1989

The Necessity of Separating Idealized Accountability from Realized Accountability: A Case Study

Karen Greenberg
Princeton University

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

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.
The Necessity of Separating Idealized Accountability from Realized Accountability: A Case Study

Karen Greenberg

The creation and maintenance of collective and individual identities falter when these identities cease to be supported by institutional communication such as the communication of military organizations, political coalitions, religious sects, and educational systems. Institutional communication, in turn, fails when it is mystified, when it is difficult to distinguish between the communication's articulated and actualized practices. This essay examines the mystery of one type of institutional communication, the communication of an educational system. The system this essay addresses is the basic communication course, as represented by basic communication course instructors' manuals.

The blurred distinction between the basic communication course's alleged accountability to public and private role legitimazation and its actual accountability is elucidated. The elucidation is provided in the context of the following assumptions: 1) that research is needed on institutional communication's mysteries, especially as this kind of mystery is made evident in educational systems; 2) that educational systems are elemental to the fulfillment of our public and private roles; 3) that the basic communication course is an important component of higher education; and 4) that basic communication course instructors' manuals constitute reasonable texts for learning about the course.

Presented at Speech Communication Association Convention, New Orleans, LA, November, 1988

BASIC COURSE COMMUNICATION ANNUAL

Published by eCommons, 1989
The Context

Research on the mysteries of educational systems' communication fails to meet the accountability needs generated by this kind of system. This deficit is described in both formal and informal discourse. Consider the observation made by the Select Committee of the Association of American Colleges that “[o]ne of the most remarkable and scandalous aspects of American higher education is the absence of traditions, practices, and methods of institutional and social accountability.”¹ Consider, too, the frequency with which instructors and students complain in their private lives about the failure of educational systems to meet their needs. In part, this deficit is constituted by misinformation about educational systems', instructors', and students' behaviors. The publics we participate in are often ill-informed about the finance and defense implications of educational policies, about the service and research implications of instructors' agendas, or about the career and health implications of students' courses of action. This deficit is also partially due to the interdisciplinary nature of research on institutional communication. Some social scientists consider work in this area to be too “ambitious” to engage in because it creates the need for additional self-examination, for new philosophical concepts, and for new responsibilities. Some humanists consider this type of work to be too “distasteful” to engage in because it applies philosophy to mundane issues. Moreover, people on both sides of the disciplinary divide consider this type of work to be too much of an aberration to engage in because it attempts to cross Postenlightenment disciplinary boundaries.

Research specifically on the instructional communication in higher education is desirable because post secondary education has received less scholarly attention than have secondary and elementary systems. There seems to be “an inability on the part of educators to synthesize an analysis of the components of good teaching in the college and university classrooms.”²
In addition, only a portion of the available literature in higher education focuses on instructional communication. Most research on higher education is based on the situation model of human behavior, and does not assume "that behavior is a result, or even an active determinant, of forces that interact with each other." Also little of the existing interactional instructional communication research focuses on ethics. Scholars seem to disavow that instructors' communication has ethical dimensions, that acknowledging their awareness of these dimensions is vital to the heuristic value of a greater body of research, or that acknowledging this awareness is politic. Existent higher education research fails to transcend objective teleology.

Yet educational systems are worthy of study. This kind of system is vital to the realization of our public and private roles. A shortage of research on this kind of system means misunderstandings about educational systems' operation and consequences, and about our use of collectively legitimized manner of teaching and reinforcing critical thinking skills. Without these kind of skills, our world becomes one of increasingly reinforced "egocentric and sociocentric thought, conjoined with massive technical knowledge and power." The implications of this latter vision of society ought to be sufficient to prompt many studies of educational systems.

Given these needs, researchers are well advised to commence by focusing on components of educational systems that are purportedly answerable to the system. The basic communication course is an example of this kind of component. This course presents itself as a forum for teaching students how to fuse ethics and politics into action, and as a means for providing students with basic literacy when they are easily accessible and relatively impressionable.

In addition, the basic communication course is a fairly easily distinguishable entity in the higher education curriculum. This course is usually: conducted in multiple, small sections; is performance based; and is taught by junior faculty and graduate teaching assistants. This course also has several prevalent, fairly easily identifiable content and
application orientations. Other reasons why research is needed on the basic communication course include the dated nature of much of the existent literature, and the existent literature provides insufficient information about the ethical dimension of the course's instructional communication. There are many reasons to use the basic communication course as a starting point for research on instructional communication ethics.

