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Scholarly Articles

Inoculation at Play: Happiness, Funniness, Types of Play, and Inoculation Theory

Josh Compton

The Symbolic Interactionism of Becoming Yourself: Theatrical Performance as Persuasion for Identity, Self-Concept, & Self-Efficacy

Josie Ganzermiller

Counterfactuals in the Communication Classroom as Global Critical Pedagogy About Intercultural Communication and Rhetorics of Difference

Nick J. Sciullo

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Scholarly Articles

- Inoculation at Play: Happiness, Funniness, Types of Play, and Inoculation Theory
Josh Compton 1
- The Symbolic Interactionism of Becoming Yourself: Theatrical Performance as Persuasion for Identity, Self-Concept, & Self-Efficacy
Josie Ganzermiller 17
- Counterfactuals in the Communication Classroom as Global Critical Pedagogy About Intercultural Communication and Rhetorics of Difference
Nick J. Sciullo 33
- Communication Behaviors Between Close Friends and Romantic Partners in the U.S. and Russia
Deborrah Uecker & Jacqueline Schmidt 51

State Advisory Showcase

- Connecting With and Impacting Students: Understanding and Integrating Immediacy Behaviors in Communication and Performance Learning Environments
Scott Jensen 71
- Our Cultural Obsession With Fake News and Incivility in America
Heather Walters and Kristen Stout 84

Teaching Resources

- Innovations in Teaching Family Communication Patterns Theory
Jordan Atkinson 97
- Tag-Team Delivery
Eric Yazell 105

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Volume 49, Fall 2019

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The editor of the 2020 Journal of the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri is presently accepting manuscripts. Scholarly articles, book and resource reviews, and teaching resources are all encouraged. Scholarship from all disciplines encompassing communication, speech, performance, and theatre will be considered. These areas include, but are not limited to: Speech, Debate, Theatre Instruction and Performance, Communication Theory, Interpersonal Communication, Intercultural Communication, Health Communication, Rhetoric, Persuasion, Organizational Communication, Political Communication, Family Communications, Communication Ethics, Listening, Mediation, Public Relations, Film, Mass Media Theory, Mediated Communication, Sports Communication, and New Communication Technologies. All methodologies are encouraged.

Updated submission information for volume 50 will be available in October of 2019 at the website for the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri – **www.speechandtheatre.mo.org**

All submissions should in Microsoft Word, and emailed to the editor. References should follow the latest edition of the American Psychological Association style manual. A separate page with abstract, author affiliation and bio(s) should be included. All submissions should be received by February 14, 2020, to ensure full consideration for publication.

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**Inoculation at Play:
Happiness, Funniness, Types of Play, and Inoculation Theory**
Josh Compton

Abstract

Inoculation is often considered to be serious business – whether in its literal understanding as a medical treatment against future disease or in its analogic understanding as a way of conferring resistance to future attempts at influence. And yet, in both conceptualizations of inoculation, there is also room for play. This conceptual paper builds from scholarly analysis of play and of inoculation theory to consider 1) current findings of how inoculation theory interacts with features and applications of play, and 2) future areas for continuing study of inoculation theory and play. The paper broadens from specific elements of play to include larger generalities about play, including happiness and funniness, and some manifestations or forms of play, including competitive speech and debate and video games.

On both sides of the analogic – medical and attitudinal – inoculation is serious business. Medical inoculations protect against the deadliest health threats in the world, such as smallpox (Greydanus, Leonov, & Merrick, 2017), malaria (Greenwood, 2017), and influenza (Paules et al., 2017). Attitudinal inoculations seek to protect against risky behaviors with the highest of stakes, including binge drinking (Parker, Ivanov, & Compton 2012) and other drug abuses (e.g., Cornelis, Cauberghe, & De Pelsmacker, 2013), and issues of consequential societal (e.g., gun control and mediated violence, Miller et al., 2013), and/or environmental impact (e.g., climate change, Cook, Lewandowsky, & Ecker, 2017). With both types of inoculations, stakes are high.

And yet, there is space for play on both sides of the analogic, too. The medical community turns to clowning to ease children before and during injections (Ben-Pazi et al., 2017). Researchers find positive relationships between humor and immunity (Lefcourt, Davidson-Katz, & Kueneman, 1990), and experiences of positive affect seem to create resilience to later stresses (Ong et al., 2006). Likewise, persuasion scholars have extended attitudinal inoculation into “funny” forums, like

late night television comedy (Compton, 2004) and YouTube satire (Lim & Ki, 2007). Inoculation work with affect looks at messages designed to elicit happiness (Pfau et al., 2001) and the effects of experienced happiness on resistance (Pfau et al., 2009). Compton and Ivanov (2018) have extended inoculation theorizing into realms of play, including sport and physical activity. With both types of inoculations, both things are true: stakes are high and there is room for play.

This conceptual paper seeks to contribute to theory building with its focus on inoculation theory – a classic theory of social influence that remains more relevant than ever (Compton, 2013). The paper builds from scholarly conceptions of play, including an Eberlian definition of play as an ancient, voluntary, ‘emergent’ process driven by pleasure that yet strengthens our muscles, instructs our social skills, tempers and deepens our positive emotions, and enables a state of balance that leaves us poised to play some more. (Eberle, 2014, p. 231)

In tune with Eberle’s (2014) approach, the analysis presented here broadens from specific elements of play to include larger generalities about play, including happiness and funniness, and some manifestations or forms of play, including competitive speech and debate and video games.

Inoculation Theory

Inoculation theory is both a theory and a messaging strategy. As a theory, inoculation theory explains how attitudes, beliefs, or other positions can be made more resistant to future change through a process that resembles medical inoculation: Exposure to a weak challenge builds resistance to future stronger challenges (Compton, 2013; McGuire, 1964). As a messaging strategy, inoculation has been used in applied communication campaigns to confer resistance to undesired future influence, with much of this work in the contexts of politics (see Compton & Ivanov, 2013, for a review) and health (see Compton, Jackson, & Dimmock, 2016, for a review). Often, inoculation messages use a two-sided messages strategy, whereas counterarguments (analogous to viruses) are paired with refutations of those counterarguments (analogous to how viruses are weakened to be used in biological inoculations) (McGuire, 1964). Such messages have been found to boost the production of counterarguing against undesirable

influence (McGuire, 1964), as well as boost talk about the issue, something inoculation scholars have termed *post-inoculation talk* (Ivanov et al., 2012). Inoculation messages have also been found to affect emotional responses to attempts at influence (e.g., Pfau et al., 2001), as well as how people assess the credibility of the sources of influence (e.g., Pfau et al., 2000). The main test of inoculation, however, is whether an inoculation theory-based pretreatment message confers resistance to future influence attempts, and decades of research suggest that it does (see Banas & Rains, 2010, for a meta-analysis).

With this basic overview of inoculation theory in mind, we can consider inoculation theory in a context of play in general, and with happiness, funniness, and manifestations of play, like competitive speech and debate and video games, in particular.

Happiness

A core principle of play is that it is fun (Eberle, 2014), so we would assume happiness to be related to play, in some, if not inherently all, cases of play. (Pleasure, a related construct in that it involves happiness, has also been offered as an element of play, Eberle, 2014). In the first years of inoculation theory's development, though, much more attention was paid to inoculation's cognitive dimensions than to its affective dimensions (Compton, 2013). But beginning in the late 1990s and continuing through the present day, inoculation scholars have taken a much closer look at affect. Although a good deal of this work looks at negative emotions, like fear (Banas & Richards, 2017) and anger (Miller et al., 2013), some work – albeit limited – has also looked at positive affect and inoculation theory. One of the first studies to do this was conducted by Lee and Pfau (1997), and they found that an inoculation message designed to elicit positive affect was able to confer resistance to attack messages that relied on cognitive support. It should be noted—as the authors also note—that the study's affect manipulations were weak. In fact, the affective inoculation messages generated no more affect than the cognitive inoculation messages.

Pfau and colleagues (2001) picked up this affect focus a few years later, looking not only at general valence (negative, positive), but also, specific emotions (anger: angry, irritated, annoyed; happiness: happy, cheerful). Their affect manipulations were based on work in goal attainment (Lazarus, 1991), and they designed their happiness treatment

message to show how retaining an existing attitude would facilitate their goals. Their “happy” inoculation message worked to confer resistance to influence attempts – as did their other inoculation messages. The happy message conferred resistance to the attack and boosted the amount of counterarguing against the attack message. One point of note, though, was that the happy message did not actually boost reported happiness, and that the amount of happiness that came up during the process (triggered by things other than the treatment message) actually diminished resistance. Elicited happiness had a negative relationship with counterarguing and seemed to dampen resistance (Pfau et al., 2001). Surprisingly, though, the messages designed to elicit happiness – even if they did not elicit much more happiness, if any, than the other messages – were actually the most effective inoculation messages in generating resistance to attacks (Pfau et al., 2001). The researchers note the unexpected – and unexplained – result:

The results indicated that affective-happiness treatments were superior to either cognitive or affective-anger in promoting resistance to attacks. There is no obvious theoretical explanation for this finding. The affective-happiness treatments were no better in eliciting threat or generating counterarguing output... Thus, whatever it is that is responsible for the superiority of the affective-happiness treatments, it is not the mechanisms of threat or counterarguing. (p. 242)

The researchers submit three possible explanations: that the happy message simply led to people thinking their position was the right one and defensible; and/or that the happy message led to heuristic resistance; and/or that the happy message was more similar than different from the cognitive and anger message (Pfau et al., 2001).

Another unexpected finding from the Pfau et al. (2001) study concerned the relationship between threat and happiness: “[C]ontrary to prediction, threat is positively associated with experienced happiness, but only in the cognitive inoculation condition” (p. 239). This finding might benefit from some further consideration. First, it is important to note that the variable of interest here is experienced happiness – which was *not* found to be a product of the happiness inoculation treatment message. Second, this finding is concerned with experienced happiness as a result of reading the cognitive inoculation condition – the message designed to rely on logic and reasoning. The threat that emerged from this message

was positively associated with experienced happiness. One might wonder, too, how the element of anticipation, of how play often begins with “imagin[ing] what happens next” (Eberle, 2014, p. 223), interacts with threat, which is inherently about anticipation, too – the anticipation of impending challenges to a belief one wants to hold. On the one hand, the two seems contradictory – the need for surprise to qualify as play, and the lack of surprise inherent in forewarning – but on the other, we might find interesting areas of conceptual overlap. Consider, for example, how Eberle (2014) notes that

Players want to be stirred, not shaken. They take pleasure in in a pleasant surprise but do what they can to avoid a disagreeable shock. And they never mistake a disagreeable shock for play... We navigate this apparent paradox easily because we allow ourselves the surprises we prepare ourselves for. (p. 228)

Such theorizing about play brings to mind McGuire’s early clarification of the ideal amount of threat needed for optimal inoculation-conferred resistance to influence: “The experimenter reasoned that this pre-exposure [to counter-attitudinal content] would be threatening enough to be defense-stimulating, but not so strong as to overwhelm the truism” (McGuire, 1964, p. 202). Inoculation scholars continue to try to figure out with more precision what threat actually *is* or *does* in inoculation (Banas & Richards, 2017). Might we put it, in the words of Eberle (2014, p. 228) as the ideal threat experience as “stirred, not shaken,” the type of “surprises we prepare ourselves for”?

Pfau and colleagues (2009) returned to similar issues of affect and inoculation theory, adding additional nuance to what we know of affect and inoculation theory in general and affective-positive treatments in particular. Researchers found that affective-positive treatments were not able to generate as much threat, issue involvement, cognitive responses to counterarguments, and cognitive content of associative networks as compared to affective-negative treatments. Another finding suggests that inoculation messages make people less happy after their attitude has been attacked (Pfau et al., 2009). Less happy, that is, but also angrier. The 2009 study had a similar issue as the 2001 study – the affective treatment messages did not generate much affect. Indeed, in the 2009 study, the affective-positive messages failed to elicit positive affect (Pfau et al., 2009).

There are plenty of opportunities to further explore happiness and inoculation theory-conferred resistance to influence. For example, Nabi (2003) has posed the question of whether positive visual images effectively counter negative visual images, and inoculation provides a promising space for testing this. Scholars should also approach the idea of happiness and resistance in terms of goal attainment, something addressed in the earliest inoculation/affect investigations (Lee & Pfau, 1997). Recent work suggests that positive affect sometimes promotes, and other times discourages, goal attainment (Orehek, Bessarabova, Chen, & Kruglanski, 2011). Using such research as a guide, inoculation scholars should explore ways of harnessing the goal attainment frame of happiness to promote more resistance.

Beyond the general area of positive affect, though, researchers could also continue to explore variables of play, including funniness. Some of these opportunities are explored next.

Funniness

Play often involves the element of surprise (Eberle, 2014). So does humor (Alden, Mukherjee, & Hoyer, 2000). Inoculation treatments would seem to threaten the experience of surprise, though. Indeed, one function of an inoculation theory pretreatment seems to be to take out the surprise of an impending challenge. And yet, despite surprise's likely role in inoculation and its efficacy, we know very little about how surprise might affect inoculation.

A few studies have pitted inoculation treatments against humorous attacks, including the forms of late night television political comedy (Compton, 2004) and YouTube satirical videos (Lim & Ki, 2007), and other work has also assessed whether humor itself can function as an inoculation treatment, through comedic ridicule (e.g., Landreville & LaMarre, 2013) or candidate appearances on political humor television programs (Compton, 2004). Compton (2018) has offered an extensive treatment of some of the intriguing relationships between inoculation theory and political humor – including inoculating *against* and *with* political humor. Additionally, for a specific example, Becker's (2017) study suggests that President Trump's tweets "inoculated" himself against parodies of him on the late-night television comedy program, *Saturday Night Live*.

Other avenues for humor have received much less attention from inoculation scholarship, including television situational comedies (sitcoms), manga comics, and nonfiction comedic documentaries. Consider, for example, Abrams' (2015) finding that references to NBC's *Seinfeld* "has made its way into several judicial opinions" (p. 1015). How does the use of such references – in rhetoric clearly intended to be persuasive – affect resistance or acceptance of the argumentation? Leung and colleagues (2017) found some success with using manga comics to promote healthier food choices. Might manga be an effective avenue for inoculation messaging, to protect healthier attitudes? Borum Chattoo and Feldman (2017) discovered more effectiveness with a nonfiction comedic documentary than a more serious one in raising awareness of, knowledge of, and actions toward addressing global poverty. Inoculation researchers have examined inoculation's efficacy against effects of conspiracy documentaries (Banas & Miller, 2013); might comedic documentaries be good methods *for* inoculation? Funniness, a related construct to play, has received some attention in inoculation research, then, but there are many more avenues to be explored.

Manifestations of Play

There is reason for optimism that inoculation theory treatments could promote actual manifestations of play, like sport and other forms of physical activity. Consider, for example, Compton and Ivanov's (2018) rationale for inoculation messaging as a way to promote more involvement in exercise, physical activity, and sport. They point out how inoculation messages could be used to help overcome common challenges to sustaining exercise programs, including a perceived lack of time to participate in such activities.

Inoculation might also protect the enjoyment of forms of play, building off of the same rationale that Compton (2016) offered to inoculate fan support prior to losing seasons of a supported sport team. He reasoned that if fans were warned, ahead of time, of expected challenges that could affect a team's record (e.g., injury, turnover), and given alternative ways of reframing their commitment to the team, besides, for example, a simple win-loss calculus, a team might be able to secure fan support that would otherwise be lost or diminished during the course of a difficult season.

We could consider inoculation theory as a means to affect parental attitudes toward play, too. Parental attitudes affect how much and what kind of play their children will experience – and these attitudes can be shaped (Grob et al., 2017). Might inoculation messages help to maintain positive attitudes toward play prior to competition for playtime as the child ages?

Another potential direction of inoculation theory and physical play research could be to assess inoculation's efficacy with participant attitudes toward a specific sport or physical activity. Consider, for example, boys and men in ballet and girls and women in adventure sports. Boys and men who participate in ballet are often targets of bullying (Risner, 2014). Might inoculation be a way to either discourage the bullying itself and/or to build resistance against the pressures of bullying? Girls and women are less likely to participate in adventure sports – and one of the key challenges is beliefs about the possibilities of girls and women participating in adventure sports (Morton, 2017). Could inoculation theory-based strategies help to raise and refute challenges to these and other barriers, increasing participation and leading to more participation of girls and women in adventure sports?

