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Policy Statement and Call for Papers
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The editor of the 2023 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 53 will be available in October of 2022 at the website for the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri – **www.speechandtheatremo.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 15, 2023 to ensure full consideration for publication.

Other inquires can be e-mailed or sent to the editor:
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New Directions for Inoculation Theory and Affect Research

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Abstract

Recent advancements in inoculation theory—a theory of resistance to influence—have brought dynamic development, with implications on how media is processed, including acceptance or rejection of mediated arguments and behavioral responses to mediated content (e.g., further information-seeking). One of the most promising areas for such inoculation work is affect. In this essay, we propose future directions for affect and inoculation theory research, including affect and the analogic of inoculation theory, need for affect, timing of affect, and specific types of affect (e.g., fear, anger, happiness) and clarify unique possibilities with inoculation messaging and media.

Inoculation theory—the classic theory of attitudinal resistance to persuasive influence (see Compton, 2013; McGuire, 1964)—is receiving a good deal of attention from scholars addressing theoretical development and empirical application. This resurgence is perhaps fueled by increased awareness of the amount and influence of mis- and disinformation in the media, which threatens health (van der Linden et al., 2020), trust in science and scientists (Compton et al., 2021), and more. Much of this work is applied inoculation research—to underexplored types of persuasive attacks, like sarcasm (Clyne et al., 2020) and covert advertising (Amazeen, 2020), and in underexplored contexts, like science communication (Compton et al., 2021a; Ivanov & Parker, 2021) and public relations (Compton et al., 2021b).

Along with this renewed attention has come dynamic advances in the theory of inoculation. One of the theoretical areas seeing the most development is affect, or the experience of feelings (Compton et al., 2022). This area of inoculation research is forming a foundation for promising new work, and at the same time, drawing attention to dynamic relationships among affect, inoculation, and emerging contexts. Ivanov and colleagues (2018) argued that “the potential of inoculation-based strategies may be ‘boundless’…in the rapidly evolving media environment” (p. 272), and scholars have drawn connections between inoculation and media settings (Parker et a l., 2022). We contend that this is particularly the case with affect and inoculation theory. We consider some of these future possibilities in this essay.

Inoculation Theory: The Basics

Inoculation theory explains how a position (e.g., an attitude, a belief) can be made resistant to influence in ways similar to how a body can be made immune to viruses—through exposure to weakened forms of the stronger attack (Compton, 2013; McGuire, 1964). The idea is that exposure to weakened forms of stronger attacks—like raised and refuted counterarguments, or two-sided messages—generates threat, or the recognition that an existing position is vulnerable to change (see Compton, 2020). The perception of threat motivates (Banas & Richards, 2017) more thinking (McGuire, 1964), talking (Compton & Pfau, 2009), and other means of strengthening the vulnerable position (Compton, 2013). Decades of research have established inoculation as an effective applied messaging strategy (see Ivanov et al., 2020b) in the contexts of politics (see Compton & Ivanov, 2013, for a review), health (see Compton et al., 2016, for a review), public relations (see Compton et al., 2021b, for a review), and more.

For decades, the process(es) of inoculation were largely considered cognitive (Compton et al., 2022), even though one of the core components of inoculation—threat—has clear implications for emotional responses (Compton, 2009, 2021). More recently, scholars have turned their attention to the affective dimensions of inoculation theory (see Compton et al., 2022, for a review), revealing that inoculation messages can elicit a number of discrete emotions, including anger (Miller et al., 2013; Pfau et al., 2001), happiness (Pfau et al., 2001), and fear (Pfau et al., 2009). Studies have also revealed that anger boosts resistance (Pfau et al., 2001, 2009) whereas happiness dampens it (Pfau et al., 2009). Researchers have also looked at emotions after encountering an “attack” message (i.e., a message that runs counter to one’s attitudes or beliefs), finding that fear, sadness, and anger elicited by inoculation treatment messages persists even after an attack (Ivanov et al., 2020b). Other inoculation and affect work has traced how affective-based inoculation messages can influence associative networks—the makeup of attitudes (Pfau et al., 2005, 2009) and how matching affect variables between the inoculation message and the attack message can enhance the efficacy of inoculation messages (Compton & Pfau, 2008; Ivanov et al., 2009, 2012; Nabi, 2003). More recent inoculation and affect research has also explored how inoculation can protect against types of affect, including decreases in pride (Pfau et al., 2008), anger (Richards & Banas, 2015; Richards et al., 2016, 2020) and anxiety (Jackson et al., 2017) and increases of fear (Ivanov et al., 2016) and jealousy (Sutton, 2011). Finally, some inoculation and affect research has looked at affective counterarguing—emotional refutations of counterarguments. Findings have indicated that affective counterarguments are comparatively less present than cognitive counterarguments; however, when they are present, they are strong (Pfau et al., 2009; Wigley & Pfau, 2010).

Despite much progress in our understanding of inoculation theory and affect (Compton et al., 2022), there remains much to learn, including how affect functions with inoculation and media. We outline some areas of future work here that we argue are particularly promising, especially in the context of increasing attention to misinformation in the media (see Compton et al., 2021a).

New Directions for Inoculation and Affect Research

Affect and the Analogy

With the exception of a brief reference to potential connections between emotions affecting resistance to viruses and emotions affecting resistance to persuasion (Compton, 2013), there has not been much attention directed toward how the analogic of inoculation theory functions—or not—in discussions of affect and inoculation theory. We encourage continued study of both sides of the analogy—inoculation against viruses and inoculation against persuasion—in future affect and inoculation theory research.

One area seems particularly promising in such research: therapeutic inoculation. Unlike the more conventional prophylactic inoculation approach (i.e., preemptive protection against persuasion), therapeutic inoculation is a reactive approach—administering inoculation treatments to those who already hold a different opinion (belief, attitude, etc.) from what is advocated in the inoculation message (see Compton, 2020). Indeed, empirical research has demonstrated the effectiveness of therapeutic inoculation as a strategy for shifting opposing beliefs in the direction of the advocated position (Ivanov et al., 2017). Perhaps more important, Ivanov and colleagues (2017) discovered “inoculation is capable of protecting these persuasive gains” when eventually faced with a subsequent attack (p. 120).

Since recipients would be interpreting arguments as either supportive or oppositional to their existing attitudes and beliefs, it seems likely that recipients of inoculation messages functioning therapeutically have different affect responses and processes than those functioning prophylactically. With the former—therapeutic inoculation, or inoculation messages challenging an existing belief—perhaps we could anticipate more anger because the information contradicts the individual’s differing opinion. With the latter—prophylactic inoculation, or inoculation messages supporting an existing belief—maybe there is a combination of both fear and anger (Parker et al., in press). Anger may be experienced in response to the unveiling of inadequately structured counterarguments that may elicit irritation due to their poor structure. It may also represent a natural or learned emotional reaction to the realization—or confirmation—of the existence of oppositional arguments. Fear, on the other hand, may represent an emotional expression to the possibility of encountering challenges to the currently held positions. Of course, these are empirical questions. We look forward to research that looks into these, and related, areas of how extensions of the inoculation analogy to the processes of resistance can inform both research and application of inoculation theory and affect, with particular attention to misinformation in the media—an area that likely uses and elicits emotional strategies.

Timing of Affect

A recurring question about affect in inoculation is the issue of when affect influences inoculation-conferred resistance to influence (see Compton, 2013). The timing of affect in inoculation seems particularly relevant to fast-paced, real-time mediated information. When, then, might affect play a role in resistance? Before receiving the inoculation message (e.g., mood)? During? After? All of the above? What about affect elicited at the time of the stronger, subsequent attack? Or after the attack? Whereas the majority of research has investigated the design of messages and catalysts responsible for eliciting the inoculation process, considerably less attention has been paid to the experience of individuals after they have encountered a persuasive attack (c.f., Ivanov et al., 2020a).

To further explore the impacts of affect on inoculation, researchers should measure affect at different phases of inoculation, following the lead of Pfau and colleagues (2009). Additionally, timing may also influence the relationship between affect and recall. Nabi (1999) proposed that fear, anger, disgust, sadness, or guilt makes it more likely that message recipients will recall reassuring information about that emotion and will do so with greater accuracy. This proposition should be tested in an inoculation context, where recall of refutations is purportedly connected with resistance (i.e., those inoculated are able to bring to mind refutational content when processing the attack message, in addition to novel refutational content). Experiences of affect during reception of the attack message, then, might differ based on whether the arguments in the attack message are the same or different from those mentioned in the inoculation message.

Discrete Emotions

Scholars have paid increased attention to communication and affect, but they predominantly conceptualized the emotional experience as discrete, meaning that emotions are qualitatively distinct and differentiated by their unique pattern of responses (Nabi, 2002). In inoculation research specifically, the focus has been centered on designing messages that elicit one of two discrete emotions, anger or happiness. Although both have been found to influence processes of resistance, we wonder if other discrete emotions have a similar or more pronounced message effect (see Compton, 2013). In addition, scholars should continue to take a closer look at anger and happiness. We begin with those two emotions before considering some less understood emotions.

Anger.

We probably know more about anger than any other emotion associated with inoculation (Compton, 2013). Anger is an emotional response to encountering an obstacle and is associated with approach or attack behaviors aimed at the source of interference (Lazarus, 1991). Stated differently, according to the cognitive-functional model of discrete emotions: “To experience anger, receivers must perceive a message to suggest a barrier or an affront that they face or is faced by someone with whom they empathize” (Nabi, 1999, p. 307). When message recipients think the rest of the message will help them achieve the goal, they are more likely to engage in central processing of the rest of the message. Inoculation messages can make people angry whether as part of a specific response to threat (Pfau et al., 2001), as an emotion elicited by the entire treatment message (e.g., Ivanov et al., 2009), or something(s) else. Specifically, the forewarning component of a message—designed to explicitly warn individuals of their vulnerability to impending persuasive attacks—could unleash such motivation.

Research of inoculation theory and psychological reactance theory—the idea that perceived threats to freedom elicit anger and negative thoughts toward the perceived restrictor (see Brehm, 1966)—also sheds light on how inoculation theory works with and against reactance. Inoculation treatments can characterize opposing messages as freedom-restricting (Miller et al., 2013) or can help to alleviate reactance against an inoculation treatment’s aim by reminding recipients that they have the freedom to choose (e.g., Richards & Banas, 2015; Richards et al., 2016, 2020).

More research should explore the relationship between anger and other variables, such as self-efficacy (Pfau et al., 2001; and see Dillard & Nabi, 2006). Previous work has considered a relationship between threat and anger, but some evidence suggests anger is more a product of involvement than threat (Pfau et al., 2001). Scholars should also heed Nabi’s (2003) advice to explore the targets of different emotions, including targets of anger. Dillard and Nabi (2006) argue, “Whether an emotion enhances or inhibits persuasion depends on its relationship with the target of evaluation” (p. 130). If anger is directed toward the source of the inoculation message, resistance to influence is likely lessened (see Richards & Banas, 2015); if anger is directed toward the source of the attack message, resistance is likely strengthened (see Miller et al., 2013). How might other targets of anger, beyond sources of messages, affect resistance to influence? For example, would anger toward the media, in general, influence resistance to mediated messages?

Happiness.

Scholars have called for more attention to positive affect in general (Nabi, 2002), and inoculation in particular (e.g., Compton & Pfau, 2005; Nabi, 2003). Happiness describes an emotional response to making reasonable progress toward one's goals and is associated with behaviors that sustain or savor such contentment (Lazarus, 1991). Ivanov et al. (2020a) built on earlier research pertaining to happiness (e.g., Pfau et al., 2001) and found further evidence for reduced happiness in inoculated individuals. The authors suggest that lack of happiness and increased anger contribute to the persistent effectiveness of inoculation-based resistance. Based on what we do know from affect, inoculation, and happiness studies (e.g., Ivanov et al., 2020a; Pfau et al., 2001), including that happiness lessens resistance (Pfau et al., 2001), and from work in other persuasion studies (e.g., Dillard & Peck, 2001; Nabi, 2002), including that happiness is associated with lack of depth of information processing and shorter-term, less stable persuasion effects (Nabi, 2002), continued inquiry is needed to better understand how and precisely when happiness influences the process of resistance.

