent, and overall instructional affect. Thus, students who feel a stronger bond and report that they praise one another, show support and cooperation, share stories, and engage in small talk, report they learned more in the course. They also report more affect toward
the course content, the instructor, and the public speaking behaviors taught in the course and they say they are more likely to enroll in another course with related content as well as with the same instructor.

Student perceptions of cognitive learning were measured by both how much they felt they learned in their public speaking class and how much they felt they could have learned if they had the ideal instructor for the class. The findings showed a significant correlation between student-to-student connectedness and how much students perceived they learned in the class. A learning loss score was calculated by subtracting how much students felt they learned from how much they could have learned from an ideal instructor. The results were surprising in that essentially no learning loss was reported on average ($M=0.02$, $SD=1.83$). A small, significant inverse correlation was found between CCCI and learning loss. Although the magnitude of the correlation was minuscule, the direction suggests that students who reported feelings of connectedness in the classroom reported less learning loss.

Taken together, these findings on cognitive learning indicate that when students experienced greater connectedness, they also felt they learned more and they perceived their classroom learning to be similar to what it would have been if they had an ideal instructor. These findings supplement previous research on classroom climate and learning by suggesting that students' perceptions of the climate-related communication behaviors of their classmates—not just of their instructor—are associated with their perceptions of how much they learned in a class.
Perceptions of affective learning were assessed by three subscales which measured student attitudes toward the class content, the instructor, and the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course. The correlations between CCCI and the subscales were all significant and positive. These findings indicate that students who experienced greater classroom connectedness tended to evaluate the class content, the instructor, and the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course to be “good,” “fair,” “valuable,” and “positive.” Therefore, when students felt more connected, overall affective learning was enhanced.

Perceptions of affective behavioral intent were assessed by three subscales measuring intent to 1) enroll in another class of related content, 2) enroll in another course with the same instructor, if time and schedule permit, and 3) use the public speaking behaviors recommended in the course. Again, the correlations between CCCI and the affective behavioral intent subscales were significant and positive. These findings indicate that students who experienced greater classroom connectedness also tended to report a higher likelihood of enrolling in another course of related content, enrolling in another course with the same teacher, and using the public speaking behaviors in the course. Not surprisingly, students who experienced greater connectedness also reported higher overall instructional affect scores.

**Pedagogical Implications**

Basic course instructors should continue to foster cognitive and affective learning and affective behavioral...
intent among their students by incorporating instructional strategies that give students opportunities to develop a sense of connectedness. Since the items constituting the CCCI are associated with the cognitive and affective learning domains, basic course instructors need to encourage students to use behaviors measured by those items, such as engaging in small talk, sharing stories, supporting and praising one another, taking part in class discussions, and communicating mutual respect.

There are numerous instructional strategies that are likely to promote both classroom connectedness and learning in the basic course. These strategies include: getting-to know-you exercises (e.g., human scavenger hunts), introductory speeches (e.g., dyadic interviews and class presentations), impromptu speeches (e.g., about current news events, movies, or weekend activities), and group mini-speeches in which students collaborate to develop and present short speeches. Interactions resulting from these types of activities may enhance interpersonal relationships among students, thus fostering their sense of connectedness.

Basic course instructors can also teach students how to listen empathically as audience members and give one another supportive feedback on speeches and class discussion. For example, instructors can encourage students to rephrase what they heard other students say and acknowledge others’ responses before giving their own opinions. Instructors should serve as role models by demonstrating empathic listening and supportive feedback behaviors.
Limitations and Future Research

Generalizations from this study are limited because data were collected during one semester at one university in multiple sections of the basic public speaking fundamentals course. Future research is needed to determine whether the results can be replicated in different types of basic courses. Another concern involves the nature of the instructors teaching the course. Many of these instructors were trained in instructional communication in their master’s programs and were taught to display immediacy, which could have impacted student perceptions of connectedness. Future research needs to involve instructors with different levels of preparation at other institutions.

Another limitation involves the scales measuring cognitive learning in this study. This measure focused on students’ perceptions of their cognitive learning instead of actual learning that occurred. The relationship between a connected classroom climate and more direct measures of students’ cognitive learning should be investigated (e.g., test scores, speech grades, and other graded assignments) in future research.

The findings on the relationship between student-to-student connectedness and learning add to the body of literature on student learning and classroom climate. Again, the findings suggest that instructors are not the only ones whose behavior is associated with classroom climate and student learning; certain student-to-student behaviors also are associated with a supportive, cooperative classroom climate in which learning is enhanced. Other measures of student-to-student behaviors such as immediacy, affinity seeking, self-disclosure, trust, and perceived caring, deserve more attention in
the communication, classroom climate, and learning literature.

**REFERENCES**


McGrath, P., Gutierrez, P.M., & Valadez, I.M. (2000). Introduction of the college student social support


Connected Classroom Climate and Learning


Desire and Passion as Foundations for Teaching and Learning: A Pedagogy of the Erotic

Sandra L. Pensoneau-Conway
Wayne State University

THE ENCOUNTER: #1

Jared¹ won't stop IMing² me, and honestly, I don't want him to. I've really come to appreciate him for more than just a student. I'm not at all physically attracted to him, but he does peak my intellectual curiosity. He has an attractive personality. By that, I mean that I could see myself having a real friendship with him were I to encounter him outside of the classroom. This institutional space surrounds us in power differentials existing between teachers and students. This doesn't feel right, though. I don't want to be accused of “playing favorites.” I'm new at this teaching thing, and I don't want to get called into the principal’s office. I don't want him to take advantage of our friendship. But I like being around him. He makes me smile. I like talking with him and hearing his stories, hearing about his 17-year old adven-

¹ I use pseudonyms throughout this paper.
² “IMing” is short for “instant messaging.” Many online programs are set up where persons belonging to them can send one another instant messages, allowing them to talk to one another online via typing messages that are instantly sent and received. Such programs include America On-Line (AOL) Instant Messaging, Microsoft Network (MSN) Messenger Service, and Yahoo Chat.
tures with his punk band and his beat up old car. His love affair with coffee makes me laugh.

Coffee is one of his favorite topics of conversation. His addiction to coffee inspired him to make some for the whole class during his informative speech. He knows that I enjoy a cup of coffee every now and then, too. He even offers to bring coffee to class for me, offers which I sort of gloss over. If someone wants to bring me coffee, then I'm all for it, but I don't know how that would look for others in the class. I don't want to send any mixed messages to him or anyone else. I'm not in the business of accepting “gifts” from students.

I make it a policy to provide students with my AOL instant messenger and MSN messenger service screen names. This has been very helpful for students; they contact me quite often to talk about class topics—questions on tests, assignments, due dates, etc. This very morning, Jared’s IM window pops up. He asks me if I’m on campus. I tell him no but, assuming he has a class-related question, I can meet with him later or answer anything right now. He says that he’s just curious. He’s working on campus and thought he’d say “hi.” We chat about a few more things, nothing to do with class. I tell him that I think a good job for him would be working at Jaguar Java because he’d get a discount on coffee. He then asks, “Would it be inappropriate to bring you coffee sometime, my fellow addict?” Another offer. After a significant pause and a few more messages back and forth about other topics, I hesitate. “I don’t think it would be inappropriate, but university policy thinks it

---

3 Jaguar Javas are small coffee stands located throughout campus.
A Pedagogy of the Erotic

would be.” Did I say too much? Is there something coded—a word we talked about a few short weeks ago in our introductory communication class—that reveals more than it should? Then I add, “I’d love to have some on exam day, though.” He writes, “You know, you’re pretty cool for a grad student. I dated one for a while once and she didn’t have a fun bone in her body.” What does he mean? Is there something coded that I’m supposed to decode? I counter, “Well, SPCM [speech communication] grads aren’t like others.” I’m at once growing in comfort and discomfort. Before I go too far, I should stop. Although, I can’t say what it means to “go too far.” So we say we’ll see each other in class tomorrow, and that’s that.

THE PURPOSE

Jared is one of my students. I’m not quite sure what to make of my desire to engage in this electronic, extra-classroom relationship with him. In many ways, I feel like it enhances our intra-classroom relationship. I feel as though I relate to him differently than I do other students. I feel less distance. I feel a mutual investment in what we’re doing in this hybrid communication course. I wasn’t taught about this in my GTA orientation seminars aside from the “don’t-have-romantic-relationships-with-your-students” advice. I haven’t had opportunities to discuss this in my communication pedagogy seminars. Yet I doubt that I’m alone in feeling a personal connection with a student, and believing these are the very things we talk about in our communication classrooms.
In this essay, I use my experiences as a graduate teaching assistant in a stand-alone introductory communication course to theorize the roles of desire and passion within the classroom, developing a pedagogy of the erotic. Using a narrative style throughout, I focus on extra-classroom instant messaging encounters I had with several students (Jared included) in one semester to inspire questions I feel are fundamental to the vocation of an educator in general, and a communication educator specifically. I argue for a shift in pedagogical practice from resisting desire and passion as feelings potentially destructive (as in when they cross ambiguous and constructed institutional boundaries), to embracing such emotions as affirming, creative, and relationship-building pedagogical influences. This entails a shift away from relegating notions of desire and passion to the realm of the sexual, in the conventional sense of the word. I aim to illuminate the tensions and contradictions young and/or beginning communication instructors sometimes face when questions of personal and professional boundaries arise. I offer a pedagogy of the erotic as a pedagogical orientation that is fitting for the introductory hybrid course, as it promotes freedom of exploration and acknowledges desire and passion as integral parts of the human communication process in general, and the teaching and learning process specifically. To that end, I hope that educators of the introductory communication course, and those that direct introductory course programs, might see the potential in acknowledging the sometimes-blurry boundaries that hinder both teachers and students from drawing upon their curiosities in exploring, together, the process of human communication. I put forward implications a pedagogy...
of the erotic may have for introductory communication course classrooms, as well as orientation programs that train educators within such classrooms.

