JOURNAL OF THE SPEECH AND THEATRE ASSOCIATION OF MISSOURI

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The editor of the 2006 *Journal of the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri* is presently accepting manuscripts. Along with traditional manuscripts, volume 37 will feature a forum dealing with women's issues relevant to this readership. Traditional manuscripts include: scholarly articles, book and resource reviews, and teaching resources. Scholarship from a diversity of areas from the disciplines encompassing communication, speech, and theatre will be considered. These areas include, but area not limited to: Forensics, Debate, Theatre Instruction and Performance, Communication Education, Communication Theory, Interpersonal Communication, Intercultural Communication, Health Communication, Rhetoric, Persuasion, Organizational Communication, Political Communication, Family Communications, Listening, Communication Ethics, Mediation, Public Relations, Film, Mass Media Theory, Mediated Communication, and New Communication Technologies.

All submissions should be in Microsoft Word and should have an abstract included with the paper. References should follow the 5th edition of the American Psychological Association style manual. Three paper copies and a diskette copy should be included with each submission. A detachable page with author affiliation should be included with the paper copies. All submissions should be received by February 12, 2007, to insure full consideration for publication.

Updated submission information for volume 37 will be available in October of 2006 at the website for the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri – www.stamnet.org

Submissions can be sent to:
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The Personal is the Political: The Wooster Group's Process

B.J. Gailey

Abstract

Based in New York, the Wooster Group, America's longest lived and most successful avant-garde theatrical collective, has created fifteen performance events in their thirty year history, all of which are connected by the Group's innovative and extensive rehearsal process. This process is directly responsible for their place among the avant-garde elite, and can be broken down into three key elements- the deconstruction of source texts, collaborative authorship and the careful arrangement of performance, scenic and technological elements by director Elizabeth LaCompte.

The deconstruction of source texts is the starting point for almost all of the Group's pieces. By examining the structure and language of a piece outside of its authorial intent (and placing it in opposition to other cultural structures), the Wooster Group finds new meaning in theatrical chestnuts such as Arthur Miller's The Crucible.

The Wooster Group then explores their personal responses to these source texts, as individuals and as a group. Other "found" objects are also brought in to be used as stimuli. This collaborative exploration of text creates a multiplicity of viewpoint and meaning.

Finally, Elizabeth LaCompte, the Group's director/collage artist, takes the "found" objects, the original text, and the responses/explorations of the Group and shapes a theatrical experience out of them. She ensures each moment and theme is given equal weight so that no one element is more important than any other.

Noted avant-garde choreographer Meredith Monk described her personal evolution as an artist in these words:

> *Maybe ten years ago, I was starting to understand how skills could get in people's way, and how my skills were even getting in my own way of finding new ways of doing things . . . I felt that seeing people that had a more natural presence, where you were able to see the human being in them more than people that had certain persona's -like 'I am a dancer'- was a necessary step in artistic development. (Savran, 52)*

The "natural presence" Monk was searching for is at the very heart of the Wooster Group's work.

Based in New York, the Wooster Group is America's longest lived- and arguably most successful- avant-garde theatre collective. The Group's ensemble of artists has remained remarkably stable over its thirty year performance history; the Group's membership has included such avant-garde luminaries as visual artist Elizabeth LaCompte, actor Willem DaFoe, and monologist Spalding Gray, the first two having worked in some capacity on all nineteen of the Wooster Group's productions. The Wooster Group is unique among theatrical collectives in that they do not attempt to create a finished theatrical experience for their audiences. Instead, they structure their rehearsal process in a way that works against manufacturing a clear meaning or message. This process results in productions that challenge audience assumptions about the nature of performance itself, and is directly responsible for their place among the theatrical avant-garde elite. The philosophies that drive the Wooster Group's distinctive process and allow for their continued success are *the deconstruction of source texts, collaborative authorship* and *the careful arrangement of performance, scenic and technological elements by director Elizabeth LaCompte*.

THE DECONSTRUCTION OF SOURCE TEXTS

Because the Wooster Group works to obfuscate clear meaning in their work, it is difficult to ascribe to them a certain philosophy. The closest match is "deconstructionist." Deconstruction defies concise definition; even the man who coined the phrase, Jacques Derrida, refused to simplify it by defining it. In his analysis of Derrida, author and humanities professor John Caputo explained deconstruction in this way: "Whenever deconstruction finds a nutshell -- a secure axiom or a pithy maxim -- the very idea is to crack it open and disturb this tranquility" (Caputo, 32). There are many purposes for this tactic, but Arnold Aronson states the Wooster Group's goal best: "By breaking down the structure ('language') of a particular play, resituating it, and placing it in juxtaposition to other shards and fragments of culture (other 'language systems', as it were), the underlying assumptions and social codes of the original texts were exposed, and new meanings and understandings emerged" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 185). The Group views all texts as raw materials, nothing more. Their definition of "text", however, has changed throughout their performance history. The Group moved through three distinct phases in relation to source texts, but all three have been motivated by this deconstructionist instinct.

The very early work of the Wooster Group was marked by their devotion to autobiographical source texts. These texts manifested themselves in the person of Spalding Gray. A member of the Performance Group along with Elizabeth LeCompte, his work with noted avant-garde artist Robert Wilson led Gray to believe that the future of performance lay not in the transformation from "self" to "character" (or even in the combination of the two), but in the performance of "self" *as* "character." This style- in which the audience cannot separate performer from performance- was adopted by the entire troupe and helped push the Wooster Group further from Stanislavski based theory; Ron Vawter, a founding member of the Group, has described them on more than

one occasion as "the anti-Stanislavksi" (Savran, 112). It was not just Gray's performance style that influenced the Group's beginnings. Gray's memories became the plot for the first major work of the Group, The Rhode Island Trilogy.

The Rhode Island Trilogy consists of three pieces- Sakonnet Point, Rumstick Road, Nayatt School- and an epilogue entitled Point Judith. The titles of the pieces all refer to places in Rhode Island connected with Spalding Gray's childhood. They are all connected by set pieces that repeat themselves- a small house, a red tent, and characters that appear in different yet similar guises throughout the sequence- the doctor figure, the mother figure. All spring from Gray's associations with his mother, who committed suicide earlier in Gray's life. Yet that was only the starting point. "In rehearsal, members of the company listened to Gray's (memories) and performed structured improvisations around them" (Heuval, 109). LaCompte and the rest of the Group's work is sometimes characterized as meaningless because "the personal material has no special meaning, it is merely material to be used in making a structure" (Shank, 171). Gray's memories were used as an outline to be filled in (and true to the Group's style, scribbled over) by the rest of the Group's reactions to his memories.

LaCompte also brought in various subjects and objects to base improvisations around, which is where many of the fundamental images of the sequence (the red tent, the house) came from. The result was a series of pieces in which "some of the material was suggested by Gray's memories; but it was also shaped as much by other performers' responses to ideas and found objects brought to rehearsal" (Giesekam, 328). This amalgam of source material created a performance that defied definition and easy categorization. It differed from more traditional theatre in that it was not "a closed system . . . but a process, inseparable from its performers and this period of their lives" (Schmitt, 47).

Gray left the Group after Point Judith to explore his "performed self" as a monologist. However, his views on performance continued to be felt throughout the next fifteen years

of the Group's existence. The layering of sources that began with The Rhode Island Trilogy became even more ambitious in the next phase of the Group's work as the focus shifted away from personal history as a starting point. Gray's interest in autobiography as a source text was soon abandoned by the Group, but he had been instrumental in determining the Group's direction; "in the work of LeCompte and Gray

> *. . . meaning constantly spiraled back inward to the source of creation- the self- and was totally and inextricably bound up in performance" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 148).*

Beginning with Nayatt School and Point Judith, the Wooster Group began moving "toward what would become its signature style- the appropriation and deconstruction of classical dramatic texts, the manipulation of spatial relationships both onstage and between the audience and the stage, and the syncopation of quiet or intense scenes with manic and frantic ones" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 153). Spinning out of the rehearsal mode that began with their association with Spalding Gray, the Group's improvisations started to focus on classic scripts as just another set of found objects. Gray had performed in T.S. Eliot's play The Cocktail Party, and he brought it into rehearsals for Nayatt School as more autobiographical material to build with. What happened, thanks to Group improvisation and LeCompte's collage work, was an extreme re-arrangement of the text that resulted, at times, in its complete anonymity.

The use of classical texts was broken down even further in Point Judith. For Spalding Gray's final show with the Group, LeCompte and ensemble told Gray's story through the filter of Eugene O'Neil's Long Day's Journey Into Night. None of the actual text made it into the final product; instead the Group used the characters and plot from the play as a container to be filled with Gray's memories. This became one of many techniques the

Group used with classical texts in an attempt to "give the theatrical event over entirely to the immediacy of non- and even anti-textual playing" (Baker-White, 184-185). An additional filter was used when the Group decided that Point Judith and the improvisations that led to it would be centered around the comedic, shifting the very autobiographical tragedies of Gray and O'Neil into soap-opera farce.

The Group's following piece, Route 1 and 9 (the last act), combined the use of classical text with personal improvisation inspired by text. The Group superimposed the last act of Thornton Wilder's Our Town on pornography, lecture, and minstrel show comedy taken directly from comedian "Pigmeat" Markham. The show began with a videotaped lecture (clearly influenced by Gray's "performed self") about the importance of Our Town which was inspired by an actual classroom aid found by LeCompte. Performers in blackface ordered takeout for a party based on a comedy record by Markham, shifting into a videotape of the Group performing the last act of Our Town reader's theatre style; this time, however, there was no re-arrangement of text. The deconstruction came from the juxtaposition of the selected text in its entirety with the raucous (and racially charged) comedy preceding it and the graphic sexuality of the dance and pornography that followed.

As noted by Heuval, "Often the narratives (of the Wooster Group) are partially determined by the use of texts" (Heuval, 58), meaning that the form the performance takes is shaped by the very nature of the source texts. This was definitely the case with L.S.D. (…just the high points…). Combining the Group's interest (or lack thereof, depending on the member) in Timothy Leary and the Beat poets with Arthur Miller's The Crucible the Group struck back at critics who claimed Route 1 and 9's use of blackface was racist because it lacked context. The Group mixed strategies with its use of The Crucible, taking the full text approach used in Route 1 and 9 and filtering it through emotionless, high-speed delivery that occasionally devolved into gibberish. When Arthur Miller

filed a lawsuit barring the Group from continuing to use his text, they substituted a text called The Hearing, written by the Group and clearly mirroring The Crucible. A member of the Group served as referee for the show, and if any member spoke a line from Miller's play they were drowned out by a buzzer. This referee/third-party role echoed Gray's influence, and became a mainstay of the Group's productions. Even without the original text, the production proved that "young audiences in the eighties, attuned to image and a gibber of language, can be as moved, on the common ground of hysteria indifferent to language, as middle-aged liberals were in the McCarthy era by the factitious drama of the original play" (Blau, 269).

The Wooster Group successfully mixed radical re-framing of texts and autobiographical reaction by performers throughout their first two periods, "but beginning with Brace Up! in 1991, their adaptation of Paul Schmidt's translation of Chekhov's Three Sisters, the literary text became increasingly privileged" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 180). The Group's early development worked with little regard for the author's intent, and this at least remained in place for the final phase of their development. However, this period saw the Group performing plays primarily in their full form without re-arrangement or excessive interruption from other non-related sources. This new-found respect for classic texts was seemingly at odds with the Group's "anti-Stanislavksi" goals, because normally "one talks of deconstruction when a mise-en-scene presents itself in a fragmented form, with no possibility of fixing a stable meaning, each fragment apparently in opposition with the others" (Harding, 100). However, the Group's deconstructive impulse had merely moved to a larger frame of reference.

When Brace Up! was rehearsed, LeCompte continued the Group's tradition of bringing in found objects and improvising from them. This time the objects were cultures. The Group studied Samurai films, Japanese customs and culture, and noh drama in their rehearsals, mixing them with the Russian foundation

of Chekhov and the Group's American reactions to both societies. The result was a deconstruction of a different sort: "this was not an interpretation or adaptation of the play but a radical re-framing in which the play was yanked out of its conventional moorings, mixed with (or placed in violent collision with) disparate and seemingly random cultures and traditions, and resituated within the ongoing oeuvre of the Wooster Group tradition" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 192).

The Wooster Group's recent performance history is a continuation of this most recent period with strong influences from the previous two making their presence known. The Group has turned its attention to classics like The Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape for its more traditional offerings, while To You, The Birdie!, Frank Dell's The Temptation of St. Anthony and House/Lights dismantle Phedre, Flaubert and Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights, splicing them with Lenny Bruce and cult bondage films. Spaulding Gray's emotionless doctor persona is a constant fixture in the form of the referee, and found objects, be they cultures, texts or red tents, still find their way into rehearsals. In general, "the Wooster Group's work seems to fall into two areas. One might be called 'layering', the creation of successive layers of sign systems based upon a foundation of conventional theatrical signs. The other, a sort of reversal, is desemanticization, the conscious attempt to divorce signs from their semantic content" (McNamara, 358). The evolution of these two areas can be seen in the three phases of their work, and the various combinations the Group utilizes today.

COLLABORATIVE AUTHORSHIP

The deconstruction of source texts is a major part of the Group's performance routine, but it is only the beginning. Group improvisations and collaborative authorship are what fill in and give shape to the rehearsal process. The Wooster Group is a group not only in name. Every aspect of rehearsal, from selection of

source texts to the use of found objects, is done as a unit, at once stressing individuality (by placing emphasis on individual response/improvisation) and removing it (by undercutting the importance of the autobiographical with multiple layers of meaning). Auslander gives an excellent comparison of the Group's identity and origins:

> *Although the Wooster Group is organized on the model of the experimental theater collectives of the 1960s (the performers work together to develop the pieces out of improvisations and experiments; LeCompte, as director, shapes the final product), the style of their work is radically different from that of the 1960s collectives. The emphasis on authenticity and communality in those groups' work has given way in the Wooster Group to performance that questions the meaning, the very possibility, of authenticity in postmodern. (Auslander, 84)*

The Wooster Group values process over product to a degree rarely seen in the world of professional theatre. A production will often be presented as a "work-in-progress" for many years before they are finalized, resulting in the relatively few productions produced by the Group over its thirty year history. "They don't want their pieces to end and so they rehearse and rehearse and divide them into parts, then make them into trilogies, and carry along objects and costumes, music and leftover texts, putting them into the same house, turned this way and that" (Marranca, 5). In addition, because shows can stay in the Group's repertoire for up to five years, there is much change that can happen organically as a result of the collaborative nature of their process (Giesekam, 329). The Group's productions can be labeled as collaborations because each step in the rehearsal and performance processes is a result of a communal devising.

The Wooster Group begins their work with a particular moment or theme in the found object or text and merely reacts, improvising action that will eventually be staged. Elizabeth LaCompte takes these improvisations and creates an order out of them, selecting additional objects to further the process. Even though she does hold the title director, she functions more like a collage artist, arranging elements; the Wooster Group truly "operates as an ensemble with all members contributing to all aspects of a work's evolution" (McNamara, 345). For Hula, it was Group member Kate Valk who brought in the Hawaiian record that was the impetus; the dance piece developed from the Group's reaction to the record and their personal impressions of words like "paradise." Each member of the Group is expected to feed the collaboration a constant stream of these found objects. "This approach highlights process- the artwork and the *work* of art" (Marranca, 1).

Kate Valk, speaking of the rehearsal process for House/Lights, notes that "as with our other pieces, we let the style arise from the material. Our idea is not to put a certain spin on something. We are always facing off with the text and finding a way to hear it in the space" (Rosten, 18). Allowing different objects and improvisations to speak opposite one another is just one example of this "facing off" that is a direct result of their collaborative nature. Oftentimes sections of Group productions may seem random or unrelated. To a certain extent, this is the result of their insistence that the audience draw their own meaning from the event as it is unfolding. However, other times the audience is witnessing the fact that the Group's productions embrace "various layers of activity and other texts, often in ways which may seem quite random to a spectator, but which usually derive from various associative leaps made during the devising process" (Giesekam, 329).

The Wooster Group equation would seem to be: single inspiration + multiple interpretations + formal structuring = process/production. This was not always the case. Early on, the

Group had more tunnel vision; "the Group merged the personal and autobiographical inspiration of a single performer (Gray) with the spirit of ensemble creation and with the singular creative vision and control of an artist-director" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 147). The result was that the early productions were easier to read into, easier to draw associations that may or may not have been intentional. Once Gray left the Group, the focus shifted toward obfuscation and multiple points of inspiration. Pieces like Route 1 and 9 were the direct result of collaborative authorship and research, with individual members' interests and abilities being intricately arranged so that meaning was not apparent. Schmitt writes of this period that the Group "improvised freely in reaction to the material over a period of seven months, and to Elizabeth LaCompte, who, as director, made suggestions and in the end selected the improv work she liked and structured it in relation to the documents . . . it is important to emphasize the freedom with which the performers worked" (Schmitt, 63). This freedom allowed the Wooster Group to retain elements of their early form while adding in multiple layers of meaning.

This freedom in collaboration is perhaps more useful to the Wooster Group than most other, more traditional theatre collectives. The reason for this is simple; the Wooster Group's aim is not the creation of character, but the creation of new symbols. "The Wooster Group's members participated as co-creators of their works", says Aronson, "and while the actors assumed characters, the basis was neither psychological nor emotional; rather, it was a semiotic approach- the creation of character through the accumulation of signs" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 189). These symbols come from the source texts, improvisations, and even past Wooster Group productions; indeed, the Group developed its own language, in a way, increasing the feeling of alienation among audience members not familiar with their work. The end result is a piece of theatre that is difficult if not impossible to reproduce because it exists only as a collection of symbols that refer to the specific personas in the Wooster Group,

which "can only be understood to exist in performance by that group" (Schmitt, 42).

The interest in symbol was present from their earliest work. However, this early period had no frame of reference, no personal history other than Gray's; "although the earliest Group productions made reference to outside material, they quickly began to reference themselves. Props, ground plans, images, actions and motifs reappeared from production to production" (Aronson, Scenography 179). Later in The Rhode Island Trilogy and in all the pieces after, a trend of self-reference and repeated imagery is apparent. The house that appears in Sakonnet Point becomes part of the set for Rumstick Road and House/Lights, and the red tent is a motif in Nayatt School as well as L.S.D.. The result of this echo of past works is "somewhat like a modern city built upon the foundations and monuments of succeeding generations and earlier cultures- the past is supporting the present work, emerging through the new framework to add historical significance, but the new work is still unique" (McNamara, 347).

This tangible history is an important characteristic of the Wooster Group, and a reflection of their intensely familial collaboration. It drives home the fact that "what is actually being staged in a Wooster production is the life of the rehearsal room. So the material- that life- that one is staging is being manifested in the very moment one is staging it" (Marranca, 11). It serves a greater purpose than a simple frame of reference, though. It further evolves a shared performance language among the members of the Group, and allows the Group to move farther away from "theatre" and closer to "performance art." This movement typifies the second period of the Group's development as described by Aronson: "It was as if the Group took a Brechtian sense of alienation from the Performance Group, chance methodology from Cage, a minimalist emphasis upon the frame over content from the art world, and a non-hierarchical approach to culture from postmodernism and then mixed it through the solipsistic and self-referential world of performance art" (Aronson, Scenography 185-

186). Text and the individual is thrown out in favor of a multiplicity of meaning, and "the agenda . . . is turned more and more away from the simple deconstruction of textuality by the intervention of performance, toward an undermining of drama and performance and the culture they inhabit and represent from within" (Heuval, 104-105).

Another by-product of this freedom in collaboration was that the vast majority of the Wooster Group's productions have moments of Bacchanalian madness- explosions of intense emotion that sharply contrast the intentional lack of connection in other sequences. These moments of unbridled creativity can be found in almost all of the Group's pieces, but most especially after Gray's departure. As most of the improvisations performed by the Group are action based, so too are these moments of madness; many incorporate dance elements, or are likewise focused on a concrete physical objective. Some, however, are based on sound rather than motion, or are rooted in a particular character. The goal, whether the madness is active or stylistic, joyful or violent, is the same. The purpose of these explosions is similar to that of a Zen riddle- to shut down the rational part of the audience's mind; "the Wooster Group has learned to cultivate a certain degree of disorder so that it can generate new ways of making sense" (Heuval, 101).