Fear.

Fear is often associated with the tendency to protect oneself from concrete and sudden physical harm by avoiding or escaping the threat (Lazarus, 1991). Yet, Pfau (1995) initially argued that the inoculation-generated threat should not be confused with, nor equated to, threat as a dimension of fear appeals (see Compton, 2009). But perhaps fear plays a more pivotal role in inoculation than previously thought. Consider the perspective of the extended parallel process model (EPPM; Witte, 1992, 1994) which explains how fear appeals motivate recipients to protect themselves from a certain danger. Similarly, inoculation explains how messages motivate recipients to defend their attitudes against counterattitudinal challenges.

According to the EPPM, for a fear appeal to be successful, a message must generate perceived threat (i.e., susceptibility and severity) and perceived efficacy (i.e., response efficacy and self-efficacy). When individuals experience fear and feel prepared to cope, they are motivated to attend to the message and follow recommendations protecting against the threat (Witte, 1992, 1994). Do inoculation messages function similarly? We think they do. Inoculation messages generate perceptions of threat by (a) explicitly forewarning individuals that their attitudes are vulnerable to future persuasive attacks (i.e., susceptibility; Compton & Ivanov, 2012; McGuire & Papageorgis, 1962) and (b) implicitly highlighting the consequences of being unprepared to defend against sample counterattitudinal arguments (i.e., severity; Compton & Ivanov, 2012; Ivanov et al., 2016). Additionally, inoculation messages generate efficacy by (a) demonstrating how to effectively fend off persuasive attacks (i.e., response efficacy) while (b) offering guided practice in defending attitudes through counterarguing (i.e., self-efficacy; Pfau et al., 2001, 2009). Empirical evidence is needed to better understand these parallel mechanisms. As such, future investigations could examine how levels of aroused fear, as well as perceptions of susceptibility, severity, self-efficacy, and response efficacy, fluctuate during exposure to an inoculation message.

Pride.

Pride occurs in response to an achievement and tends to result in behaviors that point publicly to the source of achievement—whether that is oneself or someone else (Lazarus, 1991). As a discrete emotion, pride has received limited attention in inoculation-affect research. Pfau and colleagues (2008) successfully inoculated against pride slippage in the context of television coverage of the war in Iraq. Wigley and Pfau (2010) designed some messages to elicit pride as part of their affective-positive inoculation treatment messages. Otherwise, pride has been largely neglected as an emotion for inoculation scholarship, and therefore represents an opportunity for those interested in affect and resistance. We anticipate several media-related opportunities for this work, including how watching international sports competitions (e.g., Olympics) can affect pride (Billings et al., 2013), how pride plays a role in reactions to corporate social responsibility perceptions (He et al., 2022), and the use of pride appeals in political campaigns (Ridout & Searles, 2011).

Sadness.

According to Lazarus (1991), sadness is aroused when an individual appraises a personal loss with distinct consequences for oneself. Unlike other emotions with active behavioral tendencies, sadness is accompanied by a passive withdrawal into oneself as a means to recover (Frijda, 1986). When unintentionally evoked, sadness has been positively associated with attitude change (Dillard & Peck, 2001; Dillard et al., 1996). Should inoculation messages fail, the unintended emotional outcome could be sadness as individuals realize they are not prepared for, nor capable of, protecting their current attitudes. Indeed, findings from Ivanov et al. (2020a) corroborated that, in comparison to those receiving a control message, inoculated individuals indicated greater levels of sadness after receiving the persuasive attack message.

As Burgoon and colleagues (1976) have argued, and their findings confirmed, when individuals were told via an inoculation message that they were almost certain to face counterattitudinal challenges, they resigned to having their attitudes assailed and failed to successfully defend them from persuasive attacks. Although the authors did not assess the emotional state of individuals, it is highly plausible that the inoculation message—intended to motivate and inspire defense preparation—may have instead generated sadness by making the inevitability of the attack, and the presumed "loss" of attitudinal resistance, salient to message recipients. Consistent with later research (Dillard & Peck, 2001; Dillard et al., 1996), the inoculation message attesting to the inevitability of the attack generated greater negative attitude change than its counterpart attesting to the uncertainty of a forthcoming attack (Burgoon et al., 1976; cf. Ivanov et al., 2013). To the extent that an individual estimates an "irrevocable loss" (Nabi, 1999, p. 307), it is reasonable to suggest that sadness played a role. Such theorizing should be further tested in future affect and inoculation research, including the possibility that sadness weakens motivation to counterargue.

Disgust.

Disgust is a negative emotion aroused by organically or psychologically spoiled ideas or objects (Lazarus, 1991; Rozin et al., 1993), a product of "a noxious object or idea" (Nabi, 1999, p. 307). Disgusted individuals are generally motivated to turn away from, or to remove, the object of disgust (Nabi, 2002). In the persuasion literature, message-induced disgust has been shown to negatively correlate with attitude change. Nabi's (1998) findings showed that message-induced disgust toward animal experimentation reduced the favorability of animal experimentation. Building on such findings, an inoculation message could elicit disgust toward the outcome or position purported by the attack message or message source, thereby bolstering resistance. There is reason to believe that this approach would work. In a follow up inoculation study, Nabi (2003) constructed inoculation messages that provided "graphic images of monkeys being inflicted with head injuries as well as the debilitating physical consequences of those injuries" (2003, p. 2006). As expected, the messages generated negative affect; however, disgust, although measured, was confounded with multiple other discrete emotions such as hate, anger, anxiety, fear, guilt, and surprise. Future studies should attempt to measure the effectiveness of disgust-eliciting inoculation messages by isolating this discrete emotion.

Guilt.

Although guilt has received some attention in persuasion (O'Keefe, 2002), it has received limited attention in inoculation scholarship (Compton & Pfau, 2008). Guilt is felt in response to having personally transgressed a moral imperative and often leads individuals to atone or make reparations (Lazarus, 1991). The level of emotional intensity may produce different outcomes and coping behaviors (Nabi, 2002). What should be the level of intensity of guilt for optimum resistance? At moderate levels, guilt may assist in the attainment of persuasive goals (Coulter & Pinto, 1995); however, at high levels guilt may arouse high levels of anger that may thwart the attainment of the same persuasive goals (Coulter & Pinto, 1995; Pinto & Priest, 1991).

Nabi (1999) noted that message-induced guilt (as well as fear and disgust) can lead to either more or less motivation to centrally process the rest of a message, depending on how the receivers interpret the value of the rest of the message. If guilt-ridden individuals expect the remainder of the message will enhance or prolong the experience of guilt, then they are less likely to carefully process the content of the message in an effort to downregulate this negative emotion. On the other hand, should guilt-ridden individuals expect the message will provide them with information that may alleviate guilt and lead to reparation, they are more likely to carefully process the message. If an inoculation message were to induce guilt, then, perhaps guilt would affect the process of resistance by influencing how people process the inoculation message content.

Surprise.

As a discrete emotion, surprise occurs in response to sudden and unexpected occurrences and directs individuals to orient their attention and focus on the novelty (Cowen & Keltner, 2017). Because resistance is thought to depend on preparedness for an attack on a position, surprise logically plays a role in inoculation-conferred resistance to influence. However, to date, it has received even less attention in inoculation-affect research than guilt or disgust. Ivanov and colleagues (2020a) have been among the first to assess surprise in the context of inoculation-conferred resistance. The authors predicted that inoculated individuals would be less surprised after encountering an attack than those in the control condition. In other words, because they had been directly forewarned that the persuasive attack might be coming, they would be less surprised when they actually encountered it. However, much to their surprise, inoculated individuals reported greater post-attack surprise than those in the control condition (Ivanov et al., 2020a).

The researchers offered a few explanations for the unexpected findings, which center on the idea that an expectancy violation may have contributed to heightened levels of surprise in inoculated individuals. First, the authors turned to early findings from Burgoon and Chase (1973) in which mismatching language intensity between the inoculation treatment and attack message influenced the effectiveness of inoculation. It was possible, then, the authors argued, that the attack argument was stronger than the participants expected, therefore resulting in surprise. Second, the authors proposed that the inconsistency between cognitive-based inoculation message (i.e., grounded in logic) and affective-based attack message (i.e., emotionally-charged content such as video footage of Westboro Baptist Church members thanking “God for dead soldiers”) may have also represented an expectancy violation. Consequently, the mismatch in expectations could have increased expressions of surprise (Ivanov et al., 2020a). Nevertheless, this unexpected finding suggests that future research should uncover how and when surprise contributes (or detracts from) resistance.

Boredom.

Future affect and inoculation theory research should also explore the counterpart of surprise: boredom. Evidence supports the conceptualization of boredom as a discrete emotion, despite its similarities with other emotions like sadness, frustration, guilt, and disappointment (see van Tilburg & Igou, 2017). Boredom describes the experience of wanting to engage in a satisfying activity but being unable to do so; as a result, it is often associated with "attentional disengagement from the environment" and seeking out alternative stimuli (Danckert, 2018, p. 2). Preliminary evidence has indicated that, as a preventive strategy, inoculation may be effective in protecting peoples' interest and motivation when faced with monotonous or repetitive tasks (e.g., Dimmock et al., 2016).

Compton (2019) has offered a theoretical case for how inoculation theory-informed messages could be crafted to decrease the negative effects of boredom in the workplace, including burnout and low retention. For example, inoculation messages could be used to either prevent the arousal of boredom or simply protect employees' beliefs that their work is meaningful and challenging. However, his predictions have not yet been empirically tested. Additionally, we encourage inoculation theory and affect research that looks at boredom as part of the process of resistance. That is, in addition to inoculating against boredom, researchers should see if it is possible to inoculate with boredom, e.g., as part of the way of weakening a counterargument. An impending attack on a position could be framed as boring or uninteresting, which might lessen the persuasiveness of an argument.

Narratives and Affect

Narratives play a prominent role in people's media diet, whether through journalistic accounts of local news, movies and television dramas, literature, or stories passed along social media networks. However, narratives remain underexplored in the context of inoculation (Compton & Mason, 2020). The inherent argumentative structure of two-sided refutational messages (i.e., weakened counterargument followed by strong refutation) has led most researchers to use factual evidence (e.g., Pfau et al., 2004), logic-based reasoning (e.g., Cook et al., 2017), or a combination of the two (e.g., Banas & Miller, 2013) to refute counterarguments. While some inoculation messages have used anecdotal evidence (e.g., Pfau et al., 2001), narrative as a primary message form has not yet been thoroughly studied in inoculation research.

There is reason to believe that narratives could be used to elicit more affect during the process of resistance (see Oatley & Gholamain, 1997). According to Pence (2004), "Emotions are a primary feature of our reaction to, and interaction with, narrative" (p. 273). Consequently, narratives have been found to generate more emotion than non-narrative content (e.g., argument-based content; Krakow et al., 2018), and that greater levels of emotions (positive and negative) are connected with more negative attitudes toward the advocated position (Murphy et al., 2013).

Much of the affective reactions to narratives is attributed to the narrative's transportation effect, "a convergent process, where all mental systems and capacities become focused on events in the narrative" (Green & Brock, 2000, p. 701). Individuals who are engaged in the narrative become emotionally involved and affected by the narrative (Pence, 2004). As a result, any persuasive messages embedded in the narrative can easily "get under the radar" (Dal Cin et al., 2004, p. 187) as they are "often implied as opposed to stated explicitly" (Dal Cin et al., 2004, p. 178). Thus, persuasive messages presented in a narrative form can be very effective in generating attitude change because their structure may impede the forewarning of counterattitudinal pressures (Dal Cin et al., 2004) and their transportation effect may suppress the counterarguing process associated with resistance (Green & Brock, 2000; Slater & Rouner, 2002).