My studies of graduate education have largely been situated within the field of critical and engaged pedagogies. These pedagogical orientations inform my development of a pedagogy of the erotic. While I do not have space to detail critical and engaged pedagogies, I would like to take time to highlight those parts of them that I find particularly relevant to my work here. In the age of globalization, more and more educators are beginning to take seriously, or at least acknowledge, the importance of critical approaches to education. MacGillivray (1997) summarized Giroux’s four elements of critical pedagogy:

1. voices can be heard,
2. ways to interrogate discourses can be created and used to create new understanding of lives within and outside the classroom,
3. emancipation is central to creating new ways to imagine community, and
4. work addresses and attempts to change the reality of students’ lives. (p. 473)

A critical pedagogy situates education in its historical, geographical, and cultural context. Its practitioners interrogate the process of learning as value-laden, rather than value-neutral. It asks participants to examine the ways ideologies and power dynamics based on and wrapped up in categories such as race, ability, sexual orientation, gender, class, and age, inform the processes of education and educational policy. Critical pedagogues “are dedicated to the emancipatory imperatives of self-empowerment and social transformation” (McLaren, 1998, p. 167). They understand the dynamic of power and ideology to be constitutive of what happens in schools, and are committed to classrooms as being a site
of praxis for educational participants (Fassett and Warren, 2007). Critical pedagogy relies on self-reflexivity, and asks educational participants to critically interrogate their part in creating and maintaining educational systems. Finally, a critical pedagogy embraces authentic relationships among educators, students, community members, administrators, parents, and so forth. Fassett and Warren (2007) explicate a critical communication pedagogy as one which explores mundane communicative practices as constructing educational subjects, and note that “it is in those moments [of mundaneity] that the social structure emerges” (p. 45).

Engaged pedagogy, likewise, sees education as a site of subjectivity construction. Such a pedagogy is very much invested in personhood—recognizing educational participants as more than their specific roles within the classroom (e.g., teachers and students). Hooks (1994) contests that engaged pedagogy “emphasizes [the] well-being” of teachers and students alike (p. 15). A goal is to empower teachers and students, and embrace vulnerability and self-actualization. This pedagogy stands in stark contrast to pedagogical models that are content-based, teacher-centered, and rationally-oriented. Hooks (1994) further argues that

[the unwillingness to approach teaching from a standpoint that includes awareness of race, sex, and class [the unwillingness to be an engaged, critical educator] is often rooted in the fear that classrooms will be uncontrollable, that emotions and passions will not be contained. (p. 39)]

Because both engaged and critical pedagogies are intertwined with affirming participants’ humanity, hooks
A Pedagogy of the Erotic


With this orientation in mind, I am called to be reflexive in these mediated moments like my conversations with Jared, and to ask questions of the current educational system, questions that center on the nature of the teacher-student relationship. Where do I, as a teacher, get to experience emotion and attraction? How about my students? Where might I experience the powerful force of joy and passion and curiosity which can bridge the differences between me and other students? Where is the line between teacher-student and student-teacher (Freire, 2000, p. 80)? Why can I not accept a simple cup of coffee from a student? How am I to work on my vocation of becoming fully human—and work with others to become fully human—if I am forced to deny passions and curiosities and emotions I have as a human being (Freire, 2000)?

THE SETTING

I teach the introductory communication course. It’s my seventh semester as a graduate teaching assistant (GTA) teaching this hybrid course known as Oral Communication: Speech, Self, and Society. Students have to complete speeches, reflection papers, tests, in-class activities, and attend to participation. The course content largely includes a mixture of public speaking, interpersonal, intercultural, verbal, and embodied communication. As a GTA, I’m the instructor-on-record; I don’t assist a professor in grading and the like, so no one is there to monitor what happens in the class. The course
is situated within a department that encourages and offers graduate seminars in critical pedagogies and democratic education. A large part of the week-long GTA orientation at the beginning of each school year is devoted to discussing pedagogical philosophies, the construction of the roles of teacher and student, and how GTAs might integrate critical perspectives into their classes. As a graduate teaching assistant, I hold a relatively good deal of autonomy within the class. I have guidelines, core required elements of the syllabus, required chapters, and an overall structure of assignments to follow, but the specifics of the course content are up to me. I appreciate this autonomy; I have enough freedom to develop my own pedagogical philosophies and styles while still feeling supported by the department.

Even though the university has a wonderful mix of traditional (coming directly from high school) and non-traditional (not coming directly from high school) students, I find that most of my sections of this required course are made up of persons around 18 years of age. Such students fascinate me. They’re in a sort of liminal space, having only three months to shift from an institution that relies largely on surveillance (a high school) to a place where they must self-monitor their behavior, and generally have more freedom. Many of them aren’t prepared to make this shift, but do the best they can. As a person relatively close in age to them (I’m only 26), I find that we still have quite a few things in common, and therefore, have some common reference points for class concepts and discussion. This is some of the beauty of the introductory course. Some of our most poignant moments of connection are when we find that common
ground and recognize the ways we experience communication similarly. I don't always want to connect with students, but even in those times of disconnect, there is something to learn.

Talking to Jared online gives me a different point of entry into my relationship with him than I have with other students. It's a different context from the classroom, and while a bit more constrained for the lack of face-to-face interaction, it provides a bit more freedom due to the lack of face-to-face interaction and lack of company in the form of other students. It's just him and me here. And this sparks a whole slew of tensions that I'm not prepared to make sense of in the moment. Yet, these tensions make sense in the context of what I am called to do as a communication pedagogue situated within a framework of traditional higher education that largely encourages rationality at the expense of emotion and desire. My online encounters with students evoke from me feelings that feel wrong in my body but elicit (and come from) a desire for more human (more humane?) relationships with students. I'm simultaneously engaging in personal conversations with Jared, and being introduced to critical communication and engaged pedagogies through my graduate coursework. I simultaneously feel a passion for my relationship with Jared, and a passion for these pedagogical orientations that call for educational participants to embrace the parts of the self that desire and feel—we are subjects within, rather than objects of, education. What I realize, then, is that my relationship with Jared is an experience in recognizing a common subjectivity, in affirming one another as persons and partners in the space of education,
and welcoming one another into our lives. How did I come to this conclusion?

**The Encounter: #2**

This is a teaching day for me, so of course I see Jared. “See” might be sort of misleading; I know Jared is in the same room, but I have great difficulty looking at him. I value looking others directly in the eye—I realize this is a culturally coded, and perhaps culturally oppressive, way of being, but I’ve been inculturated to value eye contact. However, I can’t look at Jared. I try—I really try! But with each fleeting attempt my body comes to matter more and more. It comes into my awareness. I can tell that my face is flushed, and I know I can’t look at him without smiling. This is not to say that I don’t smile when I’m teaching. But I can’t see myself. I don’t know if this smile is different than other smiles, and I don’t know what sorts of interpretations are being made of my smile alongside my flushed face. In nearly any other context, I’m happy to act sort of coy, and am charmed if a person notices that he makes me flush and smile, but not here, in this sterile environment where the teacher-student boundaries are clearly delineated. Or are they so clear?

After handing out the tests at the start of class, I go back to the desk at the front of the room—the first time this semester where I think my “teacherly presence” is noted. Upon coming into the room and seeing me sitting behind the desk, another student, Jesse, comments, “Wow. You’re being the teacher today!” I reply, “Yeah, and it’s kinda weird. I don’t think I like it.” Jared fin-
ishes his test and brings it up to the desk, rather quickly compared to students in the previous class who took the same test. “Finished already?” I ask, eyes focused on the papers lying on top of the desk. “Yeah, gonna go home and go to bed.” He raises his arm a bit and shows me the top of his right hand, stamped with something I can’t read. “Booby’s,” he says. “It wore me out last night.” “That did it to ya, huh?” What else should I say? What are his purposes in telling me he went out to the bar? Am I supposed to regale him with my bar experiences? Tell him I go there sometimes, too? Suggest we go there together sometime? Put up a wall and say I don’t want to know because I’m the teacher and you’re the student? Ignore him? So I say, “That did it to ya, huh? Well, have a good weekend.” Ugh, I feel like I’m in 5th grade, not knowing what to say to a boy. But this boy is eight or nine years younger than me, and not only that, we have boundaries to our relationship. He’s the student to my teacher. I’m the teacher to his student. This feels wrong! And besides, I’m really not physically attracted to him. Am I just attracted to the attention he gives me?

What I want to do is ask Jared if he wants to go get a cup of coffee. I’m interested in what he does outside of the classroom. I’m interested in who he is as a person in the world, in who he is as a person bigger than his role as a student. I sense he wants the same from me. I sense a desire on his part to acknowledge the connection between us. I feel compelled to engage in this relationship not despite, but because of, the ways it might affect our student-teacher relationship. I desire a space in the

---

4 Booby’s is a local bar and diner.
classroom where I can acknowledge our mutual connection openly, and draw upon it in my teaching and learning. I desire a pedagogy of the erotic.