In Route 1 and 9, for example, the videotaped performance of the solemn last act of Our Town, performed with an emphasis on the poetry of Wilder, is sandwiched between a raucous blackface comedy and a sensual dance wherein the performers are dressed as vampires, leading into a videotape of a sex act. This collision of unbridled sexual energy and funereal staidness brings the difference between life and death (the 1 and 9 in the title) into sharp relief. Blau describes watching Route 1 and 9:

> *There was something in the performance that seemed crazed. It was like the now-abated fury of punk in its attack upon everything in sight, but with the barrier to physical violence in front of the*

> *audience . . . this was in contrast to the unsullied language of the young lovers of Grovers Corners, which seemed anomalous on the video screen, where sincerity is always a lie. (Blau, 268)*

This attack was used sparingly, but effectively, by the members of the Group.

In L.S.D., the attack was extended from the Group to single character choices. Willem DaFoe's Proctor was emotionally distant, as was most of the cast. However, Ron Vawter screamed his lines at an extremely fast pace, emphasizing emotional content and sound over meaning. In addition, the Group had videotaped themselves using acid in rehearsal. They studied their actions and performed them live, while the video played in the background (Savran, 200). This is not only an excellent example of the diminished difference between rehearsal and production for the Wooster Group, but also the Group's dedication to collaborative risk-taking. The explosive emotion of the videotape, combined with the removed "reenactment" taking place live, functioned as an attack on audience sensibilities very similar to the tactics of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty.

The end goal of these explosions was always to layer new meaning and frames of reference to the Group's work. It was not always perfectly effective; sometimes the collaborative process resulted in chaos. "Yet on the other hand, the enfolding of that chaos into highly crafted and even, at times, didactic works of art, demonstrates an equally strong tendency toward theatrical experiences designed to lead the spectators toward a more concrete understanding of their world than they had previous access to" (Baker-White, 167). The Group's collaborative nature allowed for these moments of tremendous risk and tremendous possible reward.

The Wooster Group's collaborative authorship of their productions is not groundbreaking in and of itself- many performance collectives, Ping Chong's for example, work together

to devise original pieces. The key difference is that Ping Chong is writing his own material. The Wooster Group is working with other people's texts to create something new, building not from scratch but from years of theatrical and cultural history. To further underscore the differences, the Wooster Group's goal is not to use their collaborative process to explore the text in a vacuum. Rather, the Group uses the text as a tool to explore the world at large. The end result is something very unique, and says something about the Wooster Group's dedication to exploring the human condition; "the positive desire of artists to participate with their materials rather than use them to express themselves (or even profundities about themselves) can be understood as a way of embracing the world, not of withdrawing from it" (Schmitt, 130).

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ELIZABETH LACOMPTE

The Wooster Group specializes in multiple voices speaking at once in many languages about the same thing. It is much like the story of the five blind men and the elephant- one feels the trunk and says it is a snake, one feels the leg and says it is a tree. Text and performer combine on so many levels that it is difficult to say where one idea ends and another begins: "as group autobiographies ("lives of the performers"), the productions reflect a collective intelligence, duplicated on the literary level by the anthology-like scripts that are staged" (Marranca, 74). That is part and parcel of the Group's agenda- the creation of so many focal points that any meaning the audience derives comes from the moment itself, and that particular audience member in that moment. However, for something so chaotic by nature to work, it needs a strong eye to guide it. That is where Elizabeth LaCompte comes in.

Elizabeth LaCompte has been with the Wooster Group since their first rehearsal, and functions as a conductor/choreographer/cartographer/collage artist. A visual artist by training and with extensive work in film, she approaches the Group's work from a position she refers to as "architectonic";

she combines and arranges the improvisations, texts and space to ensure that one viewpoint is not given preferential treatment. Through a number of tactics, she sees that the Group's productions create a sense of a shared universe while not promoting a single viewpoint apart from the performance itself; LeCompte explains that "my meaning is in the piece itself" (Kaye, 256). She also attempts to make the Group an open space for all collaborators, creating a theatre that feels as much like a family as it does an artistic entity.

LeCompte's guidance is a major reason the Wooster Group has been successful for three decades. She has helped create an identity that is informed by technique, choice of text, materials, and perhaps most importantly, the fact that all the productions seem to take place in the same space. Using repeated images and actions, the Wooster Group "created an ongoing body of work that flowed from one production into the next and that was consciously self-reflexive. Each of the Wooster Group's productions was, in a sense, part of an evolving and integrated theatrical self-portrait" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 152). This gives the illusion that each event is tied to the other, enforcing the Group's belief that these are not "plays" to be performed, but individual, living experiences part of a larger whole. Indeed, "the Wooster Group . . . have always characterized their body of work as all one work" (Schmitt, 21). Thematic consistency has something to do with this cohesion, but the primary throughline can be found visually.

It has already been discussed how much props and costumes, images and action recur in Wooster Group productions. Items such as the house that changes sizes and the red tent constantly reform and reappear, and striped shirts and lab coats connect characters within trilogies and on even larger scales. Special mention should be made, however, concerning the groundplans and scenic elements of the Wooster Group. For example, in Nayatt School, "the set, foreshadowing the direction of the performance, is designed as a disorienting "antigravity room" dropped below floor level, and includes a reverse-perspective

house that destroys the fixed perspective used in Rumstick Road" (Heuval, 124).

The whole of The Rhode Island Trilogy is highly self-referential scenically speaking, but elements also return in a performance from the Group's second period; in L.S.D., "rows of metal folding chairs on the floor and on low risers face a long, narrow platform about four feet above floor level behind which, and separated from it, is a steeply raked stage. Both platform and stage are nearly the width of the Performing Garage . . . the arrangement of space is essentially a reversal of that of Nayatt School" (McNamara, 347). Even when it is not LaCompte designing the ground plan, this interconnectedness still has an extremely palpable influence. According to Group member Jim Clayburgh, "It's a constant evolution of the same ground plan, with just a transfer to another space or the change of an angle. Even when I designed L.S.D., the ground plans of all the other shows were on the stage as my reference for working it out" (Marranca, 7).

Space serves not only to connect various pieces in the Group's body of work, but also as another layer of information being delivered to the audience. LaCompte worked extensively with Richard Schechner, and his theories of environmental theatre resonate clearly in all of the Wooster Group's work. Schechner states that "I believe there are actual relationships between the body and the spaces the body moves through . . . the fullness of space, the endless ways space can be transformed, articulated, animated- that is the basis of environmental theater" (Schechner, 1). LaCompte takes this idea and focuses it into a series of leitmotifs that are completely independent of the source texts: "the space is in no way a direct consequence of the script. It is an independent element" (McNamara, 352). The scenic elements of a Wooster production function as another layer of code for the audience to decipher.

Thanks to LaCompte's background as a visual artist, she "starts with the construction of space as a way of conceiving

design as structure. Her project is aligned with the American avant-garde tendency to regard space as a field of revelation (social, political, or spiritual)" (Marranca, 5). Much in the same way that the collision of text with performer can also create various structures in Wooster productions, so too does LaCompte specialize in using the space's relation to the actors, the audience, and the relation to past productions to help shape the process. Schmitt describes LaCompte's vital role in the scenic area and in the Wooster Group's hierarchy: "the performers respond to the set designed by the director and the technical director, to the documents, props and one another. The director responds to the performers' improvisations with those materials. And the audience members respond to everything as it is presented in a structure made by the director" (Schmitt, 65). LaCompte's scenic arrangements function like architecture that connects every other element into a cohesive, if elusive, whole.

This use of space as a performer in and of itself is used to great effect in the Group's productions, drawing audience attention and creating more input to be processed. In Route 1 and 9, the last act of Our Town is shown via video monitors mounted on the ceiling, while the vampire dance takes place directly below. The result is that "the spectator's view is pulled in opposite directions: vertically and upward toward the closely framed and enclosed nostalgic view of life and death that Wilder describes, and also downward and horizontally toward the performers who, unframed and unrestrained, have so vividly evoked the physical" (Heuval, 139). This brings up another of LaCompte's unique contributions to the Wooster Group- the incorporation of technology into nearly every performance as an alienation tool.

From the beginning, the Wooster Group has insisted on using technology in such a way that it does not aid any sort of theatrical illusion. The Group "takes to heart the idea of theatrical production and reproduction, offering both the performance and its documentation within the same event" (Marranca, 74). In fact, great pains are taken to make the use of technology noticeable, as

if it were another performer in the piece. In every show from Nayatt School on, the Wooster Group has had a referee/third-party character operate the sound board onstage, using the very use of technology to make a comment on the theatricality of the event. Technological mistakes are intentionally incorporated into more traditional productions such as House/Lights in order to draw the audience out of the world of the play (in a review, it was noted that "House/Lights . . . manages to use today's technology in imaginative ways to make this a work that is distinctly of our time") (Levitt, 138).

Oftentimes LaCompte uses technology in conjunction with live performance, juxtaposing the strengths and weaknesses of each. This is especially true in L.S.D.. The dual staging of the acid trip rehearsal (live and on video) creates doubt in the authenticity of performance. In the scenes from The Crucible, "one of the performers could not make the performance, so he was videotaped and his place at the table was taken by a video monitor- the Group ended up using another performer and the videotape, which was played with and adjusted during the performance" (McNamara, 349). The use of video in L.S.D., and in all the Group's productions, "had the effect of creating temporal and spatial dislocation; it had the ability to create simultaneous yet conflicting images and it forced the audience to employ varying forms of concentration to decipher and decode multiple framing deviced and differing methods of reading images" (Aronson, Avant-Garde 195). The use of technology during performance skews the importance of the live performer and breaks down cohesive structure, a goal of utmost importance to LaCompte.

Critics of the Wooster Group's work have complained that because there are so many images with multiple frames of reference, meaning can be obfuscated from the audience. LaCompte disagrees. She believes that "anything can co-exist together- without, you know, losing its own uniqueness- without being absorbed and regurgitated. They are separate, and they can

stay separate and at the same time inform each other- within the same work. At best, when the form is strong enough, that's what happens" (Kaye, 257). That is what LaCompte believes her true position is- to create a strong enough form to hold the seemingly random associations and juxtapositions that arise from the Wooster Group's unique process. Through her arrangement of performance elements, she attempts to either remove inherent meaning from original texts or double-code the Group's work in such a way that images and moments in the event work against each other, producing conflicting reactions in the audience.

By placing equal emphasis on elements of a performance- technological, scenic, performance, source texts- LaCompte creates a sort of well-ordered chaos that works on multiple levels at once. In L.S.D.,

> *LaCompte allows each theatrical element to develop independently- to "speak in its own language." Thus the setting is clearly a theatrical creation. It is not a stage or empty space, yet it does not mesh iconographically with The Crucible or the Leary sections. "I don't ever try to make one part of the play illustrate another", she comments. "All of the elements of the piece have their own life. They are not supportive or secondary." (McNamara, 359)*

This lack of an attempt at cohesiveness in design results in a rich and variable experience.

Not only is there no attempt on the part of LaCompte to synthesize all the disparate elements of the productions, there is almost a backlash against it: "in fact, the very notion of synthesis seems to be deliberately contested. The play (Route 1 and 9) is not only constructed out of a number of other texts besides Our Town- the Fadiman lecture, Point Judith (an earlier play by the Wooster Group), the Pigmeat Markham comedy routine- but also embodies

competing streams of information" (Klaver, 28). This rebellion against meaning is at the very core of the Wooster Group, and is the basis for most of its assumptions about the nature of performance.

That being said, LaCompte has often made clear that the Wooster Group's pieces are a-political in the common usage of the term. They grow from a devotion to action and free associations using found objects as starting points. Even when this object is a text, "LeCompte resists the notion of interpreting . . . 'I think it is usually a traditional director who is trained to interpret a play, while I'm making my own play, even if I'm using someone else's play'" (Allen, 146). They are truly "found" objects, something to spark interest and create interesting improvisations. They are sounds to be orchestrated by LeCompte, nothing more.

It is not that LeCompte and the Wooster Group are against audience members receiving a message or meaning from their productions. What they take issue with is the fact that the audience might believe they are intentionally sending it. The Wooster Group strives to make every performance unique to every audience member, and that involves a great deal of sifting and sorting on LaCompte's part, and while there are certainly commonalities among the Wooster Group's techniques, great care is taken by LaCompte to weight every aspect equally. As Heuval puts it, "The Group's disposition of textuality and performance in its work never follows a linear pattern and never allows one paradigm to dominate or absorb the other. It is never a matter of thematically privileging performance over drama by displacing the text, or of discovering a neat and stable synthesis between them" (Heuval, 100). LaCompte and company let everything mix and simmer, sometimes for years, until a performance is inevitable.

Oftentimes postmodern theatre collectives are derided by critics for creating work that is meaningless and chaotic. However, by breaking down the Wooster Group's process into its three distinct philosophies, one is able to see how structured the Group's particular brand of chaos truly is, as well as how much care and

effort go into creating multiple conflicting meanings. The Wooster Group provides an audience with a completely unique theatrical experience in which the message of a piece is determined by the individual. The Group's process allows them to exist in a paradoxical state- both chaotic and highly structured, both character-based and autobiographical, both temporary and, thanks to their extensive use of technology, timeless. They are truly one of a kind. Giesekam described them best:

> *The playful collaging of found materials and daily life activities with highly popular cultural forms and texts, the use of pastiche and quotation along with a high degree of inter-textuality, the ironic, self-aware performances, the fragmentary, processual structuring which resists attempts to impose a unifying meaning, are just some of the aspects of the Wooster Group's work which have contributed to them being portrayed as the postmodern theater group par excellence. (Giesekam, 327)*

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Applying Basic Learning Style Theory in the Communication Classroom Through Direct Instruction of Fundamental Concepts

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Abstract

This paper argues that the application of basic learning style theory to the communication classroom, through direct teaching of key concepts and ideas, may lead to more efficient and effective communication instruction. While researchers such as Gardner; Schwartz, Davidson, and Maer; Flaherty; Eiszler; and Stronck, Reiff, Barbe and Swassing provide various schemas for identifying learning style differences, each maintains that the means by which individuals gather, organize, and evaluate information varies from individual to individual. This paper, then, postulates that since attending to a speech should correlate with an intention to learn whatever new information the speaker is providing, and because any given audience will be comprised of learners running the gamut of individual learning style differences, it is a reasonable assumption that knowledge of these cognitive differences may enhance communication student learning.

Using Eiszler's schema as a foundation, the paper provides specific applications for both speakers and audience members in each of three learning style categories: kinesthetic/tactual, visual, and auditory. The paper concludes that by considering as many alternative strategies as is feasible as one prepares a presentation, and by paying special attention to the individual differences that exist in every audience, the likelihood that the intended message will be understood by and retained by a larger percentage of the audience becomes apparent. And conversely, an awareness of these differences as they apply to the student as audience member

can further enhance each individual communication transaction by prompting the listener to take into consideration conditions that may maximize successful attending to a presentation.

Rationale

Why is it that three people hearing and seeing the exact same speech at the exact same time in the exact same place may come away with three widely varying responses? It depends, of course, on a number of influences ranging from the listening skills and experiences of audience members to the presentational ability (both verbal and non-verbal) of the speaker to the physical environment of the room. It could, however, also depend on something equally complex, something that influences each bit of information that we gather, organize, and evaluate, yet something that is rarely mentioned in the context of the communication classroom—the learning styles of both presenter and audience members. Learning style may be defined as the "composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and psychological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment" (Griggs 1991, p.7). According to Reiff (1992) each individual is born with natural tendencies towards one or more particular way of learning, but those once-preferred ways are later influenced by experience, culture, and human development itself. Consideration of these factors, or tendencies, may affect, in a holistic sense, how we learn, but within the context of presenting and attending to a speech, the applications may be more specifically realized. Juliann Scholl (2005), for example, developed specific activities that helped students better utilize different learning modalities in a basic communication course. That project was later successfully adapted for use in other courses. Within the communication context, Scholl suggests that "understanding one's learning style

may shed light on how one selects, organizes, and interprets (i.e. perceives) content" (2005, p. 53).

While research is inconclusive regarding the extent to which our learning style differences affect our abilities to process information, it is widely agreed upon that as individuals we do indeed learn differently from one another. *And since attending to a speech should correlate with an intention to learn whatever new information the speaker is providing, and because any given audience will be comprised of learners running the gamut of individual learning style differences, it is a reasonable assumption that knowing a little something about these cognitive differences may give communication students an edge towards more efficient and effective communication.* Applying at minimum basic learning style theory to the communication classroom, then, through direct instruction of the key concepts and ideas, seems a logical step towards providing students with a more comprehensive view of factors that may influence the communication process, and thus may ultimately positively influence the student's own communication transactions. Introducing students to this theory through the communication context may also benefit students by encouraging introspection with regards to how each learns in a more holistic sense, and applications to improvement of skills as active learners may ideally be transferred to the student's other classroom situations. Boyer (1995), in his discussion of the "basic school," emphasizes the critical nature of the learning environment as an integral factor in the overall success of any educational situation. A key to fostering an optimum learning environment may be the very recognition of how students learn, both from educator and student perspectives. In a year-long professional development course developed as a means to qualitatively analyze teacher sensitivity to learning style theory and learning style differences within students, teacher participants found that when they became better versed in learning style theory, they found themselves discussing it more often with students (Rosenfeld and Rosenfeld, 2004). Further, "teachers explained

that when they changed their beliefs and practices, so their students changed" (p. 480). Overall classroom cooperation and performance improved as a result of this increased dialogue between teachers and students about learning style theory, and according to Rosenfeld and Rosenfeld, learning became "legitimized." In a study of 105 students in a general education course, Jones, Reichard, and Mokhtari (2003) concluded that "student awareness of their own learning styles may be quite helpful in increasing control of their learning habits and strategies, which should, in turn, influence academic production" (p. 370). Following is a brief overview of this basic learning style theory, with applications to the communication process that if shared with students may result in a more thorough understanding by students of the total communication process, as well as individual improvement in both speaking and listening roles.

An Overview of the Basic Theory

Researchers have developed numerous means of attempting to explain the differences in the way we learn. Howard Gardner (1983), for example, devised a well-known system whereby all individuals have strengths and limitations in each of the following eight areas, or as he describes them, intelligences:

- -linguistic
- -logical-mathematical
- -spatial
- -musical
- -bodily-kinesthetic
- -naturalistic
- -intrapersonal
- -interpersonal

Gardner, with his Multiple Intelligences Theory, suggests that within each individual lies the ability to process information through each of the above eight distinct areas, though no two individuals possess the same combination of strengths and weaknesses, and no individual maintains the same personal strengths and weaknesses throughout one's lifetime. Rather, the way we learn—which "intelligences" become our points of focus—change as we grow and experience life.

A second way to look at learning style differences deals with lateralization in our brains, or more simply the idea that the left and right hemispheres of our brains have distinct functions with regards to how we learn. Researchers suggest that the two hemispheres of our brains contain distinct perceptual avenues (Schwartz, Davidson, and Maer, 1975). The left-brain, or "analytic" learner, functions most effectively with verbal communication and thrives on organization, sequencing, and detail. A right-brain, or "global" learner's, world-view may be described as more "holistic." That is, this individual communicates most effectively non-verbally, through exploring patterns and larger images. The global learner is often described as creative, spontaneous, and intuitive.

A third way to examine learning differences, and the schema that is perhaps most directly applicable to the communication process, combines brain lateralization theories such as the one above with cognitive style theories that suggest that all learning may be classified by the various channels, or modalities, through which individuals process information. Research by Dunn and Dunn suggests that students will be more successful learners when they are taught in the particular style most suited to them; when only one teaching style is used in any particular classroom, optimum learning does not result (Dunn and Dunn, 1978). Similarly then, when only one presentational style is used repeatedly towards multiple audience members (with multiple learning styles), the group as a whole will not process information as effectively as when multiple approaches are considered.

Flaherty (1992) suggests that there are four primary learning modalities: kinesthetic, tactual, auditory, and visual. Eiszler (1983) combines kinesthetic and tactual into one broad category. Some researchers (Stronck 1980, Reiff 1992, Barbe and Swassing, 1979) have determined that within any given audience, the breakdown would approximate the following:

- -kinesthetic/tactual 15%
- -visual 25-30%
- -auditory 25-30%
- -mixed 25-30%

Of all the learning style theories that exist (and there are numerous models other than those discussed in this brief overview), the implications to more successful communication may be strongest when examining each of the above modalities in a bit more detail. Following are the three primary modalities listed above with a brief discussion of each as it relates to suggestions for maximizing communication effectiveness and efficiency, both from the perspective of the speaker and the audience member.