Should narratives suppress threat (in a form of a forewarning) and counterarguing (by depleting processing capacity via the transportation effect), they may have an impact on the inoculation-generated process of resistance, possibly through elicited affect. Along with others (Compton & Mason, 2020), we contend that the narratives can have an impact on this process via affect in two important ways: as attacks (more persuasive because of the reasons outlined above) and as protection messages (inoculating with or against narrative persuasiveness). For example, Banas and Miller (2013) showed how inoculation messaging could be used to blunt the effectiveness of mediated conspiracy theories by using an illogical and emotionally charged film as the persuasive attack. Their findings highlighted the effectiveness of inoculating against a unique and potentially destructive type of narrative.

In addition to the impact of affect in narratives used as persuasive vehicles, narrative-elicited affect may influence resistance as well. As Oatley and colleagues (Oatley, 2002; Oatley & Gholamain, 1997) have discussed, readers of narratives start identifying with the characters of the narrative. Dal Cin and colleagues (2004) suggested the emotional connections with the characters of the narratives can be exploited to strengthen the affective components of attitudes, which should increase attitudinal resistance (Fuegen & Brehm, 2004). As they suggested:

> If we integrate positive or negative emotions elicited by a narrative into our associative networks, it seems plausible that implicit attitude change might occur. We have already suggested that identification with story characters leads to positive associations with particular beliefs. It seems plausible that on a purely implicit level, these positive responses may become integrated in the network of associations one already has regarding these beliefs. (Dal Cin et al., 2004, p. 188)

If Dal Cin et al.'s (2004) reasoning is confirmed, inoculation messages used in a narrative form may be successful in generating resistance in part by boosting attitudinal resistance using affect. Future inoculation studies should investigate the links among affect, narratives, and inoculation-conferred resistance (see also Compton & Ivanov, 2013; Compton & Mason, 2020).

Need for Affect

Inoculation scholarship has not yet accounted for individual differences in the motivation to pursue affect. Maio and Esses (2001) stated that individuals have different levels of need for affect (NFA), which they defined as "the general motivation of people to approach or avoid situations and activities that are emotion inducing for themselves and others" (p. 585). Individuals with a strong disposition to approach emotions (i.e., high in NFA) are more likely to engage with stimuli that elicit affective responses. Maio and Esses (2001) further suggested that individuals high in NFA might be more likely to allow emotions to influence and shape their attitudes, at least partly by having developed stronger cognitive associations with their emotions. Indeed, media effects research has shown that NFA facilitates narrative persuasion, such that individuals high in NFA have a stronger experience of transportation when processing the emotional content of fictional narratives (Appel & Richter, 2010).

Based on the above information, affect-based inoculation messages may have significantly more pronounced impact on individuals with high, rather than low, NFA. Attack messages, however, may also have a more pronounced effect on individuals high in NFA. That is, the same variation in NFA that might make recipients more receptive to inoculation messages (e.g., experiencing more threat from threatening content, or experiencing more anger in response to counterattitudinal content) might also make them more responsive to messages that attempt to challenge their beliefs (i.e., the "attack" messages) when either type of message (inoculation or attack) uses affective content. The pertinent question for inoculation scholarship, then, is whether NFA moderates the effectiveness of inoculation and attack messages, and if so, how. Future inoculation studies should empirically test the dynamic of the relationship among inoculation messages, attack messages, and NFA.

Conclusions

Affect is one of the theoretical areas seeing the most development during the recent resurgence of inoculation theory development and application (Compton et al., 2022). This area of inoculation research has formed a foundation for promising new work. In this review, we have proposed some future possibilities for affect and inoculation theory research, including affect and the analogic of inoculation theory, need for affect, timing of affect, and specific types of affect. Of course, what we have proposed here is not a complete list. We hope that continuing research in affect and inoculation theory will explore these and other opportunities. We see particular relevance for this theory development and application in media contexts. Several years ago, after reviewing extant research in media and emotions, Wirth and Schramm (2005) concluded: "Clearly, research on media and emotion is making satisfactory progress" (p. 25). The same can be said, we argue, about research on media and emotion and inoculation theory. We hope that our review helps this work to grow and progress even further.

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Narrative Paradigm Through Performance: Exploring the Application and Impacts of Theatre of the Oppressed Methods in Readers' Theatre

Taylor Ambrosi

Abstract

The use of stories and narratives is a powerful tool for human connection and persuasion. The goal of this research is to encourage conversations surrounding diversity, identity, oppression, and privilege through the use of Reader's Theatre. Reader's Theatre is the only type of performance sanctioned in state Speech & Theatre competitions that gives students the opportunity to develop personal stories for performance. This study suggests that the development of a Reader's Theatre script can be created through methods of Theatre of the Oppressed. Addressing individual, social, and political issues in the classroom can work to empower student voices and promote higher levels of empathy and drive social change.

Introduction

The act of storytelling is a longstanding and fundamental tradition of how people communicate. People can use storytelling to not only connect, but also work to persuade others by appealing to their emotions and experiences. Fisher (1984) coined the term narrative paradigm, noting its place as an effective tool in the art of persuasion: "one that will provide substance not only for public moral argument, but also all other forms of argument, for human communication in general" (p. 4). Through the use of words and actions, humans provide narratives of their experiences, and their audience gives meaning to these stories; as a result, stories can shape their understanding of the world and create one's sense of reality. The narrative paradigm is seen being used by marketing experts and advertisements in an attempt to capitalize on people buying into a belief or product. This theory suggests a performance of sorts: the use of truthful messages by means of stories can lead others to be persuaded to take action. We use stories in a variety of ways: to learn about and connect to others, to find empathy in differing experiences, to make sense of our social reality, and to impact the status quo. All of these means of storytelling can take effect in conversation, literature, debate and performance. Because high school speech and debate activities offer a range of opportunities to present stories through oral interpretation events, the use of narrative paradigm to lend more purpose to the activity should be considered.

This research paper focuses specifically on one single event: Reader's Theatre. Reader's Theatre is a stylized, group performance in high school speech and debate programs that relies on such storytelling to capture an audience. This type of performance can use either literature or originally written works to communicate a thematic concept. Reader's Theatre is one of the only types of group performances sanctioned in state Speech & Theatre competitions that gives students and directors the opportunity to develop personal or written stories for the script. This performance style does not allow the use of electronic effects, lighting, or character-specific costumes. Instead, it focuses on the interpretation of a script, characterization, and the use of ensemble. The set can consist of only "scripts, stools, chairs, freestanding ladders, boxes, and reading stands, none of which may be decorated by a single color per object" (Speech, 2021, p. 26). By limiting the physical objects and colors that can be utilized on stage, there are fewer distractions based on the appearance of the performance and instead, Reader's Theatre offers more of a focal point on the stylistic element and the story that is being told. Similarly, Theatre of the Oppressed focuses on the story and the outcome or resolution of the performance; Theatre of the Oppressed is meant to be performed as a loose, improvisational workshop that depends on the performers taking their personal stories and encouraging all participants to make changes in order to provide a better outcome to the experience being performed.

This study suggests that because of their similarities, Reader's Theatre and its production of a narrative can be utilized and formed through methods of a separate style of theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed, primarily Forum and Playback Theatre. Developed by Augusto Boal (1979), this style's goal was to overcome oppression by revisiting the actor's experiences and giving new opportunities to change the outcomes of future oppressive scenarios. These games through the art of theatre are meant for "professional and amateur actors, by teachers and therapists, in political and social activities and research" (Boal, 2002, p. 16). Through the use of this method, Theatre of the Oppressed actors reflect on real life stories and difficult or traumatic experiences they have had and play out those scenarios and find ways their story could have ended differently as a resolution to the performance and thus, a cathartic experience for the actor. Theatre of the Oppressed styles can be considered part of the narrative paradigm because the performance uses storytelling of truthful and subjective events in one’s life, puts context to those events, and attempts to reframe the messages one sends to themselves about the experience they had. In an attempt to persuade the audience and actor to take action in oppressive and traumatic situations, participants brainstorm ideas of how to communicate verbally and take nonverbal action in future scenarios as well.

Subsequent to Boal’s creation of Theatre of the Oppressed, research has been conducted that shows findings of positive effects on the performer and audience on a personal level and potentially steps towards social change. Studies have investigated whether effective pedagogy of Theatre of the Oppressed impacts a student’s sense of empowerment and identity, such as psychodrama as a means of Theatre of the Oppressed for therapeutic benefits (Orkibi, 2011) and the effects of Solidarity Forum Theatre as a form of Theatre of the Oppressed on empowering oppressed cultural groups to take a stand and advocate for themselves and others (Songe-Moller & Bjerkestrand, 2012). Yet, research is not available that uses a direct application of Theatre of the Oppressed to the creation and performance of Reader’s Theatre performances. Because Reader’s Theatre performances have the choice to utilize narrative paradigms and original works, this warrants research that considers the success of applications of Theatre of the Oppressed methods to Reader’s Theatre and its effects on the performers and audience.

This study will review what research has already been conducted on these two types of performances and consider whether or not Theatre of the Oppressed can be applied to Reader's Theatre. It will also focus on the commonalities of the two mediums as well as the positive effects and potential concerns of students, and ultimately audiences, undergoing Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. It is important to consider if Theatre of the Oppressed can be effectively applied to Reader's Theatre and determine if the participants can benefit from this application with the same sense of strengthened self-identity, image, and empowerment to affect true social change when it extends past the Theatre of the

Oppressed process and into a scripted performance. To address these connections, the following research questions were considered:

RQ1: Can Theatre of the Oppressed be effectively applied to the process and performance of Reader's Theatre?

RQ2: What are the social and personal impacts of a Reader's Theatre performance developed through Theatre of the Oppressed methods on the performer and audience?

Review of Literature

When considering whether or not Theatre of the Oppressed can be applied to Reader's Theatre, that requires an understanding and examination of each style's framework and continuities. By identifying where they overlap, directors can find opportunities to engage both styles of performance as a means of storytelling and persuasion. The review of literature offers a discussion of the Narrative Paradigm Theory in order to understand how storytelling itself can be a persuasive element for others and as a result, influence their thoughts, behaviors, and actions. This section will also consider the relationship between Theatre of the Oppressed and Reader's Theatre as well as the common and unique outcomes of each style. The outcomes will be considered separately by looking at how these styles specifically impact the performer but also how social change as an effect of Theatre of the Oppressed methods exist. Lastly, because this style of performance must use traumatic, difficult, and oppressive scenarios, this section will consider the implications and potential concerns and practices of using these techniques, especially in an educational setting with minors. It is essential to begin by understanding the theory that produces a framework and context of storytelling as an act of persuasive communication.

Narrative Paradigm & Storytelling through Performance

Storytelling and narrative communication has the opportunity to hold persuasive elements and derive intended meaning by the receiver. Despite the rational worldview many hold to make decisions and be influenced, storytelling is a foundation of oral tradition and human connection that can provide powerful messages in order to persuade others. Importantly, Fisher (1984) does not intend narrative paradigm to solely mean fictitious accounts, but rather the "symbolic actions–words and/or deeds–that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them" (p. 2). The use of storytelling related to persuasion and influence can have significance in both real and imaginary narratives.

Referenced by Dainton & Zelley (2015), Fisher's (1984) narrative paradigm has a few primary assumptions. The first is that "what makes humans unique and distinct from other creatures" is the need to engage in storytelling. Because even the most rational messages still have a level of subjectivity, one's "values [and] emotions…shape your beliefs and actions" (p. 133). Stories allow others to perceive both actions and words in order to make sense of the world around them; in short, narration affects perception by the ways in which people assign meaning to stories. A second assumption is based on "good reasons as the basis for most decision making." Instead of needing rationale and "argumentative logic", humans can also find good reason by personal perception of truthfulness. As a result, we use narrative rationality in order to identify believability. For the narrative paradigm to be successful and the stories believable, the audience must be able to identify a few key things: be able to follow the "structural coherence" of the story and be able to connect the stories "with our own values, culture, character, and experiences" (Dainton & Zelley, 2015, p. 133). In this way, the stories must have consistency with our own subjective experiences or one's we have already accepted from others in order to identify truthfulness. The last assumptions of Fisher's (1984) narrative paradigm is that "the world as humans know it is based primarily on both cooperative and competing stories" (Dainton & Zelley, 2015, p. 134). As we try to understand the world and others around us, we must use good reasons to decide what competing stories we will accept. Based on what stories we find hold rationale and truthfulness, these narratives thus affect our perception of the world and, as a result, will form our social reality.