**A CAVEAT**

I know. “Erotic.” Sounds... erotic. I don’t use this word for shock value, or to draw you in to that which dare not speak its name, or to entice you and excite you in ways that scholarship and academia aren’t supposed to do. I use this word to encompass what I feel is a pedagogy that makes space for me and students—for educational participants—to experience education in ways that do not necessarily rely upon notions largely thought to dwell in the realm of the cognitive. I use “erotic” to embrace the space of the body, of what performance theorists call “bodily knowing,” of acknowledging that we are feeling, desiring, curious bodies, and this is important to our educational experiences.

Many performance studies scholars who are interested in issues of pedagogy, and likewise, many pedagogy scholars who are interested in performance studies, turn their attention to the presence of bodies in the classroom. That is, such scholars are interested in the ways education sanctions particular performances from the very bodies of its participants; the ways bodies are supposed to sit, to stand, to speak, to listen. Common examples include raising one’s hand to speak; staying silent in the halls during break times; and even as recently as June 18, 2007, MSNBC.com reported that a school in Virginia had outlawed hugging, holding hands, and high-fiving in keeping with their strict no-touch
policy (“School penalizes”). Pineau (2002) advocates using “body” both literally and metaphorically. One can use it literally, as in the examples above, to examine the experiencing body. One can use it metaphorically to “[connote] all the social factors that might influence physical modes of experience and expression” (Pineau, 2002, p. 44). Pineau (2002) and Warren (1999) focus on issues of “enfleshment,” pointing towards the way the body becomes habitualized to move and act in certain ways. Habits literally become part of our flesh. Ironically, argues Pineau (2002), traditional pedagogy “schools” educational participants to forget that they have bodies in exchange for a heavy focus on the mind, embodying, if you will, the Cartesian split between the mind and the body. A pedagogy of the erotic, I argue, makes the experiencing body matter. A move like this is supported by performative pedagogy scholars, including, Gallop (1995), McLaren (1999), Pineau (2002), and Warren (1999). A pedagogy of the erotic focuses on the ways desire, passion, and curiosity are wrapped up in the body; they are bodily experiences. Important to note is that such a pedagogy does not see a fundamental break between the body and the mind. In this way, educational participants are able to experience desire, passion, and curiosity in whole body. I believe the ways we can make the experiencing body come to matter begin with taking a closer look at issues of sexuality as they intersects with desire, passion, and curiosity. In the next section, I explicate the notion of sexuality, and hope to demonstrate that sexuality is a human component that drives bodily experiences of desire, passion, and curiosity.
SEXUALITY

Smith and Williamson (1985) situate sexuality as a component of all human relationships. They argue that our relationships are “mediated through the body,” and thus, are constituted in part by sexuality (p. 235). They outline three ways sexuality differs from sex: (1) sexuality involves the entire human body, rather than just the genitals; (2) sexuality is an “ever-present condition,” rather than only an isolated act; and (3) sexuality “involves all of the individual’s relationships [because they] are mediated through the body” (p. 235). In short, Smith and Williamson (1985) write, “Sexuality consists of any bodily experience, especially touch, body image, and body rhythm (both individual and interactional), that leads to the development of sexual roles and intimacy” (p. 236, italics in original). Thus, they characterize sexuality as a primary system of communication within all interpersonal relationships.

Britzman (2000) promotes “a thought of sexuality” as a passionate relationship “within and between people . . . .” She challenges readers to examine the connections between sexuality and “freedom, liberty, and the right to craft an interesting, relevant, and vital society” (p. 37). I can experience sexual pleasure with ideas, with relationships that are in no way conventionally sexual, with objects that perhaps simply feel good to the body, such as a warm blanket, a soft sweater, or a firm school desk. Many researchers, beginning, perhaps, with Freud, argue that sexuality is a primary force of the human condition. Sexuality compels human beings with a curious drive, a passionate energy, and a desire for learning. Freud (1989a) theorizes that sexuality marks
a sort of completeness with the life substances of human beings. The sexual instinct is a life-giving energy “which seeks to force together and hold together the portions of living substance” (1989b, p. 624). Sexuality, in a sense, breathes life into the living, and does so from the very beginning of life.

In keeping with sexuality as a life-giving force, Britzman (2000) suggests we attach the Greek prefix “ur” (“for this term refers to something original, innate, the beginning”) to “sexuality,” to indicate that sexuality is “the first condition for human curiosity and hence the first condition or force of learning” (p. 38). This is what makes recognition of sexuality so important in pedagogical contexts. “Simply put,” writes Britzman (2000), “without sexuality, the human would not desire to learn. The urge of sexuality, then, is made from the desire to touch and to be touched by people, by ideas, and by living” (p. 38). Here, she points to the relational character of sexuality. That is to say, sexuality is not about a knowable, controllable object and a knowing subject; if we wish to keep the language of subject and object, all participants in sexuality are always already both. If we wish to work outside of this dichotomy, then I suggest that sexuality is created as something-in-between participants in a communicative relationship. Sexuality is what happens when desire and curiosity make their way into human relationships. It furnishes human beings with their capacity for feeling.

I base my development of a pedagogy of the erotic on the idea that sexuality is a fundamental drive of human beings that must find and create space to act. I use the term “pedagogy of the erotic” rather than “pedagogy of the sexual” purposefully, though with some hesitancy.
My use of “erotic” is meant to be an encompassing term that includes my previous discussion of sexuality, and indicates the forces of connection and love. I draw these conclusions from the mythological story of the Greek god Eros (“Cupid” in Latin), and from Freud’s discussion of Eros (1989b). Wrapped up in the story of Cupid and Psyche is the idea that persons are connected with one another through love. Likewise, Freud (1989a) conceptualizes sexuality as a life-giving energy that falls within the “life instinct” of Eros (indicating that Eros is bigger than sexuality). Therefore, a pedagogy of the erotic acknowledges that persons are driven with passion, curiosity, and desire, all within the realm of a loving connection between one another. A detailed discussion of Eros is beyond the scope of this paper, but I encourage interested readers to turn towards the aforementioned scholars for more on this.

A PEDAGOGY OF THE EROTIC

In an effort to develop a pedagogy that calls for me to experience my body, rather than just think, in the classroom—a pedagogy of the erotic—I offer three implications for what it might mean to embrace the erotic—to embrace the body. Lorde (1993) writes that “we have often turned away from the exploration and consideration of the erotic”—a heightened capacity for feeling while doing—“as a source of power and information, confusing it with its opposite, the pornographic” (p. 340). In a similar sense, I argue that sexuality, desire, and passion have often been misnamed, misused, and suppressed within the classroom. In the process, we have turned...
away from these human capacities “as [sources] of power and information” within the classroom. But we don't have to do this. Instead, we can embrace them as a part of the pedagogical process. Three connected implications of doing so are: (1) the affirmation of personhood; (2) the cultivation of creative capacities; and (3) the nurturance of relationships. I draw largely upon hooks (1994) and her explications of engaged, critical pedagogies in outlining these three implications.

**Affirmation of Personhood**

Freud (1989c) offers the concepts of negation and affirmation, which fall under the broader concept of judgment, as exclamations of either an impulse to expel (negation) or an impulse to take in (affirmation). “Affirmation—as a substitute for uniting—belongs to Eros; negation—the successor to expulsion—belongs to the instinct of destruction” (p. 669). Embracing the erotic in the classroom affirms the humanity of both teachers and students. No longer is a teacher just a mind in front of a chalkboard, and no longer are students just beings in desks. These bodies become people when we affirm life-giving energy. This entails welcoming a respect and a care for one another. Hooks (1994) writes that this embrace “is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin” (p. 13). She goes on to say that it is entirely reasonable for students to seek out classrooms where the lessons they learn “will enrich and enhance them,” where the knowledge they generate will be healing and meaningful, and where their classroom experiences will address “the connection between what
they are learning and their overall life experiences” (p. 19). The question remains: As communication educators, do we do work to create such classrooms? In order to do this, educators must not assume students to be passive receptacles of information. Rather, acknowledging and affirming students as persons opens space where students can act on instead of suppress their curiosities and desires.

But students aren’t the only persons in classrooms. Teachers must work to cultivate their own personhoods, as well. Hooks (1994) further indicates that classrooms working with an engaged, critical pedagogical model “will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process” (p. 21). Educators who invite “the challenge of self-actualization will be better able to create pedagogical practices that engage students, providing them with ways of knowing that enhance their capacity to live fully and deeply” (hooks, 1994, p. 22). An affirmation of personhood, with all its desires, passions, emotions, and curiosities, develops as one embraces those erotic instincts with which we are all born.

**The Cultivation of Creative Capacities**

Eros in the classroom ignites the creative capacities within each of us by creating the urge to act upon instincts of curiosity, desire, and passion. Hooks (1994) writes that critical, engaged pedagogy must draw upon Eros if it is to address the aspirations of empowerment and transformation (p. 194). She further explains:

> [u]nderstanding that Eros is a force that enhances our overall effort to be self-actualizing, that it can provide an epistemological grounding informing how we know
what we know, enables both professors and students to use such energy in a classroom setting in ways that invigorate discussion and excite the critical imagination. (p. 195)

Hooks (1994) parallels Freud’s belief in the potential of Eros (as an instinct) to conserve and preserve life. She writes that educators “must find again the place of Eros within ourselves” in order to “restore passion to the classroom or to excite it in classrooms where it has never been . . .” (p. 199). Thus we witness the capacity for Eros to create classroom contexts that welcome students’ (and teachers’) engagement with their emotions and passions. This allows educational participants to imagine that the world can be different, and to actualize their role in creating change. As Lorde (1993) describes it, Eros also enriches the capacity to create bridges between people on which they can work to better understand one another, and form meaningful relationships.