Instructors' manuals make a good text for documenting accountability in the basic communication course. Although instructors' manuals have limited distribution, they contain "descriptions of the teaching method[s], criteria for determining when to use the[se] method[s], characteristics of the[se] method[s], steps in [their] effective implementation, and criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the[m]." In addition, because these manuals are usually produced by a course's director, by a course's curriculum committee, or by some other representative(s) of a course's educational system, they can be indicative of a system's behavioral objectives.

Instructors' manuals are reasonable texts for studying the difference between articulated and actualized accountability in the basic communication course. Research on components of higher education, such as the basic communication course, is important to our understanding of institutional communication. An understanding of institutional communication is important to the creation and maintenance of our public and private roles. Therefore, this author conducted a study on the accountability disparity in the basic communication course.

The Study

This study aimed to elucidate the implicit accountability of basic communication course instructional communication, as this accountability was presented in the rhetoric of basic communication course instructors' manuals. This study revealed that notwithstanding the basic communication course's reputation for training students in
the skill of active citizenship, self-esteem and self-actualization, this course actually seems to teach students how to acquiesce to their instructors, how to be subservient to higher levels on the institutional ladder. This insight was made manifest through the use of rhetorical criticism.

Although rhetorical criticism that aims at illuminating communication's ethical dimension is not as prevalent as neo-Aristotelian, psychological or movement study criticism, ethical rhetoric as a type of investigation does have rationale, including: contemporary public address's concern with values and morals, rhetoricians' obligations to society and morality, intellects' duties to ethical theory and metatheory, and critics' call to behave like the "moral guardian[s] of civilization." This type of criticism does not work toward rewriting practical texts as philosophical ones, but toward producing a way to organize talk. It was the preferred method for this study because it provided a great amount of detail about communication patterns, while allowing for the development of reasoned judgment about them. Alternatively, a reductionist approach to institutional communication research would have failed to show the range of the phenomenon, would have tried to establish the phenomenon's norms, and would have neglected to account for ever present human nature. The latter kind of analysis might also disregard human destiny; "even though rhetoric may be amoral, people should not be."18

Having selected the method, the researcher moved through the stages of analysis, interpretation and evaluation. She solicited, received and sorted instructors' manuals from basic communication course directors whom had participated in the 1986 Basic Course Conference of the Central States Speech Association and the Eastern Communication Association. Of the seventy-seven directors contacted, forty-two (55%) responded. Of the forty-two that responded, twenty-eight sent instructors' manuals, three sent references to published manuals in lieu of sending actual documents, and eleven sent neither manuals nor references to manuals. Of the twenty-eight manuals received, twenty-five were in-house publications, and six
Regarding Students:
1. What are the instrumental, cognitive behaviors for the students?
2. How are these behaviors measured?
3. What are the instrumental, noncognitive behaviors for the students?
4. How are these behaviors measured?
5. Why should the students take this course?
6. How are the students supported in taking this course?

Regarding Instructors:
7. What are the instrumental, cognitive behaviors for the instructors?
8. How are these behaviors measured?
9. What are the behaviors measured?
10. How are these behaviors measured?
11. Why should the instructors teach this course?
12. How are the instructors supported in teaching this course?

Regarding Educational Systems:
13. What are the instrumental, cognitive behaviors for the system?
14. How are these behaviors measured?
15. What are the instrumental, noncognitive behaviors for the systems?
16. How are these behaviors measured?
17. Why should an educational system offer this course?
18. How are the educational systems supported in offering this course?

Figure 1. Analytical Questions
were professionally published manuals. Since the majority of the manuals received were in-house publications, this set of manuals was further examined. Of the twenty-five in-house manuals, fourteen were from teaching institutions, three were from community colleges, and eight were from research institutions. Since the majority of the in-house manuals were from teaching institutions, this set of manuals was used as the data base.

Each manual in the data base was reviewed carefully. The first time, each manual was read to provide the researcher with a sense of its author(s)' perspective on the basic communication course. Each manual was read to provide answers to questions about the educational system's, instructors', and students' instrumental cognitive and noncognitive behaviors (See Figure One for the questions and Appendix One for an example of their application).