This theory can be practically applied to theatre, especially that of Theatre of the Oppressed and Reader's Theatre where the focus is on the narrative (action and words) alone. Because the two cannot rely on outside influences such as lighting, costumes, and eccentric props or sets, the attention turns to the art of interpretation and dramatic storytelling. As such, based on Fisher's theory, observers can make connections to these other identities and experiences, creating their social reality as a result of having heard these stories. Theatre also requires an element of suspension of disbelief where spectators find truth in the narrative being performed and offers truthfulness and believability in this way. Because Fisher’s assumption is that individuals must find believability in a story, performance storytelling offers the opportunity for them to do just that through willing suspension of disbelief that theatre demands. If the audience can engage with the truthfulness of the narrative, then by Fisher’s paradigm, there is a true opportunity for persuasion to occur.

Therefore, the narrative paradigm is foundational when considering the elements of research in this paper and will provide a way to judge effects of Theatre of the Oppressed and Reader’s Theatre as they relate to one another. Due to the nature of storytelling offering a persuasive element, it is important to consider the consequences and effects of performative storytelling on the performer and the audience. Theater of the Oppressed asks the performer to also be persuaded by the changed narrative in order to overturn oppressive scenarios in the future, so the narrative paradigm is necessary as a theory that assumes perceptions are shaped by storytelling.

Commonalities of Theatre of the Oppressed and Reader’s Theatre

There are many similarities between Reader's Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed: the use of collaboration, script, off-stage focuses, and oral interpretation. Reader's Theatre is described as the “‘theatre of the mind’ in which the action of literary events takes place in the imagination of the audience.” Different from traditional theatre, Reader's Theatre is a style “in which the attention is focused on the literature rather than upon stage action and physical production” (Witt, 1966, p. 123). Similar to Theatre of the Oppressed, Reader's Theatre does not require sets since the focus is on the story itself. The stripped experience of theatre through these means requires a need for a coherent and understandable story to be received by the audience. The judges of Reader’s Theatre look at several judging criteria to best illustrate the effectiveness of the performance: script, interpretation and understanding of the theme, style, ensemble grouping, rhythm, tempo and pace, readers communication, characterization, voice and dictation, and overall effect (Speech, 2021, p. 26). These elements suggest that the narrative paradigm is present in their need to not only follow the subject, but also believe in the truthfulness of the performance.

Because Reader's Theatre allows for unpublished literature, Playback and Forum Theatre (both delineations of Theatre of the

Oppressed) could work as a starting point for creating a script. This form of Theatre of the Oppressed would assist students in writing stories that connect to their personal experiences, having them reenact those stories, before finally considering strategies or solutions to addressing each other's problems. The goal of this method is to overcome the oppressive scenario by coming up with a new solution to address what had happened in the moment; this offers cathartic value and the potential to be better equipped for responding to future acts of trauma and oppression. For the purpose of Reader's Theatre using written works, after exploring these stories and narratives, teachers would then create a cohesive written work that links these stories together in the style of oral interpretation. Audiences will view the end result of the written works where the students, who had undergone Theatre of the Oppressed games, share their true experiences of oppression and overcoming them.

While Theatre of the Oppressed utilizes audience participation, Reader's Theatre differs as a memorized, 30 minute performance that does not allow for an active audience participant. In Theatre of the Oppressed, the active audience member has the autonomy to actively participate and engage with the material; Brahma et. al (2019) found in their study a positive outcome potential for participants to take action in uprooting oppressive social norms when using Theatre of the Oppressed (p. 168). Audience members of Reader's Theatre view the 30 minute performance from start to finish and adjudicate their performance after the fact. Observers are merely that; they do not have opportunity to participate in the outcome of the narrative. Because Reader's Theatre puts audience members in a more passive role, it is unclear whether or not the application of Theatre of the Oppressed in Reader's Theatre can have similar effects in a sender-receiver setting.

Effects of Theatre of the Oppressed & Reader's Theatre on the Performers

Because it is the intention of both Reader's Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed to have specific effects on those involved, research must consider what positive and negative impacts occur as a result of having participated in these performances. The research in this section will discuss the positive effects of both Reader's Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed as separate performances before considering if the outcomes have the potential to overlap. Because methods of Theatre of the Oppressed have not yet been applied to Reader's Theatre in research, commonalities must be considered to identify an intersection of effects. Next, research will be reviewed to outline the potential implications and negative outcomes of using Theatre of the Oppressed methods. Because implications and negative effects are possible in using Theatre of the Oppressed, this section will also include best practices for disabling or reducing the potential implications of this method.

Positive Outcomes for the Individual

The use of performance amongst older and younger generations have shown to have positive effects for the actor and ensemble. Evenson (1998) found that participants in the Reader's Theatre performance amongst middle schoolers had higher self-esteem and a greater ability to collaborate and learn with others as a result of the use of this type of performance; students uncovered the necessity of getting to know their peers in order to effectively "'cooperate and make decisions' as a group" (p. 55). When a student performs scenes written by diverse playwrights, or in the case of this research, their peers, this "demand[s] both intellectual and emotional understanding of an Other" leading to more "informed empathy" (Cherne, 2013, p. 69). The positive effects of these studies in Reader's Theatre should remain in order to consider an application of Theatre of the Oppressed to be truly effective. Because students will be performing stories of the Other in their ensemble, Cherne's findings could apply.

Similarly, practices in Theatre of the Oppressed require performers to collaborate on specific oppressive experiences and find new ways to overcome these obstacles. Songe-Moller & Bjerkestrand (2012) note that with multicultural groups of performers, the sense of empowerment and agency occurred through collaboration. Individuals from different cultures were able to collaborate together to fulfill this sense of ownership and pride in their identity and culture. Powers & Duffy's (2016) focus is on making intersectionality of performers visible. A common outcome of the Theatre of the Oppressed practice they note is, "some students self-reported significant growth (e.g., depth of understanding and insight, increased knowledge, etc.), others appeared to have an emerging understanding of new concepts" (p. 68). This commonality between both Theatre of the Oppressed and Reader's

Theatre could promote similar positive effects when combining both performance styles.

Because Theatre of the Oppressed gives participants (audience and performer) an opportunity to communicate and transform their own experiences in a unique way, Clark (2009) posits that personal narratives offer "cathartic and therapeutic value" (p. 58) and a "strengthening...agency" (p. 63), similar to the findings by Songe-Moller & Bjerkestrand (2012). Research done by Brahma et. al (2019) finds participants responded to the experience of Theatre of the Oppressed with results of more confidence, empowerment, and self-esteem as well. Participants involved in Theatre of the Oppressed learned "how one's environment determined one's behavior" and, consequently "developed a new, more tolerant perspective" (Howard, 2004, p. 227). Despite Boal's claim that Theatre of the Oppressed was never intended to be a form of therapy, a greater sense of self is a natural result of the process from subsequent research. Because these studies were done exclusively with women (Brahma et. al, 2019) and older individuals between the ages of 17-29 (Howard, 2004) it is unclear whether or not students between the ages of 14-18 of different genders and demographics will reap the benefits of the previously mentioned research.

Lastly, much like any other form of theatre, the actor must have a "theatrical reality" or unity with the character they are portraying (Reitz, 1966, p.191). Reader's Theatre's "main burden of communication [is] on the spoken word" (p. 192) as well as having the ability to "cultivate the attitude that the play is a truth, theatrically, and not a fictional representation" (p. 195). For the persuasive element of narrative paradigm to be successful, truthfulness in performance will be imperative. Because Theatre of the Oppressed focuses on the personal story that is non-fiction, the difficulty for performers will not be finding truth and unity in the story itself, but likely the fictional solutions that will be devised by the students to overcome the oppressive scenario in question.

Potential Implications, Negative Outcomes, & Best Practices

Amongst many studies, Theatre of the Oppressed is considered a form of psychodrama that can achieve the outcome of healing and self-expression through theatre (Orkibi, 2011). However, this research follows the direction of Orkibi's that while the teacher must keep the space emotionally and physically safe, their role should never be that of a psychiatrist. Although research of Theatre of the Oppressed shows “the potential to empower participants to try out alternative modes of action and behaviour,” Forum Theatre can also make the participant feel blamed for how a situation or experience played out (Erel et. al, 2017, p. 308). The goal is to make sure the actor that shared their experience through Forum Theatre does not feel the burden of responsibility for their story’s outcome in reality. If Theatre of the Oppressed can be applied to Reader's Theatre, it is imperative that the process includes the group addressing social inequities and past trauma while not putting the teacher in the role of therapist.

As a result of using Theatre of the Oppressed processes, the reproduction of trauma must still be addressed, especially when used with students that are minors. Kina & Fernandes (2017) notes that “the process of performance is not in itself transformational as collective discussion of a solution does not automatically generate critical reflection on the causes of the initial problem. To overcome this, Boal developed the role of the Joker” (p. 244). There is harm in potentially replaying trauma and oppression, so the role of The Joker is imperative. This role serves an important function and must work to help those involved to overcome trauma and experience freedom rather than simply reproduce a performer's trauma. The director must make sure “students are not exploited emotionally” by ensuring the theatre is a “safe space.” The Joker’s role then would be to facilitate conversation either collectively or individually that debriefs and assesses the impacts and discomfort of the narratives students share (Giesler, 2017, p. 352). Students would need to consent to these topics and experiences together outside of the performance and practice is deemed necessary. This group collaboration will require an advanced level of trust with one another and the director.

For Theatre of the Oppressed to be safely applied to Reader's Theatre, the Joker’s role would naturally be left to the educator or director. When differing privileges and experiences exist in the group that uses Theatre of the Oppressed, the "position as Joker shifts from standing outside of the narratives presented to one of transparency, of acknowledging how they fit into systems and naming their biases" (Kina & Fernandes, 2017, p. 247). Communicating self-awareness in others' stories, finding connections, and addressing the impact of spoken oppressions is an important part of this process. The use of Theatre of the

Oppressed with students in educational settings must first lay a foundation of safety before reaping the benefits of real-world application, self-awareness, engagement, and reflection. The research shows that participating in these performances can affect those involved directly with the performance, but it is important to consider whether the performance can have lasting effects towards uprooting oppression, trauma, and injustice.

Social Change as a Result of Theatre of the Oppressed Methods in Reader's Theatre

The need for social change in marginalized communities that impact many minority groups is imperative. Because there are no studies directly related to Reader's Theatre and social change outcomes, the primary focus of this section will rely on the research conducted regarding Theatre of the Oppressed. Theatre of the Oppressed was created with the intention to have social change be an outcome and as a result, this research is necessary to consider. Siltanen (1978) asserts that the use of role playing as seen in Theatre of the Oppressed can be a useful tool for "increasing people's readiness to respond to various communication situations" (p. 28). With the use of original works and Theatre of the Oppressed application, Howard (2004) furthers that participants of the study felt empowered with a better ability to problem solve and thus, take steps towards social change. If participants can derive the personal effects many studies have confirmed through Theatre of the Oppressed, actions towards enacting social change can occur. Confidence as a personal effect on the performer can be a link to feeling empowered to address social inequities, injustices, and oppression either against themselves or others.