Nurturance of Relationships

Both of these previous implications speak to the third implication of embracing Eros in the classroom: nurturance of meaningful relationships. Trethewey (2004) acknowledges the teacher-student relationship as “a potentially erotically charged relationship,” and so taking this relationship (and I add those among students) as a point of focus is fitting for my project. When students and teachers come to know one another on a personal level, they create space in which they feel as though they have a personal stake in what happens in the classroom. We begin to care about one another as more than persons thrown together by our roles as stu-
A Padagogy of the Erotic

dents and teachers. Hooks (1994) maintains that within “a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another’s voices, in recognizing one another’s presence” (p. 8). This interest, hearing, and recognizing are facilitated through building relationships. We seldom have interest in persons who we do not know, and who we do not have opportunities to know better. But, as hooks (1994) continues, “[w]hen Eros is present in the classroom setting, then love is bound to flourish” (p. 198). Dismissing the importance of love as a goal of education is to fall into the trap of setting up education as a process with no personal implications, as a context in which emotions are not welcome, and as a system in which we expect teachers to be arbiters of supposedly objective knowledge given unquestioningly to passive recipients.

Cultivating meaningful relationships is so important within classroom contexts. Recently, I’ve become keenly aware that the longer I teach, the easier I find it to build such relationships with students. The same is true of teachers I’ve had. Given the personal and intimate nature of the focus of critical pedagogies—people’s lived experiences of oppression and otherness—it is necessary for there to be trust between teachers and students. Trust is built in interpersonal relationships. If there is trust between a student and a teacher, the investigation of feelings and the recognition of bodily and affective learning have a more fertile space in which to grow. Most of us don’t allow just anyone to know our feelings, unless those feelings are positive (and even then, we sometimes only share them with people we trust will respond positively).
As an educational goal, building toward trusting, personal relationships is a touchy issue, literally and metaphorically. It’s easy for me—a middle-class, White, Christian, higher-educated, heterosexual female—to say, “Let’s build trust.” There’s not much risk for me in trusting others (particularly students). In addition, as a teacher, it’s also easy for me to seek trust—students would do well to trust me. However, trust is not something one person can ask another to help build. As with anything in a relationship, trust must be mutually sought after, negotiated, and built. I don’t claim to have trusting relationships with my students. To do so would be to speak for them. But I do posit that being available for relationship cultivation is a way for me to let my students know that I hope we can trust one another.

I clearly find these three implications in my aforementioned IM sessions with students. In learning about one another’s lives outside of our classroom time together, we affirmed one another as whole persons rather than as merely roles. Though I can’t speak for students like Jared, I know that our conversations prompted me to inquire about the confines of the educational system, and imagine how teacher-student relationships might be otherwise. Those conversations also motivated me to interrogate how my extra-classroom relationships with these students differed from students who I only knew within the classrooms. In this way, I drew upon my curiosity for classroom relations and my desire to develop relationships with students. Finally, I found our conversations to be part of the process of building relationships that contributed to understanding one another better. These relationships even challenged me to rethink the assignments in the class, interrogating the efficacy of
these particular assignments for these particular classes of students. I can only imagine what might happen, how the classroom and process of learning might be transformed, if I were to work towards these types of relationships with each student.

THE ENCOUNTER: #3

What is it about this semester? I feel like I’m doing as much idle chatting as I am answering questions about class via IM. I’ve already had this experience with Jared, but now, I have Phil doing the same thing. And I can’t deny it—I enjoy talking with Phil. I’ve come to know that he doesn’t drink or do drugs, but can’t seem to find any activities that he and his drinking/drugging friends can all do together and stay clean. Even so, he goes with them, but “behaves.” I know he’s homesick and really looking forward to the break. I know that he teases his little 6th grade sister about boys. I know that he has a good relationship with his mom. I know that he enjoys talking to me. I know that when I see the window pop up that asks me if I want to accept a message from him, I get a bit excited. I’m more electronically than physically attracted to Phil, as is the case with Jared. I enjoy the attention of being asked questions. I enjoy having conversations that aren’t about hermeneutics, writing assignments, drag shows (my dissertation topic),

---

5 If a person is not on my personal list of instant messenger contacts, I have to formally accept the message. If a person is on my list, her or his message automatically comes through without me accepting it each time.
family conflicts, rent payments, class readings, things that I have to think about. I can just relax. I can just talk. I can just rest my mind for a while. I can learn about someone else, almost like I’m in the beginning stages of a relationship where it’s fun getting to know the interesting, minute, mundane occurrences. And I feel safe—that I have no pressure to refer to our chats during class; that I don’t have to end the conversation as I would end a face-to-face, body-to-body “date”; that this isn’t anything like a “date”; that no one will know I enjoy on-line chatting with a student; that I can joke with him about the fact that he’s the student to my teacher, and vice versa; that we can learn from one another with no strings attached. . .

**USES OF A PEDAGOGY OF THE EROTIC**

**FOR THE INTRODUCTORY COMMUNICATION COURSE**

When considering the implications of a pedagogy of the erotic for the introductory communication course, I am motivated by Sprague (1992; 1998) and her quest to examine instructional communication and communication education. At a fundamental level, a pedagogy of the erotic is necessarily a pedagogy of communication. I see communication as the mundane activities of life that are world-building; it is through communication that we have relationships with people, that we build structures and practices, that we experience our lives, and that we come to make sense of ourselves in profound ways. More specifically, I see communication as that which allows us to experience and make sense of our curiosities, desires, and passions. In a general sense, then, our com-
municative practices make space for a pedagogy of the erotic to take shape.

However, this doesn’t directly provide practical applications of a pedagogy of the erotic. As much as I shy away from “handbook scholarship” (cookie cutter applications of theories), I find usefulness in offering suggestions. I believe a pedagogy of the erotic directly addresses, though not necessarily definitively answers (as though one should in the first place), and is inspired by the questions posed by Sprague (1992) to instructional communication:

“How do schools exist?” (p. 5)
“What do teachers do?” (p. 7)
“What is the nature of development?” (p. 10)
“What is knowledge and how is curriculum established?” (p. 11)
“How does language function in education?” (p. 13)
“How does power function in the classroom?” (p. 14)

Sprague (1992) continues by offering a set of questions to expand the research agenda in communication instruction. I believe a pedagogy of the erotic also addresses this set of questions:

“How can schools be transformed to become public spaces where teachers and students can practice collective communication action toward emancipatory ends?”

“What sorts of communicative skills do [teachers] need to assume the role of transformative intellectuals?”

“If development is not psychologically pre-programmed but culturally and interpersonally shaped, then whose definition of competence and maturity
should prevail? How do various kinds of communication with adults and peers affect development?”

“[W]ho decides what counts as knowledge in the schools? How does communication function as learners come to ‘know’?”

“If language... constitutes meaning, whose language (and thus whose meanings) should be allowed in educational discourse?... What changes in our use of language could bring about different ways of thinking and living?”

“How can we as communication scholars penetrate the complexity of power in classroom life and sensitize teachers and students to the alternatives they have in use?” (p. 17)

While a discussion of a pedagogy of the erotic in light of these sets of questions is beyond the scope of this essay, I do use them as my own framing device when I think of the implications of such a pedagogy. I also encourage readers to keep them in mind when being reflexive about their own teaching, and in evaluating the suggestions I put forth.

First, the process of creating assignments can be one which utilizes a pedagogy of the erotic. Assignments that are based on questions generated by students form one way for students to potentially feel a sense of agency in their introductory class. For instance, at the beginning of the semester, take an inventory of questions the students have about communication. Being curious about something leads to a desire to want to know and experience more. If assignments can be based on questions posed by the students, then students will feel more of a sense of ownership for the assignment.
may result in, for example, a communication reflection paper with 20 different topics. However, variety such as this is healthy. Students are able to research topics that are important to them, and teachers are able to personalize the assignment to each student. This could culminate in the class sharing their reflections with one another, further building relationships among them.

Many introductory communication course programs are concerned with issues of standardization. This does not mean that “standardized” classes cannot practice a pedagogy of the erotic. Topics for public speeches can center on that which students feel passionately about. I encourage my own students to think about the notion of social change, and to develop a working definition of the concept. I then ask them how they feel empowered to create social change in their lives, and if they don’t feel that way, how might they work towards feeling empowered to create change. Derivative public speaking assignments could follow suit: introduce the class to how you have been a change agent or why you feel you have not been (self-introductory speech); choose an agency or practice or subject that you feel passionately about, and tell the class about it (informative speech); persuade the class to take up the cause, and provide the class with an immediate action they can take related to that agency, practice, or subject (persuasive speech); pay tribute to someone who you feel has made a profound difference in your own life and/or the lives of others (ceremonial speech). Such assignments directly relate to Sprague’s (1998) fourth goal for communication instruction, “[R]e-shape the values of society” (p. 20). These assignments also touch upon the other three goals Sprague outlines: “Transmit cultural knowledge”; “Develop students’
intellectual skills”; and “Develop students’ career skills” (p. 18-20).

Classroom practices that involve both the teacher and the student working together potentially employ a pedagogy of the erotic, because such practices make space for building relationships. There is no reason why teachers have to have answers. The classroom has long been a place for the depositing of knowledge by the teacher into the student for later withdrawal (the “banking method,” Freire, 2000). However, a resituation of the space into an erotic space encourages teachers and students to explore questions together. This entails creating an environment where it is OK for persons not to “know,” in the conventional sense of the word. It means performing in an environment where “I just feel it” is an OK answer. Such a phrase leaves room for the class to explore what it means to feel, what we do as communicators with feelings, and how much of what we do is based on things we feel rather than things we “know.”