A few points need to be clarified regarding these questions. The difference between accounting for "instrumental" and for "intrinsic" behaviors is the difference between accounting for means and for ends. The former is exemplified by etiquette and the latter is exemplified by the technical subject matter of "ethics." Both types of account making take place in instructional communication. When an instructor, on the one hand, explicitly endorses a behavior, such as honesty by lauding the quality of honesty in a speaker, he or she is engaging in instrumental account making. When an instructor, on the other hand, implicitly endorses a behavior, such as honesty by inference, by discussing the subject of plagiarism, he or she in engaging in intrinsic account making. Also "cognitive" behaviors involve "the acquisition and manipulation of factual information," whereas "noncognitive" behaviors involve all of the other ones, especially psychomotor and affective behaviors.

The analysis part of the investigation enabled the researcher to sort the manuals. She sorted them according to the nature of basic communication course accountability that each one made manifest in response to the analytical questions. She found five types of purported accountability...
in the instructors' manuals: accountability balanced among educational systems, instructors, and students; accountability belonging to instructors in deference to educational systems; accountability belonging to educational in deference to instructors; accountability belonging to educational systems. After the sorting was completed, the researcher randomly designated one manual per category of accountability to represent that category. She subjected the resulting set of five manuals to further study.

To interpret that data in the manuals, the researcher categorized each of the answers to each of the analytical questions. This categorization proceeded according to a model of "ethics" developed by the researcher. This categorization, too, was dependent upon the sophistication of the answers.

The conceptualization of ethics used in this study was constructed from insights on both the phenomenology of "ethics," and of the application of ethics to educational systems.

Although theories of the prescriptive and descriptive dimensions of ethics have existed for over a millennium, and although theories of the metaethical dimension of ethics have existed for over a century, these theories contain disparate accounts of ethics' phenomenology. In one view, ethics is defined as a branch of philosophy. "The traditional distinction . . . still considers as branches of philosophy the three ['normative'] sciences of logic, ethics, and aesthetics, concerned with standards, methods and tests of thinking, conduct, and art, respectively."22 In another view, "ethics" is differentiated from "morality." "Morality," or "moral philosophy," is "the business of having an action guide,"23 whereas "ethics" is talking about that action guide. "Ordinarily the term ['morals'] refers to human behavior, while ['ethics'] denotes systematic, rational reflection upon that behavior. Morality is the practical activity, ethics the theoretical and reflective one."24 In addition to these two views, many other views of ethics exist.

The student of ethics will nevertheless have to get used to a variety of terminologies; he will find plain "ethics" used for what we have just called "morals"
Separating Idealized from Realized Accountability

("normative ethics" is another term used for this); and he will find, for what we have just called "ethics," the more guarded terms "the logic of ethics," "metaethics," "theoretical ethics," "philosophical ethics." 25

In addition, most applied ethics literature covers contexts such as medicine and biochemical engineering, or focus on general ethics methodology rather than on the relationships among educational systems, instructors and students.

A reconceptualization of ethics was needed for this study. "Ethics" became understood as having prescriptive, descriptive and metatheoretical functions, and as having normative, axiological and aretaic foci. 26 The prescriptive function of ethics is used for "arriving at a set of acceptable judgments;" 27 the descriptive function of ethics is used for determining "sociological and psychological descriptions of normative ethical beliefs and language, explanations of why people use moral language in the way that they do and accounts of its origin," 28 and the metatheoretical function of ethics is used for "work[ing] out a theory of meaning and justification." 29 Roughly, rhetoric which includes the spelling out of moral obligations, moral values or nonmoral values is prescriptive. Rhetoric about that rhetoric is metatheoretical, 30 and rhetoric about rhetors is descriptive. The prescriptive function of ethics can be further distinguished from the descriptive and metaphysical ones by its concern with the philosophical nature of or with universal occurrences of behaviors. The descriptive and metatheoretical functions of ethics, conversely, are concerned with the factual nature of or with particular (sets of) behaviors.