Inoculation may also be able to make play safer, including both passive and active forms of play (see Eberle, 2014). For example, in terms of passive play, consider Kotowski and colleagues' (2011) study that designed brochures to encourage college students to wear ear plugs in loud environments (music concerts, nightclubs, sporting events) and to use over-the-ear headphones with personal MP3 music players. Results were mixed on behavioral intentions. But might inoculation theory add another layer of effectiveness by raising and refuting some of the barriers the authors pointed to that might have dampened behavioral intentions, like comfort perceptions and social acceptance, to encourage physically safer participation in these forms of play?

Inoculation could lead to psychologically safer play, too. As one example, we can consider the increasing popularity of “loot boxes” in video games. Loot boxes have been likened to gambling – a slot machine or a lottery ticket – because players purchase a “box” without knowing what resources will be revealed until later (Jilani, 2017). Could inoculation messages help to reduce the temptation of some players to spend large amounts of money on such game features, thereby potentially lessening risks of addiction? Prior inoculation research has

already established its efficacy in affecting attitudes toward gambling (Ivanov et al., 2015).

Video games could be employed *as* inoculation, too, to encourage healthier attitudes. Hwang and Mamykina (2017) had inoculation theory principles in mind when they designed a video game to encourage better nutritional choices – a game that raised and refuted counterarguments that could later threaten healthier choices. Roozenbeek and van der Linden (2019) found success with an online game based on principles of inoculation theory to help combat misinformation.

Finally, its useful to expand not only our conceptualization of inoculation theory, but also our conceptualization of play itself, when considering potential areas of interaction between inoculation theory and play. Consider, for example, competitive speech and debate. Bartanen and Littlefield (2015) advance a convincing argument that competitive speech and debate (forensics)

represents a form of high-level, intellectual play that involves critical thinking, skillful speaking, and a thorough knowledge of subject matter. The marriage of these skills produces a form of play that offers participants and observers an experience some consider thrilling, others believe daunting, but all think of as fun. (p. 155)

Bartanen and Littlefield (2015) further show how competitive speech and debate matches up with Eberle's (2014) conceptualization of play.

Inoculation theory, as noted earlier in this paper, is both a theory and a practice. We can certainly find these dual functions in the context of competitive speech and debate. For one thing, forensics – and in particular, debate – involves advancing competing arguments to be judged, and the conventional inoculation message format does something similar – advances counterarguments and refutations. Additionally, inoculation is a common specific strategy of debate and some speech events. Debaters and speakers often warn audiences about arguments their opponents will likely make and refute these arguments (counterarguments) in advance – which is the basic idea of inoculation theory-conferred resistance to influence.

If, then, we accept the conceptualization of competitive speech and debate as play (Bartanen & Littfield, 2015), and acknowledge how inoculation theory can both explain the processes of resistance in forensics and specific argumentation strategies, we find forensics to be a potentially rich avenue to study inoculation theory and play.

Conclusions

Even with its focus on serious problems and consequential issues, there is room for play in inoculation theory research and application. This conceptual paper offered a brief overview of extant inoculation work that has explored issues of happiness and funniness and then turned to applied work in types of play – including how to increase involvement and make play safer, both physically and psychologically. Specific forms of play were considered, too, including video games and competitive speech and debate. I have no doubt that other scholars will pursue projects that explore even more interesting ideas about inoculation theory and play – work that will lead to increasing insights into these two seemingly dissimilar, yet as argued here, complementary, processes of inoculation and play.

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**The Symbolic Interactionism of Becoming Yourself:
Theatrical Performance as Persuasion for Identity,
Self-Concept, & Self-Efficacy**

Josie Ganzermilller

Abstract

Symbolic interactionism explains how people derive meaning from events, experiences, and objects through social interactions with others (Blumer, 1969). This study investigates how symbolic interactionism plays a role in self-identity development through theatrical performance. Data were collected in a variety of qualitative methods including in-depth interviews, journal responses, and in-depth open-ended surveys. The data include twenty-one female participants who took qualitative surveys, wrote detailed journal entries, and participated in researcher-led in-depth interviews. The participants shared how they make meaning of their experiences performing theatrically and the personal impacts on their self-identity. Common themes emerged regarding group identification (collectivism), self-concept (individualism), self-image, confidence, perceived control, race and culture.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the symbolic interactionism and interpersonal communication research regarding self-efficacy and cultural communication research by investigating how people perceive and experience personal growth or changes in identity, self-efficacy, or self-concept as a result of performing theatrically. The concept of entertainment for social change is not a new one. The majority of research surrounding entertainment or performance as a method of persuasion or social change revolves around how to incite a change in belief or behavior for the audience. Based on the evolution of persuasion research utilizing entertainment-education and health research, this research proposes a shift in perspective from the influence entertainment-education has on audiences to the persuasive effect performing has on the actor. I hope to begin providing explanations to the gap in the literature about how performers are making meaning of their experiences and elucidate how and why performing leads to personal development and perceived identity changes. The present article

examines data from performers to seek answers to the following three research questions:

RQ1: How and why (if at all) does performing lead to increased self-efficacy of the actor?

RQ2: How, if at all, does performing lead to perceived changes in personal identity or culture?

RQ3: How, if at all, does performing lead to a change in self-concept?

The following literature review will offer some insight on prevailing theoretical frameworks regarding persuasion, self-efficacy, and self-concept through theatrical performance and active involvement.

Operational Definitions

As many scholars use terms differently from time to time, I wanted to offer the operational definitions for the unique terms I am using throughout the article to avoid ambiguous meaning or confusion.

Entertainment-Education (EE): also known as “edutainment” is a popular area of health communication research describing the use of entertainment as a medium for educating about pro-social or pro-health messages. EE often targets underprivileged communities or groups in order to change social norms to more positive social and health behaviors.

Parasocial interaction: the relationship a viewer has with a mediated personae (i.e. character in a movie, new anchor, radio personality). People often feel emotionally connected to their favorite characters and join them in their emotional journeys in the (often fictional) world of the plot. Parasocial interaction explains why we cry when a beloved character dies in a television show or movie, our feelings for the character are real, even if the character is not. Parasocial interaction is frequently cited as a reason that EE works in changing social norms, attitudes, intentions, and behaviors.

Self-concept: is one’s view of himself or herself as a whole person. Self-concept relates to personal perceptions and confidence in general.

Self-efficacy: is one’s personal belief in their ability to achieve a given task. Self-efficacy differs from self-concept in that it refers specifically to a given task and not the overall perception of self in general.

Self-identity: refers to how a person defines his or her own identity. For many people this includes group identification, life experiences, race, culture, education, profession, family, heritage, ethnicity, or any other person identifiers.

Literature Review

Social Change and Education

Many theories have offered explanations for why entertainment, performance, and media have persuasive effects. The majority of this research focuses on the persuasive influence entertainment and media have on the audience. A variety of educational and social change theories seek to explain phenomena that lead to behavior change, such as Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which describes the connections between beliefs, norms, and behaviors of an individual to determine future behavioral intention (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) which explains the cognitive processes that cause learning such as observation, environment, behavior, and cognition (Bandura, 1986). It is particularly common to see TRA and SCT utilized in an effort to change health behaviors. Rosenstock, Strecher, & Becker (1988) explain how SCT and the Health Belief Model (HBM) are both derived from Lewin's (1936 & 1952) framework for a "value-expectancy" theory. HBM posits that health behavior changes depend on the concurrent presence of three factors including motivation, belief of vulnerability (threat), and belief that behavior will reduce risk or have a positive outcome (Rosenstock et al., 1988). Similarly, SCT suggests that behavior is a result of expectancies and incentives including environmental, action consequences, and competency expectations and reinforcement that the action will lead to something of value (Bandura, 1986). Frequently, in terms of entertainment-education for social change, the goal is to change the negative social norms surrounding a specific health problem, which will lead to attitudinal change that leads to new behavioral intentions. These theories suggest that the change in social norms is ultimately responsible for the change in attitude and behavioral intention, and essentially the persuasive effects of the performance on the audience. The literature fails to address what influence the message or involvement have on the theatrical performers. With a better understanding of the social and personal impacts of participating in

theatrical performance, interventions could be more targeted and utilize more active involvement rather than simply audience tailored.

SCT highlights the five concepts for behavior change including social modeling (observation), outcome expectations, self-efficacy, goal setting, and self-regulation (Bandura, 1986). Social modeling or observation is often identified as one of the main contributors of the persuasive effects on an audience consuming entertainment. Social modeling is in essence utilizing intrapersonal communication to teach performers real life lessons in an artificial environment (the world of the play). Perhaps self-regulation, goal setting, and self-efficacy are more likely influencing the performer through intrapersonal communication. If a desired health outcome is performed on stage, the actor will already have experience self-regulating that behavior from that performance. The practical application of self-regulation allows the actor to know that he or she has the ability (self-efficacy) to complete the task. Finally, goal setting allows the actor to determine whether the actions in the world of the play had a positive or negative outcome and how he or she should act in a similar situation in their own life based on the desired outcome. For example, if a character in a play contracts HIV from having unprotected sex and becomes very ill but seeks treatment and finds a support group and eventually regains a positive lifestyle, this could greatly influence the actor's attitude towards HIV and his intentions about having unprotected sex. The role he performed in the play could enhance his ability to self-regulate in his real life and to set goals (not contracting HIV) that transcend the world of the play.

Parasocial Interaction

Most of the research regarding entertainment-education focuses on the effects that the audience members experience as a result of viewing or partially participating in a form of entertainment that seeks to educate and incite social change, frequently including health messages. Many studies discuss *parasocial interaction*; the close personal relationship that occurs when the viewer feels strongly connected to the character in a piece of entertainment (Papa et al., 2000; Singhal & Rogers 1999 & 2001; 2000; Moyer-Guse, 2008; Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2010). Parasocial interaction is frequently credited as the source of persuasion for entertainment that leads to social change.

Active Involvement

Not surprisingly, TRA, SCT, and HBM theories led researchers to create interventions that incorporated the audience into the performance in some way. For many live performances, this participation is a small audience interaction before, during, or after the performance that allows the audience to further connect with the characters, the message, or the new worldview. Due to the success of incorporating audience interaction, Greene (2013) proposed the Theory of Active Involvement, which is rooted in SCT and focuses on adolescent active engagement in message creation and involvement, which leads to attitudinal changes regarding social norms and intention and behavioral changes for enhanced persuasive effectiveness.

Audience participation, involvement, and engagement was a clear progression in the persuasion research for enhancing the effects of health-related interventions. To further investigate why this participative element is more effective, this research will evaluate the experiences of *performers* to better understand the persuasive effects of performing on the actor's attitudes and behavioral intentions as well as perceived changes in worldview and personal identity and how they influence self-efficacy, and self-concept.

In this research, I am seeking to change the focus from the audience to the performers. If the messages and characters portrayed in entertainment-education can create such obvious social change, the effects of performing on the actors may tell us something about the powerful nature of performing and how that alters identity, self-efficacy, and self-concept.

Methods

The data used to examine the experiences of performers comes from a variety of qualitative tools and techniques including personal journals, open-ended survey questions, and in-depth interviews with a researcher. The variety of data collection techniques served multiple purposes. Primarily, the participants could take their time to respond carefully to the survey questions and had a great degree of freedom to write about their most influential experiences by journaling. Finally, the in-depth interviews allowed for follow up and clarity on the written concepts as well as pointed questions to alluded themes in the written

responses. The participants answered survey questions regarding what they could recall from previous performances that were especially influential on their identity and how they perceived self-growth and other changes in self-concept or self-efficacy. Some participants chose to journal throughout the entire process of ‘becoming the character,’ rehearsing, performing, and experiences throughout the process of putting on a show as well as the immediate aftermath while others reflected on their past experiences. The journal instructions simply asked the participants to write about how theatre performance has shaped them and why they believe it had an impact. The various data collection tools also serve as triangulation for the validity of the research. The three phases also allowed for deeper analysis, reflection, and consideration of their experiences in theatre and in shaping their identities as a whole. The in-depth interviews allowed for further probing of the participant in which the researcher could help them dig deeper. The fact that all three data-collection methods led to the same emergent themes offers reliability to the information.

The participants were initially chosen through a purposive sample of theatre majors or graduates in large Mid-Atlantic universities. Participants were recruited through email advertisements to the theatre departments at two large universities. Some participants referred friends to participate and that led to a secondary snowball sample. It was purely chance that the entire sample is female. It is possible that this indicates that women feel more defined by their experiences in the theatre, simply that they are more aware of their emotional journey, or perhaps they are just more inclined to talk about themselves. There were twenty-one participants total.

Analysis

The three types of data collection were condensed into basic ‘field notes’ and read several times before being thematically coded. Through inductive coding, there are three major themes that emerged from the data: self-identity, self-concept, and performance, which were further divided by sub-themes including: group identification, gender, professional and educational, self-image, confidence and control, and race and culture. The experiences outlined by the participants display clear social ties to the meaning they associate with their experiences, even to the point that they credit their personal success to the collective

efforts of others. Symbolic Interactionism provides a theoretical framework for how participants socially create meaning of their experiences and then reflectively assign that meaning to the self.

Self-Identity

Group Identification

When I prompted the participants to define their identity, they did not respond by naming a culture, nationality, race, or socio-economic status, as most people do. They almost all identified as male/female or “theatre people” which is to say that being a theatrical performer offers a collectivist group mentality in itself. This is an interesting choice because it shows the prevalence of performing and the overall impact of the experiences that are shared with others or increased relatedness. The combined effort required to put on a performance allows symbolic interactionism to happen naturally as the rehearsal process unfolds and the cast and crew can create shared meaning of the messages and motifs of the play.

One participant described her identity as changing depending upon the group she was interacting with. She said she is an intellectual member of her family, sharing this title with her father, and also said she likes to be funny. She gave a detailed account of how she used to try to be perfect but had to stop because it was “too stressful and not fun” (Participant 4). She explained how she is working through this change in her identity. She described, but not in detail, that she recently “burnt out” and has learned to accept that she does not have to be perfect. Interestingly, she identifies as “the support system” for her friends. She does not consider herself the intellectual one or perfect one within that group. She talked about seeing a therapist for anxiety and strategically working through social pressure. It is important to note that she models this social support within her friend group, which shows that she mimics behavior that is modeled for her that she deems effective. This is another example of symbolic interactionism; the shared experience with the therapist gave meaning and social modeling to her interactions within her friend group, having a major impact on her self-identity.

Another participant (17) identified primarily as a performer but later disclosed that she was also a sexual assault survivor. She described how this part of her identity allowed her to call on her real-life emotional

experiences to portray real emotions on stage. She explained that this component of her identity has given her the chance to take something negative that happened to her and use it to enhance her work while making the topic accessible for the audience. She very aptly identified the therapeutic effect of coming to terms with what happened to her and the desire to make it okay for other women to discuss openly, on a stage, in a public forum. She is promoting symbolic interactionism of coping with sexual assault and modeling positive social behaviors without even knowing what she is doing!

Many participants' (81%) major in-group affiliation was associated with being women. One participant (12) highlighted how she sees herself as a strong woman and tries to surround herself with other strong women in order to solidify this notion of gendered power. She explained how she gained this perspective and personal identity through performing strong female characters in theatre. She experienced the world of a strong female character (a mom) through acting with a company and kept that shared experience as a part of her personal identity. Many participants recount roles they played in which they admired a character and actively decided to try to be more like them in their real lives. One woman (7) described her character as "smart, curious, inquisitive, caring, and strong" and goes on to say "now I'm a lot like Eve and even today that role holds a very special place in my heart. She's so sweet and she handles her role with grace and leadership." Another participant (11) that shared this feminist definition of her personal identity explained that she is "drawn to playing strong women, brave women who love as fiercely as they fight, who seek to bring out the best in people. These women never give up. These women inspire hope. And that is what I strive to do, every day."

Self-Concept

Professional and Education

Eight participants indicated that their most valuable contributions are in their professional work with children. One participant (19) discussed having three jobs: babysitting, teaching middle school dance, and working at a dance studio. In all three positions, she works with children twelve and under. She emphatically highlighted that her biggest contribution in life at this time is "inspiring these kids."

Another participant (3) also explained her professional contributions as her biggest accomplishment, specifically echoing the notion of feminine power and increasing awareness of cultural struggles through professional theatrical performance.