For a final project in my class, students give group presentations on an aspect of identity. In one class, a group chose to discuss race, and set up an activity where all but one member of the class were the same race. The one individual member was another race, and the class was to ignore this person. During the discussion, a facilitator asked, “Do you see this a lot?” Kerry, an African-American student, said, “I feel it more than I see it. I know that, or I feel that, it happens.” In another class, a facilitator named Farash, who is White Arab International (self-identified) was talking about coming to the United States. He was asked by a class member if he found that when he got here, he was stereotyped. He
said, “Yes, you can feel it.” This is not uncommon to hear in classrooms I’m in. Over and over again, I hear people equating feeling with knowing, as Kelly and Farash did. I know I’ve done the same thing, said I felt something and used this as evidence for knowing it. Bodily knowing—knowing through feeling—is embraced in a pedagogy of the erotic. Particularly within introductory communication courses where students (and even teachers) have not yet found the language for what they do, knowing through feeling is a valid way for making sense of experience, and provides an avenue for participants to make connections with one another.

Finally, classroom practices and assignments that encourage students to consider otherwise—to think of and act on ways that are alternatives to their own personal conventions—encourage students to be creative in the ways they perceive the world and one another. They ask students to use their imaginations to “search for openings without which our lives narrow and our pathways become cul-de-sacs” (Greene, 1995, p. 17). When people think creatively, they are more open to listening to others, to creating choices for thought and action, and are better able to create change. A way to do this in the classroom might be to ask students to journal about a recent argument they had with someone close to them. Encourage students to volunteer to “workshop” their experience, wherein other students would offer suggestions (perhaps through role play—through embodying the players) as to how that argument could have taken place differently, what about the people and the situation may have influenced how it did take place, etc. This provides students with self-generated resources for how they might (better?) communicate with those in their
lives who have meaning, and in understanding why persons might communicate differently.

A pedagogy of the erotic can also be explored in educator training programs, such as those introductory course instructors often go through at the beginning of the academic year. A useful session during these trainings would be on relationship development between students and teachers. Such a session could explore creating an environment for cultivating healthy relationships, alerting instructors to the very real institutional boundaries in place (and a questioning of how?, why?, and by whom? of those boundaries), and what to do in instances of discomfort. I know there have been times when I have sensed tension in the classroom when students talk about their experiences or work with other students, but have few (if any) ready strategies for what to do in the moment.

I believe the introductory communication course is an ideal situation in which to explore Eros in the classroom. At their most fundamental level, the three implications of embracing Eros (the affirmation of personhood, the cultivation of creative capacities, and the nurturance of relationships) are best examined within the framework of communication. The introductory course affords us a unique situation: we engage in the practices of Eros through communication, so within the introductory course classroom, we are simultaneously enacting the very thing we are examining. That is to say, we study communication through communication. Many students are studying communication for the first time when they enroll in an introductory course. Since communication educators teaching the introductory course are interacting with students who have little to no expe-
A pedagogy of the erotic fundamentally rests upon the teacher-student relationship. Teachers must be willing to take time to know the students as more-than-students, to have a part in creating an environment where students want to be known and want to know others in similar ways, and to be self-reflexive. This is particularly true when we consider Freire’s (2000) call for situated teaching and learning, i.e., liberatory education must reflect people’s “situation in the world (p. 96).” Education should be situated in the lives of students, but how, as educators, are we to do this if we aren’t part of students’ lives, if we don’t know what their lives are about? We have to understand that when we see students for 2 1/2 hours a week, that’s 2 1/2 hours out of 168 hours per week, or 2.25% of their week. That means that we are probably not involved in the majority of their lives—the majority of their situations—for the semester or year that we interact with them. So, having relationships with them is fundamental to practicing situated learning, and is an important component of a pedagogy of the erotic.
POWER AND PROBLEMATIZING

Embracing the erotic in a classroom is not an easy practice, particularly given the structure of education. Graff (1994) writes, “[T]here is an unavoidable inequality built into the teacher-student relationship, if only because once teachers and students are regarded as intellectual equals there is no longer any reason for the teachers to teach the students” (p. 184). The very notion of “teaching” in some part may depend upon the unbalanced power dynamics of a teacher-student relationship. The situation of power itself isn’t as clear as it may seem, to be sure. Students enact power, as well. Drawing upon de Certeau, Wood and Fassett (2003) demonstrate how power is a distributed resource, rather than a possession that one entity has and another doesn’t. Both teachers and students work under power structures, and the ways power in relationships play out can be situationally dependent. Understanding power in this way illuminates the classroom as a space of power differentials. An inquiry of power can be a potential avenue to build relationships in an erotic classroom. It is a way to communicate about power dynamics in relationships, and interrogating the student-teacher relationship gives both parties a common reference point for such an inquiry. Doing so may build a sort of context where students feel comfortable challenging the ideas of the teacher. Even a few students doing this can set an example that such challenges—posed to the teacher and to other students—can be productive. It also might facilitate space where teachers can reexamine their tendency to afford students protection from ideological challenges. A space such as this is ideal for embracing
the erotic. It is a space in which students and teachers can build relationships based on curiosity, a desire for learning, increased joy and passion, and respect.

**THE ENCOUNTER: #3 (CONT.)**

. . . But in the back of my mind, and in the pit of my stomach, I feel like I'm doing something wrong.

Still, I look forward to the flashing title that says, “Accept Message?”

**REFERENCES**


Author Biographies

Stephanie Ahlfeldt (Ph.D., North Dakota State University) is an Assistant Professor of Communication at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota. Her research interests focus primarily on instructional communication and communication education. She is most interested in improving student learning through innovative teaching methods such as problem-based learning, service learning, and active learning.

Shereen G. Bingham (Ph.D., Purdue University, 1988) is Assistant Director of the School of Communication and Professor of Speech Communication and Women’s Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her publications have focused primarily on communication and sexual harassment in educational settings. She is trained in conflict mediation and group facilitation, and provides these services in the community.

Robert E. Carlson (Ph.D., Purdue University, 1978) is Assistant Director of the School of Communication and Professor of Speech Communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Many of his publications have focused on communicative attitudes and anxiety/apprehension. His current research interests are in evaluation/assessment of public speaking and communication apprehension particularly in the context of a lab-supported public speaking fundamentals course. In ad-
dition, he is actively involved in distance education and teaching the basic speech course internationally.

**Ana M. Cruz** (M.A., M.S., University of Nebraska, Omaha, 1991, 1993) is an Instructor of Speech Communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Her research areas include family communication, interpersonal communication, and race, ethnicity and culture. She is working on her dissertation at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.

**Lawrence W. Hugenberg** (Ph.D. The Ohio State University, 1981) passed away in late July of this year. He was a professor in the School of Communication Study at Kent State University after having served for 20 years as the basic course director at Youngstown State University. He was a nationally renowned scholar in the field of communication studies, winning numerous teaching and scholarship awards. Additionally, he was the founder and long time editor of the *Basic Course Communication Annual*, who committed much of his time and energy to enhancing the basic course within our discipline. He is survived by his wife Barbara (Moyer) Hugenberg, four children and five grandchildren.

**Stephen K. Hunt** (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University, 1998) is an Associate Professor and Co-Director of the basic communication course at Illinois State University. He has published articles on several topics including instructional communication, persuasion, and communication pedagogy. His major research interests include communication assessment, the communication needs of
students at-risk, students' learning/cognitive styles, compliance-gaining, and training/mentoring graduate students.

**Karen Kangas Dwyer** (Ph.D., University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1995) is a Professor of Speech Communication and Basic Course Director at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She has authored textbooks, instructor's manuals, and several articles related to the basic communication course, instructional communication, and communication anxiety. Her work has involved developing and teaching special public speaking classes and workshops for highly apprehensive communicators. She has co-authored a Dutch public speaking trade book and recently received the University of Nebraska state system Outstanding Teaching Award.

**Kevin R. Meyer** (M.S., Illinois State University, 2005) is a doctoral student at Ohio University. His research interests include instructional communication, communication education, basic course pedagogy, graduate teaching assistant training programs, and sports league apologia/image repair.

**Sherwyn Morreale** (Ph.D., University of Denver) is Director of Graduate Studies in Communication at University of Colorado at Colorado Springs. For eight years, she served as Associate Director of the National Communication Association (NCA) where she worked actively to promote communication pedagogy and research. She has authored or co-authored 21 refereed scholarly articles in national and regional journals, 14 books and monographs, and 14 book chapters. She has
presented numerous programs at national and regional conventions and many workshops on communication assessment, curriculum development, and public speaking on campuses across the country.

**Sandra L. Pensoneau-Conway** is an assistant professor and the basic course director in the Department of Communication at Wayne State University in Detroit, MI. She received both her Ph.D. (May 2006) and M.S. (December 2001) in Speech Communication from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Her research interests include critical pedagogy, gender and sexual identity in educational contexts, narrative, and ethnography.

**Marshall Prisbell** (Ph.D., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1981) is a Professor of Speech Communication at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He has published and presented numerous articles related to interpersonal and instructional communication. Currently he is researching the student misbehaviors in the basic course.