Applications for Speakers and Audience Members

1. Kinesthetic/Tactual

Speakers: This learning modality emphasizes activity—doing, touching, moving, etc. Since an estimated 15% of any audience [some researchers (Barbe and Swassing, 1979) suggest the number could be much higher] is comprised of individuals who process information in this manner, it is important to consider how to best reach those who exhibit this preference. Kinesthetic/tactual learners may benefit from the opportunity to feel a sense of interaction with the speaker. Asking for a show of hands or encouraging physical responses (i.e. nods, head shakes) may help

engage these individuals, who tend to prefer closer interaction with those with whom they communicate. These learners are also more likely to have a heightened awareness of the physical conditions of a room, such as the temperature and lighting levels. Providing a warm, comfortable setting for the kinesthetic/tactual learner, and providing a sense of physical interaction (through occasional closer proximity/movement) with the audience is likely to better engage these individuals.

Audiences Members: If an individual audience member's learning preference leans towards the kinesthetic/tactual modality, there are several factors to consider as means to better the ability to process information when listening to a speaker. First, since proximity is an issue to the kinesthetic/tactual learner, the audience member might try sitting as close to the speaker as is possible. This will allow for more perceived interaction and may also help the individual focus on what is being said. Taking advantage of opportunities to interact with the speaker as is appropriate through non-verbal cues may further enhance the kinesthetic/tactual learner's engagement with the speaker. By doing so, the speaker is more likely to recognize the audience member's participation and the focus of that presentation is more likely to move towards the individual. Finally, it might be helpful to both physically interact and retain focus through careful note taking. The kinesthetic/tactual learner might even try more non-traditional note taking, such as creating diagrams or other more concrete representations of what is being said.

2. *Visual*

Speakers: The visual modality emphasizes learning by seeing, and in an estimated 25-30% of all individuals this style dominates. For the visual learner, words may seem to "funnel through" without making long-lasting connections. To help the visual learner make connections stronger and clearer, the speaker must attempt to engage the listener through the individual's

preferred modality. Providing outlines, visual aids (i.e. charts, graphs), and the use of technological aids such as Power Point may be helpful to the visual learner. Use of gestures and facial expressions are also important in reaching those of this learning style since connections are often made to those expressions more readily than to the spoken word. Referencing relevant texts during one's speech, or providing (after the conclusion) support material such as a brochure, where further information may be obtained, may also be of benefit.

Audience Members: For the visual learner, keeping thorough and organized notes of a presentation is of special importance. They serve not only as cognitive organizers during the speech itself, but also will provide the listener with the sort of detailed notes that may later be needed to review the content presented. Using symbols, labels, and perhaps even "invented" codes as note-taking devices may best serve the visual learner, who often reconstructs information from images rather than through verbalizations. Highlighting (perhaps even color coding) key items is another way to provide visual stimulus to aid in information processing. Following up a presentation where new information has been presented with a bit of library/internet exploration can also be a useful tool to help internalize new information.

3. *Auditory*

Speakers: Those with a dominant auditory modality, estimated at 25-30% of all individuals, thrive in lecture-style presentations since their focal learning area centers on oral language (words and sounds). The auditory, or aural style learner, typically enjoys listening to the spoken word and responds well in both lecture and discussion situations. When processing key aspects of an oral presentation, the auditory learner tends to hear and recall the voice of the individual speaking, rather than attend to the nonverbals that speaker may have displayed. Implications

for presenters include the necessity to provide vocal variety when presenting a speech. Variations in tone, rate, volume (a well-placed whisper can be as effective as a podium-pounding howl) will enhance the auditory learner through providing more memorable oral cues which later may be recalled as the listener attempts to make further meaning and personal application to what has been presented. Providing unusual or novel oral cues (i.e. singing a part of an introduction or conclusion when appropriate) may further enhance the auditory learner's processing of the presentation.

Audience Members: There are several factors an auditory learner should consider when attempting to process a speech, whether in a public speaking situation or a college classroom. First, the listener may consider tape recording the presentation if that is acceptable. This will allow for later opportunities to re-hear the presentation, paying special attention to those parts that might have "slipped through the cracks" the first time. As the auditory learner studies notes, it might be advisable to read them aloud, or perhaps to discuss the points of a newly-learned presentation with a partner, so that the words themselves, the key for the auditory learner, come alive.

Final Thoughts

Most all individuals utilize all three primary modalities when they learn (Reiff, 1992) but most place significant emphasis on one style. While it is impossible to determine the learning preferences of each individual in any public communication instance, it is important for speakers to pay heed to the idea that within any audience exists a wide spectrum of learning styles and combinations of styles. By considering as many alternative strategies as is feasible as one prepares a presentation, and by paying special attention to the individual differences that exist in every audience, the likelihood that the intended message will be understood by and retained by a larger percentage of the audience

becomes apparent. And conversely, an awareness of these differences as they apply to the student as audience member can further enhance each individual communication transaction by prompting the listener to take into consideration conditions that may maximize successful attending to a presentation. Sharp (1997) suggests that not only does learning improve when increased attention is paid to learning style differences, but student attitude toward their instructors (i.e. frustration levels) may also improve. Sharp suggests that "students really enjoy seeing that conflict can be explained and minimized by relating it to learning style differences" (p. 133). An in-class discussion of at minimum the above overview of theory and communication suggestions that apply to individual learning style differences, then, can enhance the communication classroom through both positing new ideas and connections and re-affirming general principles of sound communication logic. Just by considering these individual differences, researchers suggest that achievement, attitude and self-concept may improve (Reiff, 1992). It may also be helpful (and interesting) to lead students in undergoing a bit of research to confirm and further analyze their own learning style preferences. Armstrong (1993) suggests that identifying and understanding learning strengths and weaknesses can be beneficial not only in maximizing communication, but in bettering almost all elements of an individual's life. And the potential benefits of learning style instruction are not limited to the traditional classroom. Mupinga, Nora, and Yaw (2006), following a year-long study of learning style preferences among students in on-line courses, suggest that instructors of web-based courses should also consider the multiple learning styles of their students, be aware of their varying needs, and make efforts to teach to accommodate those various styles. One last point—while understanding differences in learning style does have benefits to students as participants in the communication process, they must remember that learning style and mental ability (or intelligence) are not related, and that no single learning style should be viewed as superior to any other (Griggs, 1991).

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Sex, Soap Operas, and Storytelling: International Social Marketing Research as a Venue—and a Cause For Change—in Organizational Communication

Rita L. Rahoi-Gilchrest

Abstract

As American practitioners and scholars of organizational communication begin to expand research and publication efforts into global settings, including international companies, non-profit agencies, and emergent organizations such as worker collectives, the case for revising our conceptual and methodological bases of practice becomes more compelling. Drawing on case studies of three different New Zealand-based organizations—the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective, 42 Below vodka, and Māori TV—this paper presents an argument that such reconceptualization might be needed in 1) definitions and implicit meanings of organizational communication; 2) the theoretical grounding of organizational communication research (specifically image restoration theory), and 3) the methods by which such research is conducted.

Prostitutes, Pink dollars, and Pro-social television: Three International Case Studies that Present a Venue—and Cause for Change—for Organizational Communication Research

The cry 'the center cannot hold' might well be wailed by many in the field of organizational communication. Increasing calls for more diverse approaches and practices that better reflect the fractal/fractional realities of organizational and institutional life (this analysis being one more in the list) are resulting in what seems a widening breach within a rapidly-expanding field. The increasing multidisciplinary nature of our work is creating

increasing controversy over the appropriate boundaries and types of research that should be 'legitimized' and published as representative of best research and best practices in organizational communication. Chung, Jeong, Chung and Park (2005) have observed that this phenomenon is typical of the field of communication studies as a whole as research tends to become more differentiated and diffused, and its scope more global through increased international conferences and collaborations. This does not mean, however, that collaboration is leading to coherence.

One critical point as this complex field continues to redefine itself is the importance of examining the differing organizations, corporate structures, cultures, and corporate-public relationships that exist in countries other than the United States. This line of research is vital for several compelling reasons. First, culture itself has a significant influence on corporate entities, the findings that result from studying such organizations, and even the researchers who conduct such studies. Even when the topic of study is the same, as in Chung, Jeong, Chung and Park's (2005) review comparing American and Korean communication research about the Internet, national agendas and findings may be quite unique in different global settings. This is reconfirmed by Hodgkinson's (2004) report of the *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*'s attempt to survey civic service in eight regions of the world, which found complications ranging from a complete lack of vocabulary to describe the concept in countries in the Arab region to failure to distinguish concepts such as full-time service from volunteering in France.

Additionally, economic realities differ among international settings. In many developing countries, as marketing scholars Lovelock, Patterson, and Walker (2004) noted, there is a shift away from manufacturing industries to service-based industries. This is particularly true in countries that lack the industry base to focus on manufacturing, such as New Zealand, which (lacking most-favored nation status in addition to an industry base) has reshaped its economy to focus on tourism, high-tech film effects

workshops (such as Richard Taylor's 'Weta Workshop,' source of effects for Peter Jackson's *Lord of the Rings* series and *King Kong*), and 'uniquely Kiwi' products (one of which will be described in more depth later in this article).

Finally, research in international settings is vital to determine where specific perspectives on the nature of what constitutes the theoretical base of a specific discipline, such as organizational communication, vary considerably even among settings that appear to have many cultural similarities in terms of the familiar Hofsteadian dimensions. Consider the argument of McKie and Munshi (2005), who claim that "while U.S.-based scholars have largely been confined within the often-contrived disciplinary boundaries of what constitutes organizational communication, Australasian researchers have tended to thrive more on interdisciplinary" (p. 49). Ironically, these writers also note that Australian texts in the field of organizational communication are still quite functionalist in nature, which underlines the importance of continued research that is incorporated into our teaching and practice as well as our journals. As the late Everett Rogers noted, conducting international communication research is vital not only for the simple fact that it "helps overcome the United States' dominance of most communication research" (2002, p. 346) but also because certain topics in communication can only, or can best, be examined outside our own cultural and perceptual boundaries.

To address these issues, this article presents three mini-case studies of non-U.S.-based organizations which offer a different perspective on what constitutes organizational reality and appropriate organizational theory. In part, this is a convenience sampling, since the author spent the 2005-06 year on sabbatical leave at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, NZ and so had ample opportunity to explore 'alternative' approaches to organizational communication in an international setting in greater depth. New Zealand in particular was a useful venue in which to conduct such analyses due to the fact that it has so little economic

emphasis on manufacturing. Therefore, even though it is culturally similar to the United States in a number of ways, its organizational history and development has been significantly different. These three cases also are drawn from three different sectors—services, product manufacturing, and government-funded media—in order to provide a broad perspective on just how widely such organizational differentiation exists.

Most importantly, these three cases highlight three major areas of theory and research within organizational communication in which our current assumptions might be challenged. The first, the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective[1], gives an example of the need for more inclusive definitions of organizations in which the study of communication is conducted. The second, 42 Below vodka, challenges the assumptions embedded in one of the field's most familiar frameworks, Benoit's image restoration theory. The final case, Māori TV, affirms the need for continued exploration of appropriate methodologies for global organizational communication research.

Reconceptualizing Implied Definitions in Organizational Communication: The Case of the New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective

Although definitions of organizational communication presented in undergraduate texts certainly have been broadened considerably over time, as in Eisenberg and Goodall's (2004) claim that "organizational communication is the study of communicative processes involved in the day-to-day operations of a human organization," (p. 7), the subjects reflected in current published organizational communication research in America still reflect a clear emphasis on the corporate workplace as the exemplar of and standard for what we 'really mean' by a human

[1] The author is indebted to Ms. Jolin Liou of the University of Canterbury for informing her of the existence of the Collective.

organization. Topics such as socialization and resocialization, interpersonal communication, and organizational change are still primarily studied within for-profit corporations in longitudinal, quantitative studies (for instance, see Hart, Miller, & Johnson, 2003). This bias is further indicated by American expatriate Ted Zorn, who has written in partnership with co-author Mary Simpson that the tendency in organizational communication research in New Zealand and Australia has been to consider "organizational boundaries not as cut and dried structures, but rather as permeable, fluid, and dynamic" (Simpson & Zorn, 2004, p. 14). Moore (2000) elaborates:

> *The most well-developed strategy models come from the private sector and focus on markets, customers, and competition. Yet these models fail to take account of two crucially important features of non-profit organizations: (a) the value produced by non-profit organizations lies in the achievement of social purposes rather than in generating revenues; and (b) non-profit organizations receive revenues from sources other than customer purchases (p. 183).*

As a contrast to this private sector model, we can consider the example of a collaborative organization that might indicate a different approach to defining and conceptualizing the grounds for organizational communication research—The New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective (NZPC). This organization is a non-profit collective comprised of sex workers (both past and present) as well as voluntary workers who advocate for the rights, health, and wellbeing of all sex industry workers. Unlike many worker-owned collectives, such as the Mondragon collective in Spain (Cheney, 2002), the NZPC is funded in part by the New Zealand government.

Though the sex industry has been extant in New Zealand since the early days of European colonization (Jordan, 1991, 2005), concern over threats to sex workers in light of HIV/AIDS public controversy prompted the formation of the NZPC. From pub meetings in red-light districts among a small group of sex workers, the collective has grown to represent the rights of the nearly 6000 New Zealand sex workers identified through survey research (Prostitution Law Review Committee, 2005). The NZPC defines its role as including advocacy for sex workers' rights, lobbying for the repeal of laws detrimental to the industry and its members, providing support for members, and educating the public. The organization also publishes a magazine titled SIREN (Sex Industry Rights and Education Network) and opened its first office in Wellington in 1988 (New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, n.d.). Currently staffing six drop-in centres in Auckland, Tauranga, New Plymouth, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, the Collective employs 20 part-time workers and 50 voluntary members working under a board of trustees (New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, 1987).

The collective has been successful in advocating for the decriminalization of prostitution, which resulted in passage of the Prostitution Reform Act of 2003. The Act also contained specific provisions "to protect the health and safety of sex workers and their clients" (Ministry of Justice, 2003). The collective is introducing initiatives for workers from cultures and countries outside NZ such as the "New Worker Kit," pack, complete with contraceptive samples, posters, health services information, and hotline numbers. The collective also has formed networking groups to reach male and trans-gendered sex workers; ONTOP is the Transgender Outreach Project; PUMP is the Pride and Unity for Male Prostitutes project (New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective, n.d.). Beyond its role in advocacy and education, the NZPC has now also become a research partner with other NGOs on projects related to the sex industry.

Research into the lives of sex workers certainly is not unknown in communication studies. Key studies by Svenkerud and Singhal (1998) of the diffusion of safe-sex information to sex workers and their clients in Thailand began a continuing line of research on this topic (see Singhal, 2003; Singhal, Cody, Rogers, & Sabido, 2004; Singhal & Howard, 2003; Vaughan, Rogers, Singhal & Swalehe, 2000). The guiding paradigm of the majority of this work, however, has been to 'help' a given population affected by a 'social problem' by suggesting strategies for change from the researchers' perspectives, most often by applying diffusion theory (identifying opinion leaders within communities and enabling them to act as change agents within a given population). Another popular approach has been to focus on the use of mainstream media, most often through entertainment-education ('prosocial' soap operas) to educate people about the actions they should take in response to a shared social problem (discussed in numerous studies by both Singhal and Sabido; see, for instance, Pant, Singhal, & Bhasin, 2002).

As is clear from the case of The New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective, this kind of worker-owned collective operates under a different organizational paradigm—one not shared by people who happen to be identified or grouped by problem alone rather joined for a common purpose. This group in particular does not view its members as having a social problem, although they are coping with a social issue, and is very positive in its outreach to the community and its advocacy for sex workers. The NZPC was self-formed, though it is not self-sustaining, and is steadily developing an infrastructure that allows it to make increasing progress on the issues of safe sex and sex worker practices.

This is just one example illustrating that international research examining many different models of human organizations allows us to develop more realistic and possibly more useful, models of organizational culture and practice. Whereas Cheney's mid-1980s groundbreaking work with the Mondragon Collective (cited in Cheney, 2002) opened our 'collective' eyes to the

possibilities for much more subtle investigation of many forms of human organizations, more can and should be done. As the next step, we will consider whether reviewing the example of recent international controversy surrounding New Zealand's 42 Below vodka might cause us to reconsider one of the most frequently-utilized theories in organizational communication.

Reconceptualizing Theoretical Frameworks in Organizational Communication: The Case of 42 Below

One of the most familiar theories in organizational communication, particularly in the area of organizational rhetoric, is William Benoit's Image Restoration Theory. Developed essentially post hoc from hundreds (perhaps thousands, by now) of case studies in the 1980s, Benoit's theory predicates that organizational responses to crises or image attacks tend to fall into categories including denial, evasion of responsibility, reducing offensiveness of the act, correcting the wrong, and mortification (Benoit, 1995). Of these strategies, bolstering (a means of reducing offensiveness of the act by emphasizing positive contributions or aspects of a given organization), has received considerable attention (Deshpande & Hitchon, 2002).

Findings on the relative organizational value and worth of the various image restoration strategies are mixed, however; Benoit and Drew (1997) have reported that comparisons of the 14 total strategies results in mortification and corrective action being most effective with bolstering among the least efficacious. Metts and Cupach (1989, 1992) claimed that bolstering was appropriate in responding to 'faux-pas' situations in which "acts [that] are intentionally performed [but which] prove to be inappropriate when the correct interpretation of the situation becomes clear" (Metts & Cupach, 1989, p. 155). More recently, Deshpande and Hitchon (2002) evaluated cause-related marketing ads in the light of negative news stories and concluded that bolstering was more

effective than brand ads "prior to scandal, but lost their advantage in light of negative news" (p. 905).

Burns and Bruner (2000) have also argued that the theory needs to be more audience-based/audience-oriented, a criticism with which Benoit (2000) has agreed. In addition, Sellnow, Ulmer, and Snider (1998) called our attention to the internal audiences of organizations who may be in conflict over the benefits versus the limits and risks of corrective action. If these findings were not sufficient grounds to reconsider the premises of Benoit's theory, then the example of the organizational controversies surrounding the New Zealand product 42 Below vodka might further the case.

42 Below vodka was the idea of Geoff Ross, its CEO and founder (and former director at Saatchi & Saatchi New Zealand), who saw the opportunity in the super premium spirits market category. Working initially out of his garage, Ross developed a 42-proof vodka that has expanded from 60 cases of sales total in New Zealand in June, 2002 to 700 cases in one month at one specific Hollywood-to-Santa Monica rollout in the US; the company is currently selling more than 10,000 cases per month worldwide (O'Brien, 2004; Young, 2003). The company has marketed its product internationally by targeting specific cities and nightclubs/entertainment venues, rather than targeting by country, and has been considered an extremely successful venture with a product recognized for its "staunch Kiwiness" (Young, 2003, p. 22) in terms of both its purity and its corporate 'attitude.'

To assist with the product rollout, Ross trained young, stylish staff members to serve as mixologists and "manic street preachers" (Young, 2003, p. 22) to represent the product at the world's 100 most cutting-edge bars through events and incentive competitions, including the controversial Vodka University (http://www.42below.co.nz/). 42 Below also employed viral marketing, using texting to contact people who attended their events and using a grassroots approach to increase awareness of the product and brand. As PR writer Mitch Arnowitz (2005) has observed, even though these kinds of viral strategies can result in

some corporate loss of control over the nature of the messages being disseminated, the strategy can "galvanize passionate supporters who are empowered to share that message" (p. 1). The combined appeal of a high-status, high-alcohol content premium vodka with the 'exclusivity' associated with the product through tastings and mixologist competitions has proven particularly popular with young club-goers both in New Zealand and in many international nightspots from Miami to West London. The company has now added uniquely Kiwi-based flavoured versions, such as passion fruit, feijoa, manuka honey, and of course, kiwifruit, to the 42 Below line (Todd, 2005).

The controversy over 42 Below, however, has nothing to do with the product and everything to do with its online corporate messages. The company website at http://www.42below.co.nz/ received criticism and complaints directed to the New Zealand Advertising Standards Complaints Board in late 1993 for, among other issues, running online ads that showed Māoris exchanging 42 Below vodka with the white man for muskets, blankets, and Hobbits; showed extreme gay stereotypes; and insulted ethnic groups worldwide ("Drink to that," 2004). In one ad, a Chinese person portrayed as an immigrant to New Zealand says that he'd rather work for 42 Below than make sneakers in a sweatshop in China. In another, the tag lines read, "The British have Prince Harry, the Swiss have everyone's money, the French have their distorted view of global importance, but dammit, we've got the feijoa" ("Drink to that," 2004; "42 Below adds," 2004). Yet another promotional poster claimed, "More pure than the driven snow even if you drive it yourself all the way from Colombia" (Smith, 2005, p. 3).