All participants have attributed professional and personal success to educational mentors, teachers, and advisors. This indicates that they had positive leadership socially modeling behaviors for them, which they actively choose to replicate in their professional goals. They recall the meaning their mentors had for them and they try to be that meaningful individual for others. The symbolic interactionism of making meaning of success is especially important because all participants indicated that someone else told them they were smart, talented, “good enough,” and able to achieve success before they believed it about themselves. One participant recalls a director giving pep talks telling her to “sparkle on the stage.” Not only could they clearly credit the sheer impact of those individuals, they actively model their behavior and strive to offer that inspiration for others.

Self-Image

One participant (2) said her physical appearance is her least concern. She likes to go running but does not obsess about exercise or going to the gym. She is unwilling to give up her favorite foods. She says, “I am happy with how I look. I don’t want to be a model that looks photo-shopped. I don’t obsess with that.”

Another woman (15) specifically highlighted how a change in her appearance helps her adopt the character she is playing. When she gets in hair and make-up for a character, she steps into an alternate personae and part of becoming herself again involves taking off the false layers. She explains, “I grew to really love and admire these women. I was still me, but the show would end and I would go back to dressing rooms and get undressed and it would be me again but her presence was always there. And of course you’re basking in that after show glow.”

Importantly, none of the participants discussed disliking their looks, wanting to change physical aspects of their appearance, or lack of confidence regarding body image. Perhaps in order to perform, one must have an innate comfort with herself before being willing to be on a stage in front of a wider audience or perhaps performing itself increases self-

concept of body-image and appearance. This is an area that I plan to delve into deeper in future research.

Performance

Confidence and Control

All participants have identified feeling most confident on stage, in any capacity (acting, singing, dancing, announcing, etc.). One woman (1) told a story about someone asking her if she was planning to major in theatre in college and she responded, “you can do that?” This is when she decided she wanted to have a career in theatre. When I asked what show(s) had the biggest impact on her identity, she named her three favorite (she could not list one) and explained what they taught her professionally (eg. vocal technique, performative dance) and talked about the relationships she formed throughout the production process. She explained how performing gives her adrenaline. In contrast to her earlier indication about judgment giving her anxiety, she claimed that there is a separation between the stage and the audience and she feels like “[the audience] can’t touch me.” It is not a true judgment when it is from their seats and she is in the spotlight. She said that when people are watching up close it makes her nervous but in a theatre they are “in a separate sphere.” She explained that being on stage makes her feel “untouchable” and closed to the criticism of others because she is in the spotlight and that gives her confidence that transcends what the general public thinks of her.

Another participant (21) identified her favorite roles to play are strong women and that she feels able to “channel” them for the performance. She explained how this idea of a “strong woman” aligns with her perception of herself and the ability to portray other strong women reinforces her identity. She discussed a spiritual connection with real life women that she plays theatrically and feels they are present with her as she performs. This is a prime example of the parasocial interaction that an actor can experience with a character. If she feels connected to the character, she can channel that connection into her performance, and into changing her own personal behavior.

Another participant (5) said of her most inspirational role, “it made me braver. I felt more confident and more satisfied.” That bravery, confidence, and satisfaction carried from the stage to her self-concept

that has lasted years. She explained that she can call on those feelings when she is down and it gives her inspiration and confidence. Perhaps this is an indication of symbolic interactionism through parasocial interaction with the character she played in the show.

Almost all (71%) of the participants discussed their feelings toward the characters they have played either admiring and adoring them or disliking but respecting them. The parasocial interaction happening between the character and the actor is one that I have not seen discussed anywhere else. This is another potential area for further study. It seems the symbolic interactionism goes beyond the cast and into the script as well.

Race and Culture

When asked what role impacted each performer most dramatically, all participants described a role that was historically oppressed in society; a racial minority, a sexual assault survivor, a Jewish woman. One participant (9) explained her experience in Twilight Los Angeles last semester about the Rodney King riots of 1992. She explains how the process was deeply moving as she struggled to see someone else's point of view on race and study it in order to "convincingly convey those feelings to others." She calls this difficult and scary. She played three different characters, the most difficult being a man who participated in the riots, beat up a black man and then got arrested. She explained how this was more meaningful and difficult for her because it was portraying actual events in history that real people experienced. She watched videos of the riots and interviews with her characters.

She explains how she originally thought of the play as a historical piece but by the end she realized that it is still extremely relevant and meaningful which was very eye opening. She said she now feels better equipped to discuss issues of race and is much more aware of their everyday relevance in her life. She goes on to say that even though it is a challenge to play this type of character that she believes it makes a difference and she is motivated to continue doing so because "the payoff was worth it, it's meaningful." Finally, I ask her if she has ever experienced discrimination in this way and she again says she is discriminated against as a theatre major. This implies a potentially weak understanding of racial oppression and privilege.

One participant (20) discussed playing a character that was sexually assaulted and discussed how she recalled personal sexual abuse to portray the emotions on stage. She highlighted that this was powerful for her and gave expression to her as a survivor. It could be assumed that playing a difficult situation in a play that you have actually struggled with in real life would be emotionally difficult and potentially cause psychological instability such as depression or decreased mental health. This woman explained that it was therapeutic to work through it on the stage and become an example for other women to have the ability to share their experience and overcome the difficult experience.

Conclusion and Discussion

All of the participants continuously identified personal success externally. There is a very collectivist mindset and repeated indication that others validate and promote success. While none of them specifically identify this, it appears that they are all motivated to provide that encouragement to others (ie. children they teach, friends through social support, family members, audiences watching performances, etc) which also indicates a high level of emotional intelligence. In continued research it will be interesting to see if men also find this external motivation for participation and success with performance. It would also be meaningful to further investigate connections between social anxiety and the desire to perform.

All participants also noted the positive benefits they experience from performing including confidence, empathy, relatedness, resilience, and a greater sense of self-concept. While this data set is somewhat small, there is a clear trend that women who identify as performers disclose how performance helps them feel more in control of the difficult things they have experienced in their personal lives (ie. anxiety, sexual assault, gender oppression, etc.). There was a clear theme of copying the behavior of mentors, teachers, and even characters that one finds inspiring. Applying SCT offers explanations that the social modeling of others, the enhanced self-efficacy and the increased self-concept as a result of performing lead to a higher level of self-regulation and lasting changes in self-identity. The effects of SCT are likely enhanced by the active involvement required to perform. The performers become extremely involved with the messages and themes of the play, the rehearsal process, and the performance in general. TRA posits that the

impacts of active involvement on the performers will be much higher than those who simply see behavior modeled but do not have the increased self-efficacy, self-concept, and self-regulation that come along with performing. Through parasocial interaction with the characters they perform or other characters in the play, and through symbolic interactionism and the unique opportunity to collaboratively make meaning with others involved in the theatre the participants clearly indicated real identity changes.

One participant (21) said “I think it’s hard to shake the emotions, especially after a particularly dark or tragic piece. Which is why it’s essential for the cast to let off steam together afterwards. It’s also why a lot of times great friendships and strong bonds result. We went through something together and because of it we have a closeness together forever. I really think that the bonds that happen and the connections in theatre are some of the biggest reasons I love to perform.” This perfectly describes how performing is a type of symbolic interactionism leading to shared meaning and lasting identity changes for the performers.

The symbolic interactionism that occurs in the theatre happens among the cast, between the cast and the audience, between the actors and the characters in the play, and even with the actors and their friends and family. The meaning that they derive from these interactions have major impacts on their everyday lives. While there is still much room for investigation, it is important to note the high level of influence the participants feel their participation in performance has on their personal identity.

The implications for theatrical performance changing the self-identity of actors could help youth theatre groups create more meaningful experiences that have a greater positive impact on the participants. With the knowledge of performing certain roles inciting greater strength and confidence in the actor, interventions could be created to help people who are depressed or experiencing low self-esteem. Creating effective interventions to improve self-concept and self-efficacy is certainly an opportunity that we should be embracing. The process of theatrical performance is both a strong intrapersonal and interpersonal experience. Social cognitive theory provides a mechanism through which both intrapersonal self-reflection and interpersonal social modeling allow actors to learn and grow as individuals while performing the lives of others.

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**Counterfactuals in the Communication Classroom as
Global Critical Pedagogy about Intercultural
Communication and Rhetorics of Difference**

Nick J. Sciullo

Abstract

Counterfactuals provide a useful way to encourage critical thinking in communication and rhetorical studies. This article argues that counterfactuals can help students and instructors better understand global communication because counterfactuals can be used to help people understand how others think, feel, and act. In so doing, this article expands rhetorical studies and argumentation studies' appreciation for global communication by arguing that counterfactuals, often discussed in the humanities and social sciences, can be fruitfully pursued as a means to better understand global communication. Because counterfactuals encourage the rigorous testing of ideas as a way to think more meaningfully about difference in the world, this article also understands counterfactuals as an aid in critical pedagogical approaches to learning, and as an important way to reframe difference in global contexts.

People often engage in counterfactual thinking, that is, imagining alternatives to the real world and mentally playing out the consequences (Spellman & Mandel, 1999, p. 120).

Introduction

Many educators use counterfactuals to initiate critical thinking in their students, encourage rigorous testing of ideas and debate about facts, and do so across both the undergraduate and graduate curriculums, but scholars have completed little work to articulate a theory of counterfactuals as enabling a better understanding of the global communication landscape. In this article, I argue that counterfactuals are worthy of study because they represent an opportunity to rigorously test ideas and improve critical thinking about intercultural communication and rhetorics of difference. Counterfactuals are valuable in

communication studies, particularly in a global context, because they help individuals think beyond themselves, and in turn appreciate different ways of knowing and being in the world. As universities in the United States aggressively pursue international students and many universities offer study abroad and exchange programs (as well as establishing global campuses), students and scholars alike must think more critically about a world built on difference and intercultural understanding.

In laying out the case for counterfactuals as a pedagogical tool in communication studies, I proceed through several arguments. First, I define counterfactuals and demonstrate how they may be and indeed are put into use in global critical communication teaching. Second, I make the case for counterfactuals as pedagogical tools given their reliance on critical thinking, hypothesis testing, and assessing evidence and its interpretation. Third, I argue that global critical communication studies can benefit from utilizing counterfactuals precisely because of their pedagogical value and ability to help students understand difference. Ultimately, I hope this analysis will encourage incorporating counterfactuals into the global critical communication curriculum to better encourage students' critical thinking about intercultural communication and rhetorics of difference.

Petrocelli, et al. (2011) wrote:

Counterfactual thinking, as we treat it here, is characterized by conditional mutations of a past event (e.g., “If only I hadn’t taken out so many student loans, then I might be able to buy a house by now”; “If she hadn’t been wearing her seatbelt, then she could have been killed in that accident”). Such thoughts typically recruit alternatives that are better than the outcome that actually occurred (upward counterfactuals) rather than worse than the actual outcome (downward counterfactuals; see Markman, Gavanski, Sherman, & McMullen, 1993; Roese & Olson, 1997). Research on counterfactual thinking is particularly intriguing in that it turns the usual approach of judgment research on its head (p. 30).

This explanation is a good conceptual framework for understanding counterfactuals and how they are used in everyday life. Working forward from this definition, I argue the applicability of such reasoning for the global communication classroom, not as a dry academic discussion, but

rather as a powerful pedagogical practice designed to enliven and expand classroom discussion. Counterfactuals are not, however, only about the “what ifs” of history.

Wardekker and Miedema (1997) have argued that the counterfactual can be an expression of a person-to-come and in this way may be an ideal to which individuals may aspire. Thus, the counterfactual can provide a way of articulating a subject position beyond the specific material of the class that may establish a position where students may gain agency by articulating possible futures. This is important because education can be an alienating place for many students, especially students of color, first generation students, and student-veterans. If counterfactuals can help students understand who they are, and express that, then studying them should make college more beneficial and less alienating.

Following this, Getto (2015) has argued, in the context of global communication, that culture is complex, and as such requires novel ways of thinking. It is not enough to recite definitions and name-check cultural differences or lists of canonical communication scholars. The world’s complexity, to write nothing of the complexity of individual campuses, necessitates different types of learning and surely broader understandings of what communicators bring to the table in terms of social norms, differences, and expectations. One way to do this is to put one’s self into the shoes of others (Hartley, 2009). There are a number of ways to do this, of course: service learning, studying abroad, etc. Counterfactuals, however, present one of the best ways to do this in the classroom, which is important because we cannot depend on external experiences to be the only way students reckon with difference.

Spellman and Kincannon (2001) described counterfactuals this way:

Another kind of reasoning people do is to imagine the world other than it is and play out the consequences. For example, if the child had not watched so much television, if the quarterback had not thrown that interception, or if grandfather had quit smoking, might the world be a happier place? This kind of reasoning is called “counterfactual reasoning.” In its most common guise, people imagine an early event (“antecedent”) as being different (for example, no interception), leading to an outcome (“consequent”) that may also be different (for example, winning the game) (p. 241).

No matter where one is, classroom, armchair after an important sports game, or bar with friends, counterfactuals are at play. We question what would happen if certain facts in history were different, if a different play had been run, and if a different approach had been used to pursue a potential romantic partner. Both the Petrocelli, et al. (2001) and the Spellman and Kincannon (2011) descriptions/definitions illustrate that the counterfactual is no logic game nor fantasy play, but is instead a highly interesting way of thinking about other people and situations that is not beholden to any particular discipline, cultural context, or language and therefore not to any particular humanities or social sciences class as well. Counterfactuals are broadly applicable ways to think about differences and challenge existing ideas and knowledge.

Counterfactuals as Critical Thinking Aids

Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Myer (1957) argued that the counterfactual is an important tool for critical thinking because it demands the contemplation of multiple futures and the testing of the deductive logic chain:

However, granted that counterfactuals cannot be directly tested, it is possible to consider the statement within a valid deductive system, independently of the acknowledged falsity of the conditional clause. Then, without being able to demonstrate any given instance of the counterfactual, it may be possible to verify or falsify some other proposition higher up in the deductive chain (p. 540).

Furthermore, George G.S. Murphy (1969) argued, “We can sometimes view a counterfactual as an instruction to perform an experiment” (p. 19). In this way, the counterfactual may be seen as more than abstract hypothesis testing. Indeed, it actually becomes a generative pedagogical activity creating new knowledge. We may be able to articulate counterfactuals as directions to new worlds, new ways of thinking, and new creative energies. That is, counterfactuals force new orientations and understanding through experimentation. Education should inspire students and teachers alike to not be complacent, to do more than rote memorization. In the global critical communication landscape this means acting, adapting, and reacting to a vast milieu of intercultural possibilities, not only those laid out in a textbook. Counterfactuals are a

way to encourage both teachers and students to act in a diverse and complicated world for more inclusive pedagogies and politics.

To this end, it matters very little whether or not the counterfactual can be tested or confirmed as true because truth is not the purpose of counterfactuals. Rather, the purpose is possibilities. But there is a reason to think closely about counterfactuals that move too far beyond established facts. Gary King and Lanche Zeng (2001) argued:

[W]hen the counterfactuals posed are too far from the data at hand, conclusions drawn from well-specified statistical analyses become based on speculation and convenient but indefensible model assumptions rather than empirical evidence (p. i).

They also echo these beliefs in the context of statistical modeling, arguing that for fidelity to quantitative data and the use of appropriate models, that is models that check for unsupportable extrapolations (King & Zeng, 2006). Extrapolating too far from given data, whether using counterfactuals or simply trying to extend the reach of one's data is dangerous. It involves making conclusions that are so attenuated from the original data, as to make them virtually worthless. Applied directly to counterfactuals, there certainly is room for concern. Imagine the following counterfactual in a history class: What if Barack Obama had not been elected President and George W. Bush had encouraged Members of Congress to amend the Constitution to allow for a third term and subsequently won a third term? This scenario is difficult to imagine given the constraints of law and politics, and would require so much action that imagining it seems unfruitful at best. We are in dangerous territory here, so far beyond facts that we risk losing the pedagogical moment of thinking about the future. While scholars may want to be careful with their application, counterfactuals are nonetheless important to predictions. Murphy (1969) wrote:

A model which is clearly false in the world because it uses counterfactuals as some of its statements, Fogel seems to say, may still generate testable propositions.... It would be a very strange line of argument to add to those already adduced to say that we can be so cavalier with evidence that counterfactual propositions can in some way enter into the "assumptions" of an argument; although if one holds that it is only the predictive capacity of implications of an argument that matters, then one's assumptions may indeed

be counter to fact. If one's assumptions are not realistic, they can only be unrealistic. They are, indeed, counter to fact in some way (p. 25).