**Deanna Sellnow** (Ph.D., University of North Dakota) is the Gifford Blyton Endowed Professor of Communication and Director of Undergraduate Studies in Communication at the University of Kentucky. Her research interests include instructional communication, music as rhetoric, and popular culture studies. She is currently serving as Editor of Communication Teacher and has published numerous articles on instructional communication, as well as a basic public speaking textbook.
Author Biographies

Brent K. Simonds (Ed.D., Illinois State University, 2003) is an assistant professor in the School of Communication at Illinois State University with research interests and publications in visual communication and interactive media. He is also an award winning filmmaker.

Cheri J. Simonds (Ph.D., University of Oklahoma, 1995) is an Associate Professor of Communication at Illinois State University. She teaches in the area of communication education and has published articles on teacher clarity, challenge behavior, portfolio assessment, and evaluation fidelity. She co-authors textbooks on Classroom Communication, Intercultural Communication, and Public Speaking.

David W. Worley (Ph.D., Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1996) is Professor, Chair, and Director of Communication 101 in the Department of Communication at Indiana State University, Terre Haute, IN. His research and publications focus on the basic course, communication pedagogy, and instructional communication. He is the author of a basic course hybrid text, the editor of a book on training in the basic course, the editor of a forthcoming book on service and experiential learning, and the incoming editor of the BCCA.
INDEX OF TITLES

Volume 1, 1989

Gray, P.L. The basic course in speech communication: An historical perspective. 1-27.

Seiler, W.J. & McGukin, D. What we know about the basic course: What has the research told us? 28-42.


Smitten, R.D. Using plays and novels as case studies in the basic course. 70-81.

Phelps, L.A. A unit on relationship termination in the basic course. 82-94.

Haskins, W.A. Teaching ethics in the basic survey speech communication course. 95-105.

Greenberg, K.J. The necessity of separating idealized accountability from realized accountability: A case study. 106-133.

Wallace, S. & Morlan, D.B. Implications of student and instructor involvement in the basic course. 134-149.
Index

Smilowitz, M. & Phelps, L.A. The interaction of teacher and student social styles and learning outcomes of the basic communication course. 150-168.

Trank, D.M. Training or teaching: A professional development program for graduate teaching assistants. 169-183.

Weaver, R.L., II & Cotrell, H.W. Teaching basic courses: Problems and solutions. 184-196.

Volume 2, 1990


Bourhis, J. & Berquist, C. Communication apprehension in the basic course: Learning styles and preferred instructional strategies of high and low apprehensive students. 27-46.

Yook, E. & Seiler, B. An investigation into the communication needs and concerns of Asian students in basic communication performance courses. 47-75.


Haynes, W.L. Beyond writing: The case for a speech-based basic course in a vid-oral world. 89-100.

Troester, R.A communication based model of friendship for the interpersonal communication course. 101-120.

Foster, T.J., Smilowitz, M., Foster, M.S. & Phelps, L.A. Some student perceptions of grades received on speeches. 121-142.

Goulden, N.R. A program of rater training for evaluating public speeches combining accuracy and error approaches. 143-165.
Bendtschneider, L.B. & Trank, D.M. Evaluating the basic course: Using research to meet the communication needs of the students. 166-191.


Gibson, J.W., Hanna, M.S. & Leichty, G. The basic speech course at United States colleges and universities: V. 233-257.

**Volume 3, 1991**

Verderber, R.F. The introductory communication course: The public speaking approach. 3-15.

Pearson, J.C. & West, R. The introductory communication course: The hybrid approach. 16-34.

Brilhart, J.L. Small group communication as an introductory course. 35-50.

Donaghy, W.C. Introductory communication theory: Not another skills course. 51-72.

DeVito, J.A. The interpersonal communication course. 73-87.

Hugenberg, L.W., Owens, A.W., II & Robinson, D.J. The business and professional speaking course. 88-105.

Trank, D.M. & Lewis, P. The introductory communication course: Results of a national survey. 106-122.

Sandmann, W. Logic and emotion, persuasion and argumentation: “Good reasons” as an educational synthesis. 123-144.

Braithwaite, C.A. & Braithwaite, D.O. Instructional communication strategies for adapting to a multicultural introductory course. 145-160.
Index


Sprague, J. Reading our own speech critiques as texts that reveal educational goals, instructional roles and communication functions. 179-201.


Hugenberg, L.W. & Yoder, D.D. Summary of the issues discussed during the seminar on the introductory course in speech communication. 269-280.

Volume 4, 1992


Hess, J.A. & Pearson, J.C. Basic public speaking principles: An examination of twelve popular texts. 16-34.

Ford, W.S.Z., & Wolvin, A.D. Evaluation of a basic communication course. 35-47.

Sandmann, W. Critical thinking is/as communication 48-71.


Weaver, R.L., II & Cotrell, H.W. Directing the basic communication course: Eighteen years later. 80-93.

Volume 21, 2009
Gill, M.M. & Wardrope, W.J. To say or not; to do or not — those are the questions: Sexual harassment and the basic course instructor. 94-114.

Leff, M. Teaching public speaking as composition. 115-122.

Isserlis, J.A. Be relevant, careful, and appropriate: Scary advice on the use of humor to the novice public speaker. 123-140.

Whitecap, V.A. The introduction of a speech: Do good introductions predict a good speech? 141-153.

Vicker, L.A. The use of role models in teaching public speaking. 154-161.

**Volume 5, 1993**


Gray, P.L., Murray, M.G. & Buerkel-Rothfuss, N.L. The impact of perceived research and teaching competence on the credibility of a basic course director: A case study. 27-42.

Willer, L.R. Are you a REAL teacher? Student perceptions of the graduate student as instructor of the basic communication course. 43-70.

Buerkel-Rothfuss, N.L. & Fink, D.S. Student perceptions of teaching assistants (TAs). 71-100.


Beall, M.L. Teaching thinking in the basic course. 127-156.

Murphy, J.M. The ESL oral communication lesson: One teacher’s techniques and principles. 157-181.
Index

Rolls, J.A. Experiential learning as an adjunct to the basic course: Student responses to a pedagogical model. 182-199.


Weber, D.R. Buerkel-Rothfuss, N.L., & Gray, P.L. Adopting a transformational approach to basic course leadership. 221-246.


Volume 6, 1994


Cronin, M.W. Interactive video instruction for teaching organizational techniques in public speaking. 19-35.

Jensen, K.K. & McQueeney, P. Writing as a tool for teaching public speaking: A campus application. 36-61.


McKinney, B.C. & Pullum, S.J. Obstacles to overcome in the implementation of a program to reduce communication apprehension in the basic public speaking course. 70-86.

Williams, D.E. & Stewart, R.A. An assessment of panel vs. individual instructor ratings of student speeches. 87-104.

Buerkel-Rothfuss, N.L., Fink, D.S. & Amaro, C.A. The incorporation of mentors and assistant basic course directors (ABCDs) into the basic course program: Creating a safety net for new teaching assistants. 105-128.

Willmington, S.C., Neal, K.E. & Steinbrecher, M.M. Meeting certification requirements for teacher certification through the basic course. 160-182.

Sandmann, W. The basic course in communication theory: A shift in emphasis. 183-206.

Cooper, P. Stories as instructional strategy: Teaching in another culture. 207-216.


Newburger, C., Brannon, L. & Daniels, A. Self-confrontation and public speaking apprehension: To videotape or not to videotape student speakers? 228-236.


Volume 7, 1995

Wood, J.T. Gerald M. Phillips’ devotion to basic communication skills. 1-14.

Treadwell, D. & Applbaum, R.L. The basic course in organizational communication: A national survey. 15-35.


Williams, G. TA training beyond the first week: A leadership perspective. 59-82.

Dwyer, K.K. Creating and teaching special sections of a public speaking course for apprehensive students: A multi-case study. 100-124.


**Volume 8, 1996**

Kramer, M.W. & Hinton, J.S. The differential impact of a basic public speaking course on perceived communication competencies in class, work, and social contexts. 1-25.

Williams, G. [En]visioning success: The anatomy and functions of vision in the basic course. 26-57.

Whaley, B.B. & Langlois, A. Students who stutter and the basic course: Attitudes and communication strategies for the college classroom. 58-73.

Spano, S. Rethinking the role of theory in the basic course: Taking a “practical” approach to communication education. 74-96.

Hickson, M., III. Rethinking our rethinking retrospectively: A rejoinder to Spano. 97-107.

Wood, J. Should class participation be required in the basic communication course? 108-124.

Handford, C.J. The basic course: A means of protecting the speech communication discipline. 125-135.

Hugenberg, L.W. Introduction to cultural diversity in the basic course: Differing points of view. 136-144.

Goulden, N.R. Teaching communication behaviors/skills related to cultural diversity in the basic course classroom. 145-161.
Oludaja, B. & Honken, C. Cultural pluralism: Language proficiency in the basic course. 162-174.

Kelly, C. Diversity in the public speaking course: Beyond audience analysis. 175-184.

Sellnow, D.D. & Littlefield, R. S. The speech on diversity: A tool to integrate cultural diversity into the basic course. 185-196.

Powell, K.A. Meeting the challenges of cultural diversity: Ideas and issues for the public speaking course. 197-201.

Volume 9, 1997

Osborn, M. Three metaphors for the competencies acquired in the public speaking class. 1-11.


Yook, E.L. Culture shock in the basic communication course: A cast study of Malaysian students. 59-78.

Heaton, D.W. The em-power-ing of America: Using info-mercials to teach persuasion and popular discourse in the basic communication course. 79-93.

Miller, J.J. The use of simulation in the beginning public speaking classroom: Let’s make it realistic, relevant and motivating. 94-104.