The normative focus of ethics is used for understanding the goodness or badness of behaviors; and the aretaic focus of ethics is used for understanding the "good-making characteristics or virtues and their opposites," 31 of behaviors. Normative rhetoric is concerned with stases, axiological rhetoric is concerned with values, and aretaic rhetoric is concerned with virtues. In short, "prescriptive" language cues are designated by "language used most obviously in commanding, but also in exhorting, advising, guiding, and, even commending;" 32 "descriptive" language
cues are designated by language used most obviously in informing about the qualities of an individual or object;\textsuperscript{33} “metatheoretical” language cues are designated by language used most obviously in introspection and in linguistic analysis; “normative” language cues are designated by language used most obviously in “choosing, preferring, approving, commending, and grading;”\textsuperscript{34} and “aretaic” language cues are designated by “excellence of any kind, but from the beginning [they were] also associated with the idea of fulfillment of function.”\textsuperscript{35}

These types of language cues were juxtaposed to construct a map of ethics. This map has nine categories; prescriptive normative, descriptive normative, metatheoretical normative, prescriptive axiological, descriptive axiological, metatheoretical axiological, prescriptive aretaic, descriptive aretaic, and metatheoretical aretaic rhetoric (See Figure Two). The data about students’, instructors’, and educational systems’ behaviors in each manual in the data base, as provided by the answers to the

![Figure 2. Ethics's Functions and Foci](http://ecommons.udayton.edu/bcca/vol1/iss1/12)
analytical questions, were sorted into these categories (See Appendix Two for an example).

Once the researcher was able to determine what kinds of functions and foci were attributed to the behavior espoused in the instructors' manuals, she assessed whom among the students, instructors, and educational systems were accountable for legislating, judging, and executing each of these behaviors. To determine this accountability, she pinpointed the subject(s) and object(s) of each behavior. For example, in the statement “an absence is defined as failure to attend 50 minutes of class,” an educational system was determined to be accountable for legislating the behavior, since it defined the nature of lateness; instructors were determined to be accountable for judging whether or not the behavior was fulfilled, since instructors took attendance; and students were determined to be accountable for executing the behavior, since students were responsible for coming to class on time.

Several patterns of accountability emerged from this assessment; “balanced” accountability, “shared” accountability, and singular accountability. If the legislation, judgment and execution of a behavior was divided among all three of the parties, the accountability was considered “balanced.” If the legislation and judgment, the legislation and execution, or the judgment and execution, was the responsibility of another party, the accountability was considered “shared.” If the legislation, judgment and execution of a behavior was the responsibility of only one of the three parties, that party was considered to have “singular” accountability.

After the researcher determined whom was accountable for each of the behaviors, she tallied the emerging patterns of accountability. She literally counted the instances of each type of accountability for each of the instructors' manuals in the database. Theoretically, accountability types could have included: the singular accountability of educational systems to instructors, of educational systems to students, of instructors to educational systems, of instructors to students, of students to educational systems, and of students to instructors; the shared accountability of educational
systems and instructors to students, of instructors and students to educational systems, and of students and educational systems to instructors; and the balanced accountability of educational systems, instructors and students to each other. That is, each manual could have exemplified one of ten different types of accountability. Recall, too, that the manuals purported to show one of five different types of accountability; balanced among educational systems, instructors, and students, belonging to instructors in deference to educational systems, belonging to educational systems in deference to instructors; belonging to educational systems in deference to students; or belonging to students in deference to educational systems. In actuality, the tallies showed that the realized types of accountability in the basic communication course are only one of three different types; instructors in deference to educational systems, students in deference to educational systems, and balanced accountability.

Limitations

It is hoped that this study succeeds in creating an awareness of some of the prevalent fads and folk wisdoms about the accountability of the basic communication course, and that it provides a conceptualization of ethics that is useful for rhetorical criticism, in general. However, it is recognized that the power of this study is limited by the researcher's choice of methodology, of data collection and selection, and of application of criticism.

One limitation of this study's methodology choices was that only rhetorical criticism was used. Interactional analysis, relational analysis, network analysis, participant observation, and content analysis all are observational methods that are equally viable for this kind of research. Likewise, historical or experimental designs could also be fruitful. Another limitation of the methodology is that hermeneutic studies, in general, neglect to explain: the surrounding conditions of their foci, the "pattern of
unintended consequences of actions” of their foci, structural conflicts within the societies of their foci, and historical changes affecting their foci. This study did not, for instance, provide information about how basic communication course manuals are presented to basic communication course instructors, or information on how these manuals are used after they have been presented.