The point is not necessarily that a counterfactual might lead us closer to truth, but is alternatively that the counterfactual can help us think beyond the facts that are given and make informed decisions about future events and hypothesize predictions for different situations. This is important in a world of difference where students and scholars alike are thrust into new situations with new people and new demands. While one must always check one's extrapolations, this should not counsel against counterfactuals because the goal with counterfactuals is not truth or certainty. So, where global critical communicators may not have a good sense of possible outcomes or may wish to evaluate a situation had a different course of action been taken, counterfactuals may help. Likewise, global critical communicators can better analyze where communication broke down in an intercultural interaction or negotiation, if they are able to imagine the world of their interlocutors (Thatcher, 2010). Counterfactuals, then, can be helpful despite their limitations and flirtation with flights of fancy.

Disciplinary Case Studies in Counterfactual Thought

Kevin W. Saunders (2008) argued that, "To ask 'what if' is to posit a situation that is not actually the case and ask what else would be true under the hypothesized facts" (p. 9). This presents students with a number of pedagogical possibilities. It can teach them about the ways past events influenced current events, it can emphasize the contingency of history, it can encourage creative thinking, and it can prepare students to put their research and experience to work in new and interesting ways, helping students understand why critical thinking is important to problem solving. Furthermore, this expanded thinking may help individuals grapple with the difficulties and confusion of an intercultural world. Even though communication studies have not relied extensively on counterfactuals, save for Sunwolf's (2006) valuable study on counterfactuals in group decision making that while well-argued does not apply counterfactuals to the global critical communication classroom, other disciplines have.

Counterfactuals are quite common in legal education, as Sunwolf's (2006) experience in law demonstrates, where they are used to

test judicial reasoning and to explain the ways in which legal rules are created and challenged (Strassfeld, 1992). The ability to engage the counterfactual is an opportunity to think critically about the way cases are decided and how a case may have turned out differently had facts been different. This helps test legal reasoning, helps lawyers and legal scholars theorize the outcomes of cases, and helps legal actors understand causation. Legal education should be a guide for other disciplines where, save for history, counterfactuals seem less explored. At the root of the counterfactual is critical thinking, something critical communication students and scholars need to continually test and refine in order to meet the challenges of scholarship, employment, and personal life.

The Dred Scott case provides an example of counterfactual analysis's utility (Weinberg, 2007). Weinberg (2007) conducted an excellent study of counterfactuals that may be posed about the Taney Court's egregious decision that denied Dred Scott his humanity. In it she offers the following questions:

- Could anything have been done about Dred Scott in its own day, in a Supreme Court remade by Abraham Lincoln?
- That is, was Dred Scott vulnerable to overrule, even in its own day, even in advance of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments?
- Would the power of then-existing constitutional theory have been sufficient to support overcoming Dred? (2007, p. 733).

These questions are important considerations in critiquing the Taney Court's decision. They present different considerations and hint at different possible outcomes for the ruling that would deem slaves chattels. They ask that students and scholars think through the nexus of race, power, law, and politics. Counterfactuals allow scholars and students to dig deeper, and even have fun along the way (Weinberg, 2007). In the legal classroom they help teachers and learners critique legal reasoning and develop ideas about the correctness of legal decisions, inspiring them to go out into the world and write and advocate for change. All classrooms, degree plans, and majors should aspire to this.

Legal reasoning, particularly in criminal law, often revolves around questions of causation, framed as a series of "but for" queries: But for the defendant firing the gun into the air, the bullet would not

have struck the child. But for the police officer's actions the marijuana would not have been discovered. These "but fors" are counterfactuals that test other possible events as causal factors in legal disputes. Again: But for the defendant's negligence in not maintaining a well-lit parking lot for patrons, the plaintiff would not have been mugged. But for the doctor leaving the sponge inside of Ms. Williams, she would not have become septic and died. This sort of reasoning is integral to the way cases are argued before courts (Spellman & Kincannon, 2004). The "but for" analysis is played out in law school classrooms as a way to investigate causality and a way to understand the minds of jurors, judges, and litigants. Spellman and Kincannon (2004) argued, "Counterfactual reasoning is essential for causal reasoning in the law" (p. 264). A strong claim perhaps but still an illustration of how important testing possibilities may be for law students, scholars, and practitioners. This sort of analysis, however, need not occur only in the law classroom as it can be important for analyzing miscommunication, audience reactions to communicative activities, and argumentative strengths and weaknesses.

Another discipline in which counterfactuals prove beneficial is in the economics classroom. Murphy (1969) described counterfactuals as an exciting new pursuit in economics, "They are not the raw material of sheer scholasticism. Recently, economic historians have become interested in their use, have in fact employed them, and also made them a subject of discussion" (p. 14). Here we begin to understand even in the highly scientific discipline of economics counterfactuals are being used to make sense of changes in economic policy and in the economic fortunes of populations. If a largely scientific discipline that rests on quantitative methods may find use for counterfactuals, it seems that other disciplines, less shackled by quantitative analysis ought to be able to employ counterfactuals as well.

Imagine this counterfactual: "What if the U.S. sub-prime mortgage crisis had not occurred?" The answer implicates questions of economics, public policy, politics, and history. In the critical communication classroom, it demands that students consider not only the importance of the mortgage crisis in the economic troubles the U.S. faces, but also asks that they consider other factors and their relative importance to the crisis, including the ways the crisis affects various populations and potentially the effects of economic policies and catastrophes on other countries. Students would have to reckon with policies to alleviate economic distress, different political machinations,

issues of precarity, and even the ways economic messages are communicated. Without these “what ifs” the classroom follows a linear conception of history and relies on what we already know instead of what we could know. In short, counterfactuals encourage more than memorization and a focus on key terms, instead calling on students to think through theories and possibilities.

History too makes valuable use of counterfactuals. They are the “what ifs?” of historical thought that span historical fiction as well as well as traditional historical scholarship. For example, a historian might ask, “What if Lincoln had not been assassinated? What if Bill Buckner had not made his famous World Series error? What if the Supreme Court had decided *Plessy v. Ferguson* differently?” While some, like Redlich (1965), have considered the use of “fictions” in history as anathema to genuine historical reasoning, others have indicated “we can use counterfactuals because we have good sound empirical propositions to back them up. It is because propositions are descriptive of states of affairs that they predict. If we want to say anything about policy in history, then we shall have to use them” (Murphy, 1969, p. 28). Counterfactuals rest on facts and they therefore are not so much fictions as extrapolations on a given set of circumstances. Indeed, every hypothesis in any discipline is nonfactual (or else it would not be a hypothesis at all) and rests on counterfactual logic (Murphy, 1969). If one’s hypothesis is that chemical X will make plants grow larger, there is an implicit interest in the idea that chemical X will have no effect or will make plants grow less. Historical knowledge consistently wrestles with what constitutes knowledge and how different events transpired and affected other events.

Counterfactuals as a tool to prove causation are a hotly contested issue in history, but they need not be. As legal analysis demonstrates, counterfactuals can help think about history’s importance to the present as well about how we think about historical events. Counterfactuals may provide knowledge about the significance of an individual or an event (How important was Hitler to the emergence of Germany in World War II? How important was the death of Medger Evers for the Civil Rights Movement?) (Reiss, 2009). Questions of importance are, well, important to historical projects. It matters little if Medger Evers death caused any specific action during the Civil Rights Movement, but it does matter that the event was important and did influence other actions. That is, we do not need a direct, linear causal link to appreciate the galvanizing force of

his death. The historian needs not prove sole causation, and counterfactuals are not likely to do this. But a historian may be interested in elucidating the importance of this event for the Civil Rights Movement. If historians seek to learn more about our knowledge of facts and not simply more facts, then the counterfactual is a necessary and proper tool for historical thought (Murphy, 1969). In the global critical communication classroom, understanding the evolution of theory and relative importance of events and scholarship can be tested with counterfactual reasoning just as it is in history so that students understand how the discipline has developed as well as how different actions and ideas influence the global communication landscape.

Psychology may find counterfactuals important in understanding how people cope with distressing events, how they justify their actions, and why they think, fear, and worry as they do (Spellman & Mandel, 1999). Psychology's close relationship with communication studies should not be ignored. Spellman and Mandel (1999) concluded their brief study of counterfactuals in the psychological literature with this note: "It seems, however, that our beliefs about the universe of the actual...are affected by our considerations of the merely possible—created by the 'what ifs' and 'if onlys' of counterfactual thinking" (p. 123). In short, possibilities are all around us regardless of discipline, and they do and can shape how we act in the present. We all use them in considering various courses of action (What if my boss catches me stealing copier paper from the office? What if my students don't think I understand the material? What if I turn my homework in late with a bad excuse?). Further, counterfactuals help us come to terms with difficulties in life (Petrocelli, et al., 2011). As communication studies continues to take on issues of hate, violence, domestic disturbances, propaganda, and extremism, counterfactuals can help critical communication scholars and students understand these complicated and emotionally challenging situations. Counterfactuals are not simply logic games or ideas to be tested in the laboratory/classroom, but are instead ways that we address life and the events that happen to us all. Victims of accidents, rape, and other violence, etc. all tend to rely on counterfactuals, sometimes to their detriment as in when a victim of a crime asks, "What if I had not been flashing my new watch around on that dark street in that neighborhood?" Nonetheless, counterfactuals are a way of life, and an important way to attempt making sense of the world. Further, for the psychology classroom, counterfactuals may provide a way of understanding coping

mechanisms, victimization, feelings of inadequacy, and other psychological ills quite common on society.

If Spellman and Mandel (1999) are correct, using counterfactuals in the classroom is merely an extension of the way we already think about the world. Counterfactuals in the classroom offer not so much a change in thinking, but an appreciation for the utility of the way we already think. As such, counterfactuals provide a way to think differently about intercultural communication and rhetorics of difference that demand students and scholars critically engage the ideas and actions they and others take in a world of difference. Although many may already be doing this, it is nonetheless important to expand these efforts and appreciate their benefits.

Counterfactuals as Critical Communication Pedagogy

Counterfactuals present an important tool for critical communication pedagogy. Critical pedagogy challenges the notion of teachers as masters and students as receptacles into which knowledge is dropped and stored (Freire, 2000). This oppositional tendency can also be important in breaking down barriers in global communication. Rather than assume the supremacy of one form of communication (high context verses low context, for example), the critical pedagogue does not take these ideas for granted, opening up opportunities for appreciating different communication styles and contexts. Critical pedagogy challenges the notion of stable truths and seeks to disrupt the power relations of traditional educational and communication structures where students lack agency in their educational endeavors. Analogically, critical pedagogy can help uncover biases with respect to different cultures as well as help students understand why communicative situations seem different to different people. For example, one might ask a question to a fellow employee who has trouble understanding one's anxiety on the first day of work, "What if this was your first day of work and your parents had put so much pressure on you to find employment and succeed?" Wardekker and Miedema (1997) wrote, "The important step in critical pedagogy is its denial of the existence of a transcendental principle of personality formation," which underscores the important of critical pedagogy for the self (p. 51). Even if the aim is stable subjectivity, this idea is posed as a counterfactual. What if I was whole or completely dedicated to my sorority? What if I was not denigrated by

the competing forces of industrial education, capitalism, classism, sexism, racism and other divisive ideas? What if education could produce a better me? What if I stopped believing that supporting my university in unpaid labor made my education better? Students are continually confronted with these ontological questions as they pursue higher education, and critical pedagogy helps challenge the teleological basis of many modern university education slogans: “Graduate ready.” “Greet the world.” “Your career awaits.”

For the critical pedagogy these questions in the preceding paragraph are important not only for empowering students, but also for questioning neoliberal educational structures, and hopefully changing them. Corporate trainers too might benefit from critical pedagogy and counterfactuals because counterfactuals could help them reach learners in new ways and might highlight why certain learners learn better with different teaching styles. Critical pedagogy hopes for emancipation, critical thinking, and not control. Counterfactuals help pose an alternative to the present, where emancipation might reside. They challenge learners to think differently in many situations recognizing not necessarily that there are correct answers, but rather than there are other possible answers. In work as well as in graduate study, students often struggle making their way in a world that is not definite or determined, but rather full of contingency. This struggle often manifests in undergraduate education where recent high school students struggle with the idea that there is not a right answer or one answer. As intercultural communication and rhetorics of difference increasingly become part of life, a critical communication pedagogy can help students adapt to and understand a complicated world. For example, critical pedagogy using counterfactual logic produces this insight:

A reformulation of pedagogical theory in this sense would have to ask what the possibilities are for human beings in the actual political situation not to be made totally dependent on existing structures. Put differently, what possibilities are left for humans to become coauthors of the cultural narratives, and what shape should education have to promote this actorship or authorship? (Wardekker & Miedema, 1997, p. 60).

This notion suggests that theorizing the possible is itself a tactic of critical pedagogy. In order to give students, hope about the future and to encourage their perception of themselves as actors in and authors of the

possible, it is necessary to formulate a pedagogy that demands that they engage the future and think critically beyond the facts, books, and lectures they receive. Put another way, counterfactuals help people think about political situations and structures that are experienced differently by different cultures. Paolo Freire (2000) wrote:

The important thing, from the point of view of libertarian education, is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades (p. 124).

Emancipation comes from imaging the possible and planning for it, from students thinking about their thinking. Counterfactuals in global critical communication enable people to challenge domination and think more freely in whatever context they might be in: classroom, airport terminal, boardroom, or living room.

Counterfactuals in Global Communication

Having established that counterfactuals are beneficial in critical thinking and utilized across disciplines, I now turn directly to how counterfactuals help individuals understand each other in global communication. Anyone who has taught communication classes in colleges and universities or worked in global business understands how difficult it is to get people to understand how others experience the world. Now more than ever because of continual advances in the Internet and telecommunications and the increasing transnational character of business and academic work, it is important that individuals understand how others communicate (Duin and Moses, 2015). Like it or not, intercultural communication and rhetorics of difference will be if not already are the norm for college students regardless of their pursuits after college. In fact, as universities pursue high tuition paying international students, encourage study abroad and exchange programs, enhance cooperation agreements between universities internationally, and develop global campuses, educators must do all they can to prepare students for a world of difference.

As Thatcher (2010) has argued, communication studies must respond to globalization both in technical and professional communication as well as in other disciplines and sub-disciplines. Duin and Moses (2015) argued that more time must be spent teaching students

to become interculturally competent including exposing students to different ways of thinking and different sources of information. While communication studies have not studied counterfactuals much, there is an increasing interest in their ability to explain and aid communication (Sunwolf, 2006; Waisanen, 2018). Counterfactuals can help students develop these competencies because they provide the opportunities to take on the position of others and to understand how others might address situations based on their lived experiences. While communication scholars can always include new texts in the classroom (and we need more texts that are not written by and about cis-gendered, Christian, middle class, white men) and encourage speeches, group projects, and research papers about rhetorics of difference and global critical communication, we can also incorporate teaching strategies that focus on these ideas as well.

To make the claim broader, teachers must do more than simply expose students to new texts and new situations. It is incredibly easy, with earbuds in or phone in face, to ignore exposure to difference and intercultural communication. Our students and even some scholars do this regularly. Because counterfactuals demand not just the perception of difference, but instead demand active learning empowered by students engaging texts and situations by thinking differently than they would or than the existing evidence would suggest, counterfactuals represent an important way to think about global critical communication in a diverse world. Counterfactuals are likely to make students active learners, and not merely passive class attendees. This type of learning can be vital to students meaningfully addressing communication in a global context.

Conclusion

I have endeavored to move beyond the question of, “Can the counterfactual explain causation?” to instead consider the ways in which counterfactuals may be employed in the global critical communication context to help students understand intercultural communication and rhetorics of difference. Questions of causation are surely important, yet the more interesting question to critical communication educators is: “Can the counterfactual make us think critically about global communication because our students must do this in an interconnected world?” That question is important no matter what discipline one calls home nor what the day’s lesson plans demand. I have sketched a

workable interdisciplinary description of counterfactuals and described their benefits as well as rebuffed some of their criticisms. I have laid out the importance of counterfactuals to several disciplines illustrating how they have been used successfully and how they might be usefully applied to global critical communication. Because counterfactuals have been demonstrated to help students think critically and because many related disciplines have found them successful, I conclude that as questions of globalization and intercultural communication continue to gain importance, counterfactuals can help students think more critically about difference in global critical communication.