This controversial method of corporate promotion has been a deliberate policy choice, according to marketing director Angela Barnett. Barnett has been quoted as saying, "We're getting our stories out there and haven't been afraid of controversy. We are very anti-corporate; we like to have a good time. That comes through in our advertising" (quoted in O'Brien, 2004, p. 5). The

strategy might be a good fit with the company culture, but it has attracted worldwide attention. One campaign aimed at gay US consumers, known as the "Pink Dollar" campaign, was met with threats of a boycott after a letter written by New York Brite Bar owner John Libonati to company president James Dale about the gay stereotypes used in 42 Below's advertising to was met with a misspelled, expletive-filled email that ended up being published in the New *York Post* (Smith, 2005). Soon, counter-viral messages criticizing the company's approach began showing up on blogs and chat rooms such as socialitelife.com, towelroad.com, sharetrader.com, and adrant.com (Smith, 2005). A new anti-British campaign claiming that Britain invented "cricket for the Aussies, rugby for the Kiwis, football for the Brazilians and Robbie Williams for the gays" is expected to be met with similar public outcry ("42 Below launches," 2005, p. 19).

Certainly an obvious recommendation for 42 Below, based on traditional uses of Image Restoration Theory, would be to engage immediately in bolstering to repair the company's damaged public image. Instead, however, 42 Below publicly capitalized on Dale's image by adding a pseudo-advice column to the website called "I'm James Dale, so f--- you" which abuses fictional letter writers with expletive-filled responses (Smith, 2005). Although the company's price per share did drop on the stock exchange at the time of the Pink Dollar controversy, Dale ended up appearing on American television and claiming that brand awareness and business both substantially improved business in New York, saying "the end result for us was very positive" (quoted in Smith, 2005, p. 2).

CEO Ross concurs, claiming, "We have to be more contentious from time to time and certainly risqué to gain attention in this very competitive world market" (quoted in "42 Below: The coolest," 2005). The company website points out that its original "The Story of 42 Below" flash animation was a finalist in the first global Viral Awards competition in 2005 and that the Pink Dollar mpeg appears on www.boreme.com, a site that lists the most

frequently distributed clips on the web ("42 Below one," n/d). Industry representatives appear to agree that the company should not engage in image restoration efforts; Peter Vegas, an ad agency executive, states "If they managed to get away with it, then hats off" (quoted in Smith, 2005, p. 2). Simon Young, a PR writer, noted in an editorial in *Ad Media* that the 42 Below ad "was the best laugh I'd had in a long time, and I would proudly play it to anyone who wants to find out about Kiwi culture and humour" (2004, p. 4).

After examining the case of New Zealand 42 Below vodka, we should feel further uncertainty about predicting the efficacy of bolstering as an organizational response to crisis. In line with Burns and Bruner's claims about understanding text not just as a tangible object developed and delivered by an organizational source (and therefore needing to rework a more audience-centered view of image restoration), this case indicates that bolstering was not only unnecessary in the view of 42 Below company executives but also that the lack of such bolstering has had no apparent impact on audience and industry perceptions of the product and company.

In fact, it is possible that the company has even benefited from taking an 'outlier' and politically incorrect approach to the controversy over its marketing methods, since its target market is likely to reject mass marketing efforts and typical organizational messages in favor of viral marketing and grassroots communication strategies. The company is actually mentioned under the 'viral marketing' entry of the Motive Internet Glossary online, named as 'one of the more successful New Zealand viral marketing campaign" that "quickly reached cult status" (Motive Ltd., 2004, ¶4).

Having examined the NZPC as an example of alternative models for defining and examining organizations then moved to 42 Below as a case challenging the assumptions of Image Restoration Theory, the final section of this paper addresses the issue of research and organizational outreach methodologies in

organizational communication by presenting the example of indigenously-operated Māori TV.

Reconceptualizing Research Methodologies in Organizational Communication: The Case of Māori TV

Many researchers over the past twenty years have commented on the disenfranchisement of indigenous voices by print media and the dominant groups that control such media. Also relevant, however, is the issue of whether or not the methods we have conventionally used to studying organizations that are indigenous in their membership and leadership have equally disenfranchised such voices. One case in point concerns the lack of media/mediated inclusion of New Zealand Māori, whether due to biased or minimal coverage of Māori-related issues (Barclay, 2003, has typified the 'voice' afforded to Māori in the media as more consistent with minority status in a multicultural community than with the status of 'equal partners' provided by the Treaty of Waitangi) or the preference for continuing the oral tradition within the Māori community. Such disenfranchisement of indigenous groups by dominant others is not unique; what is unique in this circumstance has been the attempt to create an organization that could help to redress deeply-embedded social issues resulting from the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi and the resultant civil wars that characterized New Zealand's early civil history (Lean, 1999).

Beginning with the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975, the New Zealand government has attempted to enact legislation that seeks to reverse early government policies focused on assimilation. One such recent act, the Māori Television Service Act 2003 (Te Aratuku Whakaata Irrangi Māori), provided the basis for the foundation of Māori Television, which went on-air in 2004 (Russ, 2005). This initiative dated back to 2001, when the Labour government first began movement toward the service (Horomia, 2001). Māori Television's mission to become 'a

world-class indigenous broadcaster' is embedded in the values expressed in its slogan, "Mā ātou, mā mātou, mā koutou, mā tātou," translated approximately as 'for those who have gone before, for Māori, for you whoever you are/wherever you are located, for everyone' (http://corporate.Māoritelevision.com/, ¶15).

The company's specific mission statement is 'to provide an independent, secure and successful Māori television channel broadcasting programmes that make a significant contribution to the revitalization of te reo and tikanga Māori" (http://corporate.Māoritelevision.com/, ¶13). Public support and outreach have been amazingly successful in the short time since the station went live on-air; 100 percent of New Zealanders have access to the channel through digital satellite, with another 83% able to view it via UHF frequency.

Research conducted in June 2005 reported that among audiences that had heard of Māori Television, 98% of Māori and 84% of the general population supported permanent broadcaster status for the company. The research also indicated that awareness was at 97% of the Māori and 90% of the general populations surveyed; that 90% of the Māori and 59% of the general populations had watched Māori Television at some point in time; and that 86% of Māori and 71% of general populations surveyed agreed that Māori Television was valuable and important to preserve and foster the Māori language and cultural traditions and knowledge (http://www.Māoritelevision.com/latestnews/Māori%20television%20a%20perm%20broadcaster.htm). Māori Television's programming excellence has been recognized by two 2005 Silver awards in Sound Design and Promotion Animation at the World PROMAX BDA 2005 awards in New York, as well as the Quantas Media Award for Best Information Programme category.

The worldwide attention paid to the success of Māori Television also has begun to be mirrored in changes closer to home. As of September, 2005, the Australian government has

decided to implement a new Backing Indigenous Ability program, including $51.8 million in funds to develop comparable indigenous television and update existing radio broadcasting systems and infrastructure (Coonan, 2005). Māori leaders also appeared to be satisfied with the initiative; academic Huirangi Waikerepuru was quoted in the online publication NZ Edge as saying that "The launch of Māori television is yet another milestone for us and our language" ("Te reo on air," 2004).

Despite these early successes, recent events pose new challenges for the continuation and growth of Māori Television, including race debate as a keynote of the 2005 election, Pakeha (white) hostility over government-funded Māori rights programs, Māori Television's growing affiliation with hip hop culture, the challenge for developing sustainable funding strategies for the free-to-air station, and the call for increasing use of English subtitles in news and popular programming. This section of the analysis will focus on one specific issue, that of subtitling programming on Māori TV.

Māori Television CEO Jim Mather has stated publicly that the organization is committed to inclusiveness in its broadcasting, and the most recent effort to do so has been to deliver the Māori news broadcasts with English subtitles. As Mather commented, "The sub-titling of our flagship news programme, Te Kaea, reinforces our commitment to ensuring that 100 per cent [sic] of our prime time programming is accessible to non-Māori speakers and those learning the language" ("Māori TV delivers," 2005, ¶7). This issue, however, has engendered debate over the true purpose and representative nature of Māori Television. Sibley (2004) conducted two studies of Pakeha (New Zealanders of European descent) attitudes toward biculturalism, finding that although support is stronger for general discussions of biculturalism (53% supportive, 3% opposed), resource-specific biculturalism receives far less support (3% supportive, 76% opposed), regardless of level of social dominance orientation. Therefore, although generally supportive initially of the

company's permanent broadcast status, some groups are more likely to oppose continuance of funding for the channel or for new initiatives such as subtitling (which requires a new three-person bilingual team just to cover the nightly newscast; see "Māori TV delivers," 2005).

The problem of researching ways to resolve the organizational issues of Māori TV is a challenging one, since this case is unlike many normally found in publication. Outreach cannot be conducted through the medium itself (the television programming) or the organization's corporate outreach through other media (print and online) with any guarantee of success. Māori author Alan Duff made this point in commenting on the recent attempts by Don Brash and the National Party to stop funding for race-based programs, noting, "This race debate is taking place mainly in the print media and so Māori don't know what is being said. We need to be participating in discussions about our own fate and destiny" (quoted in "SCOPE: New Zealand fired up," 2004). In addition, Pakeha who oppose the continued funding of Māori TV are unlikely to be exposed to the programming to make an informed decision on the value of initiatives such as bilingual subtitling.

This organization's issues related to the appropriate management of subtitling Māori language broadcasts in English might be more appropriately addressed through an action research approach—meeting with members of both Māori and Pakeha communities, discussing their concerns, and enabling them to take action without prescriptions per se from the investigator—thereby further broadening the definition of appropriate methodologies for organizational communication research and practice. Jean McNiff has astutely observed that even in moving from interpretive research to critical research, the perspective and insight of the researcher is still ultimately given place of priority (see McNiff & Whitehead, 2005). Only when the question changes from 'what do I think should happen now' to 'what do *you* think must happen

now' would organizational communication researchers successfully have adopted an action research paradigm.

The sensitivity to researchers as 'outside experts' is very high in New Zealand generally as well as within Māori communities specifically. Māori author Alan Duff crystallized this view when he told Kyodo News International, "Stop the nonsense of separating us. Clearly Māori are at the bottom of the heap, but we have to fix our own problems" ("SCOPE: New Zealand fired up," 2004, p. 3). The so-termed 'ethnographic' approach to organizational communication research, 'collecting' the stories of participants and then analyzing them from an outside perspective (even a critical one) is not appropriate for a group such as the Māori who take value from the process of storytelling and have little interest in the 'product' a researcher would create from their texts. Facilitation, not recommendation, is a more likely solution to studying this problem. Therefore in terms of not only the kinds of organizations that we study in defining organizational communication or the theories that frame such work, but also the paradigms and models used to conduct further research, international case studies such as the three presented here offer further opportunity for thought and discussion.

The Charge to 'Be Good'

Of the three areas of organizational communication research and practice discussed in this analysis, the most difficult barrier to be cleared in broadening and reconceptualizing our ideas of, and approaches to, the field might be the area of action research. As pointed out earlier in this analysis, the researcher-centered perspective that dominates publication in organizational communication is in stark contrast to population-centered approaches of the kind more frequently found in social marketing studies. This is especially true if we continue to explore the uncertainties behind the seeming certainty of frameworks such as Image Restoration Theory. The merit of such effort, however,

cannot be ignored. Even for the least idealistic and most pragmatic among us, as a recent issue of the *Journal of Applied Communication* pragmatically pointed out, action research that engages us with our communities—certainly with the global community—can offer opportunities for interdisciplinary funding and external support (see Applegate, 2002; Biocca & Biocca, 2002).

The case studies of The New Zealand Prostitutes' Collective, 42 Below vodka, and Māori TV have been presented here not as definitive analyses but rather as a point of discussion to add to the continuing call for openness, diversity, and discourse as a part of our theorizing and research in organizational communication. This is not an easy path or a clear one, but support appears to be increasing gradually for a more socially-oriented approach to both pedagogy and practice in the field. We must remain aware, as critical organizational scholar Dennis Mumby reminds us, that organizations are the source of a discursive process by which core societal values are established that generate a shared understanding "about what is good, right and true" (2000, p. 4). This means that everyone in the field of organizational communication—whether their focus is on teaching or research—benefits from being able to understand, articulate, and teach to other publics the importance of understanding how organizations function and explaining the process by which our organizational work life and our societal lives are interwoven. Expanding on this point in a recent commentary on trends in the field, Kathleen Krone (2005) concluded:

> *According to Schumacher (1979), work becomes* ***good***[2] *when it: (1) provides necessary and useful products and services, (2) enables us to use our unique talents and gifts, and (3) is done in cooperation with others so as to free us from a*

[2] The emphasis here is the author's.

> *tendency toward egocentricity. Engaging in good work is self- sustaining because it is also life giving. Given our past and more recent trends, organizational communication research clearly has the capacity and much potential to be good* (p. 103).

Should such intradisciplinary discussions continue, we might see increasing numbers of organizational communication scholars and practitioners choosing to try to reach out from the 'center' rather than holding fast to comfortable beliefs, travelling physically as well as conceptually to create more meaningful research, and doing work that is by any cultural measurement—*good*.

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Apple's "Think Different" Campaign: Creating a Hegemonic Target Audience

Porter Roberts & Mark Goodman

Abstract

Apple Computer's "Think Different" advertising campaign sought to create interest in its technology by presenting itself as a community of people. By casting Apple against the dominant ideology of Microsoft, Apple sought to create a hegemonic community. Within this community, Apple represented the rhetorical vision that would bring diverse people—i.e., those who think differently—together because of their opposition to Microsoft. In effect, hegemony and rhetorical vision became tools of persuasion in Apple's advertising campaign.

Apple Computer's "Think Different" advertising campaign sought to attract customers ideologically by presenting them with an alternative to the Microsoft juggernaut. By casting itself as an alternative to Microsoft, Apple invoked a concept of hegemony to create a favorable binary opposition argument, which it hoped would attract those members of the masses who disliked the domination of Microsoft.

Our critical analysis of the "Think Different" campaign relies on Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony as a methodology to explicate the class conflict inherent in an advertising strategy built upon hegemonic conflict. By casting itself as the "Think Different" corporation, Apple places itself in a subordinate but oppositional ideological position to Microsoft's personal-computer dominance. In effect, computers become class warfare. Our critical analysis becomes a case study of Gramsci's

concept of hegemony as an advertising strategy, revealing through a rhetorical analysis how hegemony can be a process through which persuasion is created.

Our paper reviews the Apple advertising campaigns of 1984 and 1997. Our analysis begins with an explanation of Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which will show that Apple created a hegemonic dichotomy, targeting a market large enough for Apple to remain profitable. Once the target audience is self-identified, the rhetorical vision (Bormann, 1972, 1973, 1977; Bormann, Cragan, and Shields, 1996) introduced by the "Think Different" campaign created unity among the diversified potential Apple buyers. Hall's concept of rediscovery (1982) clarifies the binary opposition between Apple and Microsoft created in the advertising campaign. These binary oppositions reinforce the hegemonic argument, creating the rhetorical unity. This three-pronged rhetorical analysis explains the success of the "Think Different" campaign, providing insight into the conflict that has waged between the corporations since the 1980s.

The Beginning

On Sunday, January 22, 1984 during the Super Bowl, Apple televised "1984," a commercial that introduced the masses to its vision of personal computing. The sixty-second commercial, saturated with an ominous Orwellian theme, showed no product; rather, it featured a women single-handedly rebelling against her oppressor. The advertisement warned of authoritarianism and suggested to the masses that something called "Macintosh" would reveal to society "why 1984 [wouldn't] be like '1984'."

Apple's target in "1984" was International Business Machines Corporation (IBM). Fostering a technological subculture in the underpinnings of laboratories, corporations, and political units in the early 1960s and 1970s, IBM controlled the mainframe market, and because of cost, applicability and expertise, computing in these decades was hardly "personal" computing. IBM hired a

small company calling itself Microsoft to develop *DOS*, an operating system for a new kind of computer that IBM planned to market as a smaller, more personalized tool. In 1981, IBM unveiled this computer, commonly referred to as the IBM PC. This IBM-branded computer with a Microsoft core became a hit and the company dominated this new personal computer market in the early 1980s.

Apple, established in the 1970s, found some success with an early series of computers; however, the company was foreign to individuals who were not a part of the emerging computer culture. Apple planned to change its status with a new kind of computer to be released in 1984, spawning from the concept of a personalized computing experience. Apple's Macintosh computer would challenge IBM's dominance of the market in concept, design, and, advertising. The "1984" advertisement was a direct challenge to IBM's status as the Orwellian "Big Brother." Stein (2002) argues that the success of "1984" occurred because the audience read the advertisement from the position of the heroic woman who rebels against Big Brother. The audience, positioned rhetorically, participates in the meaning articulated by Apple, thereby accepting the ideology presented by Apple (p. 173). The advertisement created an audience "who as narrativized subjects-as-agents" were positioned to purchase Apple computers (p. 179).

"Think Different"

During the television-network debut of *Toy Story* on American Broadcasting Company (ABC) in 1997, Apple began its "Think Different" advertising campaign. A sixty-second commercial was aired that consisted of a montage of black-and-white film clips from eighteen historical figures: Albert Einstein; Bob Dylan; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Richard Branson; John Lennon and Yoko Ono; Buckminster Fuller; Thomas Edison; Muhammad Ali; Ted Turner; Maria Callas; Mahatma Gandhi; Amelia Earhart; Sir Alfred Hitchcock; Martha Graham; Jim

Henson; Frank Lloyd Wright; and Pablo Picasso. The voice-over, spoken by actor Richard Dreyfuss, creates cohesion among this assemblage of individuals.

> *Here's to the crazy ones. The misfits. The rebels. The troublemakers. The round pegs in the square holes. The ones who see things differently. They're not fond of rules. And they have no respect for the status quo. You can quote them, disagree with them, glorify or vilify them. About the only thing you can't do is ignore them. Because they change things. They push the human race forward. And while some may see them as the crazy ones, we see genius. Because the people who are crazy enough to think they can change the world, are the ones who do. ("Think Different" commercial)*

The montage closes with a film clip of a young child opening her eyes that fades to black, showing the six-color Apple logogram with the slogan "Think different" appearing below it in white text.

Hegemonic Dichotomy

Apple became an iconoclastic protagonist by targeting IBM in "1984." In this case, Apple offered individuality within the computer culture in the face of an onslaught of computer conformity. Beginning in the late 1980s, however, Apple faced a new antagonist that had a different approach to capturing the marketplace of ideas. Microsoft, unlike IBM and Apple, was predominantly a software company. Microsoft's *Windows* operating system, originally coupled with *DOS* underpinnings, delivered a seemingly Mac-like approach to the computing experience. Additionally, *Windows* could run natively on a multitude of personal computers, including systems from IBM. Apple faced a two-headed dragon; specifically, the company had to

target Microsoft's *Windows* operating system and the hardware on which this software would run. Apple launched the "Think Different" campaign to not only challenge this new enemy but also reestablish its corporate image.

> *Gramsci (1971/1999) argues that hegemony is "[t]he 'spontaneous' consent given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group; this consent is 'historically' caused by the prestige (and consequent confidence) which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production" (p. 12). This theory is applicable to Microsoft and, more specifically, the way in which Apple used the "Think Different" campaign to cast Microsoft as a member of the "dominant fundamental group." Microsoft had been accepted by the masses, i.e., the dominant group, in the sense that most people used PCs with Microsoft's operating systems and most of these buyers lacked the computer knowledge to fight the Microsoft hegemony by installing Linux or other operating systems on their computers. Alternative operating systems were isolated from the masses that could not operate a computer using these "foreign" languages. Through marketplace dominance, Microsoft forced workplace dominance. The Microsoft hegemony left the computer savants—the people who wanted freedom from IBM and Microsoft—isolated from the computer mainstream. This "hatred" of Microsoft expanded "into an article of faith" that Microsoft's products were "mediocre" (Anderson, 2002, p. 74).*

The Masques of Apple

The "Think Different" campaign was an aggressive attempt at reestablishing the identity of Apple by using humanistic figures from our current culture in a celebratory fashion. "Our ads are for people who don't care what the computer does but care about what they can do with the computer. The premise is that people who use Apple computers are different and that we make computers for those creative people who believe that one person can change the world," said Allen Olivo, senior director for worldwide marketing communications at Apple (Elliott, 1998, p. D1). The faces of the figures appeared on television, on the World Wide Web, and in print, yet they were never shown with a specific Apple product or technology. The figures were only associated with the Apple logogram and the "Think different" slogan. Apple carefully selected figures that would not only reflect the ideals of the company but also the beliefs of disenchanted computer users—namely those users who rejected the Microsoft empire. For example, a young Bob Dylan, a figure used in all three media campaigns, signifies someone who changed the sound of popular music. Additionally, he was associated with the 1960s protest movement, with his lyrics often challenging the ideology of his time, particularly on a political level. By challenging the decisions of the government and authority, Dylan raised the awareness of the listeners by asking them to question the center of their society. Similarly, Apple wants computer users to question the role of Microsoft in society; Dylan and the other figures are simply the stimuli.