Data collection choices also limited this study. By deciding to use instructors’ manuals as the texts, the investigator was limited to rhetoric generated by educational systems for instructors. Other possible data collections include: texts from instructors to educational systems, texts from instructors to students, texts from students to instructors, texts from students to educational systems, or texts from instructors to instructors. Another limitation of the choice of data collection was the researcher’s dependency upon basic communication course directors for the data. Although the response rate to the information request was high, it was not unanimous. The substance of the data base constrained the results of this study, too. Although the basic communication course at teaching institutions was examined, other research foci could have been employed. This study could have used: texts from other kinds of institutions (e.g. research-oriented ones), texts in other forms (e.g. published manuals, or department reports), texts from other periods, or texts on other critical components of the higher education curriculum.

Further, the manuals critiqued were dissimilar in form. Although the manuals tended to have more or less universal content and authority, they tended to have different structural and temporal boundaries. Some manuals consisted of a handful of pages stapled together, or lacked total contiguity and consisted of a series of memos or other departmental documents, whereas other manuals were large, professionally bound and printed volumes. In addition, whereas some manuals were reedited or rewritten every year, others were merely redistributed annually.

Like methodology and data choices, criticism choices, too created limitations for this study. Although it is hoped that the clarity of the conceptualizations, the specificity of
the research objectives and the training and practice of the researcher yielded sound results for the analysis, any employment of question asking "adds unreliabilities, particularly when the volume of writing is large." Further, the analytical questions that were applied to each instructors' manual in the data base were representational rather than definitive. The researcher did not consider her set of questions to be exclusive in nature, nor pertinent to all of the manuals. Information was found in some of the manuals, in fact, that was relevant to the study, but not directly responsive to the selected method of analysis.

The interpretation stage of the study also had inherent limitations. The lack of a universal conceptualization of ethics was the chief problem of this stage of the research. As William Lillie noted in *An Introduction to Ethics*, "[i]t is notorious that one can use a chisel as a screw-driver, with disastrous results to the chisel."41

The evaluation stage of the study also limited the potency of the study's findings. Subjectivity on the part of the researcher and a true lack of similar studies with which to compare findings impaired the reliability of the researcher's judgment on whom among students, instructors, and educational systems were actually accountable for legislating, judging, and executing each of the behaviors framed in each of the answers to the analytical questions.

These limitations of the study's methodology, data and criticism choices are but a few of the many fathomable ones. It is hoped that reference to them acknowledges the boundaries of this work and reaffirms its value.

**Discussion**

The purported picture of the basic communication course's accountability moved from the highest levels of the educational system's hierarchy to the lowest ones, whereas in actuality, accountability moved from the lowest levels of the social hierarchy to the highest ones (See Figure Three). In addition, in the ideal picture, students are usually presented
as accountable for executing behaviors, instructors are usually presented as accountable for judging behaviors, and instructors, in concert with educational systems, are usually presented as accountable for legislating behaviors. In the real picture of the texts, though, educational systems are usually presented as both the legislators and judges of behaviors, and students and instructors are usually presented as the behaviors’ executors.

One implication of these findings is that although we believe that the basic communication course is a vehicle by which “new citizens” are taught how to critically and creatively respond to institutional communication, the course is in fact a vehicle for conditioning both students and teachers to acquiesce to institutional systems. This discrepancy is worrisome because the basic communication course has been regaled as a valuable means of enlightening the masses and moreso because this discrepancy is hidden.