Further research should consider specific ideas for incorporating counterfactuals into the communication classroom, the ways in which differences (race, country of origin, sexual orientation, language, etc.) relate to counterfactuals, and the construction of counterfactuals as uniquely rhetorical arguments as well as expressions of a teacher's pedagogical preferences and politics. These sorts of additional pursuits will help explore the depth of counterfactual reasoning for specific rhetorics of difference and will aid scholars and students in self-care, allying, and becoming more responsible and ethical actors in and beyond the classroom.

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Communication Behaviors between Close Friends and Romantic Partners in the U.S. and Russia

Deborrah Uecker & Jacqueline Schmidt

Abstract

This study examined U.S. and Russian willingness to engage in communication behaviors for close friends and romantic partners. Students completed surveys and interviews on communication behaviors in the areas of disclosure, companionship, emotional support, conflict, and instrumental support. Interviews supported survey results for important qualities/behaviors for friends and romantic partners. U.S. and Russians students had more similarities than differences in communication behaviors for close friends and romantic partners. U.S. students perceived smaller differences between friends and romantic partners, but U.S. and Russians were more willing to engage in communication behaviors for romantic partners than close friends.

Intercultural relationships offer unique and unexpected challenges. The definition of relationships across cultures, as well as what we call or name a relationship (i.e. close friend, friend, significant other, family or who we consider family) can vary. Cultural beliefs, value dimensions, norms and social practices about such things as love, romance, and dating can be perceived quite differently when people are from different cultures. According to Gao (2001), even the meaning and function of terms such as love and romance may vary considerably from one relationship to another and from one culture to another. Such differing cultural orientations can cause disappointment and confusion within these relationships. As people move globally and become more interconnected, the opportunity for working together continues to increase. This highlights the importance of understanding the nature of relationships in such contexts to avoid misinterpretation of behaviors. Friendships and romantic relationships share some characteristics and behaviors and differ in significant behavioral ways. For example, what should one do or what is important for a romantic partner or close friend? Are these similar or different in various cultures? The purpose of this

study was to examine communication behaviors in close friendships and romantic partners for the U.S. and Russia.

Relationship Framework

Henrick (1988) proposed that relationships are a set of processes with a social structure. Social behavior is rule governed (Harre & Secord, 1972). Rules are behaviors that members of a group or subculture expect should or should not be performed. Baxter and Bullis (1986) argue that rules keep relationships together and when rules are broken, deterioration and dissolution often occurs. These rules give relationships a sense of stability and predictability. (Furhman, Flannagan & Matamors, 2009). Scollo and Carbaugh (2013) stress the importance of culture in shaping, understanding, and applying meaning to these behaviors (rules).

One cultural lens used frequently in analyzing friendship and romantic relationships is Hofstede's collectivism/individualism (Dion & Dion, 1991; Dion & Dion 2005; Karandashev, 2011; DeMunch, Korotayev, deMunch, & Khaltourina 2011). Characteristics of individualism are attributes such as strong personal goals, autonomy, a loosely knit social framework, and looking after one's own immediate interests (Goodwin, 1999; Hofstede, 2001). Collectivism is characterized by a preference for group interaction as compared to individual achievement (Trandis, McCusker, & Hui, 1990) However, preference for group interaction is limited in that "collectivist societies are keen to protect and aid their in-group members, but they are not necessarily so helpful to those outside of the group" (Goodwin, 1999, p. 25). This cultural orientation helps people conceptualize themselves and what they experience or want from relationships. Individualists see themselves typically as a separate entity operating within a relatively loose social framework, while collectivists view themselves as part of more extended relationships in a smaller and more tightly held framework (Karandashev, 2011). This concept is related to Lim's (2009) construct of analytic and holistic. Analytic cultures like individualistic cultures are more apt to view the world independently and have many types of friends depending on the context while holistic cultures are more apt to have fewer friends and view a friend as a friend across contexts (Choi, Koo & Cjoi 2007).

Russia - U.S. Friendship

Russians generally are rated as moderate in individualism/collectivism measures, but have many attributes of collectivism such as placing a high value on friendship and interdependence with a family group (Naumov & Puffer, 2000). The U.S. is considered highly individualistic and analytic on most measures and is more flexible in selections of social figures (friends) than collectivistic cultures (Realo & Allik, 1999). Sheets and Lugar (2005) found that the concept of friend may vary between U.S. and Russians. Using scenarios, they found that Russians were more sensitive to violations of betrayal by friends, less likely to confront a friend about an issue, and perceived themselves more in control of their emotions and emotional displays in relationships with friends than U.S. participants. Additionally, Russians reported having fewer friends, but expected more from them. Sheets and Lugar (2005) did not identify any types or categories of friends such as close, business, etc. in their study.

While there is some research on Russia and U.S. friendship, much of the work to date is fragmentary and mainly focuses on cultural similarity, competence, personality and identity. (Gareis, 2012). Research by Schmidt, Uecker and Lau (2014) did identify types of friends (close, business, and internet) and found differences between Russian, Croatian, and U.S. students in motivation for types of friends, noting that there were similarities in areas of emotional support, companionship, disclosure, advice and self-development. In forming close relationships, Russian students were significantly more motivated by material support than were U.S. students. By comparison, U.S. students were more motivated by trust and respect than Russian students.

Russia - U.S. Romantic Relationships

Dion & Dion (1988) and Karandashev (2011) identify individualism/collectivism as a major cultural variable that influences similarities and differences in romantic relationships across cultures. For example, individualist cultures view being dependent on someone else as a negative. However, collectivist cultures view dependency as a sign of another persons' benevolence. They also found that the greater the level of individualism, the less love, care, and trust that was reported in romantic relationships (Dion & Dion, 1991). Furthermore, romantic love

is less likely to be considered an important reason for marriage in collectivist cultures, but is considered the main reason to marry among individualists (Dion & Dion, 1993). Dion & Dion (2006) found that for collectivists love was more in what you did than in what you said.

Most of the research on love has focused on perceptions and beliefs about love and love styles rather than communication behaviors (what one expects or will do for their romantic partner). Sprecher, Aron, Hatfield, Cortese, Potapova, & Levitskaya (1994) examined romantic beliefs' such as the importance of physical appearance, family/friend approval and beliefs about goals in the romantic relationship and found differences in love styles, falling in love predictors, and attachment types between Russian, U.S. and Japanese students. DeMunck, Korotayev, DeMunck, & Khaltourina (2011) focused on types of love (agape, ludus, pragma, mania) goals and beliefs rather than communication behaviors. They found that romantic love did exist for both Russian and U.S. students, but romance was defined differently. Collectivists (Russians) view love as more an unreal fairy tale that ends or is transferred while U.S. participants viewed love as more realistic, less illusionary, including friendship as a necessary component of a successful love relationship. Pearce, Chuikova, Ramsey, & Galyautdinove (2010) focused on qualities desired in long term romantic partners including age, physique, and psychological traits such as forgiveness and gratitude.

Limitations of Research

One limitation of this research is that it has not studied close friendship and romantic partners in the same study which makes it difficult to compare results. As noted above friendship at least for the U.S. participants in De Munck et.al. (2011) was a critical component of love. An additional problem is that even when general categories for communication behavior are used such as forgiveness and disclosure, they are not well defined. It is not clear that the participants understood the communication concept being discussed. For example, in looking at friendship, Schmidt et al. (2014) found differences in general affective areas such as disclosure, emotional support, trust and respect, and companionship between Russia and the U.S. However, when analyzing specific communication behaviors (actions such as sharing information) between business and close friends, they discovered inconsistencies compared to earlier findings (Schmidt & Uecker, 2015). One example of

inconsistency was found in the area of disclosure. Russians identified no significant differences between business and close friendships to the general category of disclosure, but when they were asked about specific disclosure behaviors there were differences in that U.S. students expected more forgiveness from their close friends than Russians and expected business friends to listen more than Russians did.

Much of this research has also examined friendships and romantic relationships from a monocultural perspective, using scales and measures developed by U.S. researchers and primarily validated with U.S. participants. In examining friendship, Schmidt et al. (2014) relied on categories from the work of Fehr (1996) to create a U.S. survey. In exploring styles of love across cultures, Sprecher et al. (1994) used surveys and instruments, translated into Japanese or Russian, but based almost exclusively on U.S. values. Dion and Dion (1991, 1993) also conducted surveys and offered insights into the nature of romantic love and its perceived importance for marriage based on US values.

Current Study

Given these concerns about the lack of direct comparison between close friends and romantic partners, the lack of use of specific communication behaviors for clarification, and the dependence on surveys/instruments based on U.S. values, this study used a two-part methodology composed of surveys and interviews to address the following research questions:

- R1: Are there differences in what one is willing to do in communication behaviors (disclosure, companionship, emotional support, conflict and instrumental support) for close friends and romantic partners within countries?
- R2: Are there differences in what one is willing to do in communication behaviors (disclosure, companionship, emotional support, conflict and instrumental support) for close friends and romantic partners between U.S. and Russian students?
- R3: How important are these types of behaviors for the U.S. and Russia students for close friends and romantic partners? Are there variations, and if so, what are they?
- R4 - Are there behaviors/qualities not covered in previous research that are culturally important and if so, what are they?

Part One

For the study there were 66 Russian and 79 U.S. students who completed a survey on communication behaviors that they were willing to do for close friends and romantic partners. The Russian students were from several universities in Russia. The U.S. participants were from two private mid-western universities and enrolled in communication classes. All surveys were in English. The Russian professors were confident their students could read and understand the questions.

The survey was adapted from Fehr's (2004) and Mendleson and Aboud's (1999) survey on communication behaviors. The categories included: disclosure (willingness to listen to work and personal problems, to tell the person if they disagreed with them, to keep secrets, to stop what they were doing and listen if needed); companionship (willingness to spend time with person if they said they were lonely, invite the person to dinner at their house, to a movie, play or concert, to talk with this person daily) ; emotional support (willingness to defend them if someone criticized them, to tell them they cared about or loved them, to compliment them if they did something well, to forgive if they did something wrong); conflict (willingness to tell them if they made you angry, listen to their anger with you, and to work on resolving the conflict); and instrumental support (willingness to give advice, money, to provide a place to stay, clothes, possessions, food). Participants were asked to respond on a scale of 1-7 with 7 being the highest. All questions are included in the appendix. T-tests were run between and within countries.

Part Two

Following the survey, the researchers conducted interviews with ten Russian students in Volgograd, Russia and ten U.S. students in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Cleveland, Ohio. These interviewees did not take the survey in part one. Interviews were based upon a modification of the Retrospective Interview Technique (RIT) that has been used to examine romantic relationships (Baxter & Bullis, 1986). All interviews were conducted in person, in English, and were approximately 20 minutes in length. All Russian respondents were fluent in English and made available by Russian professors. This purposive sample facilitated the exploration of specific social practices and the meanings of these

practices in a cultural context. As the study explored specific social phenomenon for unique qualities uncovered in the interview, a normal distribution of a sample population is not an issue (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

The interviews began with open ended questions about the most important qualities of a close friend to gauge if there were any specific cultural qualities. Participants were allowed to list as many qualities as they chose. The next set of questions were the same questions from the survey about their expectation of specific communication behaviors using the same 1-7 scale with 7 being the highest. Additionally, after asking the specific behavior questions of the interviewees on a category, participants were asked about the importance of these types of communication behaviors for both close friends and romantic partners using a 1-7 scale with 7 being the most important. This had not been asked in the survey. Interviewers noted the respondents' nonverbal and verbal hesitations, reactions, and questions during the interviews that would indicate problems in understanding.

Results

Communication behaviors between close friends and romantic partners within each country

In the survey there were significant differences for both U.S. and Russian students between close friends and romantic partners in all of the general areas (see Table 1). The individual questions in each area identified additional differences (see Table 2). Under disclosure, both Russians and U.S. students were more willing to stop what they were doing to listen to a romantic partner than a close friend. U.S. students were more willing for romantic partners to keep secrets and tell them if they disagreed with them than for close friends, but Russian students saw no difference between close friends and romantic partners in these behaviors. Both Russian and U.S. perceived no difference in listening to work or personal problems between close friends and romantic partners. In companionship, both Russian and U.S. students were more willing to spend time, invite person to dinner at their home, movie, play or talk daily with romantic partners than close friends. In emotional support both Russians and U.S. were more willing to tell romantic partner that they cared or loved them and defend them if they were criticized by

others than a close friend. Russians were more willing to forgive romantic partners than close friends while U.S. students perceived no difference. However, U.S. students were more willing to compliment romantic partners than close friends while Russians perceived no difference. In conflict behaviors both Russians and U.S. students were more willing to listen to a romantic partner if they told them they were angry with them and work to resolve the issue than a close friend. U. S. students were more willing to tell a romantic partner if they made them angry, but Russians perceived no difference between close friends and romantic partners. In instrumental support both U.S. and Russians saw no differences between close friends and romantic partners in offering advice about work or personal problems. Both were also more willing to do favors, give money, offer clothes, possessions and food to romantic partners than close friend. U.S. students did not perceive a significant difference in providing a place to stay between close friends and romantic partners, but Russians did.

The interviews supported the within country survey results in all areas for U.S. students between close friends and romantic partners and in all areas but conflict and disclosure for the Russian students. For conflict behaviors in the survey on the question if this person told me they were angry with me I would listen, indicated more willingness to listen for romantic partners than close friends. In the interviews, Russians expressed more willingness to listen for a close friend than a romantic partner. Additionally, when asked if their partner/friend told them they were angry with them, 22% of Russians responded that they might be angry with close friends, and 55% felt they might be angry with a romantic partner for this behavior. On another conflict behavior telling your close friend or romantic partner if you were angry with them, on the survey Russians perceived no difference between close friends and romantic partners. However, in the interviews 45% of Russians students said they would tell their close friend, but only 15% would tell their romantic partner. In the area of disclosure Russians identified no difference in keeping secrets for close friends or romantic partners, but in the interviews only 40% of Russians would keep a secret for close friends, but 100% would for a romantic partner.

Comparing treatment of close friends and romantic partners between the countries

In the survey there were only three behaviors that were significant in the area of close friends. In companionship, U.S. students would invite close friends for dinner at their home ($p= 0.03011$) and talk with them daily ($p= 0.03957$) more than Russians. In instrumental behavior, Russians would give money ($p= 0.01187$) to a close friend more than U.S. students would. There were no significant differences in behaviors or categories for romantic partners.

The interview results supported the survey findings between cultures for both Russian and U.S. students in all areas.

Importance of behaviors

The importance of these general types of communication behaviors was not asked in the survey and only in the interviews. For U.S. students, the means for the importance of communication behaviors between close friends and romantic partners were very close while more variations were present for the Russians (see Table 3).

Close friends

Comparing the importance of communication behaviors between U.S. and Russian students for close friendships, U.S. students rated all categories of communication behavior higher than Russians students and the variation among the means of the behaviors was smaller. The behaviors listed in terms of importance for U.S. students were: emotional support, conflict, disclosure, companionship/activities, and instrumental support. In order of importance for Russian students, the communication behaviors were: conflict, companionship/activities, emotional support, disclosure, and instrumental support.

Romantic relationships

Comparing the importance of these communication behaviors between U.S. students and Russian students in romantic relationships, the U.S. students gave higher ratings to all categories in romantic relationships than Russian students except disclosure where identical

means were present (see table 3). Although the scores of the U.S. and Russian students were more similar for romantic partners than close friends, there were differences in behaviors. In order of importance for U.S. students, the behaviors were: companionship/activities, disclosure, conflict and emotional support, and instrumental support. The importance of these communication behaviors for Russian students was disclosure, companionship/ activities, emotional support, conflict and instrumental support.

The issue of importance was only addressed in the interview. Based on the results, there were none. The most frequent responses for both U.S. and Russians in qualities were covered in previous surveys. For close friends, the top qualities for U.S. students listed in frequency were: understanding and acceptance (10), trust/honesty (6) Monitor behavior (4) humor/fun (3), similar interests (3) respect (2) and reciprocal (2). For Russians qualities listed in frequency were: supportive (9), loyal/trust (5), wants best for you (5), listen/give advice (4), fun (2), and live together (2). With the exception of humor/fun (U.S. 3 and Russians 2), similar interests (U.S. 3 and Russians 2), respect (U.S. 2), and living together (Russian 2) all of these were behaviors in the survey.