Rhetorical Vision

Ernest Bormann's theories of rhetorical vision underscore the process through which Apple used these figures to appeal to a number of consumers. Bormann developed his theory of rhetorical vision to explain how individuals unite into a group behind a

dominant image. Raising the flag over Iwo Jima rhetorically represents the Pacific campaign of World War II. Bormann et al. (1996) argue that the first phase of rhetorical vision is that "[c]onsciousness-creating communication involves the sharing of fantasies to generate new symbolic ground for a community of people. . . . In this phase, speakers dramatize new formulations, and others share them until group and community fantasies explain the unfolding experience in novel ways" (pp. 2–3). Occurring within this first phase, "[t]he principle of imitation asserts that when events become confusing and disturbing, people begin to share fantasies that give some old familiar dramas a new production . . . [by] portraying an ideal past with old familiar heroes, values, and scenarios as a golden age to which we should return" (pp. 2–3). Apple relied upon the figures in the "Think Different" campaign to create a fantasy for consumers, suggesting that the company's association with these figures would return the individual, and Apple, to earlier years of innovation and individuality. People like Dylan and Einstein, revolutionary thinkers and rebels, rhetorically represented the familiar heroes and values of a golden age. They fought the system with their ideas and won, creating a new hegemony. Apple offered these figures as icons of rebellion, offering room within its ideology for the free thinkers of the computer culture.

In the second phase of Bormann's rhetorical vision, "[c]onsciousness-raising communication is the proselytizing that leads inquirers and newcomers to share the fantasies of a rhetorical vision in such a way that they become converts and members of the rhetorical community . . ., a feature of the communication once the new vision emerges" (p. 10). Dylan, Einstein, and the other figures used in Apple's campaign established rhetorically that Apple and its product users should think differently about computing by converting from Microsoft to Apple. Apple hoped that these users would find a way of expressing their computer fantasies by purchasing a Mac.

In effect, Apple's campaign sought to unite what Makus (1990) calls "fractured classes" (p. 501). Makus argues that the Internet has created a community of protestors. This group was composed of people upset, angered, and frustrated with Microsoft and the way in which it sought to force compliance to a *Windows*-based computer world through corporate domination. The "Think Different" campaign was an appeal to this group of resistors. Apple wanted to unite the discontented and rebellious by creating a new hegemony strong enough to stay profitable by opposing Microsoft and Windows.

Stuart Hall's concept of rediscovery explains why Apple's campaign had appeal. Hall (1982) explains that "'grammars of culture'" create illusions of unity; as such, Microsoft's and Apple's operating systems and methods of computing become "'grammars of culture,'" seeming to create cultural unity in a ideology where computers are dominant elements (p. 73). Within the "'grammars of culture,'" logic becomes the common sense of the culture (p. 73). The personal computer culture was dominated by Microsoft, which dominated the language of computers, i.e., *Windows*. Under Hall's (1985) theory, most computer users accepted Microsoft's domination because the *Windows* operating system achieved a "taken-for-granted" cultural status. Thus, the global power of Microsoft was without challenge.

Apple sought to undermine the legitimacy of the Microsoft *Windows* operating system as common sense with its "Think Different" campaign. To be successful, the Apple campaign must argue that *Windows* was no longer synonymous with computers. Thus, Apple had to create a computer ideology in which both Microsoft and Apple could coexist. Microsoft would be the dominant corporation, but Apple would be positioned as the opposition.

This ideological challenge was not without potential consequences. Alternative perspectives are resisted because they require change (Makus, 1990, p. 500). Apple needed to expect a certain level of backlash among the masses because they were

more familiar with the *Windows* operating system. On the other hand, there was a countercultural element within computer culture that created a natural audience for Apple's hegemonic assault. In order to create legitimacy, one must convince the masses that only one choice is the correct choice. The masses needed a legitimate reason to support this solitary choice. In Apple's case, why should *Windows* users switch to Apple's operating system? The answer emerged from the signification of the figures in the "Think Different" media campaigns; these images brought credence to the Apple ideological model.

Conclusion

As we have shown, hegemonic conflict has been the predominant theme for Apple since *1984*. Apple presented itself as the challenger in conflict first with IBM and then with Microsoft. Skillful computer users resented the principles and dominance of IBM and Microsoft; they demanded freedom from the hegemonic strangulation of the corporations. Apple promised liberation with the purchase of an Apple computer.

Although Apple dropped the "Think different" slogan from its advertisements in mid-2001, the "Think Different" campaign retuned to the limelight on at least three occasions. On its opening web page, Apple recognized Jimmy Carter for being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in August 2002 and memorialized the lives of Gregory Hines and Rosa Parks in August 2003 and October 2005, respectively.

In June 2002, Apple presented a new rhetorical vision: If one has been victimized by one's *Windows* system, pick up the flag and cry freedom from *Windows* tyranny by switching to the Apple platform. Apple's "Switch" campaign presented the experiences of jaded *Windows* users who became Apple advocates. Apple selected former *Windows* users who were identifiable by traditional PC users, e.g., a *Windows* LAN administrator, an entrepreneur, a programmer, and a student, who present their frustrations with the

usability of *Windows* in thirty-second television advertisements. Their stories not only evoked the frustrations of a *Windows*-using audience, but also placated these feelings by offering Apple as a solution to their frustrations. The anti-Microsoft alliance assumed the support of the personal computer savants while expanding the Apple base by appealing to all computer users frustrated by Microsoft.

Launched in 2006, Apple's "Get a Mac" campaign continues the hegemonic debate by casting the Mac and PC platforms in opposing ideological positions. The advertisements feature two men personifying the Mac and PC platforms. The Mac character is gregarious, casually dressed, and young, while the PC character is dull, conventionally dress, and middle-aged. In one commercial, "Work vs. Home," the Mac character states that he is "into . . . fun stuff like making movies, music, and podcasts," while PC character states that he, too, enjoys "fun stuff like timesheets, and spreadsheets, and pie charts." In a different commercial, "Touché," the Mac character introduces himself and states that he is "a Mac . . . and a PC, too." The PC character appears confused, so the Mac character clarifies his statement: [N]ow you can run *Mac OS X* or *Windows* on a Mac, so . . . I'm . . . the only computer you'll ever need." As Hall (1985) points out, language is the unifying element of ideology. By speaking the language of Microsoft *Windows*, Apple has joined the dominant ideology. However, Apple cannot cast itself as a PC clone and expect to be successful. Apple returns to the oppositional position by casting the PC platform as unfashionable and uninspired and offers a new dominant position: In a Microsoft world, Apple argues that it is the dominant computer platform.

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Exploring the Forensics Banquet: Building beyond Competition

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Abstract

As forensics programs function within the challenging environments of the twenty-first century, they encounter ongoing needs to justify inclusion, appreciation, and support within diverse local and academic settings. To encourage educational communities in gaining a better understanding of the dimensions and benefits of forensics participation, programs need to welcome a variety of options for building rapport and support. This essay emphasizes the place of the forensics banquet as an inclusive annual event that involves academic leadership, alumni, team supporters, and families of the squad members. While recognizing the role of the narrative, and especially the place of the success story as discussed by Benoit, this paper explores organizational elements and benefits of the banquet program. An ongoing objective seeks to emphasize the importance of adapting the banquet concept to the unique needs of individual forensics programs.

In her discussion of challenges facing American higher education in the twenty-first century, Ami Zusman (2005) writes that eliminated educational programs have often been "identified as academically weak, high cost, duplicative, having low market demand, or less central to institutional mission or state need" (p. 122). Additionally, she observes an increased perception by the public that "higher education is largely a private benefit, rather than a public good" (p. 150). Without doubt, such observations

hold clear implications for institutions, educators, and even co-curricular programs in higher learning.

With attitude shifts of the public toward higher education, student opinions and expectations should also be recognized as a part of the total educational fabric of the twenty-first century. As Philip Altbach (2005) observes, "student interests have also had some impact on academic policy and governance" (307). Altbach concludes that "student perceptions are brought to the campus and are translated into attitudes, choices, and orientations to higher education" (p. 307). Thus, numerous influential factors, although subtle at times, continually affect policies and individual programs in today's colleges and universities.

As a part of an academic environment that includes challenges from internal and external forces impacting higher education, forensics faces the ongoing need to justify its inclusion, appreciation, and financial support in the academic community. It must communicate its contributions to a public that may not understand the depth or extent of its offerings and benefits. In responding to the climate of the present century, speech educators and forensics teams need to welcome all opportunities for dialogue with academic administrators and incoming students who continually select from competing curricular and co-curricular options.

Although the goal of linking forensics with local communities is often desired or even assumed, speech and debate can easily and quickly become less visible to the public and administrative leadership in higher education. In fact, forensics programs can become isolated or crowded out by other academic interests and co-curricular or extra-curricular activities. In their efforts to maintain vital speech programs, forensics educators and participants often make inadequate efforts to communicate the benefits and the lasting contributions of speech and debate participation and achievement within the larger educational community. Michael Bartanen, writing in 1993, observed that speech professionals can become isolated on their own campuses

and that "forensics education may be hidden from view" (p. 8). Professor Bartanen contends that "we have, for much too long, viewed forensics in a narrow sense, as a form of student training, which does not involve social obligations" (p. 9).

The necessity of communicating the purposes and values of forensics education to and with the entire university community is a goal that is long recognized. In their insightful treatment of the role of the speech-debate educator, Faules, Rieke, and Rhodes (1978) observe that it is easy for the forensics director and his/her assistants to concentrate on competition and simply forget or neglect public relations aspects that need to accompany a successful program. Importantly, these educators write that the director should publicize "to the appropriate audiences the needs and dimensions of the program as well as its competitive victories" (p. 75).

Since the successful forensics program needs to communicate beyond practice rounds and tournament settings, potential audiences may and should easily involve a broad range of organizations and community groups that include academic peers of students, supportive parent gatherings, and an extensive list of service and religious organizations. Specific formats or identified programs may include features such as audience debates, reading hours, and evenings with forensics that can utilize diverse speech and interpretation preparations. In addition to the listed formats, the annual forensics banquet certainly merits development and utilization as a valuable option for incorporating and promoting a wide range of educational goals, values, and benefits. The advantages gained through the banquet experience can enhance the credibility of speech programs while also fostering positive working relationships with numerous campus academic units and the entire local community. Hence, the following discussion will be devoted to organizational choices, program features, and the potential strengths of the forensics banquet as one workable option for communicating educational applications and benefits of forensics with the broader public. Examples referenced from the

Southwest Baptist University program represent the experiences of a director, numerous colleagues, and dedicated Pi Kappa Delta members attempting different strategies through decades of experimentation and learning.

The Banquet Audience

Certainly, forensics banquets at the close of the academic year vary from program to program. Some directors and organizations focus upon gathering the speakers and debaters for a final meal and an informal time to celebrate the season's achievements as a team. Others may wish to use the close of the year occasion as a workshop for organizing and planning for the upcoming forensics season.

With the Southwest program, the banquet group is composed of an inclusive audience of individuals with an interest in forensics and Pi Kappa Delta at many levels. Invited guests include members of the faculty and administration who may have special interest in the team, or other professors in attendance may have followed the academic progress of individual speakers throughout the year and want to know more about the activity. Attending faculty and administrators also include some persons who have not seen forensics team members "perform" prior to the evening's program. The parents and relatives of team members are usually enthusiastic about the opportunity to attend the banquet and meet other squad members and representatives of the university staff. Following the evening's program, some parents often declare that the occasion is an enlightening educational introduction to the activity that is such a major part of the lives of their sons or daughters. The alumni in attendance are consistently eager to "return home again" and learn how the current team is meeting challenges of growth and competition, and interested community friends are pleased to interact with team members, coaches, and scholarship recipients whom they may have supported during the academic year. Finally, new team prospects

and recruited squad members, attending as invited guests, take advantage of the opportunity to become acquainted with the team's heritage and history.

Organizing the Banquet Program

Standard elements of the banquet program at Southwest include the planning and presentation of agenda items linked into a framework characterized by careful organization, creativity, and participation by as many forensics team members as possible. Early coaching guidelines emphasize that comments and speeches must be timed and scripted to make sure the entire program moves smoothly. Often new students understand the preparation for the evening more completely by emphasizing that the appreciation banquet is a special performance requiring thorough planning and thoughtful adaptation.

Although the specific program format may vary from year to year, features include the formal but brief speech of welcome, an invocation, the recognition of guests, the introduction of alumni and greetings from the alumni, a musical performance, the year in review, the introduction of the evening speaker, the keynote address, senior reflections, and a brief recognition of award recipients and new members of Pi Kappa Delta. Members of the squad stand for recognition at the close of the program.

Introductions of Guests and Alumni

The introduction of guests in attendance not only accomplishes an essential act of courtesy with the brief welcoming comments, but the procedure initiates the telling of a continuing forensics narrative that progresses throughout the evening. Identification of university officials, parents, and alumni helps members of the audience to feel a part of the gathering. The presentation of alumni with accompanying identifications of their years of competition as undergraduates and their current

professional activities remains a special interest to all guests and members of the speech and debate team. Recognizing some of the accomplishments of alumni and former team members also serves as a quiet testimonial to university officials regarding the significant places that alumni fill in their respective communities. With the introductions, an emphasis of the forensics tradition at Southwest is also highlighted and often becomes an ongoing theme through program features revealing the heritage of the local chapter of Pi Kappa Delta.

Sharing Alumni Letters

An anticipated feature of the spring banquet at Southwest Baptist is the reading of letters and messages from alumni who are unable to attend the annual event. Although the "mail" must be edited to meet the limits of time, student readers carefully arrange and practice copies of scripts to convey the essence of the greetings. Usually the letters are presented by a duo team in order to highlight and contrast the messages through presentation.

The notes habitually salute the team and frequently identify the living locations of the writers along with references to recent professional or personal achievements. Utilization of the Narrative that characterizes the communication of the evening is evident as alumni express their greetings and memories. Occasionally, the messages employ the use of satire, mild ridicule, and exaggeration; and favorite targets include former colleagues, opponents from the "old days," and coaches. Still, most mail involves more than humor as writers generally conclude with reflective comments. Attorney Timothy Triplett, a graduate of the program thirty years ago, sent greetings to the audience in 2001. His closing thought is typical of many yearly messages as he wrote: "The foundation for learning and development . . . and the entire experience with the forensics group have made a tremendous difference in my life. I am always grateful, if not always in touch and vocal about it" (personal communication, April 19, 2001).

Thus, the inclusion of letters in the evening program not only relates interesting updates for alumni, but the greetings also help the audience visualize broader dimensions of forensics at Southwest.

Communicating the Forensics Story

Following introductions and greetings, other program segments continue the communication of the team's traditions and accomplishments. Specifically, program features such as the year in review, the keynote address, and the senior reflections recount the year's record and the program's history. Students charged with writing parts of the program are responsible for including all names of current speakers who are active in the program, and alumni greetings often include names of prior team members as references. "In-house" stories that are understood only by present squad members are discouraged.

In a sense, the consistent use of team narratives throughout the banquet program illustrates the function of the success story explained by Professor Pamela Benoit (1997) when she discusses the role and influence of narratives in our lives and culture. Citing the work of Gergen and Gergen of 1988, Benoit explains that success stories are "inherently social events, publicly performed and negotiated" (p. 23). As banquet participants engage in relating stories of their successes and failures, they often evaluate their experiences in terms of their roles or membership as a part of the team. They relate descriptive stories about tournament hosts and settings, the long rides in crowded university vans, the personal lessons learned, and the memorable personalities that help to shape their communication practices and professional goals. Present students as well as alumni demonstrate how stories capture experiences and influence the shaping of their philosophies and values. They experience and utilize the kind of clarification set forth by Daniel Taylor (1996) when he writes: "Stories make connections. They allow us to see our past, our present, and our

future as interrelated and purposeful. We seek out stories which enhance this process" (p. 85).

Speeches of Introduction

Introductions for the guest performer and the keynote speaker continue the telling of the program's developing story that permeates the evening's agenda. As introductory presentations focus upon the anticipated performances and speeches of special guests, the overall guidelines of brevity and careful preparation are emphasized, and presenters realize that they must adapt their information to the special banquet occasion.

Specifically, introductory speakers gather and communicate information that is designed to build the credibility of the speaker or artist while also linking guests with the banquet gathering. Following typical speech writing admonitions, introductions are scripted to blend qualifications with human interest. As Carolyn Keefe (1999) has noted, presenters of introductions are urged to remember that speeches are not given in a vacuum but in a social context (p. 216). To assist featured presenters in building rapport with listeners, introducers are directed to focus upon "giving the audience a reason to listen" (p. 216).

The Keynote Address:

The keynote address at the Southwest Baptist banquet is the program's feature. The guest speaker is typically a representative of professional-business success, a noted forensics educator, or an individual known for his or her strong support of the local speech program or forensics honorary. Ideally, a news release and a carefully planned introduction serve to build the speaker's initial ethos as the spokesperson before the address is presented. Although it is the highlight of the evening, the speech is limited by time constraints to approximately twelve minutes in length. It is

recorded and quotations are frequently included in upcoming issues of the student forensics journal.

While keynote speakers at the Southwest banquet have freedom to select topics of their choice, guest presenters are reminded of the educational goals and traditions that have become a part of the context of the occasion. Speeches certainly vary from year to year in terms of speaker styles and modes of identification with listeners. Memorable addresses often explore or mention, at some level, the potential applications of forensics and team participation to the educational, professional, or relational lives of listeners.

Although the developmental support utilized in the keynote speeches certainly reflects the perspectives and personalities of speakers, individual narratives are frequently employed as the primary support in the addresses. Matthew Morrow, for example, speaking in 2005, depended upon his own embellished story to frame and launch his message. "I recall," he began, "as a freshman wondering why I was the only one not winning trophies. My older teammates seemed to have a superhuman power to dominate their opponents that I just didn't have" (p. 1). Morrow then detailed a humorous account of his soliciting assistance from his experienced colleagues in order to reach his goals. His narrative, similar to choices used by others, illustrates Professor Benoit's observation that "tellers of success stories often acclaim their successes by enhancing their value" (p. 148). Morrow's address also exemplifies the Benoit conclusion that story tellers may also work to "shape audience perceptions of the distinctiveness and desirability of their accomplishment" (p. 148). Clearly, Southwest Baptist banquet speakers often adhere to similar practices in their use of individual and team stories.

Narratives, reflections, and specific instances often lead to rhetorical challenges that are presented to the audience at different levels. University administrators are frequently reminded of their roles with budget allocations, and parents may be reassured that their scholars are wise to elect involvement in forensics, but

admonitions to the team are frequently even more direct in the keynotes. For example, Morrow underscored the team building objective as he explained:

> *On most successful forensics teams you would be expected to develop and perfect your own repertory of events and make them as good as they possibly can be. But that alone is not good enough to be a member of our team. You must also contribute to making your teammates as good as they can be. (p. 3)*

Similarly, Todd Fuller, speaking in 2002, challenged squad members to value team unity and building as he declared: "You are a part of something bigger than that group you strategically squeezed into a van weekend after weekend from September to March. Your team numbers in the hundreds." He concluded: "That reality should really make all of us question what it means to be a part of any team" (p. 1).

Applications of forensics to life and purposes beyond competition are also repeated conclusions of keynote messages. Attorney J. Russell Jackson, speaking in 1998, attempted to put tangible awards in perspective for current forensics competitors and their supportive audience as he explained:

> *Trophies, of course, are only symbols of accomplishments; they have no meaning in and of themselves. Their true value lies only in whom we have become through our efforts to achieve. Your speech trophies, your tournament victories are invaluable–not because you won them, and not because you were better than the other speakers at a particular tournament, but instead, because you sweated–you research, analyzed, and you willed*

> *yourself to grow, learning how to win and to lose gracefully in the Southwest Baptist tradition. (p. 1)*

Thus, the keynote addresses, while relying heavily upon the narrative that is frequently developed as a success story, habitually present challenges relating to team building, group responsibility, and allegiance to the local program, and internal or lasting rewards from participation experience. Despite the uniqueness of each address, the common themes are repeatedly evident.