Social change can also take place within the individual when they recognize the biases, beliefs, and actions that are harmful to others, especially marginalized groups. Powers & Duffy (2016) confirm the outcome that, "...Theatre of the Oppressed provides a powerful framework for students to recognize, confront, and challenge beliefs about themselves and the multiple identities of their future students. This awareness is critical to create small openings for recognizing and embracing the multiple identities within our classrooms" (p. 71). By taking what is learned through the art of Theatre of the Oppressed and applying more empathy and understanding in other areas like Reader's

Theatre, research that shows the audience can walk away from these performances with a greater sense of those traits could have a positive effect on social change. Giesler (2017) confirms this position, that "Theatre of the Oppressed ultimately provides students with tangible ways of understanding practice in a real-world sense...a rehearsal of revolution can be a revolutionary act in and of itself" (p. 352). By gaining empathy and the understanding of other's experiences, specifically minorities in terms of race and gender, participants may be more influenced to drive social change by taking action or considering new beliefs, even if the effects are short-term.

In order for the audience to have a connection to the performance, they must find narratives that are truthful to their experiences. Fisher (1984) discusses the assumption that humans will find good reasons to accept a story based on differing and homogenous stories they have already experienced or heard. If the stories do not hold a level of universality, the audience may not have a connectedness to the experiences being performed. Fox (2007) notes that when stories of the audience are told, the narrative impacts the participants and community with a positive outcome of empathy and human connection. These qualities have the potential to encourage more action towards social change and addressing oppressive scenarios in the moment.

Theatre allows the performer to capture the experience of someone else through a first-person view. The audience is immersed in the performance through the elements of immediacy and intimacy that live theatre offers. Cherne (2012) confirms in her study that, "acting can provide a useful path toward empathetic understanding in the actor of someone else's experience...and through the spectator as well" (p. 70). When using storytelling methods that follow Fisher's (1984) "presuppositions that structure the narrative paradigm" (p. 8), Theatre of the Oppressed applied to Reader's Theatre performances has the capability to function as a persuasive tool geared towards enacting social change through changes in beliefs, values, or influence over future action.

Discussion

Storytelling is a longstanding tradition of connecting with others and gaining new information. Fisher (1984) confirms that storytelling is what makes humans unique and offers a distinct opportunity to use emotions and narratives to shape beliefs and actions. There is a need for students in their formative years to address their experiences that cause trauma and oppression. The method of Theatre of the Oppressed relies solely on the true experiences of those involved and was created with a direct attempt to change the actions and outcomes of future oppressive scenarios by using storytelling. Reader's Theatre proposes the use of either published literature or original written works; either way, stories are an essential part of both mediums. The use of narrative in Theatre of the Oppressed and Reader's Theatre encourages the art of storytelling to evoke emotion, connection, and meaning. Participating in Theatre of the Oppressed and Reader's Theatre is an opportunity to take an educational and empathetic approach to the experiences of today's youth.

Research question number one sought to discover if Theatre of the Oppressed methods could be effectively applied to the process and performance of Reader's Theatre. Based on the research, Theatre of the Oppressed styles such as Playback and Forum Theatre seem to easily apply to Reader's Theatre and the creative writing and brainstorming process that can take place in developing a script. The proposed steps to applying Boal's styles to Reader's Theatre include the following: build a relationship with students involved, develop a thematic concept for students to reflect on and connect to, engage in discussion surrounding these stories, develop a script based on the narratives that connect coherently, discover and explore opportunities for solutions, and apply them to the script. An important component of exploring traumatic and oppressive experiences will require moments to debrief collaboratively as a group and individually between the teacher and their students. Because the research and intention of Theatre of the Oppressed is done in a single workshop of a one-time performance, there is much left to consider for the effects on students communicating stories and ultimately, performing a Theatre of the Oppressed-inspired Reader's Theatre after multiple rehearsals and performances over the course of one to four months.

The use of these styles is beneficial because the research supports the notion that original works (performed by Reader's Theatre) through Theatre of the Oppressed methods have positive effects on the performer. This will work best and most fluidly when the director decides on a theme or concept to draw out stories and experiences from the students. In order for Theatre of the Oppressed styles to be most effective, these stories should be honest and true. Perhaps the stories are personal and have happened to the students, or they could be stories they have seen in the news or media that have had a traumatic or difficult impact on them. Fisher's narrative paradigm confirms that stories intended for persuasion do not have to be real; the narratives can be imagined so there is room for truthfulness to exist in the imagination of the students' perception of the world around them.

The second research question asks what effects, both positive and negative, exist as a result of this performance on the audience and performer. As for the impacts on the audience, there is no research regarding if Reader's Theatre and the lack of audience participation in this style of theatre will have impacts or effects of social change. Because these studies were done primarily on the performer, there is much left to consider for the effects on the audience through the use of Theatre of the Oppressed methods in Reader's Theatre original works and its effect on its influence for acting towards social change. While Theatre of the Oppressed utilizes audience participation, Reader's Theatre differs as a memorized, 30 minute performance that does not allow for an active audience participant. In Theatre of the Oppressed, the active audience member has the autonomy to actively participate and engage with the material; thus, the outcome was that Theatre of the Oppressed has the potential for participants to take action in uprooting oppressive social norms (Brahma et. al, p. 168). Because Reader's Theatre puts audience members as a spectator rather than an active participant as they are in Theatre of the Oppressed styles, further research of the application of Theatre of the Oppressed in Reader's Theatre should be done to see if the benefits can exist in a sender-receiver communication model.

Reason (2010) notes the limitations researching the impact of theatre on an audience. There is difficulty in understanding the audience's perspective and the effects on them objectively. Even if the audience "externalize[s] that experience," there are shortcomings to interpreting those findings (Reason, p. 15). The primary objective is not to identify the impact on the audience in the moment, but rather to view the influence of the performance on their beliefs, actions, and their drive to enact social change as a result of seeing the performance. Erel et. al (2017) confirms the purpose and outcomes of Theatre of the Oppressed:

> For practitioners of Theatre of the Oppressed the method aims to create in participants a desire to enact social change beyond the confines of the theatre…participatory theatre has

> the potential to make visible the subjugated knowledges of participants. This is in itself a transformational social intervention that can give way to social action beyond the research and theatre space. (p. 309-310)

By allowing students to undergo the Theatre of the Oppressed process in the creation of the written work for a Reader's Theatre performance, students may be more apt to a greater sense of identity, self-image, and motivation to overcome future oppressions. Audiences can view the end result of the written works where the students share true experiences of oppression and overcoming them. Thus, audiences may have the opportunity to leave the performance trained for "real action" (Boal, 1979, p. 122) potentially impacting opportunities for social change. Future research should explore if this form of narrative performance has such positive and lasting impacts; additionally, this query suggests that audience members would feel more capable to address instances of oppression and trauma in the moment, similarly to Theatre of the Oppressed style's intended outcome.

A primary implication of this study is the negative effects that are possible within the application of Theatre of the Oppressed to Reader's Theatre, and thus adolescent students. Future research should consider more best practices associated with the teacher acting as "The Joker." Parents of students should be debriefed often and have an awareness of the conversations taking place while also balancing the need for trust and confidentiality with the students involved. If negative impacts on the performers exist in Theatre of the Oppressed styles, such as feeling blamed for the outcome of their oppressive scenarios, conversations and language surrounding victim-blaming and trauma should be consistently addressed. The intention of this application is for a positive outcome, but because the communication of stories can be interpreted and perceived differently, Geisler's (2017) suggestion of creating a "safe space" should be further explored in how to provide this environment.

The status quo in America calls for social change amongst many identities and marginalized groups. Diversity in cast will allow Theatre of the Oppressed to truly see outcomes of empathy and deeper understanding for the Other. While this does not suggest that homogenous or privileged groups do not experience trauma, this just means that stories may lead to an already understood experience by all involved; in this scenario, the process will still remain cathartic and find positive effects for the performers. Regardless, students everywhere are experiencing unique stories and events; they will meet people of different backgrounds and identities in their lives. By experiencing Theatre of the Oppressed practices, they may be better equipped to recognize the importance of active allyship for communities different to them. This has the potential to achieve greater levels of social involvement and political participation. Improving students' well-being by developing a greater sense of self-esteem and confidence will encourage future opportunities for empathy and engagement in social problem solving. When applying Reader's Theatre to Theatre of the Oppressed, this consistent exploration of trauma and oppression linked to themes of their current social realities could create positive implications towards changing the status quo.

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Reconnecting with Former Student Interns: Exploring the Impact of a Higher Education Institution's Public Affairs Mission Pillars Of Ethical Leadership, Cultural Competence, and Community Engagement on Alumni Since Graduation

Randy K. Dillon

Abstract

This study reconnects with alumni who were enrolled in and undergraduate communication internship course for academic credit to think back on their experiences as an intern as well as update what he/she has been doing since graduation. Intern alums were asked to contemplate how Missouri State University's mission in Public Affairs and its three pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement have played a role in their personal and professional lives since graduation.

> *"My alma mater gave me the confidence to talk with and live among people different from me."*
>
> As told to the author by an alumnus while walking through the streets of Old Town in Hoi An, Vietnam, February 17, 2020.

What do students take away from their time in college? Why do certain scholarly and pedagogical experiences impact one's life long after graduation? What can colleges and universities provide that go beyond being a place of learning? What are the factors that influence alumni to remain in contact with their alma mater? These are some of the questions that institutions of higher education grapple with. Providing responses to these questions can assist an institution in establishing its identity and uniqueness among its competitors. This paper explores how higher education institutions can employ an organizational mission that offers a means to both identify with the overarching goals of the institution while also allowing the flexibility for the individual to shape and apply the mission to one's own goals. This manuscript also draws upon the concept of the "scholarship of teaching and learning" (SOTL). SOTL encourages each educator to pose questions about pedagogical practices and student learning. Although most SOTL work occurs during the course it can be used to look at educational impacts long after a course is over. In the case of the current study Missouri State University's organizational mission focusing on public affairs was originally used as a way for students to reflect on what they had learned as part of their internship experience. Now as alumni how may the university's mission carry an impact years after they have been in the internship course? Thus, this project brings together the author's passions of teaching and scholarship, experiential learning in the form of internships, as well as opportunities to reconnect with former students.

Even though Missouri State University's Public Affairs Mission has been in existence for over a quarter of a century little is known about what students do with the mission after they leave the university. This study explores what recent alumni have to say regarding the university's public affairs mission, particularly as it relates to the pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement. Further, what are these alumni proud of, what challenges have they faced since graduation, and what advice would they give to current and soon to be college students.

Organizational Mission Statements as Identity Markers

An important decision for any organization is to assert a mission that emphasizes identity and uniqueness (Alegre, Berbegal-Mirabent, Guerro, & Mas-Machuca, 2018). Likewise, an institution of higher education must establish an identity and present itself as being unique if it wants to endure and succeed. It must answer questions such as: What does it mean to go to this school? How can life be imagined or reimagined as a result of graduating with a degree from this institution? Colleges and universities publicly address these questions through their mission statements. Consequently, mission statements can offer ways in which organizations can claim their identity, establish goals, and set themselves apart from others.

According to Seeber, Barberio, Huisman, & Mampaey (2019) the challenges that arise from mission statements cannot be ignored. The first challenge is a pursuit of legitimacy despite multiple and competing expectations. Mission statements do not work unless they are "consistent with the values of its internal members" (Seeber, et al., 2019, p. 230). For institutions of higher education these internal members are students, faculty, staff, administration, and alumni. The second challenge is to balance the similarities and differences with one's competition. This can be an especially acute challenge for institutions of higher education existing among others who are geographically close offering comparable programs. With the increase in online education this distinction is becoming more blurred.

Edelman (1977) argues that when organizational goals are too concretely stated, they often fail. Mohr (1983) encourages organizations to be creative and flexible with stating goals, even to the point of cultivating inconsistencies. Organizations such as those in higher education comprise a diverse group of people. Therefore, mission statements need to be worded in a way that are clear but not at the point of being restrictive. To address these concerns organizations need to pay attention to the "keywords" used when expressing central concepts within their discourses and texts. According to Williams (2015) keywords "…are significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation; they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought" (p. xxvii). Leitch & Davenport (2007) argue that key words can be used and an enabling function for discourse even when they may be different interpretations.