Williams, G. Two heads are better than one? Setting realizable goals in the basic course. 130-159.
Hugenberg, L.W. & Moyer, B.S. A commentary: the basic communication course, general education and assessment. 160-179.

**Volume 10, 1998**

Wolvin, A.D. The basic course and the future of the workplace. 1-6.


Lubbers, C.A. & Seiler, W.J. Learning style preferences and academic achievement within the basic communication course. 27-57.

Quigley, B.L., Hendrix, K.G. & Freisem, K. Graduate teaching assistant training: Preparing instructors to assist ESL students in the introductory public speaking course. 58-89.

Schaller, K.A., & Callison, M.G. Applying multiple intelligence theory to the basic public speaking course. 90-104.

Spano, S. Delineating the uses of practical theory: A reply to Hickson. 105-124.

Hickson, M., III. Theory and pedagogy in the basic course: A summary from Spano and Hickson. 125-132.

Jensen, K.K. & Williams, D.E. Teaching the honors public speaking course. 133-156.

Hugenberg, L.W. & Moyer, B.S. Commentary: The research foundation for instruction in the beginning public speaking class. 157-170.
Volume 11, 1999


Buerkel-Rothfuss, N.L. How basic course directors evaluate teaching assistants: Social constructionism in basic course land. 37-54.

Williams, G. & Johnson-Jones, J.M. Get your modem runnin’. Get out on the I-way: Encouraging Internet investigations in the basic course. 55-78.

Mino, M. Will the dazzling promise blind us?: Using technology in the beginning public speaking course. 79-107.


Cutspec, P.A., McPherson, K. & Spiro, J.H. Branching out to meet the needs of our students: A model for oral communication assessment and curriculum programs. 133-163.

Schnell, J. Analyzing C-SPAN in the basic communication course. 164-174.

Yoder, D.D. An idea for restructuring the basic communication course: A “time when needed” modular approach. 175-184.

Volume 12, 2000

Titsworth, B. Scott. The effects of praise on student motivation in the basic communication course.

Sellnow, Deanna D. & Golish, Tamara. The relationship between a required self-disclosure speech and public speaking anxiety: Considering gender equity.
Huffman, Karla J., Carson, Christy L. & Simonds, Cheri J. Critical thinking assessment: The link between critical thinking and student application in the basic course.


Heisler, Jennifer M., Bissett, Susan M. & Buerkel-Rothfuss, Nancy L. An examination of male and female students’ perceptions of relational closeness: Does the basic course have an influence?

Hendrix, Katherine G. Peer mentoring for graduate teaching assistants: Training and utilizing a valuable resource.

Worley, David W. An acrostic approach to teaching public speaking in the hybrid communication course.

Volume 13, 2001

Hunt, Stephen K., Daradirek Ekachai, Darin L. Garaard & Joseph H. Rust. Students’ perceived usefulness and relevance of communication skills in the basic course: Comparing university and community college students.

Cox, Stephen A. & Timothy S. Todd. Contrasting the relationships between teacher immediacy, teacher credibility, and student motivation in self-contained and mass lecture classes.

Treinen, Kristen & John T. Warren. Antiracist pedagogy in the basic course; teaching cultural communication as if whiteness matters.

Hess, Jon A. Rethinking our approach to the basic course: Making ethics the foundation of introduction to public speaking.

Schwartzman, Roy. What’s basic about the basic course? Enriching the ethosystem as a corrective for consumerism.
Dixson, Marcia D. Teaching social construction of reality in the basic course: Opening minds and integrating contexts.

Arnett, Ronald C. & Janie M. Harden Fritz. Communication and professional civility as a basic service course: dialogic Praxis between department and situated in an academic home.

Volume 14, 2002


Troup, Calvin L. Common sense in the basic public speaking course.


Dwyer, Karen Kangas, Robert E. Carlson & Sally A. Kahre. Communication apprehension and basic course success: The lab-supported public speaking course intervention.

Anderson, Karen & Karla Kay Jensen. An examination of the speech evaluation process: Does the evaluation instrument and/or evaluator’s experience matter?

Janusik, Laura A. & Andrew D. Wolvin. Listening treatment in the basic communication course text.

Johnson, Julia R., Susan M. Pliner & Tom Burkhart. d/Deafness and the basic course: A case study of universal instructional design and students who are d/Deaf in the (aural) communication classroom.
Volume 15, 2003

Sims, Judy Rene. Streaming Student Speeches on the Internet: Convenient and “Connected” Feedback in the Basic Course.


Turman, Paul D. & Matthew H. Barton. Stretching the Academic Dollar: The Appropriateness of Utilizing Instructor Assistants in the Basic Course.

Volume 16, 2004

Turman, Paul D., & Matthew H. Barton, Bias in the Evaluation Process: Influences of Speaker Order, Speaker Quality, and Gender on Rater Error in the Performance Based Course.

Reynolds, Dana L., Stephen K. Hunt, Cheri J. Simonds, & Craig W. Cutbirth. Written Speech Feedback in the Basic Communication Course: Are Instructors too Polite?


Jones, Adam C., Stephen Hunt, Cheri J. Simonds, Mark E. Comadena, & John R. Baldwin, Speech Laboratories: An Exploratory Examination of Potential Pedagogical Effects on Studies.

Volume 21, 2009
Treinen, Kristen P., Creating a Dialogue for Change: Educating Graduate Teaching Assistants in Whiteness Studies.

Harter, Lynn M. Erika L. Kirby, Katherine L. Hatfield, & Karla N. Kuhlman, From Spectators of Public Affairs to Agents of Social Change: Engaging Students in the Basic Course through Service-Learning.


Edwards, Chad & Gregory J. Shepherd, Special Forum on the Philosophy of Teaching Education as Communication: The Pragmatist Tradition.

Rawlins, William K., Teaching and Learning in the Spirit of Friendship.

Modaff, Daniel P., Native Virtues: Traditional Sioux Philosophy and the Contemporary Basic Communication Course.

LaWare, Margaret R., The Public Speaking Classroom as Public Space: Taking Risks and Embracing Difference.

Sprague, Jo, Special Forum on the Philosophy of Teaching: A Synthesis and Response.

Volume 17, 2005


Hayes, Javette G, Problematic Student Behaviors in the College Communication Classroom: Reviewing and Re-envisioning Instructional Communication Research.

Rattenborg, Allison N., Cheri J. Simonds, Stephen K. Hunt, Preparing to Participate: An Exploration of Student En-
Wolfsen, Amy Rachelle, A Study Exploring the Impact of Two Instructional Paradigms on State and Trait Communication Apprehension.

Turman, Paul D., Implementing Technology into the Basic Course: The Influence of Sex and Instructional Technology Use on Teacher Immediacy and Student Affective Learning.


Volume 18, 2006

Carlson, Robert E., Karen Kangas Dwyer, Shereen G. Bingham, Ana M. Cruz, Marshall Prisbell, Dennis A. Fuss, Connected Classroom Climate and Communication Apprehension: Correlations and Implications of the Basic Course.

Prividera, Laura C., Suppressing Cultural Sensitivity: The Role of Whiteness in Instructors’ Course Content and Pedagogical Practices.

Worley, David W. & Debra A. Worley, The First year Experience (FYE) and the Basic Communication Course: Insights from Theory and Practice.


Durham, Wesley T. and Adam C. Jones, Undergraduate Teaching Assistants and Their Use of Nonverbal Immediacy Behaviors in the Basic Communication Course.
Wahl, Shawn T. & Chad Edwards, Enacting a Pragmatist Educational Metaphysic through Civic Engagement in the Basic Media Studies Course.

Limon, M. Sean, Philip J. Aust & Lance R. Lippert, Instructors Students, Managers, and the Basic Organizational Communication Course: Are We All Working Together or Working Apart?

Special Forum on Theorizing the Basic Course

King, Janis L. Re-Focusing the Basic Public Speaking Course: Changing to an Epideictic Framework to Create Community.

Leeman, Mark & Arvind Singhal, The Basic Course as Social Change.

Craig, Deborah, Revising Pedagogical Strategies in Large Enrollment General Education Courses.

Harter, Lynn M., Elizabeth Graham, Stephanie Norander & Daniel E. Rossi-Keen, The Use of Professional Seminars to Prepare Future Faculty for Teaching Basic Communication Courses

Special Forum on Discourses of the Basic Course

Preston, Marlene M. & Rachel Holloway, Case Study of a Basic Course: Using Assessment to Legitimize Innovation.

Titworth, Scott, Ben Bates & Pam Kinneston, Kenneth Burke, the Basic Communication Course, and Applied Scholarship.

Volume 19, 2007

Meyer, Kevin R, Cheri J. Simonds, Brent K. Simonds, John R. Baldwin, Stephen K. Hunt, Mark E. Comadena, Designing Classroom Management Training for Basic Course Instructors.
Broeckelman, Melissa A. Creating Sites for Connection in the Classroom: Dialogism as a Pedagogy for Active Learning.


Howe, Marlina Marie, Karen Kangas Dwyer, This Influence of Diaphragmatic Breathing to Reduce Situational Anxiety for Basic Course Students.


Theisen, Lisa M. Roberta A. Davilla, Seeking Social Support among Female Graduate Teaching Assistants.

Book Review

Volume 20, 2008


Semlak, Julie, Traditional Pedagogical Tools: Examining Peer Feedback in the Basic Communication Course.

Pearson, Judy C., Jeffrey T. Child, The Influence of Biological Sex, Previous Experience, and Preparation Time on Classroom Public Speaking Grades.