Discussion

The use of the qualitative interviews and open-ended questions provided support that the communication behaviors tested by the earlier surveys (Schmidt, Uecker & Lau, 2012 & 2014; Schmidt & Uecker, 2015) although based primarily on U.S. values were perceived as the important behaviors/qualities for close friends and romantic partners by Russians as well as U.S. students. Respect was mentioned by U.S. students for both close friends and romantic partners, and was not included in this study, this finding does support previous studies which found significant respect/trust was a significant factor for U.S. participants, but not for Russians. (Schmidt & Uecker, 2014).

The only new categories identified were fun/humor, similar interests/reciprocal, respect and living together. Fun/humor, similar interests/reciprocal, and living together were reported with a lower frequency of occurrence by both U.S. and Russian students. Fun/humor was seen more in the Russian responses across all categories than in the U.S. student's responses (only for close friend). As a quality, similar interests were identified equally in both Russian and U.S. responses.

Since these behaviors appeared for both groups, they might be less a cultural factor and perhaps more a generational millennial factor. While living together was not specifically asked, questions on frequency of interaction were and Russians listed living together as a quality for close friends, while U.S. students did not. This could be an important factor for Russians in identifying who is a close friend and a possible explanation for why Russians list having fewer close friends than U.S. students (Sheets & Lugar, 2005). One suggestion for future studies would be the inclusion of communication behaviors such as makes me laugh and have fun as well as specific behaviors connected with respect and whether one lives with friend/romantic partner to understand these factors more.

The study also provided information about similarities/differences in the perceived importance of particular behaviors. Overall, from the interviews U.S. students felt all communication behaviors were more important in close friendships than did the Russians. This supports previous findings of U.S. students' higher expectations of close friends than Russians (Schmidt & Uecker, 2015). The closeness of the averages for the importance of behaviors in close and romantic relationships for U.S. students supports previous findings on romantic relationships which found there is a strong emphasis on friendship in love relationships of U.S. respondents (Sprecher et al., 1994), but not for Russians (DeMunck et al., 2011). However, in the survey U.S. students perceived more differences between close friends and romantic partners in their willingness to do certain behaviors. Because willingness not importance was addressed in the survey, more research on the importance of these behaviors needs to be done.

There were more similarities than differences between Russian and U.S. students for both close friends and romantic relationships. Similarly, Russian and U.S. students were more similar in describing the differences between close friends and romantic partners. They agreed on 17 of the 23 behaviors and expressed more willingness to do activities for romantic partners than close friends. If one looks at the discrepancies found by the interviews, they actually agreed on 20 of the 23 behaviors. This suggests that Russian and the U.S. share similar views on behaviors for close friends and romantic partners. This also suggests that Russia may be becoming more individualistic as Naumov & Puffer (2000) had identified or that the distinction between individualistic and collectivistic cultures on communication behaviors is changing.

Overall, the study provides a framework for friendship and romantic relationships using actual behaviors. The study supports the findings of Sheets and Lugar (2005) that Russians are more sensitive to betrayal by friends and are more willing to forgive a romantic partner if they did something wrong than a close friend, while U.S. students perceived no difference. Additionally, conflict was listed first in terms of importance for Russians on close friends. The discrepancies between the survey and interviews especially in the conflict area between willingness to listen to their romantic partner, share anger with them or to tell their romantic partner if they are angry, suggest that more studies should be done in the area of conflict and expressing feelings. Future studies could explore these areas to identify conversation rules for close friends and romantic partners (Scollo & Carbaugh, 2013).

Although there were few differences between the survey and the interviews, the differences found were for Russians. Additionally, both U.S. and Russian students expanded on their answers in the interviews and provided more background. This suggests that researchers might want to use more interview approaches, focus groups, or backchannel translations of the survey/ interview with the non-U.S. population prior to distributing the survey to assure understanding.

Limitations of current study

Several limitations are identified for this study. The sample size, especially for the interviews is small. The participants for the interviews in Russia were individuals conveniently provided by professors, who agreed to be interviewed and were fluent in conversational English. Also, the study did not account for gender. Particularly for Russia the majority of the subjects/participants were female. No doubt with a more even distribution of males and females across both the Russian and U.S. samples the results could be different.

This study provided support that U.S. and Russian students see similar communication behaviors as important in relationships, but vary in the degree and order of importance for the behavior. By providing responses to specific behaviors clarification of the meanings of words such as disclosure, emotional support were operationalized. Results demonstrate that more studies using specific communication behaviors need to be conducted to develop a stronger understanding of expected behaviors and to increase effective communication between cultures. The

more that we can understand the function or structure of friendships and romantic relationships we can continue to advance international understanding and goodwill.

Table 1: Difference in close friend/romantic partner communication behaviors (survey)

Communication Behaviors	Russia			USA		
	Close	Romance	pValue	Close	Romance	pValue
Disclosure	6.05	6.46	0.00574	6.03	6.42	0.00003
Instrumental Support	5.82	6.42	0.00142	5.91	6.43	0.00036
Companionship/Activities	5.65	6.40	0.00002	6.20	6.69	0.00067
Conflict	5.73	6.20	0.01322	5.64	6.27	0.00003
Emotional Support	5.59	6.46	0.00042	6.15	6.49	0.00002

Table 2: Individual Question Responses

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming Unequal Variances	RUSSIA CLOSE	RUSSIA ROMANTIC	pValue	USA CLOSE	USA ROMANTIC	pValue
Disclosure						
Q1: If this person wanted to talk to you about work problems I would listen.	6.47	6.70	0.16270	6.47	6.57	0.471064
Q2: If this person wanted to talk about personal problems I would listen.	6.74	6.82	0.51743	6.72	6.71	0.915878
Q3: If this person told me secrets, I would not tell others.	5.95	6.20	0.24804	5.90	6.46	0.001476*
Q4: I would tell this person if I disagreed with them.	5.59	5.97	0.20138	5.34	6.13	0.000020*
Q5: Whenever this person wants to tell me about a problem, I stop what I am doing and listen for as long...	5.39	6.30	0.00001*	5.66	6.44	0.000001*
Companionship						
Q6: If this person told me they were lonely; I would spend time with them.	5.77	6.62	0.00000*	6.03	6.61	0.000125*
Q7: I would invite this person to dinner at my house.	5.80	6.58	0.00086*	6.30	6.66	0.031684*
Q8: I would invite this person to go to a movie, play, or concert.	6.02	6.45	0.00085*	6.30	6.66	0.016519*
Q9: I would talk to this person daily.	5.35	6.24	0.00001*	5.84	6.54	0.000008*

Emotional Support

Q10: If this person told me that they did something wrong, I would support and forgive them.	5.92	6.30	0.03302*	5.91	6.15	0.284511
Q11: I would complement this person if they did something well.	6.48	6.38	0.17344	6.30	6.56	0.034120*
Q12: I would tell this person that I cared about them.	5.80	6.55	0.00028*	5.85	6.71	0.000002*
Q13: I would tell this person that I loved them.	5.36	6.39	0.00002*	5.28	6.47	0.000003*
Q14: I would defend this person to others if they were criticizing them.	5.95	6.41	0.01534*	6.13	6.38	0.023219*

Conflict

Q15: If this person made me angry, I would tell them.	5.21	5.68	0.10791	5.18	5.86	0.000016*
Q16: If this person told me they were angry with me; I would listen to them.	5.83	6.39	0.02537*	5.89	6.32	0.017131*
Q17: If I had a disagreement with this person, I would talk to them about how to resolve it.	6.00	6.42	0.01955*	5.78	6.47	0.000017*

Instrumental

Q18: I would give this person advice about work problems.	5.73	6.00	0.42367	5.76	6.01	0.557041
Q19: I would give this person advice about personal problems.	6.02	6.41	0.27936	6.22	6.34	0.161079
Q20: I would be willing to do favors at any time for this person.	5.77	6.44	0.00003*	5.82	6.58	0.000000*

Q21: If this person needed money, I would give it to them.	5.77	6.27	0.00623*	5.11	6.01	0.000009*
Q22: If this person needed a place to stay, I would provide it.	5.97	6.53	0.00491*	6.10	6.56	0.106075
Q23: I would offer this person the use of my clothes, possessions, food.	5.94	6.52	0.00391*	5.97	6.53	0.002388*

Note: * represents significant pValue

Table 3: Importance of behaviors for close friend/romantic partner communication (interview)

Communication Behaviors	Russia		USA	
	Close	Romance	Close	Romance
Disclosure	5.46	6.70	6.51	(6.7)
Instrumental Support	4.48	5.81	6.16	6.58
Companionship/Activities	5.60	6.58	6.23	7.00
Conflict	6.37	5.88	6.58	6.72
Emotional Support	5.46	6.23	6.72	6.72

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Connecting with and Impacting Students: Understanding and Integrating Immediacy Behaviors in Communication and Performance Learning Environments

Scott Jensen

Abstract

Immediacy behaviors have received a great deal of attention in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Literature suggests a number of benefits materialize when students perceive teachers as more “approachable” or “less distant,” including students being more engaged in the classroom, less anxious about course activities, and more motivated to learn. Communication and performance learning/teaching is uniquely suited for immediacy, given the focus on expression and student voice, co-curricular experiences, and the nature of immediacy behavior being part of the curriculum in these disciplines. This paper is an introduction to the concept of immediacy in teaching, with special attention paid to communication and performance contexts. Additionally, the paper provides strategies and a discussion of implications for both educators and students.

I teach at a university where all my classes are small – never larger than 24 students. All my students call me by my first name, know details about all four of my children, my wife, and my pets, and happily harass me on a nearly daily basis about my love for the Chicago Cubs. My comfort with self-disclosure is one of the ways I try to build immediacy between my students and me. There is an inherent power difference between a teacher and a student. The less familiar a student is with an instructor, the more likely that difference is a factor in the level of student comfort in the course. As students become more comfortable in a class, they are more likely to engage with the course content. A critical piece of that increased comfort is the student/instructor relationship. As students feel immediacy with an instructor, their motivation to engage, and willingness to do so, both increase. This paper looks at the role of immediacy in learning and teaching spaces, with a focus on how communication and performance spaces are uniquely

suited for instructors and students to engage more deeply with one another.

What Do We Mean by Immediacy?

The best teachers want to connect with their students. *Immediacy* is the way teachers establish that connection in ways that bridge distance between themselves and their students. Much of what we understand about immediacy is grounded in the research of Mehrabian (1981), who frames the concept as a behavior that promotes closeness between individuals. The crux of his research on immediacy references nonverbal communication. Allen, Witt, and Wheelless (2006) note that Mehrabian does apply verbal behaviors to his theory. They also speak to the general impact of immediacy when they write:

Immediacy behaviors that a teacher displays in communicative acts and interactions with students, therefore, can be seen as rewarding. It follows that these rewarding behaviors may serve as reinforcement for the attentive behavior, feedback, and interaction from the student that increase affective, cognitive, and behavioral learning.

Increasing the willingness of students to approach and engage in educational tasks is critical to the learning process (22).

Inherently, immediacy seeks to engage students. When it works, students become motivated and their potential for learning increases.

Immediacy, for the purposes of this discussion, is *communication, both verbal and nonverbal, that is displayed and managed by educators/mentors/coaches to bridge distances, ranging from emotional to spatial, in order to enhance the teaching/learning experience shared by all individuals involved*. So immediacy is (1) communication that is the (2) intentional choice of those who work with students, (3) designed to bring them closer to their students, creating closer proximity (4) at a variety of levels such as emotions, age, and space with the (5) desired outcome of an enhanced teaching/learning experience.

Making the Case for Immediacy

Given its intent to bring teachers and students closer, and its potential for enhancing the teaching/learning experience, one might think

engaging in immediacy behaviors is something teachers would automatically embrace. The reality is that connection with students is likely a goal of most teachers, but the desire – or ability – to do so with immediacy behaviors is not as easily assumed. There are a number of reasons to incorporate immediacy into one’s teaching.

Immediacy is Good Teaching

Motivating students to learn, while helping them hone the skills that make them better students is always a worthwhile outcome from teaching. Research on immediacy overwhelmingly points to the meaningful ways it enhances classroom teaching. Pogue and AhYun (2006) found that effective teaching combines teacher credibility and the personal communication between teacher and student that enhances that credibility. Bolkan and Griffin (2018) conclude that nonverbal immediacy, combined with dynamic teaching combine to not only catch students’ interest, but also translate that interest into a motivation to learn.

Immediacy Empowers Students

Every student brings their own strengths, limitations, and potential to their learning experiences. While a variety of factors contribute to what becomes of these pre-conditions, a great deal of research points to immediacy behaviors as important contributors to students overcoming challenges and excelling. Titsworth, Quinlan, and Mazer (2010) write that “the clarity with which teachers present information, their immediacy behaviors, and how they listen and react to students are intuitive, though not exhaustive ways, through which teachers potentially influence students’ emotions” (p. 445). Chesebro (2003), in an earlier study, concluded that students taught by teachers who communicate immediacy and teach in clear ways feel stronger, more positive emotional connections to the teacher and the class content. These finding are confirmed by later research that suggests a relationship between a lack of teacher immediacy and heightened students’ negative emotional connections with the teacher and course, such as anger, boredom, anxiety, and hopelessness.

Immediacy Motivates and Manages Students and Teaching Spaces

Extending the premise that immediacy behaviors improve teaching, this approach to teaching also helps to effectively motivate and manage. Students who are receptive to immediacy behaviors are motivated to learn when that kind of communication is part of the classroom environment. At the same time, such a classroom culture is effectively managed when students are engaged in the learning process. Burroughs (2007), for example, found that students were more likely to comply with immediate teachers because of both an elevated desire to learn, and stronger feelings of being appreciated. She concluded that “teacher immediacy has a very powerful impact in the classroom” (p. 469). Engaged students respect the learning process and the environment in which that learning takes place. Allen, Witt, and Wheelless (2006) conclude that teacher immediacy increases motivation of a student to learn, and that drive to learn translates into higher cognition in that teaching space.

Immediacy and the Uniqueness of Speech and Theatre Teaching Spaces

There is not a volume of research that suggests one discipline’s teaching spaces are more or less conducive to employing immediacy behaviors. That being said, arguments can be made for the unique relationship speech and theatre teaching spaces have to immediacy. The need for students to reveal themselves in these teaching spaces corresponds with a need for professionals who teach and guide in these same situations to shape a space in which this can be comfortable and meaningful for the students.

Speech and Theatre Teaching Calls for Student Transparency that Immediacy Facilitates

Many speech and theatre courses incorporate performance that calls for students to express part of their identities. Speeches given in classrooms are student-authored reflections of their values, interests, and ideologies. Choices made in how to portray a character or idea in stage performance are often windows into the worlds of our student performers. Beyond these traditional classrooms, speech and theatre

education encompasses co-curricular experiences that bring students and teachers/coaches/directors together as teams...team that often evolve into groups that characterize families. The relationships and necessity of engagement almost necessitates immediacy.

Speech and Theatre Teaching Spaces are Collaborative

Groups always work better together when there is an interdependence among the members. The more we feel connected and comfortable with our group peers, the more likely we are to trust and value them. If immediacy is effective at facilitating management of teaching spaces, and if it helps students to feel more comfortable with their place in the classroom, then it stands to reason that immediacy can enhance the collaboration that is essential in many speech and theatre classrooms and teaching spaces. This is particularly true with co-curricular activities such as forensics and stage productions. The personal connection students often feel with speech and theatre learning spaces makes the “companion metaphor” discussed by Sibii (2010) particularly applicable. Sibii suggest this model is similar to a parental model, and works when “the companion-teacher does everything in his or her power to forge a person-to-person connection that recognizes, accounts for, and celebrates the complexity of human motivation and behavior” (p. 536).

Actuating Immediacy – Modest Suggestions

There are countless ways educators can integrate immediacy into their teaching. While Mehrabian and others largely posit immediacy to be nonverbal choices, this discussion extends the concept to verbal choices. “Communication...that bridges distances,” as I have defined it herein, highlights the ultimate objective of immediacy, which is for the educator to reveal him/herself in ways that entice students to connect to facets of the teaching experience. An educator’s immediacy choices can make both him/her and the space itself more comfortable for students. They should also be choices appropriate to the context, and congruent with the comfort level of the educator. Bolkan and Goodboy (2010) suggest that whatever specific choices are made to promote learning, teachers behave in “transformational fashion when they personalize the content of their courses and made their lessons relevant to students’ realms of experience” (p. 15). In short – teachers succeed when their

choices limit distance between themselves, their course content, and their students.