> Keywords are thus not only salient words within a discourse that are closely associated with the issues that are central to that discourse but are also words for which there are multiple meanings. These multiple meanings may be traced to the different ideological positions and/or sets of interests associated with the various discourse participants. (p. 9)

Later, the attempts to describe the allowance of multiple viewpoints in organizations prompted Eisenberg (1984) to advocate the term of "strategic ambiguity" (p. 229). According to Eisenberg, such "[A]mbiguity is used strategically to foster agreement on abstractions without limiting specific interpretations" (p. 231). Eisenberg explained that strategic ambiguity provides a way that one can "fill in" what they believe to be the appropriate context and meaning. "Strategic ambiguity is essential to organizing because it allows for multiple interpretations to exist among people who contend that they are attending to the same message" (Eisenberg, 1984, p. 231). Research utilizing strategic ambiguity includes Leitch & Davenport (2007) and their study on keywords appearing throughout governmental documents advocating sustainable biotechnology in New Zealand. Jarzabkowski, Sillince, & Shaw (2010) also drew on strategic ambiguity to examine how a university business school in the United Kingdom developed internationalization strategy goals for purposes of accreditation.

Organizations can make use of strategic ambiguity through the careful word crafting of an organizational mission statement that encourages its members to imagine how they fit into the organization. People locate themselves and others in the stories they tell (Beech & Johnson, 2005; Fenton & Langley, 2011). This consists of stories that are told and retold, and stories imagined and yet to be told. Fisher (1987) refers to stories as narratives in which human make sense of their own lives and the world around them. As storytellers, humans use narratives to provide a "currency of sense making" that connects identity work to the roles they enact (Boje, 1991, p. 106).

Narratives can serve as vehicles for strategic ambiguity. Organizational missions that are strategically ambiguous allow for actors to supply and personalize their own interpretations while at the same time following certain parameters that coincide with general narratives of the organization. For strategic ambiguity to proceed an organization needs to offer a "strategy in practice" by providing examples of "macro-level grand narrative stories" (Fenton & Langley, 2011, p. 1179) that not only influence but allow for people to create their own stories that "reflect or build on expectations created in these macro-stories" (p. 1185). This supplies a "narrative infrastructure that enables and constrains the possible stories, action, and interactions" (p. 1185). Deuten & Rip (2000) dub these as the "rails' in which stories are developed and follow. Second, individuals as they become actors in their own stories continue to shape and reshape the narrative structure. Deuten & Rip (2000) used the metaphor of "telling yourself forward" to describe one's fitting within the narrative while at the same time adding to it (p. 85). "[S]tories shape the organizational landscape as individuals and organizations become actors in their own stories" (Fenton & Langley, 2011, p. 1186). Thus, narrative is used to not only describe action; narrative is constitutive of action by its players (Deuten & Rip, 2000; Fenton & Langley, 2011).

Missouri State University's Mission of Public Affairs

According to its website Missouri State University is [the State's] second largest public university by enrollment (www.missouristate.edu). Formed in 1905 as the Fourth District Normal School, the school's original purpose was training of public school teachers. The first name change came in 1919 to Southwest Missouri State Teachers College to recognize its regional and academic reach. With the introduction of liberal arts and sciences the university was renamed in 1945 to Southwest Missouri State College. In 1972 with the addition of graduate studies the College name was replaced with University to be Southwest Missouri State University. Later in the 1990s and with momentum gaining in the 2000s public universities throughout the state refined their foci and some even transformed their names. During the 1990s and early 2000s Southwest Missouri State University became the second largest in student population in the state; the regional designation was dropped with a name change to Missouri State University in 2005. Like other institutions who changed names during this period, Missouri State University had already differentiated itself in through its public affairs mission.

Since its beginning questions proliferated about what is a mission in public affairs? How narrow or broad should the mission be? Does public affairs comprise only of public administration and/or service? How can different programs in the Arts, Humanities, the Social Sciences, and the Sciences across campus link to a public affairs education? In other words, how does a particular discipline such as Communication promote itself as preparing students for a life in public affairs? What markers determine if a student has opportunities to engage in learning about public affairs through their time in courses, as well as their campus activities, and even through their off-campus pursuits? Furthering defining what is meant by public affairs, the university's mission was supported by certain pillars. The word "pillar" as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary as being "a fundamental precept" ("pillar," n.d.). Three pillars--ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement constitute Missouri State University's Public Affairs Mission. Each of these three pillars is defined as follows:

> <u>Ethical Leadership</u> – Students will articulate their value systems, act ethically within the context of a democratic

> society and demonstrate engaged and principled leadership (Adapted from the Center for Ethical Leadership). [The institution] is preparing students for the future by helping them understand the ethical dimensions of leadership and take what they learn in the classrooms and use it to help solve problems and bring about change.
> <u>Cultural Competence</u> – Students will recognize and respect multiple perspectives and cultures. [The institution] helps students develop knowledge in several ways. Study abroad programs, interactions with international students and opportunities to study different languages, histories, and religions help students broaden their horizons, build relationships and bring about better competition for the future.
> <u>Community Engagement</u> – Students will recognize the importance of scientific principles in the generation of sound policy. Community engagement lets students branch out and see how the world is working through a different lens, giving them the opportunity to work with their communities and build up their ability to lead in their careers (Retrieved from the Missouri State University website, February 10, 2022).

A successful organizational mission enables members to relate to it and interpret it with their own experiences through the stories that are shared. These narratives both provide guidance and structure for communication. Missouri State University's mission of public affairs has been in existence for over a quarter of a century. Narratives of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement have had opportunities to be developed, lived, and shared. A mission should function as rich territory for narrative structures for incoming and current students, its faculty, staff, and administration. Hopefully, this continues with an institution's students long after one has graduated. Since the university mission is aimed toward students to make their way forward as citizens, one group in particular—alumni—should be asked about the mission's impact. What are their stories and how do they link to their alma mater's organizational mission?

Connecting With Recent Alumni

Institutions of higher education recognize that it is crucial to maintain ties with their alumni. Private institutions cannot be sustained unless they have a strong donor base, many of these consisting of alumni that have fond memories and thus want to support their alma mater. With cuts in state support public universities and colleges are also in need to ramp up efforts to tap into other pools of support, with alumni being a potential revenue source (Miller, 1993). More institutions are engaged in large fund-raising campaigns that support the goals of the university (CASE, 2015). A lot of attention is given to generous alumni bequests with benefactors primarily being older alumni who are several years and often decades since being a student. Nevertheless, colleges and universities recognize the need to broaden appeals to reach different kinds of alumni. Rissmeyer (2010) reports that "developing young alumni groups is a high priority for offices in alumni relations" (p. 21).

Most recent alumni do not have the financial ability to contribute to their alma mater due to challenges of student loan debt, a tough job market, and being lower paid due to being near the beginning of their careers (Gaier, 2005). Despite not being able to provide considerable monetary donations more institutions of higher education recognize the need to reach these recent alums in order to cultivate future contributions (Hanover Research, 2018).

In a study of alumni giving, recent alumni report that the primary communications from one's alma mater are requests for financial contributions (McDonough, 2017). These requests can be viewed negatively by recent alumni since they may not be in a favorable position to give financial contributions (McDonough, 2017). Nevertheless, recent alumni are interested in staying connected with their alma mater chiefly through non-monetary events such as student mentoring programs, serving on advisory boards/councils and attending local alumni events (McDonough, 2017). Research indicates that recent alumni that do engage in volunteer and advocacy activities are more likely to later provide financial support to their alma mater (McDearmon, 2013; Weerts & Ronca, 2009). Further, alumni who are recognized for the assistance they provide often leads to lending futher support in the future (Thelin & Trollinger, 2014).

Alumni who are satisfied with their undergraduate academic experiences are more likely to be active and participate in alumni involvement (Gaier, 2005; McDonough, 2017). Recent alumni report being gratified for gaining valuable experience while in school including work on a class project, extracurricular activities, committee work, leadership responsibilities, and opportunities to link what is learned in the classroom and apply to the world around them such as through internships (McDonough, 2017). In addition, remaining in touch with fellow students, professors, administrators, student-work supervisors/staff can serve as an "emotional attachment" with one's alma mater (Gaier, 2005, p. 280). McDonough (2017) also found that recent alumni value these kinds of relationships as important.

High Impact Practice: Internships

Popik (2009) described internships as opportunities for students to "test drive" a career (p. 9). For the purposes of this study, an internship is defined as "structured and career relevant work experience obtained by students prior to graduation from an academic program" (Taylor, 1988, p. 393). An "intern" is an advanced student gaining practical experience usually in a professional field. Students see internships as a way to "gain an edge in the job market by acquiring valuable employment experience prior to graduation" (Stirling, Kerr, Banwell, MacPherson, Bandealy & Battaglia, 2014, p. 10). Research on what constitutes a successful internship point to a student engaging in meaningful work along with the necessary supervision that comes with it (Sattler, 2011). Kuh (2008) includes internships as high-impact educational practices beneficial to college students. High-impact practices share several traits. "They demand considerable time and effort, facilitate learning outside of the classroom, require meaningful interactions with faculty and students, encourage collaboration with diverse others, and provide frequent and substantive feedback" (Indiana University Center for Post-Secondary Research, 2007., paragraph 1, http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/high_impact_practices.cfm).

For an internship to constitute high impact it must go beyond learning gained from direct experience. Learning should be transformational for the individual (Baumgartner, 2001; Mezirow, 1994; Mezirow, 1997). An essential part of this transformational learning requires critical reflection that encourages the learner to evaluate their worldview and frames of reference with the new experiences (Cranton, 2002; Curran & Murray, 2008). Thus, students in the internship course produced final portfolios that necessitated them to reflect on their work experiences and performance, as well as their interactions with supervisors, with other co-workers and with the public (e.g., clients, customers, patrons). The final portfolio required students to submit examples of accomplished work. In addition, interns were asked to integrate Missouri State University's Public Affairs Mission, and more specifically the three pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement as part of the final portfolio. The three pillars served as a framework for students' reflections about internships including: solving problems and bringing about change (ethical leadership); engaging in recognizing and respecting multiple perspectives and cultures (cultural competence); and contributing their knowledge and experiences to their own community and the broader society (community engagement).

Research in this paper draws upon the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). SOTL asks highly skilled and curious teachers engage in systematic inquiry about the process of teaching and learning outcomes (Jardine, Clifford, & Friesen, 2003). SOTL inquiries involve not just what students share about teaching and learning outcomes but also require the teacher to reflect on what their students report. This reflection consists of the teacher listening to and responding to what students have shared. According to Hutchings (2000) some of the SOTL questions that teachers-scholars employ include what works regarding teaching practices and pedagogical approaches. Another SOTL question consists of descriptive inquiries about students' learning and experiences that they bring from outside the class. While another question urges scholar teachers to ponder the possible lasting impacts of learning experiences upon their students (Hutchings, 2000). This last type of SOTL question guides the research in this paper.

Calls for institutions of higher learning to assess alumni beyond fund-raising are not new. Pettit and Litten (1999) write alumni can "provide critical assessments of the institution's performance in preparing students to lead productive and rewarding lives" (p. 1). SOTL questions can therefore be a means to obtaining these assessments. A majority of SOTL research centers on the scholarly and pedagogical experiences of teachers with present day students. It is imperative to extend this scholarship by listening to the experiences of former students, in the case with the current study, alumni who were interns as part of high-impact practice experience completed in their undergraduate degree program. In addition, the internship required these alumni to reflect upon and integrate their universities organizational mission (particularly the three pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence of Missouri State University's Public Affairs Mission) as part of the internship experience. At the center of this project is finding out from these alumni what they have experienced and learned utilizing the three pillars of the university's public affairs mission since graduation. In other words, after over a quarter century of the public affairs mission what are our alumni doing with it? Thus, the three primary questions posed to recent intern alumni that guide this research are:

- *Ethical Leadership* - How have you acted ethically in helping solve problems and bring about change either in yourself, your relationships, and your communities?
- *Cultural Competence* - How have you have engaged in recognizing and respecting multiple perspectives and cultures?
- *Community Engagement* - How have you have contributed your knowledge/expertise in engaging with the community and society in general?