Many of us have believed, for instance, that higher education’s moral system is one that looks to the public’s motivation to attain “justice” and to the “public good” as a unifying way of conceptualizing ethics. This assumption is reasonable because of the influence of the Enlightenment on American higher education. The Enlightenment implored citizens to take active roles in the decisions of the state. American higher education did emphasize citizens’ civic duties. American higher education historically: “had private denomination sponsorship, with a modest admixture of
stage supervision . . . had no connection with professional
and advance faculties . . . [and was] a system in which the
major decisions were made by a board of governors who were
not teachers . . . "43

Yet, the rhetoric in the instructors' manuals was not
rooted in this tradition. The Enlightenment tradition places
civic decisions above individual ones and is symbolized by
collective accounts of right and wrong. Many
metatheoretical statements would have had to be present in
the instructors' manuals to demonstrate this type of
morality. Few metatheoretical statements, though, were
actually present. In the cases in which the rhetoric did
indicate that the distribution of accountability was
balanced, very few metatheorized values and norms were
given. Alternatively, in the cases in which the students were
presented as accountable, no singular focus of ethics seemed
to be premier, and when the instructors were presented as
accountable, few metatheorized virtues, and to a lesser
extent, few metatheorized values were given. There were no
cases in which the educational systems were presented as
accountable. The educational systems do not seem to want
instructors to question or to lead questioning about
institutional conventions. Instructors were limited to
prescribing stases, values, and virtues. The educational
systems seem to want students to mimic, but not to challenge
institutional ethics, and to know how to execute, but not to
know how to legislate or to judge a variety of behaviors. In
contrast, the Enlightenment tradition of morality implores
individuals to create and maintain the state.

Another belief many of us have held about higher
education's moral system is that it is based on a view that
looks to "each person['s] unique core of feeling and intuition"
for a unifying way to conceptualize accountability.44
American higher education's evolution was influenced by
the Lehrfreiheit and Lernfreiheit of the nineteenth century
German universities. Hence this assumption about the
moral order undergirding American higher education, too, is
reasonable. The German universities' version of expressive
individualism advocated:
Separating Idealized from Realized Accountability

the paucity of administrative rules within the teaching situation,[as exemplified by] the absence of a prescribed syllabus, the freedom from tutorial duties, [and] the opportunity to lecture on any subject according to the teacher's interest. Thus, academic freedom, as the Germans defined it, was not simply the right of professors to speak without fear or favor, but the atmosphere of consent that surrounded the whole process of research and instruction.45

Indeed American higher education elevated instructors' roles to some of these heights.

Yet, the rhetoric in the instructors' manuals did not mirror the rhetoric of Lehrfreiheit and Lernfreiheit, since the former was mostly transindividualistic and the latter was not. Substantial amounts of clearly distinguishable ethical statements on instrumental, noncognitive behaviors would have had to be present in the instructors' manuals to indicate this type of moral system. In contrast, the manuals' rhetoric mixed language cues about the ethics of instrumental, cognitive behaviors with language cues about the ethics of instrumental, noncognitive behaviors. The rhetoric also obscured distinctions among normative, axiological and aretaic cues and made axiological cues most accessible in cases in which these cues were aesthetic rather than ethical in nature. The educational systems seem to want obligations to be masked in actions "good for" or "good of" students and instructors instead of "good for" or "good of" educational systems, and seem to back this stance with the authority of tradition.

Alternatively, we may have suspected that the rhetoric in the manuals could have represented a moral system that looks to individuals' effort to maximize their self-interest in response to the given ends of basic human appetites and fears.46 This assumption, too, would be credible, during the course of the development of American higher education "wealth and a talent for business had once been considered virtues in trustees, [and eventually] they were thought to be prerequisites."47 Yet, the rhetoric of the instructors' manuals did not reflect this tradition, either. A majority of the manuals' language cues about instrumental, cognitive
behaviors, were entangled in language cues about instrumental, noncognitive behaviors. This verbal morphosis is contrary to the rhetoric of an utilitarian individualistic moral system.

Finally, some of us believed that American higher education's moral system is rooted in a tradition that looks to "[c]hurch, sect, mystical or individualistic forms ..." of theistic voluntarism for unifying ways to conceptualize ethics. This belief, too, is plausible because American colleges began as and were influenced by religious institutions rather than sectarian ones. Harvard University, this country's first institution of liberal thinking, was "founded in a community ... dedicated to the enforcement of religious unity." Interestingly, the instructors' manuals' rhetoric did seem to be backed by this tradition. Many of the statements in the manuals showed students and instructors seeking external validity for their roles, specifically from educational systems.