Self-Disclosure

I teach my students that self-disclosure is developmental and reciprocal, meaning that we generally self-disclose non-intimate, non-threatening parts of ourselves in expectation that others will reciprocate. This dynamic becomes an exchange that grows in both breadth and intimacy. It is, in fact, this self-disclosure that is largely responsible for shaping a resulting relationship. That speech and theatre teaching spaces necessitate students revealing themselves to others makes self-disclosure an ideal immediacy behavior. As a member of that space, and particularly as the person who evaluates performance and manages the context, students are likely to feel more comfortable when relationships are formed with disclosures from the educator. Some research also suggests that the nature of self-disclosure can impact student civility and motivation, particularly noting that negative disclosure about the teacher's personal failure or weaknesses can diminish perceived credibility. That same research identifies nonverbal immediacy as critical to enhancing credibility (Miller et al, 2014). While teacher disclosure can help connect them with their students, caution should be given to not disclosing excessively, or at levels of intimacy that students may find uncomfortable. Interestingly, while Sidelinger et al (2015) write that "instructors need to be aware of effective boundary management in the classroom" (p. 582), they also report that when students react negatively to teacher disclosure, "nonverbal immediacy offers the potential to temper students' negative perceptions" (p. 582). Clearly the educator should be comfortable and appropriate with his/her disclosure.

Social Media and Modes of Communication

This is possibly the most sensitive of suggestions for being immediate. Our students are digital natives—they are often most comfortable communicating in social media networks. While the values and implications of a reliance of social media and electronic modes of communication can be debated, there is little argument against the reality that students prefer and often thrive when communicating in these channels. Educators can be more immediate to their students when they

connect through these digital forms. Legg and Wilson (2009) found that even welcoming emails prior to or at the onset of a course enhances motivation to engage with the instructor and course. The paramount consideration for educators, like with self-disclosure, is appropriateness and comfort. Some educators may have regulations that outline protocol for social media and digital communication with students. Certainly, all educators have levels of comfort regarding how digitally and socially connected they are with students. These are paramount considerations that should inform immediacy choices. Educators can consider reciprocal “friending” or “following” relationships with students on social media networks. Classrooms and co-curricular groups can use GroupMe or other applications to facilitate communication within the group. Any connection that utilizes the communication comfortable for our student has the potential of facilitating immediacy. When an educator chooses to be immediate through social media or digital channels, it may be a good idea to devote some teaching time to literacy and management of that communication; this can help reinforce limits and practices that will make the communication more comfortable for everyone, including the educator.

Personal Narratives

Stories are powerful. We understand one another and our world through the narratives that frame experiences and ideas. As an extension of self-disclosure, telling our own stories as people – not teachers or coaches or directors – helps our students know us on personal levels. Further, stories make it easier to identify with people and situations. The characters, actions, and lessons that shape our narratives are more immediate to students than the lesson plans for a class session. While course content, or the programming in a co-curricular program are essential, those outcomes are more easily achieved with motivated students. In any relationship, sharing stories makes individuals more personable, and by effect, more approachable. Narratives are also enduring, allowing them to become the fodder with which cultures are shaped and legacies created. As one example, our university’s forensic program includes stories of alumni who have been part of memorable moments. It has become a thread throughout our team’s past and present members to strive to become “a story” for the next generation of team

members. Consequently, our alumni network is one of our team's greatest assets.

Demonstrating Performance and Assisting with Tasks

Collaboration is an effective way of bringing groups together, embracing common goals and investing themselves as an interdependent group. Educators can contribute to this collaboration by “working” alongside their students. For some, this might mean demonstrating characterization in a play rehearsal, or being part of a practice debate round. For others this might mean hammering nails into a set or cleaning up after a hosted forensic tournament. The more classroom management or co-curricular group activities include the educator working alongside students, the more students see that educator investing him/herself in the experience.

Charismatic Teaching

Every teacher brings a personality to their teaching space that is largely out of their control. We can work to become more open, better speakers, more organized, or more skilled with navigating our way through the dynamic world of digital communication. In the end, we own communication states and traits that are reinforced over several years, making them impervious to significant changes. That being said, personifying the lessons we teach to our speaking and acting students is an essential immediacy choice. Bolkan and Goodboy (2014), based on their research, were able to “empirically verify that nonverbal immediacy, humor, caring, and confirmation may appropriately reflect charismatic leadership in the classroom” (p. 141). Bolkan, Goodboy, and Myers (2017) write that “students exposed to nonverbally immediate instructors may find it easier to focus their cognitive resources on the learning task compared with instructors who deliver their course material in a less dynamic manner” (p. 132). Those whose scholarship created our understanding of immediacy originally shaped it around nonverbal communication. Charismatic teaching employs important nonverbal cues that bring ideas to life, in the same way they make a speech oratory, or a recitation of lines a compelling performance.

Signaling Territoriality and Personality

The impact revealing oneself can have on immediacy has already been established. While we may think of self-disclosure as the way to reveal oneself, there are other choices that also impact immediacy. Teachers should think about how they arrange and adorn their rooms and offices. Spaces that communicate dynamism, stories, or the personalities of their inhabitants are easily seen as spaces that seek to welcome and engage their visitors. Students may well feel more comfortable and connected to the teacher and the spaces when these spaces are dynamic.

Engaged Nonverbal Behaviors

In keeping with the origins of this theory, teachers can communicate their genuine interest in students with spontaneous nonverbal cues. Direct eye contact, responsive and active listening, and expressiveness that directly responds to what students are communicating and feeling are excellent ways to express immediacy. Weger (2018) found that teachers are able to curb discourteous and disruptive behavior when they exhibit empathic behaviors, such as active listening. The more expressive a listener is, the more a communicator will want to interact with that listener. The more engaged a listener is, the more a communicator will want to connect in order to receive continued reinforcement of their expressions. Kerksen-Grief and Witt (2015) discovered that immediacy behaviors often help students frame their relationships with teachers as mentoring, rather than a more distant relationship defined by power differential and detachment. This is the reality in communication, and is equally true with teacher/student relationships.

Final Thoughts

It stands to reason that we are more engaged with people and ideas when we feel a connection. Teaching and learning situations are no different – students are more likely to want to learn when they feel a connection. Teacher immediacy is an effective way to motivate students to want to learn because they want to be part of that learning environment. Teacher immediacy is an ideal way to engage students and enhance teaching and learning. In particular, speech and theatre learning

spaces are ideally suited for immediacy. No other subjects demand the self-expression from students than do these two disciplines. Few other disciplines allow for the student-teacher immediacy than do speech and theatre. Educators in these fields are more in line with the nature of what they teach when they actively seek to limit distance between themselves and their students.

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Our Cultural Obsession with Fake News and Incivility in America

Heather Walters and Kristen Stout

Abstract

The rise of fake news has been the focus of journalists and academics alike in the last few years. However, that focus has often been on the rise of false information itself and not the cultural phenomenon of calling unflattering information, true or not, fake news. This paper will analyze fake news as a broader term. It will not only analyze the rise of fake news as a source of disinformation but also as a growing cultural phenomenon used for denying the legitimacy of quality and verified news sources. This paper will also analyze the consequences of the growing fake news phenomenon and its negative impact on civil engagement and society as whole. Inquiry, dissent, idea testing, trust in public institutions, and a commitment to civil discourse are all necessary for the continued success of our democratic form of government. Fake news flies in the face of those democratic norms.

Introduction

In 2016, the Oxford Dictionaries chose “post-truth” as its word of the year. Oxford defined post-truth as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief” (Tsipurksy, 2017, para. 2). One reason “post-truth” was selected as the word of the year was that Oxford noticed the use of the term had increased over 2000% during the year – (largely because of the nature of the presidential election that featured Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton) (Steinmetz, 2016, para. 3). The 2016 election cycle also saw a corresponding rise in fake news stories. Not only were more fake news stories created, but technology had increased the number of potential interactions the public had with these stories. This combination highlighted the distrust the public might have about the kinds of stories that are distributed by “the establishment” – which could include politicians, mainstream media, corporations, etc. As Anthony Gooch, Director of Public Affairs and Communications at the OECD stated “we now face the uncomfortable

reality that truth, fact, statistics, and “expert” views are losing currency in decision-making...being replaced by assertions that “feel right”...on the grounds that they challenge the elite and vested interests” (2017, para. 6). This distrust in truth and traditional media have changed the way arguments happen, the way that arguments are disseminated, and the way that arguments are received by the public.

This paper will do three things. First, it will address the rise and popularization of fake news as both a phenomenon and concept. Second, it will analyze fake news as a cultural sensation. Finally, this paper will delve into the consequences of fake news for civil political discourse in the United States.

The Rise of Fake News

What is fake news, and how has our cultural obsession with it become a problem? If discourse by certain public figures is to be believed, fake news is any news or content that someone does not agree with or does not like. The terminology is often used to discredit a source of information by claiming its facts or conclusions are false. Certainly though, not all unflattering information or disagreeable claims can be labeled as fake news. Fake news, also known as disinformation, is defined as one or more “malicious stories created with no intent for the search of truth.” (Chiara, 2017, para 7). Fake news is an intentional, malicious choice to spread a lie about an individual, group, or idea. For example, a report released in the American Journal of Public Health found that twitter bots were programmed to share “unverifiable and erroneous information about vaccines” in the lead up to the 2016 election in order to sew discord amongst Americans about healthcare and the safety of vaccines (Broniatowski et al, 2018, para 1). This information was knowingly false, yet was shared to create tensions and confusion among American voters. Fake news is distinct from misinformation, which is information that is unintentionally false or false information that is shared by someone who thinks it is true. This distinction is important. While all untrue information is a detriment to effective argumentation, fake news is intentional in its goal of spreading false information. Despite its connotation as a way to categorize all things that someone disagrees with, none of the following things would qualify as fake news: true stories that reveal something unflattering, deciding not to cover an issue and choosing to cover something else instead, minor, retracted

errors in reporting, or information critical of a particular person or idea. It is becoming more common for people to simply dismiss information they do not like or does not match with their worldview by calling it fake news. This not only implicates critical thinking skills, but also is a dangerous step away from the belief in objective facts.

While fake or misleading news stories have existed for decades the rise of fake news as a phenomenon is fairly recent. The 2016 election showed one of the first widespread and documented spikes in false news stories spread primarily through Facebook (Subedar, 2019, para. 18). These stories were going viral within minutes or hours, and were spreading much more quickly than real news stories. Most notably, these stories were focused primarily on presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton and were generated outside the United States by foreign entities (Subedar, 2019, para. 21). This prompted responses from Democrats, including Hillary Clinton, which might help explain the partisan nature of the discussion on fake news. This paired with its consistent usage by Donald Trump exacerbates that effect.

Many scholars credit the turning point in the societal discussion of fake news on a press conference featuring Donald Trump. Jim Accosta, reporter for CNN, was denied a question by Trump who exclaimed “I’m not going to give you a question. You are fake news” (Subedar, 2019, para. 22). This is the first time a president-elect had chosen to deny questions to a mainstream media source based on the accusation of fake news. More importantly, the denial was not based on a claim that a particular story or comment was false, but instead that the reporter himself was an embodiment of fake news. This accusation led the way for the denial of entire organizations or bodies of work by reporters as fake news without specific, credible information against them. Fake news as a means of wholesale denial of information was now mainstream.

Fake News as a Cultural Obsession

It is important to move beyond simply defining fake news and move toward how it came to be such a cultural phenomenon.

A recent Pew study found both that Americans rate fake news a larger problem than climate change, racism or terrorism and that the emphasis that our society is placing on fake news “might actually run the risk of making people, especially conservatives, less well informed”

(Graham, 2019, para.2). In fact, the study concluded that “more than making people believe false things, the rise of fake news is making it harder for people to see the truth” (Graham, 2019, para. 3). The study also reported that the risks of “made up news and information” has led seventy percent of Republicans and fifty-nine percent of Democrats to stop getting news from a specific outlet and that fifty percent of Republicans and thirty eight percent of Democrats have been motivated to get less news overall (Graham, 2019).

Fake news has become a loaded term that does far more than identify false information; it has now become a rallying cry for people who hope to dismiss information that contradicts their prescribed world view. Mike Wendling, in a BBC article from 2018 explains it best when he says, “in record time, the phrase [fake news] morphed from a description of a social media phenomenon into a journalistic cliché and an angry political slur” (para. 1). Our cultural obsession is not with finding the truth, but instead with dismissing any negative potential information under the guise that it must be “fake news”.

Of course, this is not just a problem in the United States. Tony Hall, the director-general of the BBC recently said “the fake news tag has given street cred to mass disbelief. That doesn’t just threaten journalism everywhere. It threatens people everywhere” (Handley, 2018, para. 4). He also called the term fake news “the weapon of choice for repressive regimes everywhere” (Handley, 2018, para. 2).

The label “fake news” should not be applied in instances where professional journalists are delivering accurate information. Mainstream press institutions like CNN, the New York Times, and The Wall Street Journal do not publish “fake news”. The journalists at these institutions follow a code of ethics. This does not mean that journalists who work for these organizations do not ever publish inaccurate information or information that you might disagree with, but they do attempt to verify information and they will publish corrections consistent with journalism’s code of ethics if they publish false information. Information that the public disagrees with is not always fake news. The source and factual nature of the information still matters. Clearly, there is a difference between biased journalism and “fake-news” and the public/audience is called upon to understand the differences between them in order to make the best decisions on which information to use in order to make the best decisions.

Ultimately, there are two main concerns with the growing phenomenon of fake news. The first is the malicious spreading of disinformation by people or groups. This disinformation undermines effective decision-making and makes solving problems impossible. This also makes arguments unresolvable because there is no stable agreement on the facts of a situation. Second, allowing people to disregard true and pertinent information under the guise that it is just “fake news” is irresponsible. The goal of any argument should include seeking truthful and honest solutions to problems. That is impossible if there is information that is not accounted for or purposely dismissed by the other side. The implications for civil discourse are vast and will be discussed in detail below.

Implications for Civil Discourse

A serious implication of the notion that public should respond to fake news by picking and choosing their own news outlets which they deem “safe” or to cut themselves off from information as a whole is that the public “will become more and more siloed” (Graham, 2019, para. 7).

The previously discussed Pew study also suggested that “fake news panic, rather than driving people to abandon ideological outlets and the fringe, may actually be accelerating the process of polarization: Its driving consumers to drop some outlets, to simply consume less information overall, and even to cut out social relationships” (Graham, 2019, para. 9).

Indeed, as a result, polarization is at an all-time high. There is a large gap between liberals and conservatives (or in the United States – Democrats and Republicans). While this gap is partially explained by policy differences, mounting incivility (perceived and actual) has pushed the sides even farther apart.

Many commentators have argued that civil discourse is on “life support” in America (Petrille, 2017, para 1). Multiple studies substantiate the views of these commentators. Weber Shandwick’s annual “Civility in America” survey in 2018 found that “93% of Americans believe that the U.S. has a civility problem” and “more than 8 in 10 Americans have at one time or another experienced incivility” (Patterson, 2018, para. 3). A large percentage of Americans have said they quit paying attention to politics because of incivility (Plazas, 2017, para. 2). An iCitizen poll went on to show that “90 percent of respondents said there was a great

decline in civility and high numbers attributed that primarily to Congress, the news media and President Donald Trump” (Plazas, 2017, para. 10).

All of these factors put together have created a situation where more and more people are becoming overly emotionally invested in their opinions, and more prone to extremist or violent action. One reason for the manifestation of such violence is the lack of ability to engage in a rational, civil way with people who might hold opposing viewpoints to your own.

The study of argumentation and development of refined critical thinking skills is a way we have to fight back against the rising tide of incivility in our culture. One important function is to teach ways to respectfully disagree and challenge others without resorting to discrediting, disrespect, or even violence. Plato and Aristotle even originally argued that it is the foundation of deliberative democracy. Unfortunately, “the ability to listen to and attempt to understand other’s beliefs without resorting to short-sighted emotional outbursts rarely comes naturally...but as with many other skills, it can be learned and practiced, and it is invaluable due to its applicability to a myriad of real-life situations” (Anesi, 2017, para. 9). Labeling others beliefs as ridiculous or stupid or deciding someone is evil or unacceptable because they disagree with you contributes to incivility and divides the nation. Just consider the situation when Donald Trump referred to Hillary Clinton as a “nasty woman” in one of the 2016 Presidential Debates. Specifically, the transcript reads:

Debate Moderator Chris Wallace: Will you as president entertain — will you consider a grand bargain, a deal that includes both tax increases and benefit cuts to try to save both programs [Social Security and Medicare]?