Senior Reflections: Comments of Farewell

The annual forensics banquet is incomplete without the opportunity for graduating seniors to present brief responses as they close their undergraduate careers in forensics. These comments allow departing team members to fulfill at least two purposes in prepared remarks: First, speakers may wish to pay tribute to colleagues, coaches, the university, and the forensics program. With elements of the speech of tribute as objectives, the speech allows students to accomplish the goals summarized by Carolyn Keefe when she explains that elements of tribute "can help sort out the impact of people and events on our lives and provide an outlet for emotional response" (p. 221). The farewell comments allow students to give voice to responses of appreciation that they need to clarify and express at the conclusion of their speech and debate careers.

A second value and tradition exemplified by the senior comments fosters the continued telling of the forensics story through the completion of the evening program. At Southwest Baptist, a long-held tradition requires each departing team member to present to the squad archives a special trophy, award, or recognition that has been earned by the student during his or her years of competition. These presentations allow the graduating student to reflect upon an entire career and comment upon success as it relates to others. Students often give brief but sincere

accounts of how others assisted in their growth and achievements. Interestingly, as tellers of success narratives, students also demonstrate the explanation of Professor Pamela Benoit as she concludes that tellers of success stories often "share responsibility for their success" (p. 153). A common practice, Benoit observes, is that "an individual's success is celebrated as a collective success, and those individuals identified by the teller can share in the recognition" (p. 153). For the Southwest banquet, the senior reflections involve team members sharing success with numerous individuals, especially members of the team.

Benefits and Implications for Forensics Programs

Although potential benefits from the forensics banquet are implied in the foregoing discussion, several noteworthy advantages deserve particular emphasis. While examples of the Southwest program are referenced, applications and implications for other programs and forensics organizations may certainly exceed the rewards that are described.

The initial positive result must consider the advantage of building a forensics support community that extends far beyond the immediate team and its host academic department. By uniting an occasion and audience that includes special guests, members of the local community, university administrators, and representative alumni, a much broader and inclusive vision of forensics is emphasized. Specifically, the Southwest program benefits from creating an audience and context for dialogue about the contributions of forensics to the lives of students, the university, and the community. The program segments, featured stories, and comments from the alumni and team members allow the entire gathering to learn about forensics and the specific dimensions of the local program.

The community benefits can have far reaching advantages for the school or university. For example, at Southwest Baptist, the forensics banquet occasion often fosters friendship building

that encourages scholarship contributions, valuable contacts with prospective students, and even direct monetary support. University officials often express appreciation for the annual speech banquet because it encourages cooperation between the speech team, the university, and the entire community. Relationship efforts have far reaching implications.

A specific benefit for the speech and debate program can be identified as an enhanced sense of purpose for the forensics team. The experience of this educator continues to demonstrate that student speakers and debaters easily and habitually think of forensics in terms of tournament successes. Hence, there is an ongoing temptation to evaluate a program by merely counting individual awards and team sweepstakes trophies at the end of the season. While impressive records and hardware easily function to measure success, such a calculation often lacks a sense of lasting accomplishment for the team. Speaking of the lingering benefits of participation in forensics, Kristine Bartanen (1997) proposes a comparison that certainly applies to a program's healthy educational philosophy as well as the forensics banquet. Bartanen writes:

> *Just as course grades are only one piece of evidence in support of a claim that students have accomplished objectives we have set for them in our course syllabi, so competitive success is but one element in the narrative which documents the benefits of forensic education. (p. 3)*

Indeed, the banquet can serve as an appropriate avenue for speech educators to promote advantages of participation in forensics and the corresponding life values that reach beyond a winning record or the mere accumulation of trophies or awards.

In fulfilling its educational mission, the banquet calls upon forensics students to focus upon others. Although speech preparation and personal responsibility are emphasized, the

atmosphere that prevails at the appreciation banquet is entirely different from the purpose and tempo that accompany competitive preparation and participation. For example, at Southwest Baptist, team members, and especially chapter leaders, are asked to visit informally with all guests in an effort to make invited individuals feel comfortable and appreciated. Team members assume responsibility for all aspects of the evening including program designing, room decorating, greeting of guests, and clearing displays following the banquet. In short, the team assumes the perspective of focusing upon the well-being of others. This orientation guides team members in expressing appreciation to the university, the community and alumni for their support of the forensics program. At the Southwest banquet, only a few student awards are given as a part of the program. Instead, students concentrate upon presenting the team as a credible, versatile, and appreciative group.

In her award-winning *Eloquence in an Electronic Age*, Kathleen Hall Jamieson (1988) mentions an ongoing decline of opportunities for speakers to practice and develop oral communication talents and skills. Her discussion concludes "that those who aspire to speak well have few ready-made occasions in which to test their talents" (p. 15). The need identified by Jamieson as well as other speech educators is recognized with the opportunities such as those afforded by the forensics banquet program.

Specifically, the banquet promotes the advantage of calling for team members to concentrate upon communicating rather than merely engaging in another specialized event, performance or activity. In practical terms, student participants in the spring banquet program have the experience of speaking and receiving feedback from a "real life" communication setting. Since the context is not a classroom or merely another round at a competitive tournament, a different type of adaptation is required. Repeatedly, students from the Southwest program evaluate the banquet

experience by commenting: "This is a different kind of audience; it is not like speaking in a tournament or in the classroom."

A distinct advantage for the local forensics program is derived from the transitional nature of the occasion. Since senior members of the current team are usually approaching graduation, the evening may serve as a ceremonial closing for upcoming graduates who are reaching the completion of their speech and debate experience. At Southwest, graduates are encouraged to join the ranks of alumni now spanning decades who continue to support their university's tradition in forensics. Ideally, the banquet not only marks a moment of completion and celebration, but it also serves as a time for emphasizing continued unity between the ongoing program and those who leave the team.

A closely related final advantage can be identified as building a team over time. As alumni return for the banquet evening and guest presentations are made, references to the program's heritage can be emphasized throughout the evening. Team activities may include tours of trophy displays or team artifacts, and photo presentations from past years can be featured as points for visiting and interaction. Although individual alumni may maintain associations with the speech program through visits, tournament judging, letters, and even financial contributions, the banquet can serve as a unifying experience between alumni and the present program.

Conclusion

Recognizing that forensics must function within a challenging environment that affects educational institutions in the twenty-first century, this paper has proposed examination and development of the annual forensics banquet as a means of building the credibility of the local forensics program and promoting a wide range of values and benefits. With the utilization of the program hosted by Southwest Baptist University serving as a framework for discussion, the essay has examined a

typical banquet audience, organizational options, and recurring advantages. Discussion has also called attention to the use of the success story with insight provided by Professor Pamela Benoit to illustrate how the narrative can unify and develop elements of the program, especially in the keynote address. While references have been made to the writer's program experience, the ongoing objective throughout the discussion has been to stimulate brainstorming that may expand the banquet concept in ways that meet the unique needs and challenges of individual forensics programs.

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Negotiating Organizational Acclaim: A Case Study of a Self-Proclaimed Interdisciplinary Forensics Team

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Abstract

Forensics teams are organizations that must both be aware of how publics perceive them, and be aware of how their internal stakeholders attribute value to them. Organizational stories of competition and success provided to publics and stakeholders add rhetorical layers to this communication experience. Hence, it is no wonder that identifying a forensics team as a rigorous, interdisciplinary pursuit—an acclaim holding great cultural and academic cache for a Liberal Arts University and its students—is complicated. Using Pamela Benoit's typology of acclaiming, I examine how our interdisciplinary forensics organization 1) situates itself in the academic climate among audiences, students, and administrators and 2) deals with the ramifications of the rhetorical acts of acclaiming and disclaiming.

When Aristotle categorized his list of discourse types those many millennia ago, he separated out epideictic as a form of speech encompassing "either praise or blame" and tending to reference the "present" even while recalling past events and contemplating future intentions (1991, p. 48). Of course this category of discourse has remained open for examination in relation to the other Aristotelian categories of deliberative and forensic (Yuris, 1996), but it is particularly useful as an evaluative model to organize and compare those types of encomium or honorary speech that deal with vice, virtue and responsibility

(Vickers, 1998). In relation to the study of discourse in various contexts, applying typologies such as the epideictic template is still useful to scholars in the contemporary academy. Jamieson and Campbell (1982) argued that the application of genre criticism provides situational and temporal comparisons for "like" texts in a manner providing insight into speaker, audiences, culture, and popular expectations affiliated with texts under scrutiny. Furthermore, Hochmuth (1955) explained that an assessment of genre in the search for form forces critics to learn history, art, culture, and above all speaking position. And though such neo-Aristotelian approaches to criticism have been deemed problematic in epistemic terms of their ontological scope, limited symbolic interrogation and creativity, continued consideration of epideictic rhetoric certainly elicits an intellectual rigor for analysts comparing texts as regards the way those texts share in praise and blame aspects. But when and where should such a consideration of epideictic take place?

While myriad texts purporting expertise in critical analysis explain that rhetorical traditions of public speaking text assessment comprise the target for genre analysis (e.g. Bryant, 1973; Foss 2004; Hart, 1999; Jost and Olmsted, 2006; Thonssen and Baird, 1948), contemporary scholars articulate our lifeworld as a significant theatre of communicative episodes and interactions that includes multiple contexts for symbolic assessment. One particular communication context that has garnered much scholarly attention over the previous few decades is organizational communication since, as Krone (2005) and Deetz (1992) have claimed, organizational life has become sutured into our very existence. Grant, Keenoy and Oswick (2001), among others, have laundry listed the academic currents that posture the discursive study of organizations including both conferences and multiple publications. Buzzanell and Stohl (1999) further explained that organizational communication studies have gained a foothold due to the value of critique and the assessment of discursive features in organizational climes, among other modes and methods of

communication study. It is clear, then, that organizational communication as an area of scholarly investigation is already accepting of the study of speech acts. Questions regarding epideictic rhetoric in the organizational context would certainly not feel out of place and, as mentioned above, such genre analysis would certainly provide an evaluative template for considering the rhetoric of praise and blame therein. As Boyd and Stahley (2005) have demonstrated, examinations of epideictic rhetorical behavior can certainly provide symbolic insight into the problems organizational actors face when speaking in terms of praise and blame.

In line with Dean's (1990) and Ribarsky's (2005) call for more learned interaction with the institution of forensics, we can also feel confident that an examination of speech and debate organizations within the communication field is a worthy parameter for scholarly focus. Swanson (1992) likewise maintained that we should consider the organizational qualities of forensics groups as per the standards of functional communication, network maintenance, and educational focus on rhetorical technique. Given the pervasiveness of forensics organizations in our communication discipline, the rhetorical goals and discursive nature of their existence, as well as the organizing activities required for effective preparation, research and coaching interactions, the usefulness of assessing forensics organizations is clear. In that these organization are places where individuals invest time and money, focus on critical thinking (McGee, Williams & Worth. 2001) and creative capacities (Gaer, 2002), learn life skills such as civic participation and critical thinking for political ends (Frank, 1993; Hollihan and Baaske, 1994; Perry, 2002) and generally identify with others who share similar interests in the maintenance of our civil rights and our freedoms (Freeley, 1996), analysis of their texts are warranted. Moreover, when we consider the added dimension of organizational advertising and narratives propagated by forensics groups employed to extend visibility and increase community legitimacy it

becomes even clearer that the epideictic genre applied to the communication behavior of these organizations is justified. Hence, Compton (2005) has suggested that the rhetorical tools afforded in Benoit's (1997) acclaiming typology may provide stimulating insight into how such presentational discourse impacts not only the individuals in forensics organizations, but also institutional image and educational outcomes of those programs.

Benoit's acclaiming speech model follows in the footsteps of classical epideictic rhetoric in the sense that it seeks to examine and compare the methods by which rhetors engage in talking about success on the personal and organizational level. But while classical notions of epideictic have tended toward seeking virtuous capacities, celebratory identities, and the use and abstention of vice in moments of praise and blame in public sectors, Benoit's acclaim developed from interpersonal constructs of self-presentation, social identity, and social reward literatures. Benoit proposed that speakers engage in both defensive and assertive self-presentations, where the latter constitute a focus on providing an image of success for attribute to the speaker. She further explained that when rhetors tell stories of acclaim they tend to take on the posture of negotiating between acts of entitlement (claiming ownership for positive outcomes) and enhancement (increasing the attractiveness of an accomplishment) over against acts of dissociation (diminishing one's affiliation with an outcome) and detraction (reducing the attractiveness of accomplishment). In her original research on athletes, cosmetics dealers and Nobel Prize winners, Benoit demonstrates that speakers develop a number of goals for the telling of success stories due to the fact that sources of success tend to derive from exclusive behavior outcomes while audience expectations regarding apropos acclaiming differ depending on situational and relational factors. For instance, it may be very unwise to claim all of the responsibility for an exceedingly prestigious outcome without "spreading the wealth" regarding group inputs or talking about the fortuitous nature of the achievement, especially if those listening expect that narrators

should include dissociative or distracting reasons for successes and "give credit where credit is due." Benoit explains that the goal of acclaiming rhetoric is to provide a successful image of the speaker without diminishing the speaker's identity goal of improved attribute in the minds of others. Hence, successful acclaiming depends on story teller's abilities both to posture others' perceptions through a convergence strategy of conjoined acclaiming and disclaiming—negotiating the parameters set up by audience expectations of how much responsibility a story teller can claim and how much quality can be claimed in the successful achievement—as well as to concentrate primarily on either acclaiming or disclaiming at different moments within messages depending on listener expectations and cultural appropriateness standards of modesty and worthy achievement. Finally, tellers of success stories may also need to rely both on these assertive forms of self-presentation in moments of achievement in tandem with the account form of self-presentation when image is tarnished and previous identity and image work built on success stories is thrown into question.

The following case study takes to heart the descriptive work Benoit has manifested regarding the tellers of success stories. I examine my own speech and debate organization as per its acclaiming behavior both to demonstrate Benoit's work as a heuristic for organizational communication criticism, as well as a learning tool for forensics organizations and for our own organizational future as a self-presented interdisciplinary program.

Case Study: A Midwest Coach Examines Problematic Acclaiming Behavior

"Why don't you schedule a meeting with Academic Affairs? I just spoke with one of the members of the group and they are interested in what you're doing. It would be a good move for the kids and the department to have the group approved by A.A. and get their feedback. Do you think you can talk with them

soon?" Immediately after this spring semester discussion with one of my departmental colleagues, I spoke with a member of our campus' Academic Affairs Committee to set up a meeting so that I might articulate the "nature" of our speech and debate program for other faculty and, hopefully, receive some level of symbolic support from the group. I had previously mentioned to my colleague that I thought our program was a nice addition to the interdisciplinary focus of the campus community and provided an intellectual outlet both for humanities and hard science majors. I was particularly anxious about meeting with A.A. considering this group of elected professors traditionally hails from disciplinary rigorous perspectives and has demonstrated a track record of promoting deep research agendas for students. To be honest, I wasn't sure if we would fit into their vision of our campus' intellectual climate.

"I think what you're doing with the whole debate team on campus is great! In fact, I wish we had more students working with you." I was caught a bit off guard by this exclamation from my colleague in Fine Arts at our opening Fall Convocation this year. I'd been unable to meet with A.A. in the spring and so I was working on a fall date for presenting my case to them. In the interim (in fact in piecemeal fashion over the past two years since my arrival on campus), I had been building a case for the academic import of our program by sending out constant press releases about our team's success as well as generating visual media advertisements in newspapers and on posters with the help of various communication students. The culmination of national awards and rankings along with our press releases, student networking, university communication press releases, and some newspaper coverage had started to pay off. We were getting some airtime and the campus community was coming around to understanding who we are. Or, at least, the campus community was starting to recognize our existence.

I've only recently realized the importance of why we need to posture the intellectual features and gains of our program's

continuing existence. It is only due to the advent of electronic notes sent to the faculty explaining our academic worth that what we have had positive response from the faculty. Apparently, some professors continue to think that our students do little more than tell jokes with guiding theses, or offer up watered down versions of English essays. I know this because I've met a few colleagues in various campus-wide meetings, faculty introduced to me who say things like "oh, so you work with that group that does poetry reading on other campuses" or "hey, don't you travel with those kids who argue with kids from other universities?" While there is nothing implicitly negative about these interrogatories, certainly they demonstrate a level of ignorance about our work that must be remedied if we are to sustain our growth qua intellectuals. And while I have received private email and handwritten notes over the past two years from various department chairs wishing us luck and providing congratulatory remarks, I must say that private accolades such as these, while very encouraging, do little more to amplify our goals for symbolic growth. What we are really after is some sign that the campus culture recognizes our academic worth.

Further, I have the desire to position our speech and debate program as an intellectual endeavor for our campus students, and our department has intentionally added the program to its offerings as a public outlet for academic work and as a way to recruit students for the university. We travel both a regional circuit and a national circuit. We are a Pi Kappa Delta Chapter competing in NFA/AFA individual events, NFA Lincoln-Douglas Debate, and NPDA Parliamentary Debate. While we are one of the smallest teams in these respective forensics organizations, a size which corresponds with our campus population of 1,500 students—very small in relation to the majority of teams who compete in these events, we feel that we do alright. What's more, I've made it my goal to recruit the best and brightest on campus so that when we compete we are demonstrating the best minds our program has to offer while representing the university's competitive focus. That said, we've worked to introduce our research goals, our student's

hard work and achievements, and our aspirations of becoming the co-curricular on campus that truly accents and adds to the intellectual community.

The Rhetoric of Forensics Organizational Acclaiming

The primary way that our program has worked to accomplish our community posturing is through a rhetoric of acclaiming. In line with Benoit's (1997) general explanation of success story telling, we have instigated a campaign of notes, published accolades, and poster postings wherein we generate claims to success and intercollegiate accomplishments. These range from descriptions of our team sweepstakes hunt—even if we are not large enough for overall sweepstakes championships, we claim honor by making it into the top three to five list at regional tournaments on occasion—to multiple individual awards at regular season tournaments as well as state and national tournaments. Moreover, our organization comprised of team members, department faculty and coaching staff have designed, introduced and brainstormed almost all of these success narratives. Yet, we have only had a media source beyond our influence proactively seek out our program's team members a few times over the course of two years to publish or broadcast news stories about us. That said, we have had numerous occurrences where professors have mentioned in conversation to students, coaches and department faculty, that they were previously unaware of our existence and only by way of our press releases have they come to know of our success.

I should also note that our three year old program doesn't exist due to the whim of an outgoing administration nor does it exist because our newly elected president believes in the innate worth of debate and forensics. Rather, I was hired by a communication department who wrote the worth of such a program into their long-term goals, and included such a program as part of the prescription near the end of a five-year program

assessment. Admittedly this is a department that fronted a debate program over twenty-five years ago, but all of the intellectual and competitive residue from that program have long since eroded from the memory of the current department faculty constellation. Of course, even internal documents do not expose all of the generative communication that called our program into being. I should also mention that my hire was contingent only upon my ability to teach appropriate communication and argumentation classes. Departmental review only provided a desired vision for our speech and debate program to come into being and for me to help build it. I had to create a program from scratch in the summer of 2003. To do so, I began an email blitz campaign to faculty and students wherein I articulated the educational opportunities that would arrive with a competitive team. I elicited the help of Alan, Berkowitz, Hunt & Louden (1999) when they explained the aid to critical thinking basic speech and debate competition provides. I dredged up Ehninger's (1952) analysis that an ethical team with a focus on composition and research practice would only enhance the greater intellectual community. As well, I echoed the speech community's call (see Schnoor & Karns, 1989) to be relevant to students' academic and social lives.

The outcome of those early tradition-building, justification-providing attempts was quite positive. I entered a situation where I had a very modest budget, but one that would allow me to travel a small team to competitions of average size. Over the course of the next few years, our students would far outpace the budget we would be given, prompting me to seek more funding from administrators. The process of improved tournament outcomes along with more travel and, subsequently, a growing team, eventually lead us to deal with our current concern for how we are perceived on campus.

Of course I wouldn't go as far as to call our concern a crisis of perception, but there are a number of residual effects of having developed a tradition out of thin air. Particularly, we have attempted to situate our program as an academic co-curricular

beyond the realm of classes but where the work done in classes translates into intellectual success by way of competitive performance as a synthesis for gained knowledge. Given the perception gleaned from conversations I have had where faculty 1. do not know that we exist, or as I mentioned earlier, 2. do not know exactly what we do, it is quite obvious that our faculty of under one hundred persons either have not received the message, or they have not internalized our story. Hence, we continue our campaign of organizational acclaiming.