Our lack of awareness of the discrepancy between the articulated and actualized moral systems supporting the basic communication course is more worrisome than is the contradictory nature of the actualized moral system to popular social constructionist myth. This lack of awareness on the part of instructors and individuals empowers "a social order that, while it elicits [people's] reverence, does not represent [people's] true nature," and places us in "a double repressions [sic]: in terms of those it excludes from the process and in terms of the model and the standard (the bars) it imposes on those receiving this knowledge." We must communicate the existence of this mystery and work to alter its ends. Otherwise, our basic communication course will continue to contribute to the legacy of institutional communication that inhibits rather than enables the creation and maintenance of collective and individual identities.

Volume 1, November 1989
Appendix One: An Example of One Manual’s Answers to the Analytical Questions

Regarding Students

What are the instrumental, cognitive behaviors for students? The purposes of this course were given as: developing an awareness of, providing an understanding of the theory and principles of, and providing an opportunity to apply, the basic concepts of communication in today’s society. These purposes were met by speeches, papers and written examinations.

How are these behaviors measured? Several measurements were specified. For example, requirements for an “A” grade were given as: offering insightful contributions; providing substantive thought and critical analysis; having well organized, developed and amplified speeches recognizing and expressing counterpoints to views expressed; having mechanically correct communication; developing information-thorough research; demonstrating superior understanding of important concepts; turning in papers on the designated dates; creatively developing material; and demonstrating the interrelationship of information. The students were also expected to complete any additional assignments not specified in the grade criteria. A variety of forms for students’ and instructors’ preparation of assignments and evaluations were contained in this manual, too, including model outlines for informative and persuasive speeches, a general speech evaluation form, and an outline evaluation form.

What are the instrumental, noncognitive behaviors for students? Successful students needed to: have adequate attendance, be prepared to speak on assigned days, and meet all basic requirements on assigned days.

How are these behaviors measured? These behaviors were measured by written or oral evaluations from the listeners; by instructor’s assessments, including instructors’ make-up policies; and by student-instructor
conferences. Interestingly, nothing was said in this manual about role taking.

**Why should students take this course?** Rationale provided in this manual included: applying principles of oral communication to specific needs, engaging in social activity, developing communication understandings and behaviors, and enhancing career and community life.

**How are students enabled to take this course?** This category pertains to prerequisites, and so forth. None were given in this manual. However, possible answers could include: passing one or two writing courses, or passing a fundamental oral skills competency exam.

### Regarding Instructors

**What are the instrumental, cognitive behaviors for instructors?** The stated, cognitive objectives included manifesting the ability to: lead discussions, manage problems, have office hours, and give examinations.

**How are these behaviors measured?** In this manual, this information was not made explicit. In other manuals this category included items such as meetings, peer evaluations, supervisor evaluations, and journals.

**What are the instrumental, noncognitive behaviors for instructors?** This type of behavior included: personalizing teaching, personalizing evaluative comments, giving encouragement to students, and providing students with continuous and long term exposure to a particular system of appraisal. Additional noncognitive behaviors included: respecting students as learners, developing rapport, and developing and using feedback. Civility and teaching experience were among other instrumental, noncognitive behaviors in other manuals.

**How are these behaviors measured?** Self-appraisal was the implied measurement. After each of the noncognitive behaviors listed, methods by which these behaviors could be achieved were given. For instance, under the behavior of maintaining a warm and accepting classroom atmosphere, this manual urged that;
The more positive the student’s [sic] perception of their teacher’s feelings toward them, the more positive their self-image, the better their achievement, and the more desirable their classroom behavior. In addition, teachers who like pupils tend to have pupils who accept and like each other.

**Why should instructors teach this course?** This manual claimed that instructors “have been choosing and developing their own teaching techniques through the years.” Other reasons, given in other manuals, included required service, tenure, and money.

**How are instructors enabled to teach this course?** Although nothing was specified in this manual, other manuals answered with “experience,” “rank,” or “seniority.”

**Regarding the Educational System**

**What are the instrumental, cognitive behaviors for the educational system?** Here, too, nothing was explicitly stated. In some of the other manuals, though, the answers included personal and social responsibilities.

**How are these behaviors measured?** Here, too, nothing was explicitly stated. Some manuals responded that schoolwide or departmentwide committees, or supervising instructors, such as department heads, measured these behaviors.

**What are the instrumental, noncognitive behaviors for the educational system?** Among the qualities listed were: enforcing academic honesty, providing a worthwhile educational experience, and providing subjects for research in speech communication.