Intern alumni were asked: What are you most proud of so far regarding what you have done with your life and or your career? How did your internship play a role in your life/work/career? What has been your biggest challenge since graduation, and how did you overcome it? What advice would you give to prospective students about internships?

Method

A qualitative method was used to address the research questions in this study. Qualitative research centers on understanding social processes, respects the subjective nature of humans in how they make sense of their world, particularly those perspectives of research participants (Esterberg, 2002).

Participants

Before making initial contact with intern alumni the research investigator gained approval by the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for use of research with Human

Subjects. Initial contact with former student interns was primarily obtained through the professional networking site LinkedIn. LinkedIn was used since it is the professional networking site that interns were encouraged to join while in the internship course. Other means of reaching participants included asking faculty colleagues in touch with former students through other social media. In a couple of cases this type of outreach resulted in the researcher contacting participants directly though texting and stating the connection with the other professor. Email was also utilized to reach participants.

Participants were intern students in the COM 495 Communication Internship course at different times during a ten-year period (2008-2018) that the research investigator coordinated the internship program. Participants in the present study represented the different internship classes during the ten-year period including one from the first semester (Summer 2008) to the one from the final semester (Spring 2018). A majority (over 80%) of the 599 interns during this ten-year period identified as Communication majors; with other interns being Communication minors. However, for the present study only intern alumni who were Communication majors were interviewed. Twenty intern alumni (12 females, 8 males) participated in the interviews. The names of the participants were kept confidential. Each participant was documented with either an F for female or M for male noting the gender of the participant along with the order in which she or he was interviewed. For example, the first female interviewed is denoted as F1; the first male interviewed is listed as M1.

Procedures

Twenty interviews were conducted between the researcher and the interviewee participant (intern alum). Before beginning an interview the participant was administered the informed consent. In-person interviews took place at convenient locations for the interviewee participant including coffee shops, restaurants, or at the alum’s worksite including either a personal office or conference room. Interviews took place in metropolitan areas of the state where the educational institution is located. Geographical distance for out-of-state interviewees as well as the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic requiring “social distancing” measures prevented some planned in-person interviews. Consequently, these interviews were conducted over the telephone or through Zoom.

The interviews consisted of what Tracy (2013) refers to as "guided question and answer conversations" (p. 131). Each interview participant was sent a copy of the interview questions beforehand either by email or attachment on LinkedIn. This allowed the interview participant to review and to think about the questions before the interview started.

Interviews began with the researcher asking the participant to share what he or she had been doing since graduation. Other questions followed including what alumni participants were most proud of in their life and career, addressing any challenges he or she had, and how these challenges were overcome. Participants were then asked to reflect on how their COM 495 internship has or has not impacted their personal and professional life since. Questions specifically focused on how the internship played a role in one's life/work/career and advice one would give to current and future students wanting to complete an internship.

As the interview progressed participants were invited to focus on the Missouri State University Public Affairs Mission. Participants were questioned if and how the mission is a part of their personal and professional life. Explicitly, this included the interviewee participant to comment on each of the three pillars of the public affairs mission: (1) Ethical Leadership: *Talk about how you have acted ethically in helping solve problems and bring about change either in yourself, your relationships, and your communities?* (2) Cultural Competence: *Talk about how you have engaged in recognizing and respecting multiple perspectives and cultures?* (3) Community Engagement: *Talk about how you have contributed your knowledge/expertise in engaging with the community and society in general?*

Each interview took between 25 and 40 minutes. The research investigator would write down the responses. Immediately after each interview the investigator would review notes and write down information while it was still fresh. Because participants received interview questions beforehand, some interviewees would complete the response questionnaire and email the responses to the research investigator.

Data from the interviews were analyzed using Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method for themes and categories. Interview transcripts and notes were read and reread to isolate material that relates to the research questions. Emerging themes and interpretations from the interviews were compared to establish place categories in order to ensure qualitative research that is rigorous (Richards, 2009; Tracy, 2010).

Results

Twenty former students in a Communication Internship course were asked to talk about their experiences since graduation. These recent alumni were asked if and how the three pillars of Missouri State University's public affairs mission: ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement had made an impact on their lives. Participants were also invited to comment about what they had encountered since graduation including what they are proud of, challenges that were faced, and advice for current and future student interns.

Ethical Leadership

Interview participants were queried about Ethical Leadership, the first pillar listed under Missouri State University's Public Affairs Mission. Interviewees were asked, "How you have acted ethically in helping solve problems and bring about change either in yourself, your relationships, and your communities?" Intern alumni mentioned the importance of being "transparent". One intern alum (M3) who worked in finance said, "We are dealing with members' money. I need to make sure I am transparent and ethical in handling their finances." Another alum (M1) who has spent much of his career working in politics stated. "Since politics is all about public record this [ethical leadership] is an important pillar because everything is open such how much money you make, how much you spend, and so on. You need to be transparent." Alum (F11) who was interviewed during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic brought up the topic of transparency and asserted:

> Being a teacher, I have to make ethical decisions all the time Especially now with moving my seated classes to online. What is the most fair? Being transparent about what can be accepted as an alternate assignment? Deciding between doing this or doing that and bringing students in on the decisions of these choices. And still keep to the goals, the expectations of the course syllabus.

For some intern alumni talking about ethical leadership involved dealing with conflict situations. One alum (F10) said that ethical leadership during conflict means for them that “I should be there without getting my ego involved. I’ve worked a lot on that.” One alumni participant (F8) mentioned taking on the role of a “collaborator” during workplace disputes. Another intern alum (F7) said that collaboration involves “including the voices of others” when struggling with conflicts and decision making. Intern alum (F7) explained, “I bring a unique perspective to discussions of benefits and treatment of employees. What is best for people? Think of the different situations that people are in. Think about offering benefits that impact people, not just from the business side.”

Ethical leadership for some intern alumni requires taking responsibility either by providing a stance or calling something out. For intern alum (M8) confusion about voting in the 2020 election primaries and general election resulted in him taking part in helping others in exercising their right to vote. As M8 explained, “I have assisted my community in XX with resources to learn where to vote, when to vote, and how to vote whether that’s absentee or at a polling place.” For intern alum (F12) that was interviewed during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic ethical leadership meant that it was essential as a state employee to be there for the public. “If my services are needed elsewhere, we [state employees] are expected to help and I will gladly do so if needed.” Alum (M2) related about a time working in a political campaign when someone was “not treating people appropriately.” The situation demanded that the alum “step in when it goes beyond inappropriate to not right. Knowing when to stand up and saying something.” Alum (M5) cited an example of required ethical leadership that occurred during a previous job working at an insurance agency. “We also had a duty to the policy holders: the clients who were buying policies. I uncovered many examples of insurance fraud that I had to disclose and investigate without immediately alerting the agent.”

Another theme that came out of the ethical leadership discussions concerned self-care and making needed ethical decisions to bring change in one’s own personal and or professional life. In other words, if one is not ethical to themselves, how can one be ethical to others? One alum (M4) related how job stresses were carried home. The alum struggled to organize and prioritize time and tasks. “I was using drinking as a crutch.” Change involved self-care to manage the work/life balance. “Luckily, I had a team that helped me.” This “team” included the individual's work supervisor. “Now I do running, meditating, and yoga. Self-care is a pinnacle of all this.”

Ethical leadership involved making a “tough choice” with regards to one’s family for alum (F1):

> I loved working there…and thought that I could be there forever, but the job changed where I had to do a lot of travel. They [the company] wanted me to stay a week in St. Louis, then go to Kansas City for a week. I couldn’t because of me having kids. Due to the stress of travel and not being able to find day care for my children I was unable to stay. So, I resigned.

Cultural Competence

Regarding the public affairs mission pillar of cultural competence participant interviewees were asked about how he or she engaged in recognizing and respecting multiple perspectives and cultures. Several participants related to the need to go beyond recognizing and respecting difference and ensure action was carried out. An intern alum (F7) who works on the internal and external publishing for her organization mentioned that she has often highlighted internal employees of color and immigrants and their career paths. An alum (M5) in between employment stated that in his previous job, “I also had to be mindful of other cultures, ethnicities, and language barriers in my interactions with agents over the phone.” Alum (F12) who helped put on a large-scale public event each year referred to balancing conventional expectations of entertainment while opening-up to newer production ideas. “We definitely want to keep our traditional families happy, but we always try to bring new, exciting and different entertainment, shows, and fun to the XXXX each year.” Alum (F2) who works for a large global tech company pointed out how cultural competence plays a role in carrying out employment evaluations. “We have to consider what it’s like to be a woman in tech. But also look further and differentiate that a woman in tech in the U.S. may face different challenges than a woman in tech in India or Sao Paulo (Brazil).”

For intern alumni considering the pillar of cultural competence the employment of “intellectual empathy” emerged as a theme. Paul and Elder (2009) maintain that intellectual empathy is an essential intellectual trait for employing critical thinking. Intellectual empathy is "[h]aving a consciousness of the need to imaginatively put oneself in the place of others in order to genuinely understand them…This trait correlates with the ability to reconstruct accurately the viewpoints and reasoning of others and to reason from premises, assumptions, and ideas other than our own" (p. 14). Intellectual empathy is critical for those working with the public. Alum (M6) reported, "…it is crucial to understand every which way any communication may be interpreted, understood and accepted so as not to offend, insult or alienate..." Alum M7 indicated that he began working with colleagues much older than him "When I signed up as a learning and development specialist, I had experiences with people in the industry way longer than me." M7 said he "made it a point to be respectful and engage in open communication and learning."

One example of intellectual empathy was expressed by intern alum (F7). She realized how quickly rights could be taken away from certain groups of people, prompting her to "not shy away "from engaging with those who think differently from her. "I would say that over the past couple/three years I am more confident to have conversations with those who don't share my views. To ask them why they think the way they do. And taking the time to ask people questions, getting their perspectives, and challenging them if I need to."

Intellectual empathy can even be extended to members of one's own family as reported by one participant (F11). These are family members who "are on the opposite end of the political spectrum from me" on such issues as immigration and transgendered rights. "I'm trying to learn to see how and where they are getting their perspectives and forming their opinions. I then can or maybe hopefully can engage with them without demeaning them."

Community Engagement

Participants were interviewed about Community Engagement, the third pillar of XX University's public affairs mission. Specifically, each was asked about how he or she has contributed knowledge/expertise in engaging with the community and society in general. Community engagement was defined in different ways by the participants including being involved through volunteer work or connected with members of one's team within a workplace.

One community engagement theme was that early work with a professional organization or nonprofit can often produce a special place in one's heart for that organization resulting in lasting bonds. Some intern alumni remain in touch with a supervisor or fellow employee. Alum (F9) said her internship supervisor became her mentor and later through the years as a mutual sounding board. "I can turn to her. We can talk with one another and compare and contrast different things. We learn from one another." Other alumni report still participating in one form or another either through mentorship or fundraising activities. Intern alum (M6) mentioned that he was encouraged to become involved as a student in a professional organization while he was in college. At the time of being interviewed for this study he was in a national leadership position for the organization. "I was, and still am, able to help students across the nation and internationally to achieve more than previously believed possible and push students to achieve great things…"

Alumni connections with a professional and/or non-profit organization can result in convincing corporate peers and colleagues as well as fellow community allies that this is a worthy organization. Students who intern or do volunteer work for a specific nonprofit and who have beneficial experiences likely carry a special place in their heart for these organizations. Organizations that welcome student interns and volunteers can reap rewards in the future from these alums including support of donations of time and money. In addition, this may produce the most powerful reward - a positive word of mouth about the organization shared with others.