One of the approaches we have appropriated to help us foundationalize our rhetorical approach of self-presentation is informed from an issues management perspective. Kuhn explains that this organizational communication perspective is "concerned with shaping policy on issues in which the public has a stake;" and is derived from a symbolic, rhetorical approach to communication in organizations and with organizational stakeholders (1997, p. 188). I very much believe that our program's acceptance on campus is a function of how we, as an organization, are observed by the campus community stakeholders of administrators, professors, staff and students. In parallel, Benoit's analysis demonstrates that we are part and parcel identified by the modes of self-presentation in which we engage. What's more, given our university's mission statement geared toward critical thinking and our general education requirement across the disciplines, our legitimacy as an organization is situated in educational and interdisciplinary locutions. Hence, our ability to fit into accepted academic community frameworks hinges on our ability to manage organizational rhetoric in such as way as to orchestrate acclaiming messages that meet these interdisciplinary and educational expectations. After all members of the community are certainly stakeholders in our organization in the sense that they participate in the academic features of the campus of which we are a part. And given our situating discourse that draws on the mission statement and pedagogical necessity of the academy, it certainly makes sense

that these stakeholders are concerned about our program as an extension of the intellectual community.

Of course issues management is not the ultimate constraint on our acclaiming campaign, but it does function as a form of rhetorical vigilance. That is to say, when we craft the wording of our press releases and news stories, we almost always start with a description of what happened and what, if any, awards the team received, followed immediately with a discussion of how to situate the organizational accomplishments in an education or interdisciplinary vein. We have felt that this remains key to our continued success in providing necessary evidence substantiating our claims to successful synergy between course work and tournament attendance. Even more importantly as per the rhetorical stakeholder model and the self-acclaiming literature, it is imperative that we speak to the community audience 1. in such a way that they feel we are participating on their behalf, and 2. in such a way that we continue to articulate a level of intellectual efficacy through the events in which we participate and the accomplishments we achieve.

Returning to Benoit, clearly we must seriously consider voicing both positive self-evaluation in terms of entitlement and enhancement as well as disclaiming in terms of dissociation and detraction since, in our case, we have worked to "get seen" on campus as an academic group with pretenses toward aiding and advancing academic rigor. For instance, our press releases have yet to disclaim in addition to acclaiming. We have not engaged in dissociation by speaking to a level of campus support for our critical and research activities nor have we designed messages combining acclaim with any level of detraction as regards the quality or level of achievements of the team. Rejoining the comments I have received from colleagues in art, architecture, business, education and interdisciplinary studies, we feel that we have made great strides in what we have accomplished intercollegiately, yet we have not had the success we had hoped for in getting the local community to understand how we function as

an extension of our greater intellectual culture. It follows from the issues management strategy compared to and contrasted with Benoit's self-presentation model of acclaiming that we must examine ways to take on the burden of self-acclaiming and the responsibilities toward balancing those messages with a modicum of modesty that our campus culture expects. That said, I have stared a conversation with our returning students, department colleagues, and other faculty across campus. This conversation is being documented to help us determine what steps we must take to add a demonstrable shouldering of the burden we claim to have regarding educational expansiveness and interdisciplinary rigor in conjunction with searching for message strategies that incorporate the university-wide participation in our organization's success. Hence, we already have an early collection of thoughts provided by faculty, other students, and team members that should help us begin the process of crafting more sophisticated success stories by balancing acclaim with apropos disclaiming strategies identifying the greater community as an important facilitator of our successes at different levels.

Adding to Our Intellectual Environment

Our academic dean has been one of our closest allies in the visioning and generation of the program, as well as one of our biggest supporters along the way. We are eternally grateful for his help in talking about us to other departments and mentioning our accolades in campus-wide faculty meetings. Likewise we are grateful that he maintains a focus on academic rigor to the effect of asking us to boost our intellectual offerings on campus. One of his recent suggestions is for us to provide campus debates for the community writ large. The internal dimension of these public events would provide an awareness of selected issues (environment, social justice, presidential elections, etc.) along with a forum for exploring researched opinions on those topics. The external dimension would be such that the university community,

facilitated by one of its academic arms—namely the speech and debate program—would provide a catalyst for a larger discussion of these issues, thereby providing an academic outreach to the greater metropolitan community. Both of these modes of engaging in an academic pursuit as a self-proclaimed intellectual program certainly do accept the responsibility that comes with this form of acclaiming. Moreover, the early issue raised by a few faculty who wonder exactly "how" we are educational is likewise answered with the self-presentation of publicly demonstrated behavior. To this end, we have started requesting that our debate students attend as many public, academic events as is possible. This means that instead of averaging one event attended per week, many have started attending three or more per week. This blanket attendance now prepares us for program and departmentally sponsored public dialogues and debates we host later in the year.

As research and critical thinking skills are also components of our program, we've also dedicated ourselves to conceiving ways to "back up" claims that we foster critical thinking and make available added forums of research to those already offered in classes around campus. One of the ways I have personally provided these offering is by working with our campus' first year experience as a provider of debate formatting and argumentation theory discussions. In fact, I recently offered an electronic account of Bellon's (2000) discussion of what debate across the curriculum might provide the greater academic community. Along with this type of campus interface, our program has taken on the challenge of demonstrating research abilities by furnishing various instructors research that is additive to course work. For instance, our Lincoln Douglas competitors used work they were doing on the recent criminal justice topic to offer insight into capital punishment and non-tort legal reform in criminology classes and legal communication courses. Finally, many of our speech students took literature research they had finalized for their own performances to classes so that those classes could compare the

styles and approaches to writing those pieces over against the material included in course content.

We have experienced a nervous optimism on the part of our students in promoting a responsible program that self-acclaims along the lines of extra education and extra interdisciplinary. This happens for a couple of reasons: 1. students are unsure that their research and debate offerings will be well received elsewhere on campus given their newness; 2. students are already pressed for time and the pressure to promote quality public events and quality research adds to status quo anxiety; and 3. students worry that so much work offered on campus detracts from work that could be accomplished off campus at competitive tournaments where they represent the university to the best of their ability. But all this is potentially worth it when, we are reminded, it is our burden to add to the qualities that make the university an intellectually invigorating experience. Amid the "ruins" of campus intellectual discontent, as Michael (2000) might say, our forensics program is working to provide ever more intellectual stimulation and ever more critical mindfulness. However, this level of work and the discussions that surround it do not guarantee a self-presentation received with the outcome of positive organizational identity in the minds of our community. We have received a few emails that identify our acclaiming efforts as self-aggrandizement and organizational bragging similar to the brashness of some sports teams. While we sincerely do not intend to promote ourselves as the most important organization on campus doing the hardest academic work, we do want to provide continuing coverage of our achievements without the negative identity attributes demonstrated in these emails. Hence, our decision to follow Benoit's description of balancing discursive strategies for acceptable identity goals on a trajectory that improves our symbolic posture in the community requires that we expedite the refurbishing of our acclaiming campaign. So that we are not seen as mere braggadocios flaunting our wares, we must disclaim by including the greater community as partially responsible for our achievements while managing the

quality striations across various press releases and team advertisements. Certainly not every press release can claim our organization's conclusive accomplishment. However, we can and should do more to explain collaborative contexts for our competitive and academic behavior.

Acclaiming and Disclaiming Toward Interdisciplinary

"So why do you think your program can add to what we do here, to what we do with our global perspective program?" A colleague asked this of me only a few days ago in regards to my belief that our program will continue to have residual effects on students, especially in the realm of our campus' unique global studies minor. While I can safely point out my record of teaching a global studies class each semester since my arrival, I can also provide detailed examples where our program has fostered the exploration of new ideas and the gain of new knowledge. I need only look at our current group of extemporaneous speakers to realize the force of research required to keep up on cultures and politics around the world. Moreover, these same students are continually recognized in our minor curriculum as quite knowledgeable and most likely to succeed in articulating ideas, political issues, environmental concerns, and social justice dimensions in dealing with the world within and beyond the borders of our nation. The same can be said for our debaters, especially our parliamentary competitors who research world events weekly. Thus I respond with, "Our program takes most of what we do in global and intercultural classes and forces students to talk about it all year long. Certainly, this is an excellent example of the synthesis we expect from our students as they take their intercultural journeys into a globalized world?"

Moran (2001) explains that an interdisciplinary perspective is one which makes it possible for individuals from various knowledge-gaining forums to come together and explore their approaches to understanding the world. Our university adheres to

this notion of interdisciplinary by way of bringing students together in classes from an introductory, year-long freshman class to advanced global studies classes that are required of all majors. The categorical inclusion of students in an educational venue that asks that they develop a global sensitivity makes for an excellent pool of competitors for a team that claims interdisciplinary as its watchword. More importantly, it is makes the task of posturing our program as successful on campus one of increasing complexity given that we have continued to claim that we are a venue for exploring the world around us, for articulating an understanding of the world, and for examining the ways that various others understand it. This educational feature of our cultural condition adds even more force behind our new success story telling design given that our acclaiming discourse dealing with our propensity to incorporate interdisciplinary efforts in practice and competitive preparation must be followed up with acclaim for the university's mission of interdisciplinary. Including this descriptive addition to success communiqué becomes a disclaiming activity in the event that acclaim is qualified as an outcome of our organization's hard work only when conditioned by a university culture replete with a mission across both disciplines and educational goals.

Conclusion: An Immodest Proposal

The added responsibility we are now attempting to take ownership of provides a sense of correspondence from Benoit's acclaiming features in relation to disclaiming for more strategic story telling. While we have worked hard over the past few years to generate a record of our program's achievements, we are now taking cues from Benoit based both on a symbolic self-presentation perspective as well as on an issues management perspective. Assessing responses from students, colleagues and administrators, we are now beginning to envision what our new communication strategy should be. So that we are not simply awash in perceived shameless acts of bragging and gloating without any semblance of

"paying our dues" to our university's educational culture, we must become more vigilant in the identity management strategies of conjoined acclaiming and disclaiming for the sake of improved success narratives. So that our organizational stories are not simply entitled, enhanced boasting, we must rethink the epideictic modes through which we attribute conditioned with tactics of dissociation and detraction so that our achievements are perceived as successful attainment on a modest, intellectually sound scale while facilitated in kind by other institutional factors. Our new approach to telling the success story for our organization must balance the goals of reporting achievement with identity management in an academic clime wary of immodest grandstanding. This or we will not be successful image managers.

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Teaching the Undergraduate Communications Research Methods Course

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Abstract

An imperative for personal and professional success is for communication students to understand and appreciate the wide range of research methods employed in academic and applied communication research. This article focuses on a course designed to prepare students for future academic study in the communication discipline and for professional careers in communication or related fields. Emphasis is on how one communication program introduces undergraduate students to the major concepts, issues, and techniques of quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods as they are used in communication research.

Overview

What is the best way to teach undergraduate students about communication methods? This is a question our Communication faculty at Missouri State University has wrestled with for years. We knew that our students should be informed about research methods as preparation both for future academic study in the communication discipline and for professional careers in communication or related fields. Because quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods have informed study and research in communication we wanted students to be exposed to all three. Thus, we created an undergraduate methods course where teachers

with expertise in one or more methods come together and teach as a team. One goal that we all shared was that the course should be a place where our students understand the relationship between theory, research, and practice as well as become familiar with ethical issues involved in conducting research. We also wanted our students to understand research design, conduct a research project, and produce and present findings in a final report.

This article tracks the development and instructional content of an undergraduate course that introduces students to concepts, issues, and techniques of quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods of communication research. We also talk about how the course engages students in ethical ways of defining research and solving knowledge problems, and where faculty share and coordinate their research expertise. In addition, two unique features of the course are presented in this article: a theme unifying the three methods and a performance-based final examination.

Rationale and Objectives for the Research Methods Course

It is our belief that a strong undergraduate program in Communication should provide students with some training in research methods. Regardless of a student's post-graduation goals, the ability to understand the research process is important. As citizens, students will need to be able to critically evaluate information generated by a variety of different kinds of research. As employees, the same skill is necessary. In addition, in some occupations the ability to design simple data collection instruments and analyze the resulting data is important. Of course, for those students who go on to post-baccalaureate education, a background in research methods will ease their transition to graduate-level academic work.

Faculty belief in the importance of undergraduate training in research methods was validated in our department's annual student survey. Undergraduate students were asked the extent to

which they agreed or disagreed with the statement "A research methods class should be required of undergraduate communication students." To the surprise of the faculty, more than 50% of the students responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed with the statement and only 15% of the students disagreed or strongly disagreed. Buoyed by student support for our belief in the importance of an undergraduate research methods class, we went forward in the curricular process of requiring the course for all our Communication majors.

The justification and rationale for establishing the undergraduate Communication Research Methods course (COM 210) is specified in the syllabus distributed to each student: These objectives guide our development of the course and clarify learning outcomes:

1. Enable students to understand the role communication research plays in defining and solving knowledge problems.
2. Introduce students to the major concepts, issues, and techniques of quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods as they are used in communication research.
3. Enable students to understand the relationship between theory, research, and practice.
4. Familiarize students with the ethical issues involved in conducting research.
5. Enable students to evaluate critically academic and applied research reports.
6. Develop in students an appreciation and understanding of the relationship between quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods of research.
7. Enable students to conduct a bibliographic search on a topic in the field of communication.
8. Enable students to organize and write a review of literature.

9. Enable students to understand how to formulate research questions, conceptualize a research design, conduct a research project, and produce a final research report.
10. Enable each student to present the findings of his/her research in poster and oral form.

Planning and Coordination of the Course

Careful planning and coordination are essential for COM 210. The first three or four class sessions requires all students and instructors to meet in a large conference room to discuss the emphasis of conducting ethical research. Through the remaining schedule of a 16 week semester, students rotate through three sections with each section focusing on one particular research method, quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical. The instructor and classroom for each method remain the same throughout the semester. When meeting on a Monday, Wednesday, and Friday schedule each of the three sections meet approximately 13 times.

Another aspect of the course that sets it apart is that the class is designed around a common theme. Over the past three years these themes have included Communication and Conflict, Communication and Violence, and Communication and Censorship. For the 2006-07 school year students will focus on the theme of Communication and Censorship. This theme was selected because in recent years censorship in its various forms has come to the forefront of our national consciousness.

In order to have a common experience from which to begin, each student was asked to read one of the following books which have been the target of censors: *The Age of Reason* by Thomas Paine; *Daisy Miller* by Henry James; *Fahrenheit 451* by Ray Bradbury; *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison; *Slaughterhouse Five* by Kurt Vonnegut. All five books are out in mass paperback and are inexpensive and easy for students to obtain copies. Two of the books, *The Age of Reason* and *Daisy Miller*, have copyright clearance for their entire contents to be printed online. During one

of the first days of the course where all students and faculty meet together, time is designated for discussing the history of censorship, the different reasons that each of the five selected texts for the course faced or continue to face censorship, as well as talking about current examples of censorship.
The class finishes by offering research questions involving censorship and communication for possible study.

Emphasizing Ethics in Conducting Research

A cornerstone of research that we wanted to get across to our students was the importance of following appropriate guidelines for conducting research. In the first week of the course we brought all sections together and first introduced the question. "Why have rules about research ethics? To answer this question we first talked about the evolution of today's ethical standards by looking back at recent 20th century cases where research was conducted in an unethical and questionable manner (e.g., Nuremberg Medical Trails, Tuskegee Syphilis Study, Stanford Prison Studies, and Milgram's studies on obedience). We encouraged students to think about what was unethical about each of these research studies and pointed out other reasons as well as ways to correct and address these ethical concerns.

We next introduced basic ethical standards for conducting research. We concentrated on the issues of confidentiality, of treating participants fairly, and the goals of not doing harm both physically and psychologically to research participants. Students were also told that deception in research is avoided where researchers strive to be honest and tell the truth about their research. To further emphasize the importance of ethical behavior we presented our COM 210 students with the ethical codes from the National Communication Association, the ethical guidelines from our campus Institutional Review Board, as well as the Missouri State Academic Integrity Policy that students were already familiar with. Course instructors brought in examples of

their own research studies and talked about decisions made in following basic ethical research conduct. We distributed copies of informed consent forms that demonstrated explaining not only the nature of a project, but also the importance of confidentiality, and voluntary participation that allowed participants to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. To further understanding of ethical research each student was required to complete the National Institute of Health (NIH) online training, and print out and turn in a copy of their completion of training in order to proceed in the COM 210 course.

Syllabi and Assignments for Three Research Methods

We are fortunate that we have Communication faculty at Missouri State University from all three research areas of quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical methods. Realizing that it may be disjointing for some students we told our students to think of having three separate instructors as a wonderful opportunity to learn about each method from a professor who has expertise and experience in the specific method being taught. Furthermore, we wanted to demonstrate to students how each method can be used to address questions and how methods may be integrated to provide insights on a research topic. What follows is a description of each research method, quantitative, qualitative, and rhetorical, as well as presentation of findings through a final report and poster session.

Quantitative Methods

The quantitative section of the course is designed to provide students with an overview of quantitative approaches to research with a goal to create in students an understanding of empirical research so they can be better informed consumers of this methodological perspective. Given the brief nature of the course, the goal of the quantitative section is not to create student statisticians or even to teach statistics with great depth. Rather,

faculty members seek to help students understand the fundamentals of quantitative research, while reducing some of the fear and anxiety associated with numbers.

This section begins by discussing basic concepts of quantitative research, including distinguishing between dependent and independent variables, determining potential relationships between variables, measuring of variables, and using research questions and hypotheses. The section then moves into a discussion of effective quantitative research design. To do so, journal articles are studied and analyzed in order to demonstrate successful strategies of research design. As part of evaluating the journal articles, students are taught the concepts of validity and reliability as ways to indicate the quality of the research study. Students are then taught specifically about approaches to survey methods, content analysis, and coding. The last few class periods of the quantitative section consider basic statistical analysis necessary for general understanding of quantitative analysis and findings, including frequency, descriptive, and inferential statistics.

Students are required to complete a final research proposal through which they apply their understanding of the content of the section. The proposal requires them to select a research focus based on the topic of the course, to identify dependent and independent variables, and to create a review of literature from which they arrive at several potential research questions or hypotheses. A methods section allows students to demonstrate their understanding of participant selection, measures to be used, and procedures for gathering the data. Students also explain basic statistical analysis used to describe and test their research questions or hypotheses. As a final part of the proposal, students provide strengths and limitations of the design of the study and are encouraged to suggest potential directions for future research.

This section of the course also uses a take home final exam through which students are able to demonstrate their understanding of quantitative research. The exam tests for both theoretical understanding and application.

Qualitative Methods

The goals of the qualitative research section are to help students understand a variety of contemporary approaches to qualitative research, including interviews, focus groups, and participant observation. Each of these approaches or methods is considered from a pragmatic and applied perspective to provide students with a working knowledge of how to use qualitative research methods to gather and report data on communication-related issues. Challenges associated with qualitative research are also taught to students. Production of students understanding how to interpret and analyze findings from qualitative data gathered during their time in the qualitative section is the ultimate goal of this section.

Faculty members hope that through their experiences with qualitative research, students will become savvy consumers of research and will be able to determine quality research from poor research. In order to accomplish this, students are first given an overview of qualitative research, including how to design a qualitative research study. They are taught to find a research focus, review literature, and create research questions. Given this understanding, students are prepared to learn about a variety of qualitative research methods useful for answering their questions. The basics of participant observation, qualitative interviewing, and focus groups are presented to class participants. As the section progresses, discussion and lecture moves from theory to praxis. Students seem to catch the vision of qualitative research as they apply the abstract ideas in practical ways.

Assignments in the class build on each other and culminate in a qualitative research study. When students are taught how to design a qualitative research study, they are encouraged to select a specific focus relating to the theme of the course. From the focus, students create a brief review of literature from which they propose research questions used to design effective interview questions for

gathering of their data. Because of the condensed nature of the course, students are compelled to conduct a focus group because it allows them to collect richer data quicker. After the focus group, students create an expanded account of the notes they took during the focus group to share with other members of the class. These notes are used as part of in-class discussion of analysis from which students learn to analyze their findings of the focus groups. Finally, students create a discussion section for their final paper by considering the analysis of their focus group notes together with their review of literature. The final paper assignment gives students a chance to practically experience qualitative research.
The literature review and research notes often tie in with what students have already completed or will complete with their quantitative research papers. Thus, students learn to triangulate both qualitative and quantitative methods to address research questions.

The section ends with a final exam focusing on the key points of designing a qualitative research study. Exam topics include, research design, research methods, and analysis.