**How are these behaviors measured?** This information was not stated. Other manuals’ answers included administrative audits and course evaluation forms.

**Why should the educational system offer this course?** No explicit answers to this question were given in this manual. Other manuals’ answers included public
Separating Idealized from Realized Accountability

concern with communication competencies and administrative foresight.

*How is the educational system enabled to offer this course?* Likewise, this question was not answered. Other manuals' answers included a special course budget, legislative requirements and curricula committees' requests.

Appendix Two: Examples of Categorization of the Manual's Rhetoric: The Interpretation Stage of the Critique

An example of a *prescriptive normative* statement is; "all requirements must be completed in order to pass this course." This statement is prescriptive because it specifies a judgment, completing requirements. This statement is also normative because it specifies that students need to complete all requirements.

An example of a *descriptive normative* statement is; "the grading system and the value given to each assignment will be determined by the individual instructor." This statement is descriptive because it specifies a judgment of a subclass, instructors. This statement is also normative because it specifies that instructors' need to determine grading systems and the value given to each assignment.

An example of a *normative metatheoretical* statement is; "you have been choosing and developing your own teaching techniques through the years." This statement is metatheoretical because it specifies a particular theory of judgment. This statement is normative because it specified an application of that theory to the need to choose and develop teaching techniques.

An example of a *prescriptive axiological* statement is; "it is important that the University policies ... be followed." This statement is prescriptive because it specifies a value, the importance of university policies. This statement is also
axiological because it specifies that a particular educational system's instructors value the importance of these policies.  
An example of a descriptive axiological statement is; "a good speech should have a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion." This statement is descriptive because it specifies a value of a particular subclass, basic communication course directors. This statement is also axiological because it specifies that directors value speeches containing a beginning, a middle, and an end.

An example of an axiological metatheoretical statement is; "because critical thinking is important, an ethics unit is included." This statement is metatheoretical because it specifies a particular theory of value, critical thinking. This statement is also axiological because it specifies an application of that theory to the value of including a unit on ethics.

An example of a prescriptive aretaic statement is; "oral communication is, by nature, a social activity." This statement is prescriptive because it specifies a virtue, social activity. This statement is also aretaic because it specifies that people consider engaging in oral communication virtuous.

An example of a descriptive aretaic statement is; "purposeful oral communication . . . [is] necessary in your career and community life." This statement is descriptive because it specifies a virtue of a particular subclass, instructors. This statement is also aretaic because it specifies that instructors consider communicating purposefully virtuous.

An example of an aretaic metatheoretical statement is; "you have the opportunity in this class to develop communication understandings and behaviors which are usually associated with articulate, literate and purposeful oral communication." This statement is metatheoretical because it specifies a particular theory of virtue, utility. This statement is also aretaic because it specifies an application of that theory to the virtue of developing communication understandings and behaviors.
References


9. Consider such classic views of rhetoric as Aristotle’s belief that rhetoric is an off-shoot of ethical studies, and Cicero’s notion of “the good man speaking well.”


12. The orientations include: public speaking, combined contexts, communication theory, interpersonal communication, and small group communication. The instructional applications include various ratios of performance to theory. James W. Gibson, Michael S. Hanna, and Bill M. Huddleston, “The Basic Speech Course at U.S. Colleges and Universities: IV,” 283 and 285.


38. An instructors' manual presented as "gospel" in a formal orientation session is likely to be utilized differently than one mailed to and unaccompanied by explanation for, incoming or inexperienced instructors. In addition, some manuals might be used on an ongoing basis to answer instructors' questions, others might be discarded, as bureaucratic clutter, soon after they are received.

Separating Idealized from Realized Accountability


41. William Lillie, An Introduction to Ethics, 315.

42. This and subsequent conceptions of moral systems are based on Robert N. Bellah, et al. 1985. Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life (27-51 and 335). Los Angeles: California UP.


44. Robert N. Bellah et al., Habits of the Heart, 334.


47. Walter P. Metzger, Academic Freedom in the Age of the University, 141.


49. Walter P. Metzger, Academic Freedom in the Age of the University, 19; and Richard Hofstadter, Academic Freedom in the Age of the College, 76.