Preston, Marlene J., J. Matt Giglio, Kristin N. English, Redesigning Public Speaking: A Case Study in the Use of Instructional Design to Create the Interchange Model.
Payne, Holly J., Sally O. Hastings, Grade Distributions in the Basic Public Speaking Course: Exploring the Differences and Pedagogical Implications of Faculty Rank.

Fotsch, Paul. Race and Resistance in the Communication Classroom.

**AUTHOR INDEX**

*BASIC COMMUNICATION COURSE ANNUAL VOLUMES 1-20*

Amaro, Charlotte A. 1994
Anderson, Karen, 2002
Appibaum, Ronald L. 1995
Arnett, Ronald C., 2001
Aust, Philip J., 2006
Ayres, Debbie M. 1994
Ayres, Joe. 1994
Barton, Matthew H. 2003, 2004
Bates, Benjamin, 2006
Beall, Melissa L. 1993
Bendtschneider, Lyn B. 1990
Berko, Roy M. 1998
Berquist, Charlene. 1990
Bingham, Shereen G., 2006
Bissett, Susan 2000
Bourhis, John. 1990
Braithwaite, Charles A. 1991
Braithwaite, Dawn O. 1991
Brann-Barrett, M. Tanya 2004
Brannon, Linda. 1994
Brilhart, John L. 1991
Broeckelman, Melissa, 2007

Burkhart, Tom, 2002
Butler, Marilynn N. 1995
Callison, Marybeth G. 1998
Carson, Christy L. 2000
Cild, Jeffrey T 2008
Cooper, Pamela. 1994
Cotrell, Howard W. 1989, 1992
Cox, Stephen A., 2001
Craig, Deborah, 2006
Cronin, Michael W. 1994, 1994
Cruz, Ana M., 2006
Cutbirth, Craig W. 2004
Cutspec, Patricia A. 1999
Dalbey, Jennifer 2003
Daniel, Arlie. 1994
Davilla, Roberta A. 1997, 2007
Dawson, Edwin J. 1991
DeVito, Joseph A. 1991
Dixson, Marcia D., 2001
Donaghy, William C. 1991
Durham, Wesley T., 2006
Edwards, Chad 2004, 2006
Ekachai, Daradirek, 2001
English, Kristin N. 2008
Fassett, Deanna L. 2003, 2008
Fink, Donn S. 1993, 1994
Ford, Wendy S. Zabava. 1992
Foster, Marilyn S. 1990
Foster, Ted J. 1990
Fotsch, Paul 2008
Freisem, Karen. 1998
Fritz, Janie M. Harden, 2001
Fus, Dennis A. 1999, 2006
Garrard, Darin L., 2001
Gibson, James W. 1990, 1997
Giglio, J. Matt 2008
Gill, Mary M. 1992
Golish, Tamara 2000
Gorcyca, Diane Atkinson. 1992
Goulden, Nancy Rost. 1990, 1995, 2002
Graham, Elizabeth E., 2006
Greenberg, Karen J. 1989
Gring, Mark A. 2000
Hackman, Michael Z. 1995, 1997
Hailer, Melissa 2007
Haleta, Laurie B. 1990
Handford, Charlene J. 1996
Hanna, Michael S. 1990, 1999
Harter, Lynn M. 2004, 2006
Haskins, William A. 1989
Hasxtings, Sally 2008
Hatfield, Katherine L. 2004
Hayes, Javette Grace, 2005
Haynes, W. Lance. 1990
Heaton, Daniel W. 1997
Heisler, Jennifer M. 2000
Hemphill, Michael. 1992
Hendrix, Katherine G. 1998, 2000
Hickson, III. Mark. 1996, 1997
Hill, L. Brooks. 1994
Hinton, J. S. 1996
Holloway, Rachel, 2006
Honken, Connie. 1996
Howe, Marлина M. 2007
Huffman, Karla J. 2000
Isserlis, Judythe A. 1992
Janusik, Laura A., 2002
Johnson, Julia R., 2002
Johnson-Jones, Joni M. 1999
Jones, Adam C. 2004, 2006
Kahre, Sally A., 2002
Kasch, Chris R. 1997
Kennen, William R. 1994
Kelly, Christine. 1996
Kenniston, Pamela J., 2006
King, Janis L, 2006
Kirby, Erika L. 2004
Kirchner, W. Faye. 1991
Kosloški, David L. 1990
Kramer, Michael W. 1995
Kuhlman, Karla N. 2004

Volume 21, 2009
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kussart, Natalie J.</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamoureux, Elizabeth R.</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langlois, Aimee</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LaWare, Margaret R.</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeman, Mark</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leff, Michael</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichty, Greg</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewis, Pat</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limon, M. Sean</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lippert, Lance R.</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littlefield, Robert S.</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Littlejohn, Jera W.</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall, Rodney, K.</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McGukin, Drew</td>
<td>1989, 1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKinney, Bruce C.</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McPherson, Kevin</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McQueeney, Pat</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller, John J.</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mino, Mary</td>
<td>1995, 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modaff, Daniel P.</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morlan, Don B.</td>
<td>1989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murphy, John M.</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Murray, Martin G.</td>
<td>1993, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neal, Kay E.</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nelson, Paul</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newburger, Craig</td>
<td>1992, 1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norander, Stephanie</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novak, David R.</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oludaja, Bayo</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osborn, Michael</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owens, Alfred W., II</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payne, Holly</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips, Gerald M.</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pliner, Susan M.</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powell, Kimberly A.</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preston, Marlene M.</td>
<td>2006, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prisbells, Marshall</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prividera, Laura C.</td>
<td>2004, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pullum, Stephen J.</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punyanunt-Carter, Narissa Maria</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ragan, Sandra L.</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rattenborg, Allison N.</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rawlins, William K.</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reynolds, Dana L.</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robinson, David J.</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolls, Judith A.</td>
<td>1993, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russell, Bruce W.</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rust, Joseph H.</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santoro, Gerald M.</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schaller, Kristi A.</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schliessmann, Michael R.</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schnell, Jim.</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwartzman, Roy</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sellnow, Deanna D.</td>
<td>1996, 2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherd, Gregory J.</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siddens, Paul J.</td>
<td>2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singhal, Arvind</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sims, Judy Rene</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Index

Simonds, Brent 2007, 2008
Smilowitz, Michael. 1989, 1990
Smitter, Roger, D. 1989
Spiro, Julie H. 1999
Sprague, Jo. 1991, 2004
Steinbrecher, Mild M. 1994
Stern, Lesa 2007
Stewart, Robert A. 1994
Theisen, Lisa 2007
Thomas, Richard W. 1989
Titsworth, B. Scott, 2000
Timothy s. Todd, 2001
Treadwell, D. 1995
Treinen, Kristen P., 2001, 2004
Troup, Calvin L., 2002
Troester, Rod. 1990, 1993
Turman, Paul D. 2003, 2004, 2005
Verderber, Rudolph, F. 1991
Vicker, Lauren A. 1992
Violanti, Michelle T., 2005
Wahl, Shawn T., 2006
Wallace, Sam. 1989, 1995
Wardrope, William J. 1992
Weaver, Richard, L., II. 1989, 1992
Weber, Dawn R. 1993
West, Richard. 1991
Whaley, Bryan B. 1996
Whitecap, Valerie A. 1992
Willer, Lynda R. 1993
Willmington, S. Clay. 1994
Wolfsen, Amy Rochelle, 2005
Wood, Jennifer. 1996
Wood, Julia T. 1995
Worley, David W. 2000, 2006
Worley, Deborah A., 2006

Volume 21, 2009
Submission Guidelines

The Basic Course Commission of the National Communication Association invites submissions to be considered for publication in the Basic Communication Course Annual. The Annual publishes the best scholarship available on topics related to the basic course and is distributed nationally to scholars and educators interested in the basic communication course. Each article is also indexed in its entirety in the ERIC database.

Manuscripts published in the Annual are not restricted to any particular methodology or approach. They must, however, address issues that are significant to the basic course (defined broadly). Articles in the Annual may focus on the basic course in traditional or non-traditional settings. The Annual uses a blind reviewing process. Two or three members of the Editorial Board read and review each manuscript. The Editor will return a manuscript without review if it is clearly outside the scope of the basic course.

Manuscripts submitted to the Annual must conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 5th edition (2001). Submitted manuscripts should be typed, double-spaced, and in 12 point standard font. They should not exceed 30 pages, exclusive of tables and references, nor be under consideration by any other publishing outlet at the time of submission. By submitting to the Annual, authors maintain that they will not submit their manuscript to another outlet without first withdrawing it from consideration.
Submission Guidelines

for the Annual. Each submission must be accompanied by an abstract of less than 200 words and a 50-75-word author identification paragraph on each author. A separate title page should include (1) the title and identification of the author(s), (2) the address, telephone number, and email address of the contact person, and (3) data pertinent to the manuscript's history. All references to the author(s) and institutional affiliation should be removed from the text of the manuscript. After removing all identifiers in the properties of the document, authors should submit an electronic copy of the manuscript in (Microsoft Word) to the editor at dworley@isugw.indstate.edu.

David Worley, Editor

Basic Communication Course Annual, 22

Department of Communication
Indiana State University
314 Erickson Hall
Terre Haute, IN 47809-0001

If you have any questions about the Annual or your submission, contact the Editor by telephone at (812) 237-3657 or by email at dworley@isugw.indstate.edu.

All complete submissions must be received by April 1, 2009 to receive full consideration for volume 22 of the Basic Communication Course Annual.