Rhetorical Methods

The rhetoric section of the combined methods course attempts to provide students an overview of rhetorical methods, and particularly rhetorical criticism, over the course of approximately 4 1/2 weeks. The fundamental objectives in this section are for the students to appreciate the process of rhetorical criticism (including its challenges and limitations), understand how it relates to other methods of inquiry, and to become more conscious of rhetorical strategies as they experience the world. It is hoped that students reading research using a rhetorical approach in higher level classes will better understand and assess the articles they are assigned.

The primary assignment to achieve these goals is to have students compose a short rhetorical criticism, including the

separate processes of selection of an artifact (related to the COM 210 theme which ties all sections together), close textual analysis of the artifact, background and historical research, selection of an appropriate method (from the three covered in class), and construction of a paper. The final paper is approximately 10 pages, and includes method, artifact, and application sections. Each phase of the process is truncated, given the time constraints of the section.

Course material is divided such that 1.5 weeks are devoted to an overview of rhetorical criticism, including definitions, comparison/contrast to other types of criticism and other types of communication research, purposes for conducting criticism, and the overall method. The I-CARE system from the University of Kansas is introduced to help students grasp the fundamental process.

Over the next two weeks students explore three different methods of criticism. The methods employed have varied by semester, but have included such options as Burkean pentadic criticism, narrative criticism, metaphoric criticism, Neo-Aristotelian, and critical studies. Each method is presented with a representative published article to demonstrate how the method has been employed; these articles account for the majority of the reading load during the rhetoric section. Students are also required to complete a short online quiz over each article prior to the class.

The final week includes a unit quiz and a cross reading (students proofreading the papers of other students). In some cases the instructor has had students workshop papers where students need to complete each part of the paper per class meeting and other students read and ask questions on that portion of the paper. The final papers are generally due about a week after the unit is completed.

Final Poster Session

The final project of the communication research methods course is a poster session during which students demonstrate the culmination of their knowledge gained during the course. The poster session functions as the final exam for the course. The poster sessions allow students to present in a public venue the work they have accomplished over the semester and is designed to be a project in which students can be proud of the work they have done. Students are required to select one of the projects from the qualitative, quantitative, or rhetorical sections of the course around which to build their poster presentations. Because many of the projects students work on from section to section overlap, students are also encouraged to triangulate methods for their poster session to add depth and detail to the studies they have done.

On the day of the final exam, all students in the class come together to present their poster session. The posters are displayed on the ground floor of the building in which the communication department is housed. This location is large enough for approximately 30-35 students to present their posters simultaneously. The location is also a place with a moderate amount of student, faculty, and administration traffic so other members of the university community can see the work the students are doing in the course. The poster session lasts for two hours, during which time all students are required to be in attendance. During the first hour, half the students present their poster session while the others walk around to see the work their fellow students have accomplished. In the second hour the second group of students presents their posters, while the other students interact with them about their presentations.

Posters are graded using several criteria, including visual attractiveness, presentation of key ideas, and appropriate format (thesis, method, and results). They are also graded on their ability to present the ideas on the poster in a lucid and effective manner. All posters should have a clear emphasis on the theme of the

course for that semester. Grading occurs during the two hour period as all three instructors in the course visit briefly with each participant, judging each poster on the above criteria. The instructors of the course also appoint three judges from the communication department or university community to judge the posters. The Department of Communication budgets a small financial award given to the top three posters based on the judges' comments. The small award gives students even more incentive to create and present a beautiful poster presentation meeting the required guidelines.

What we have learned?

With the start of the 2006-07 academic year we are in the fourth year of offering the COM 210 Communication Research Methods course. This gives us some history to assess our progress and determine where the course needs "tweaking." For those of us who have taught the COM 210 Communication Research Methods course we agree that "coordination is the key" to a successful classroom experience for both students and instructors. COM 210's largest enemy, like it is with so many other courses, is time. We constantly berate the lack of time it takes to get everything done in the course.

Our assessment of COM 210 has resulted in general questions and weighing the pros and cons that each presents. These questions include:

- Is it too much to keep all three methods in the course? Should the course be a four hour course or should it be split up over a couple of semesters? If all three methods are kept in a single semester course what are ways to help better coordinate teaching and learning?
- What do we want our students to come out with after taking the course? Should an introductory

methods course emphasize more on how students become more savvy consumers; that is more comfortable reading and interpreting research? Or should students actually be required to do their own research project. The pro side of this that doing one's own research demystifies the process. The con side is that there is so much time spent learning about how to write a literature review that other essential lessons about research methods may be missed by most students.

- With all the work that faculty put into this research methods course can we get publishable data from the research that is carried out? In addition, should we write our own customized textbook for the course? One suggestion is that we edit a book and include articles of research studies and then ask guest authors to comment on their own research and explain why they chose a particular method over another.

Conclusion

This ambitious undertaking of instituting an undergraduate communication research methods course has several benefits. Primarily, we believe and have seen evidence where our COM 210 students are better prepared for upper division and graduate level work. Knowledge of research methods will undoubtedly help these students beyond graduation as well. Because students are required to present their research at the end of the semester poster session this event provides greater visibility for our discipline on our campus. Furthermore, several students have gone on to submit present at state, regional, and national conferences. COM 210 has quickly gained a reputation where students need to work hard, but will learn a lot. Often students report the course as one of their

favorites. Perhaps the greatest compliment came from a student who in the semester after she took COM 210 reported that in her psychology course it was required for students to go through the online NIH certificate training. The student said to the professor that she had completed this training in one of her communications courses, and promptly presented her certificate. According to the student, the psychology professor saw the certificate and gave her credit for completing the assignment. This situation is becoming more common with the communication students in the course.

References

Note: There is no official text in the COM 210 course. Articles and handout copies are used to teach students about research methods. However, we suggest and have required the following texts that are helpful for students in learning about conducting literature reviews and writing up research results.

American Psychological Association (2001). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) 5,* Washington, DC: APA.

Bourhis, J., Adams, C., Titsworth, S., & Harter, L. (2002). *Style manual for communication studies.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Rubin, R.B., Rubin, A.M., & Piele, L. J. (2005). *Communication research: Strategies and sources (6th ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Randy K. Dillon, Ph.D., and Janis King, Ph.D, are Professors, and Dan Peterson, Ph.D, Isabelle Bauman, Ph.D. and Eric Morris, Ph.D. are Assistant Professors in the Department of Communication, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO. Each has taught in the Communication Research Methods (COM 210) course. ***We also would like to acknowledge the other***

instructors who have taught in COM 210 and have contributed to the development of the course, Charlene Berquist, Ph.D. and Carey Adams, Ph.D. both of Missouri State University.

This article is based on a workshop first conducted at the September 2005 Convention of the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri held at the Lake of the Ozarks, Missouri. The workshop was selected for a States Advisory Showcase Program representing Missouri at the Annual Convention of the Central States Communication Association, Indianapolis, IN, in April 2006.

An Explanation of the Speaking and Listening Assesment Project

Douglas K. Jennings

There have been numerous challenges to incorporating speaking and listening instruction into P-12 classrooms. One problem is that while teachers universally agree that improving student communication skills is important, they often feel that they don't have time to add large segments into their already busy curriculum. The Speaking and Listening Assessment Project, co-produced by the Illinois Speech and Theatre Association and the School of Communication at Illinois State University, attempts to address that problem by providing lesson activities and assessments that blend into existing P-12 curriculum.

The following is a sample of the types of curriculum and rubrics that have been developed by the Speaking and Listening Assessment Project. Additional free lesson ideas, activities and assessments are available by visiting their web-site, http://lilt.ilstu.edu/cslaml/ or emailing communication@ilstu.edu. The lessons and rubrics are cumulative in nature and grow in sophistication by grade level. They are designed to be included in either traditional English language arts or speech curricula. Lessons such as the ones included herein can be used as a part of a group or can stand alone.

The project is additionally gathering data regarding national speaking and listening instructional practices. We encourage you to provide them with your ideas via a short questionnaire that can be found at: http://lilt.ilstu.edu/surveys/trends/default.asp.

Media Literacy: Media Bias

Mark Adams

Level	HS	High School, Grade 12
Unit	V.	Media and Persuasion Literacy
Lesson Plan	E.4.	Media Bias
IL Goal	ELA 4	P-12 English Language Arts Goal 4

Goal: This lesson is designed to help the student understand the issue of bias in relation to media messages.

Standard: 4A. Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.

Indicators:

- **IL.4.A.4a** > Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).
- **IL.4.A.5a** > Use criteria to evaluate a variety of speakers' verbal and nonverbal messages.
- **IL.4.A.5b** > Use techniques for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of oral messages.
- **IL.4.B.5a** > Deliver planned and impromptu oral presentations, as individuals and members of a group, conveying results of research, projects or literature studies to a variety of audiences.

Cognitive Objectives:

- The student will be able to evaluate examples of bias in media communication.

- Identify when a message is fact, opinion, or entertainment.

Skills and Behavioral Objectives:

- The student will apply listening, visual and comprehension skills.
- Demonstrate the application of the distinguishing characteristics of fact vs. opinion and entertainment.
- Demonstrate the application of the distinguishing characteristics of bias.

Content Outline:

1. Set induction - Review of previous lessons on persuasive and ethical delivery of messages. What kind of devices do media outlets use to construct persuasive messages? When does a message "cross the line" and become unethical? What kind of examples can you think of re: unethical communication? Write bullet ID's of responses onto board – make sure students rationalize why their example is ethically questionable, allow for argumentation and debate on this point – this can become an excellent discussion event that may require you to list the previous unit's ethical standards. The debate itself can allow for an application of indicators 4a, 5a and 5b. Guide the discussion to examples noted by students that indicate bias. If the set induction ends up taking the entire class period, make sure to come to an agreement with the students on the definition of bias. Then parlay the discussion into a homework assignment requiring the students to bring in an example of biased communication in two days (suggest they watch Fox news – O'Reilly transcripts at http://www.foxnews.com, very good examples of separation of fact/opinion/entertainment, and many potential arguments for bias).

2. Set induction - Today's material: Media Bias – Note how many of the student responses of unethical examples of media communications can be regarded as biased. It is important that this acknowledgement is not limited to just advertisements, news coverage would be important too.
3. Content -
   a. Define 'bias' and 'media bias'. Ask students to provide examples of mass media. Indicate this lesson will focus mostly on mass media bias.
   b. The Oxford English Dictionary (1989) offers the following definition for 'bias'; "3a. *transf.* An inclination, leaning, tendency, bent; a preponderating disposition or propensity; predisposition *towards;* predilection; prejudice. b. A systematic distortion of an expected result statistical result due to a factor not allowed for in its derivation; also, a tendency to produce such distortion…5.a. a swaying influence, impulse or weight; 'any thing which turns a man to a particular course, or gives the direction to his measures' (J.)" (e. 21538).
   c. Examine why mass media messages may be regarded as biased. Refer back to the Fundamentals of Communication and use television messages as an example.
      - The power of words.
      - The power of actions.
      - The synergy T.V. counts upon to use these powers
      - Point out communication is a two way function – How then does the response from the consumer filter back to the T.V. producers? - We purchase products, we watch programs and

become ratings numbers, we vote for candidates etc.

- How does bias fit into these fundamentals? (Appeal to certain markets – e.g. why soap commercials are on during soap operas – so what kind of commercials would be on during O'Reilly? e.g. Who's political commercials?)

d. Review the ability of the media to construct messages and reality

- Some things are "real" and some are "make-believe." Some things start as make believe but become real because as consumers, we buy into them. Refer back to previous examples of reality T.V. like Fear Factor. Remind students about the tape of vertical driving or something equally outrageous that was produced as 'reality' – (ask students; How can bias be framed? In the same manner as "reality"? What is the potential for someone to be persuaded by biased reporting being communicated as objective fact? How often do media consumers 'fact-check' information they have consumed?).
- Clearly, the message is 'don't believe everything you read, see or hear. It is ok to be skeptical' of mediated communication.

4. Activity – Media Hunt

a. Break students up into small groups (3-5) called 'Bias Posses' and give each member of every group the assignment of finding an example of biased media communication. Again, reference to Fox or CNN may be helpful.

b. Inform students that it is important that each group come back to class in two days with the same number of examples of bias that there are group members.

****Note! Sometimes you have the opportunity to provide students with examples of bias, do so judiciously because the research involved in this project is also a valuable learning experience.
You may want to identify some rules of engagement – e.g. what media forms/outlets may be used – just T.V. may be too limiting, newspapers and magazines should also be allowed.

5. Review and summary - Return to the unethical examples of mediated communications provided by the students during the set induction. Determine their initial purpose (entertainment, factual, or opinion driven) and reevaluate the bias noted. Review the definition of bias and inform the students that during the next class period you will be presenting an example of biased media communication.

Formal and informal assessments:

The ubiquitous nature of media provides a wealth of examples that students can apply as input for this lesson. The teacher should evaluate the student's ability to distinguish between fact, opinion and entertainment via both written and visual testing. The teacher may want to bring a newspaper into class and show editorial opinions vs. news coverage. If so, you may wish to include, or limit, students regarding the use of editorial comment as their examples of bias (if you allow editorials – also require fact-checking).

Mark Adams is a high school teacher at University High School in Normal, IL

An Integrated Rubric System

Douglas K. Jennings

Systematically assessing student communication skills is important in proving that what we do in our classroom actually makes a difference. Gone are the days when the communication discipline can defend the value of P-12 speaking and listening instruction on the oft-stated claim that employers "rank communication skills as number one."

The purpose of this paper is to provide a structured oral performance assessment system that can be incorporated into existing P-12 curriculum. The concepts for this rubric system are based on material developed by more than 120 P-12 and higher education teachers involved in the Speaking and Listening Assessment Project based at Illinois State University.

The project began with a national study of P-12 standards. The findings identified commonly desired speaking and listening behaviors to assess. The standards/behaviors were then converted into a series of rubrics envisioned as being cumulative and sophistication-appropriate. For example, rubrics for early grades include visual cues to assist the student in memory and understanding the concepts. Later grade rubrics drop the visual cues in order to provide more room for description and instructor response. The expected concepts are incremental with the goal of measuring student maintenance of previously earned concepts and acquisition of newly targeted components.

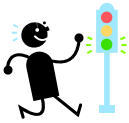
The rubrics utilize a standards-based approach with three performance levels (beginning, meet, exceed) for elementary students and four performance levels for secondary level students. The three and four level indicators can be easily converted to a standard grading system.

Rubrics can also be used for peer and self-review without making revisions to the form being used by the teacher. Having

presenters and listeners complete the rubric helps to ensure that everyone is critically reviewing the communication process. Additionally, having multiple similar responses can reinforce student improvement. Similar responses and inter-rater reliability are increased with training. Since the rubrics indicate specific behaviors necessary for the credit, consistency of responses and speech score is better with rubrics.

Samples of the rubrics are included here. You can acquire a complete set by emailing communication@ilstu.edu.

Speaking and Listening Assessment Project **Grade 2** **Speaking Assessment Rubric**				
	Secure **3**	**Developing** **2**	**Beginning** **1**	**Total**
Presentation				
Speech Stance 	Stands up straight and still	Stands still	Fidgets	
Eye Contact 	Looks at audience often	Sometimes looks at audience	Does not look at audience	
Volume 	Speaks so everyone can hear	Some of audience cannot hear	Talk cannot be heard	
Clarity 	easy to understand and chooses good words to explains fully	Student explains their ideas sufficiently	Student does not explain their ideas	

Content				
Beginning the talk 	The talk smoothly begins with a planned opening	The student is able to begin the talk	The student has difficulty getting the talk started	
Closing	The end of the talk is clearly and smoothly signaled to the audience	The end of the talk is indicated	The student has difficulty finding a way to end their talk	
Focus	The talk is consistently on topic and generally stays on track	Most of the talk is on topic and track	Focus is often distracted or off topic	
Time	Student talk time meets teacher expectation		Student talk time does not meet teacher expectation	
Optional				
PRESENTATION TOTAL				

@ The Speaking and Listening Assessment Project, Douglas K. Jennings, School of Communication, Illinois State University, September 2005

Speaking and Listening Assessment Project Grade 5 Speaking Assessment Rubric					
	4	3	2	1	Total
Presentation					
Eye Contact	Consistently looks at entire audience	Looks at the audience most of the time	Looks at the audience some of the time	Rarely or never looks at audience	
Facial Expression	Consistently uses meaningful facial expressions	Sometimes uses meaningful facial expressions	Seldom uses meaningful facial expressions	Does not use facial expressions	
Volume/ Vocal Expression	Speaks with expression so everyone can hear	Speaks with some expression so most can hear	Speaks with little expression or few can hear	Talk is missing expression or cannot be heard	
Rate	Consistently speaks at a rate that can be understood	Often speaks at a rate that can be understood	Sometimes speaks at a rate that can be understood	Seldom speaks at a rate that can be understood	
Clarity	Consistently speaks clearly and uses vocal expression	Often speaks clearly and uses vocal expression	Sometimes speaks clearly and uses vocal expression	Seldom speaks clearly or uses little vocal expression	
Fluency	Consistently uses complete sentences and no vocal fillers	Talk has few incomplete sentences or vocal fillers	Talk has several incomplete sentences/ vocal fillers	Talk has many incomplete sentences/ vocal fillers	
Movement	Consistently uses purposeful movement with stance	Often uses purposeful movement with speech stance	Seldom uses purposeful movement with speech stance	Does not use purposeful movement with speech stance	

Content					
Attention-Getter	Talk had an interesting and topical opening attention statement	Talk had an opening statement	Talk did not have an opening statement	Talk began before audience was ready to listen	
Intro/Main Idea	Clearly states the main idea	Has a main idea	Main idea sentence is unclear.	There is no main idea sentence.	
Body	Labels and uses a logical organization	Logical organization is used	Organization is not clear	No organization	
Strategies	Uses a variety of devices to accomplish goals of the talk	Accomplishes the goal of the talk	The goal of the talk is understood but not developed	Audience is uncertain of the goal of the talk	
Elaboration	Consistently and clearly explains ideas	Often explains ideas clearly	Seldom explains ideas clearly	Does not explain ideas	
Closing	Closing is well developed with a main idea/ summary	States the main idea in closing	Does not refer to main idea in closing	There is no closing	
Time	Talk fully meets time expectation	Is close to meeting time expectation		Talk does not meet time expectation	
PRESENTATION TOTAL					

@ The Speaking and Listening Assessment Project, Douglas K. Jennings, School of Communication, Illinois State University, September 2005

Speaking and Listening Assessment Project **High School - Beginning** Speaking Assessment Rubric					
	4	**3**	**2**	**1**	**Total**
DELIVERY ITEMS					
Body Posture and Movement.	Stands straight and still. Uses purposeful movements.	Uses purposeful movements but shifts or leans without distractions.	Uses no purposeful movements and leans or shifts weight.	Posture or movement interferes or distracts from presentation.	
Gestures	Purposeful and natural gestures compliment the message.	Uses gestures in the presentation.	Uses no gestures in the presentation.	Gestures contradict or distract from the message.	
Eye Contact	Maintains consistent eye contact with entire audience.	Maintains eye contact with most of audience; most of the time.	Only occasionally looks at audience.	Has no eye contact with audience.	
Volume/ Projection	Speaks loudly and comfortably to be heard by entire audience.	Speaks loudly enough to be heard by most audience members.	Speaks softly causing some audience discomfort.	Cannot be heard.	
Language Usage	Uses language and grammar that enhance audience understanding.	Uses clear language and proper grammar.	Uses language that is awkward and creates some discomfort or confusion.	Uses language that is inappropriate for the audience or occasion.	
				Total	

ORGANIZATION/STRUCTURE					
Introduction/ Purpose Statements	The topic and purpose (thesis) are clearly stated.	Either the topic or purpose (thesis) is clearly stated.	Attempts to state the topic or purpose (thesis).	No topic or purpose (thesis) is stated.	
Body/ Organizatio-nal Pattern	The speaker presents a clear and logical organizational pattern.	The speaker uses a clear organizational pattern.	The speaker attempts to use a pattern.	The speaker is unorganized.	
Elaboration/ Explanation	Explanations are clear, interesting, well developed, and balanced.	The speaker meets 3 of the criteria.	The speaker meets 2 of the criteria.	The speaker meets 1 or none of the criteria.	
Conclusion/ Ending	A clear final appeal/ending relevant to the attention-getter is used.	A clear final appeal/ ending is used.	The close of the presentation is signaled.	The presentation ends abruptly or incompletely.	
				Total	
MEETING THE PURPOSE					
Assignment Expectations	The speaker meets time and topic expectations.			The speaker does not meet time and topic expectations.	
PRESENTATION TOTAL					

@ Illinois Speech and Theatre Association and Department of Communication, Illinois State University - May 2002

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