Clinton: Well, Chris, I am on record as saying that we need to put more money into the Social Security Trust Fund. That's part of my commitment to raise taxes on the wealthy. My Social Security payroll contribution will go up, as will Donald's, assuming he can't figure out how to get out of it. But what we want to do is to replenish the Social Security Trust Fund...

Trump: Such a nasty woman. (Ross, 2016)

Multiple twitter reactions to Trump’s comment and the influence that comment has had on the 2016 election and beyond helps prove how that

type of rhetoric and response to another's argument promotes division rather than civility.

Just because an individual believes that something is true does not invalidate another's views on that subject. Furthermore, if the public does not acknowledge that other views exist, they will find themselves unequipped to properly defend ideas. Effective arguers and critical thinkers even actually seek out contradictory points of view in order to guarantee that they have considered all sides and have a fully formed and accurate opinion on the issues. This means engaging in reasoned judgment and fact-collecting along with supporting respect and tolerance for other opinions. Too much value is currently placed on "being right [over] finding the truth or working through problems with others" (Baird, 2016, para. 16). Also, we do ourselves a disservice if we become convinced that direct disagreement with others should not occur. People hold opinions quietly and rarely reveal them to people around them except in echo-chambers of like-minded people. This can lead to radicalization of opinions and a belief that one cannot be wrong or hold incorrect opinions and itself hampers civil discourse.

The consequences of a continued decline in levels of civil discourse are real and frightening. As mentioned earlier, civil discourse is essential to the proper functioning of our deliberative democracy. The ability to express all opinions, even those of the minority, the willingness of individuals to participate in the democratic process, and to adequately test ideas all require civil discourse. Harri Raisio (2010) explains that "deliberation enhances moral perception and facilitates empathy, which make possible decisions that are not only sounder but also morally better...empirical proofs which support the notion that public deliberation leads citizens to focus more on the public good" (p.10)

Not only is civil discourse the foundation of a proper democracy, but the lack of civil discourse is contributing to rising levels of violence. Teresa Bejan (2017) is fearful that "our wars of words threaten to give way to swords, the historically minded may detect an uncanny echo of another earlier modern crisis of civility. 500 years ago, when Martin Luther posted his "95 Theses" to the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany" (para. 3). Arguably, this launched the Protestant Reformation, which, for centuries, not only caused violence but also persecution and oppression based on religious beliefs. Unfortunately, we do not really even need to look that far back in history to find violence caused by a lack of civility. Results from a report "Civility in America" finds that

“most Americans report they have been victims of incivility (86%). Their most common encounters with rude or disrespectful behavior come while driving (72%) or shopping (65%). Americans also admit to perpetrating incivility – approximately six in 10 (59%) Americans acknowledge that they themselves have been uncivil” (Williams, 2016, para. 6). Cyberbullying, mass shootings, and riots are further examples of this incivility.

Furthermore, as former President Obama said, “only a more civil and honest public discourse can help us face up to the challenges of our nation” (Wladawsky-Berger, 2011, para. 20). The United States has several pressing issues to act on – health care, the economy, immigration, etc. and little action is possible in a world of continued polarization. In a very real way, civil discourse is needed for society to function. Jim Taylor (2009) concluded, “civility is an expression of a fundamental understanding and respect for the laws, rules, and norms (written and implicit) that guide its citizens in understanding what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. For a society to function, people must be willing to accept those strictures” (para.5).

Conclusions

The past few years have resulted in evident differences in the way the public responds to argument and deploys rhetoric. Of primary concern is that if objective truth is no longer the criteria for good, persuasive arguments – then something else has to be. This should illicit fear - as it has become increasingly obvious that the public might boldly reject arguments that are outside of the frame they have adopted.

When asked what to do about this “problem,” most of the solutions offered by the public might not seem promising. More than half of respondents in the Pew study think journalists are the problem and 8 in 10 say limitations on “made up information” or “restrictions on free speech” are needed (Graham, 2019). This analysis seeks education outside of this norm. As Stephen Sullivan (2018) argues “critical thinking itself demands a willingness to consider diverse perspectives” ...it means “acknowledging that we must do the opposite of what we have been trained to do. While much of our effort has been aimed at resolving disagreements, the lesson here is that today it might be just as valuable to try to find them” (p. 129)

Also, scholars have started investigating what it is that leads people to want to make decisions on the basis of emotion rather than fact. Norbert Schwarz of the USC Mind and Society Center believes that “when people consider whether something is true or not, they engage in either analytic or intuitive evaluations” (Vavreck, 2017, para.4). The difference between analytic and intuitive evaluations is largely based on how much effort goes into the process of making the decision. Analytic evaluations “are cognitively taxing and may involve searching for information like knowledge drawn from books or experts” (Vavreck, 2017, para.4). Alternatively, intuitive evaluations are easier and largely based on emotion or what is already understood. The existence of new technology and the internet has made it even easier for people to feel comfortable in making these intuitive evaluations. As Matthew D’acona wrote “the internet...represents a kind of dream vector for post-truth” (Tompsett, 2017, para. 13). This helps explain why analysis of argumentation are so critical to this struggle, because we can change the starting point for how people process important decisions. It is possible to separate fact from fiction and we can work toward clearer understanding in an objective reality.

Pushback against the rise of “post-truth” society is important not just for the quality of our individual decisions but also for our democratic society. Operating in emotional vacuums paves the way for bad decisions, and leaders who lead through fear and emotion, not through facts. Inquiry, dissent, idea testing, trust in public institutions, and a commitment to civil discourse are all necessary for the continued success of our democratic form of government.

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**Innovations in Teaching Family Communication
Patterns Theory**
Jordan Atkinson

Abstract

This teaching resource focuses on teaching Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT). This resource can be used in family communication, interpersonal communication, or communication theory courses. Using a series of instructional techniques that include (a) instructors administering the Revised Family Communication Patterns Instrument to students, (b) students interviewing a family member about their family communication, and (c) students locating examples of various family types in the media, students will learn the major premises of FCPT and be able to apply the theory in their lives. This teaching resource includes the necessary documents and other information that will be useful when teaching FCPT.

Goals and Rationale

This activity is ideal for courses in family communication or communication theory. This activity can also be implemented in interpersonal communication courses that include a component on family communication. The goal of this activity is to creatively teach Family Communication Patterns Theory (FCPT) to undergraduate students using a family interview and popular culture examples. Learning communication theories can be difficult for undergraduates, however, through this innovative approach, FCPT can be taught in an entertaining and engaging manner. This activity serves two essential purposes: to help students better understand FCPT and to make relevant connections of the theory to their own family and fictional families displayed on television.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this activity, students will be able to:

- Explain the major premises of FCPT, including the main ideas, conversation orientation, conformity orientation, and the four family types.
- Thoughtfully analyze and evaluate their own family communication using the main ideas of FCPT.
- Create connections between FCPT and depictions of fictitious families on television.

Directions

1. The instructor of the course should start by providing a lesson about FCPT. The lesson should include an overview of the theory, descriptions of conversation orientation, conformity orientation, and the four family types. FCPT is a common way to assess the role that communication plays within the family (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). The theory provides a two-dimensional model (i.e., conversation orientation, conformity orientation) and a four-category typology of family communication environments (i.e., consensual, protective, pluralistic, and laissez-faire) that explains how normative communicative behaviors develop within a family system. Conversation orientation is conceptualized as the “degree to which families create a climate in which all family members are encouraged to participate in unrestrained interaction about a wide array of topics” (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002, p. 85). Conversely, conformity orientation refers to the “degree to which family communication stresses a climate of homogeneity of attitudes, values, and beliefs” (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002, p. 85).
2. During the lesson, the instructor should provide examples of how families can be high and low both in conversation orientation and conformity orientation, therefore creating the four different family types. The instructor should find four television (or movie) families that communicate with (1) a high conversation orientation, (2) a low conversation orientation, (3) a high conformity orientation, and (4) a

low conformity orientation. These should be simple to locate as television families display a variety of communication behaviors.

3. The instructor should then distribute the Revised Family Communication Patterns (RFCP) Instrument (Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) to each of their students. The students should take the 26-item questionnaire and determine their families' level of conversation orientation and conformity orientation.
4. The next part of the assignment involves the student interviewing an individual in their immediate family. After learning the main ideas of FCPT and the two orientations, the student should ask direct questions to their family member about their levels of conversation and conformity. Students should be instructed that interviews should last between 10 to 20 minutes. They may also ask additional questions about their family communication. When students have completed the interview, they will need to write one page about the interview and describe (a) their family members' thoughts on the conversation orientation within the family, (b) their family members' thoughts on the conformity orientation within the family, and (c) how communication can improve within the family.
5. The final part of the activity involves the student locating examples of families high and low in conversation and conformity orientations. The student should locate four examples and these should be different than the examples that the instructor showed in class. For example, the family on *The Simpsons* is a low conversation and low conformity family (i.e., *laissez-faire*). Another example is the family from *The Brady Bunch* and how they were very high in conversation orientation. The students should then write one paragraph for each family type and how the communication within the family displays the level of conversation orientation and conformity orientation. There will be four paragraphs total.

Typical Results

This activity has been incredibly successful and the students have enjoyed learning about FCPT by using these techniques. Overall, the learning objectives are easily met and they perform well on the FCPT part of the examination.

Time

It normally takes two days to discuss FCPT thoroughly and to show the videos. On day three, students should be ready to discuss their individual interviews with their family members and how they connect with FCPT. On day four, students will show their video examples of families who are high and low in conversation and conformity orientation.

Appendix A: Family Type Examples

This appendix is to assist the instructor on part 2 of the assignment.

Conversation Orientation and Conformity Orientation in families are often displayed in their daily interaction. In television shows and movies, it is rather easy to determine the level of conversation and conformity that each family displays. Some examples are below:

High Conversation/ High Conformity (Consensual)	High Conversation/ Low Conformity (Pluralistic)	Low Conversation/ High Conformity (Protective)	Low Conversation/ Low Conformity (Laissez-faire)
<i>Full House</i>	<i>Modern Family</i>	<i>All in the Family</i>	<i>The Simpsons</i>
<i>Fresh Prince of Bel Air</i>	<i>That 70's Show</i>	<i>Fresh Off the Boat</i>	<i>Roseanne</i>
<i>The Brady Bunch</i>	<i>Hairspray</i>	<i>The Bernie Mac Show</i>	<i>Married with Children</i>

Appendix B: Family Communication Patterns Instrument (Richie & Fitzpatrick, 1990)

This appendix is to be distributed to students on part 3 of the assignment.

Instructions: Below is a series of statements that describes communication within families. For each statement, use the following response format and place the appropriate number in the blank.

If you **strongly disagree** with the statement, write a **1** in the blank.

If you **disagree** with the statement, write a **2** in the blank.

If you are **neutral** with the statement, write a **3** in the blank.

If you **agree** with the statement, write a **4** in the blank.

If you **strongly agree** with the statement, write a **5** in the blank.

- ___ 1. My parents and I often talk about topics like politics and religion where some persons disagree with others.
- ___ 2. My parents often say something like “Every member of the family should have some say in family decisions.”
- ___ 3. My parents often ask my opinion when the family is talking about something.
- ___ 4. My parents encourage me to challenge their ideas and beliefs.
- ___ 5. My parents often say something like “You should always look at both sides of an issue.”
- ___ 6. I usually tell my parents what I am thinking about things.
- ___ 7. I can tell my parents almost anything.
- ___ 8. My parents and I often talk about our feelings and emotions.
- ___ 9. My parents and I often have long, relaxed conversations about nothing in particular.
- ___ 10. I really enjoy talking with my parents, even when we disagree.
- ___ 11. My parents encourage me to express my feelings.
- ___ 12. My parents tend to be very open about their emotions.
- ___ 13. My parents and I often talk about things we have done during the day.
- ___ 14. My parents and I often talk about our plans and hopes for the future.
- ___ 15. My parents like to hear my opinion, even when I don’t agree with them.

- ___ 16. When anything really important is involved, my parents expect me to obey without question.
- ___ 17. In our home, my parents usually have the last word.
- ___ 18. My parents feel that it is important to be the boss.
- ___ 19. My parents sometimes become irritated with my views if they are different from theirs.
- ___ 20. If my parents don't approve of it, they don't want to know about it.
- ___ 21. When I am at home, I am expected to obey my parents' rules.
- ___ 22. My parents often say things like "You'll know better when you grow up."
- ___ 23. My parents often say things like "My ideas are right and you should not question them."
- ___ 24. My parents often say things like "A child should not argue with adults."
- ___ 25. My parents often say things like "There are some things that just shouldn't be talked about."
- ___ 26. My parents often say things like "You should give in on arguments rather than risk making people mad."

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Tag-Team Delivery *Eric Yazell*

Abstract

Public speaking is the number one fear of most students. This fear tends to manifest itself in the speaker's delivery. Speakers who focus on their anxiety and not their topic are less enthusiastic. The following exercise I call "Tag-Team Delivery." The goal is to get the students to forget that they are nervous and focus on winning a competition. The exercise also leads to great discussions about what delivery techniques that increase the speaker's ability to get and maintain attention. I have been using this exercise for over 20 years and many students say it was their favorite activity of the semester.

This exercise is designed to emphasize the importance of enthusiasm in delivery and a chance to go over the top. Hopefully, the students will get lost in the competition and forget to be nervous.

Break the class up into an even number of groups (at least 4 groups) of ideally 3-5 students. Have each group come up with a crazy topic that the members are very excited about (they have made fun of me as a topic! :)

Each group should form a rough outline including:

- Introduction with an attention getter, topic statement, reason to listen, establish credibility (optional) and a clear preview of main points.
- 3-5 main points including examples and transitions
- Conclusion with a cue, summary of main points and a memorable statement (I call them "Wow" statements)
- Groups need to evenly divide up the parts of the speech. For example, one student is assigned the introduction, one student for each main point and one for the conclusion.

Once they have completed the speech and divided up the parts as evenly as possible, then two groups will compete against one another at

the same time. Offer some sort of prize for the overall winners. I usually offer 5-10 points extra credit for the group that wins the overall competition. The other groups are the audience. They must follow some simple rules:

1. The performers are instructed that they are competing for the audience's attention as the audience will vote on which group won their attention the most.
2. One person from each group will present at the same time
3. Group members can encourage their performer but not insult the other group's performer
4. Once students have completed their of the speech, they will "tag in" the next member
5. Speakers may move anywhere in the room they like to get the attention of their audience including in front of the speaker they are competing against
6. However, they may not physically push or touch their competitor
7. All articles of clothing must remain on!
8. If one group completes their speech before the other group, then must start over and continue until all students complete the speech one time

During the presentations have fun and encourage them to be more enthusiastic. The instructor must be very enthusiastic to fuel the performers' energy

After the competition of the first two groups instruct the performers to turn their backs to the audience. Ask the audience to vote by a show of hands which group kept their attention the most. The winner is announced and then the next two groups go to the front of the room to perform.

Once the second round is completed, then the two winners from each round will compete against each other. I usually give them a couple of minutes to discuss a strategy.

Once the top group is chosen, tell the students about what a great job they did using examples from all groups. I especially compliment the

students who are normally quiet in class for their enthusiasm. I say things like, “You were awesome! I didn’t know you had that in you!”

To finish the exercise, I ask the students to write down and/or share what kept their attention, focusing on the delivery elements. This leads into a discussion about delivery elements such as eye contact, movement (I think lecterns or podiums lead to the death of enthusiasm or create boredom!), vocal variety, subject, etc. Then I ask how can you use what we learned today for your next speech. Comments often include the need to move around the room more, need for more eye contact, be louder and vocal variety, etc.

Eric Yazell is the Theatre Program Coordinator and Public Speaking Instructor at State Fair Community College. He has served in this role since 2000. Eric graduated from State Fair Community College in 1988 and was happy to return to his Alma Mater. After graduating from the University of Central Missouri with a Bachelor’s Degree in Speech Communication and a Master of Arts Degree in Theatre in 1992, he began his teaching career in 1992 as a Speech & Theatre Instructor at Crowder College in Neosho, Missouri.

Eric has over 28 years of experience in the speech and theatre – acting, directing, sound design and assisting with costumes and designing and building sets. He has directed over 70 plays and musicals and has served on the Board for Camp Blue Sky, a summer arts camp program for elementary and middle school students. Eric has been a member of STAM since 1993 presenting several workshops and served on the Board of Governors and as President.

Eric is married to Christine and has two children and two stepchildren. He is a die-hard Kansas City Chief’s fan since 1979.