Another theme that came out of discussions of the Community Engagement public affairs pillar was how intern alumni frequently employed what they learned in their classes (including internships) for use later in their careers. One alum (F4) mentioned that "I kept my textbooks. I can still go back to those courses, my notes, and the texts for help with work I do now." An interesting phenomenon of identifying and naming what is going on in the workplace with the terms used back in their academic studies was identified by more than one participant. However, stating the term out loud was not often done. As one alum (F8) explained, "Saying oh, here is what is going on. It is 'cognitive dissonance', but you don't say it." Another interviewee (F10) mentioned that what they had learned in their communication courses enabled them to identify the different norms of another socioeconomic class. "It was helpful for me to have studied communication because at least I had a framework." Contributing to this knowledge was Payne's (2005) *Framework for Understanding Poverty* that the alum had come across in a college course. Again, this framework was used but not directly spoken about during the alum's interactions. Others talked about specific classes that continued to impact them such as one (F7) "I learned to follow the Objectives/Strategies/Tactics model I learned in Public Relations. I use it every time I approach a new project. It impresses people." Another alum (F9) related that in a Health Communication and Culture course the teacher required students to make a presentation speaking to a company on the topic of wellness. "I have used this presentation platform multiple times since when talking with donors and partners.".

What makes intern alumni proud?

Intern alumni participants were asked what he or she was most proud of. Some of the interviewees focused on overcoming adversity/challenges. One alum (F1) talked about surviving as an immigrant to the United States and finishing her undergraduate degree. "It took me nine years, but I stuck with it." Another alum (F7) who is a child of immigrant parents talked about the struggles her father and mother faced including "sharing an apartment with eight other people" after they had first arrived in the U.S. With the support of her family this alum was able to attend college, earn a bachelor's degree and later a master's degree." Furthermore, she has gone on to a "great career." Higher education achievement was central for alum (F11) who is a first-generation college student and continued to earn a Ph.D. Grasping the opportunities represented through a college education were also what made alum (F10) proud. Instead of relenting to the family pressures to attend the local college, this alum chose to move over three hours away to attend the institution. "I grew up poor in XX in a trailer. Many of my classmates in the hometown I'm from never left." Alum F10 cited poverty, no opportunities, substance abuse, and incarceration as holding many of her high school peers back. "I was glad to leave that all behind me. A lot of people don't get that chance."

Relocating and/or changing course during one's career were also reasons given for intern alumni being proud. Alumni (F2, F8, M4, M5, M7, M8) made decisions to further their careers by moving away to different cities, with three of these being in different states, and one living in a foreign country for a couple years. As one alum (M4) added, “It was good to get away and grow up as a person.” Alum (M5) revealed that he received a job offer through the on-campus Job Fair and had a job right out of college. Later, he decided to change careers “having the courage to end that career path when I decided it was right and make an enormous move across the country after living in [the State] my whole life.” Alum M7 who mentioned that he grew up in a small town in the State stated, “Most of my friends stayed in-state, but for me I am most proud of moving to a new state and making a name for myself.” Alum M7 elaborated that he had been working in a career area with start-up companies that “I didn’t even know existed until after I graduated.” Changing career direction didn’t require relocating to a different part of the country for another alum (F5) but it was still a tough decision that needed to be made.

> I guess walking away from a job that looked great on paper, but was not the right fit for me. Many didn’t understand why I would leave such a great paying job that came with an important title, which I got right after college. But I was so unhappy in it. I stayed true to myself and what I valued in the long run.

Career accomplishments were also cited by intern alumni as making them proud. Three male alumni emphasized this accomplishment: “Being able to work in the field [politics] I most wanted to” (M1); becoming a branch manager (M3); work I have done (M6). Female alumni also referenced work with alum (F4) stating, “I’m proud of the words of affirmation, the value that people have of me and the work I do.” Alum (F12) reported that she was proud of her leadership skills and staying up to date on technology and adapting to different systems. Alum (F9) indicated “Getting my dream job” at a specific nonprofit was what made her proud. “The job was not immediately there when I graduated, but I stayed involved, and persisted.”

A couple alumni emphasize that personal accomplishments were what made them most proud. Alum (F3) who noted more than once during the interview that she had been an older non-traditional student when completing her degree and her undergraduate internship said that she is proud of being a foster care provider and that she “adopted a young boy with challenging needs and limitations.” Alum (F6) on maternity leave at the time of the interview indicated that her family life was what she was most proud.

What is the biggest challenge?

Participants were asked about their biggest challenges since graduation and how they had overcome them. Breaking in careers, adjusting to demands and different roles of the workplace including how they were seen by others were reported challenges by alumni participants. Alum (M1) talked about the challenge of "Getting my foot in the door. But once you do, and do the work, and show up then that leads to others helping you." Alum (F8) also admitted that a challenge was "Getting a job. I applied to about 60-80 jobs. I got two interviews and one job offer." Intern alums talked about other challenges on the job. Alum (M5) revealed that, "[d]efinitely getting used to the 8-5 Monday to Friday schedule" was a challenge. For Alum (M4) it was "adapting to the fast-pace environment of a career." Alum (F5) disclosed, "[p]robably adjusting to adult work life and finding a balance and taking care of myself."

Intern participants spoke of challenges of interacting with other colleagues on the job especially if he or she stood out in some way such as age and gender. Alum (F4) indicated

"The biggest challenge at my previous job was my age. To be taken seriously by the older men who saw me as a young naïve woman." Age was also seen as a challenge for alum (M3) including being the youngest manager in the organization.

Recent alumni brought up the challenge of getting value for what they put into the job. For alum (M6) "negotiating salary" was a challenge. Alum (F2) who graduated during the Great Recession (2008-2010) remarked, "Over the years the salaries and opportunities put me back in comparison to what recent graduates coming out of college are making immediately. It has taken a decade to get where I need to be financially."

Advice for current and future student interns

Intern alumni interviewees exhibited positive attitudes toward the internship and were eager to offer advice to current and future student interns. "Do them. More than one if you can" said alum (F4). Alum (F5) remarked that internships "help you network." Alum (F1) acknowledged, "I think an internship is the best way to get your foot into the door at a prospective job. It gives you insight as to what your job duties will be and the people and culture of the organization." For alumni (F7, F10, F12, and M2) their internship led to either a job or connections to landing a first job.

Intern alumni stressed the importance of employing a strategy when pursuing and carrying out an internship. Alum (F2) declared, "So my advice would be to take time to think about what you want in an internship. Specific goals that you want to learn or acquire, and when you speak to the supervisor of your internship share those goals." Alum (M5) shared that even the experience of an internship can be helpful in communicating. "Having an internship will also give you important experiences to talk about when interviewing, which can make you stand out from the crowd." Alum (M3) suggested, "Don't be afraid to form your own internship." In fact, this alum (M3) said he did just this when he saw a need in an organization he was familiar with as a result of a class service learning project.

Interviewees confirmed that internships are opportunities to develop skills and to determine what one wants to do in a career. Alum (F3) said, "I believe it has increased my ability to empathize, and to be a better leader for collaborating teamwork of others with different perspectives." For alum (M4) an internship provides a chance for learning about the corporate structure. Alum (F6) affirmed that her internship required her to work with a group of people who were much older. It resulted in her "getting out of my comfort zone talking with people who are not of the same age group." Alum (F8) described that internships provided further understandings such as learning what you don't want to do and if you want to be in that career field. Alum (F9) asserted that internships assist one in developing skills and interests "while less is a stake." Further, "if it is a three-month internship, if you hate it, that's okay." Alum (F8) disclosed that internships can mean doing work that one doesn't know about or thought possible. "If you would have asked me when I was a senior that I would be doing what I do, I would have thought what? I would have never considered it. You might be surprised what you do. Working in a firm here that I had never considered or dreamed." Alum (F2) stressed about not being limited when one thinks of a career path. "Realize that different tracks and majors in school are more blurred in the workforce, especially as you progress in your career. Allow yourself to get involved in opportunities and learn from people outside your program and field." Intern alum (M8) imparted practical advice, “Don’t depend on one job. Have multiple streams of income.”

Discussion

Recent alumni of Missouri State University, specifically those who had completed the (COM 495) Communication Internship course as part of their undergraduate major in Communication, were the focus of this paper. The internship consisted of students completing an academic course along with the hours worked at different off-campus internship sites. These internship sites included both profit and non-profit workplaces. Since the integration of XX University’s public affairs mission was part of students’ reflections on what was experienced in the internship course, participants were asked to reflect on the mission, in particular the three pillars of ethical leadership, community engagement, and cultural competence. Intern alumni were asked how the three pillars played a role in their personal and professional lives since graduating. They were also urged to talk about other experiences since graduation including what makes them proud, challenges faced, as well as offering advice about internships to current and future students.

To paraphrase Freire (1970), students will make and remake, create and recreate what they have learned and apply it to their own life experiences. It is the opinion of the teacher/scholar of this study that some of the best teaching and learning occurs when students return with their own accounts and examples of what they learned from and since he or she took a course. This corresponds with the scholarship of teaching and learning where teachers engage in a systematic inquiry about educational outcomes. In this study, this was extended to hearing from recent alumni.

Eisenberg’s (1984) notion of “strategic ambiguity” regarding the university’s public affairs mission and its pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement came through in the alumni narratives. Strategic ambiguity enables individuals to attribute different meanings to the same goal. They can accommodate different interpretations depending on what is going on now and where they are now with respect to their work/life situation. For example, community engagement may mean for the present one being a competent work colleague. Later, community engagement may necessitate more attention given to one’s community beyond the workplace. In addition, engaging in cultural competence may mean that as the public relations manager one can spotlight immigrants and people of color in the company's publications. In the future, one's role in cultural competence may translate in being in a position of power able to interview and hire a more diverse workforce.

Intern alumni responses in this study demonstrate what Jarbabkowski, Sillince, & Shaw (2010) point to as strategic ambiguity being a rhetorical resource to make possible multiple strategic goals (p. 219). One can speak for the need to assert one's own interest while also accommodating the interests of others. One example of this is when some study participants characterized ethical leadership as standing up for others' concerns. Other participants asserted the need to take care of the self to engage in ethical leadership. These rhetorical responses are not meant to be opposing. Rather, it could be argued that in order to care for others one needs to first care for the self.

Since study interviewees were recent alumni, public affairs responses for all three public affairs pillars intertwined with starting and or getting settled into one's career. This was also carried over into talking about what makes them proud and addressing challenges. For some starting families was a primary focus. Some participants spoke with longing that they would like to do more with community engagement but had been immediately focused on their careers and personal responsibilities. It is reasonable that as they advance and become more secure in their careers and raise their children that interpretations of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement can and will change. Since the study was framed through undergraduate work internships this could have influenced responses. Some participants through the very nature of working for a nonprofit were involved with community engagement efforts. Others were still involved with community groups and programs that they had gotten their start with back in their undergraduate programs. One intern alum (M3) described that the company he works for pays each employee for 40 hours of volunteer service during the year. He was excited about volunteering with Junior Achievement and was going out to "talk with third and fourth graders about banking and learning about entrepreneurship."

The pillar of cultural competence did generate examples of recognizing and interacting with diverse people, but again most of these examples involved what the alumni participant was experiencing at their workplace. The framing of the question as well as the relationship of the interviewer as former internship coordinator and interviewee as former intern could have influenced the more work-related responses. Again, as these recent alumni get more settled into their careers and into their communities more examples of cultural competence that are outside the workplace could be shared. Several participants did talk about how the environment of the University provided opportunities for engaging in diversity. As alum (F8) pointed out, "At MSU it was the first time where I met people who were from so many different backgrounds." Alum (F7) disclosed, "Even though it is in the Midwest, the University allows for discussions on differences, provides opportunities to engage in diversity that are so important in today's workplace, today's world."

This preliminary study of alumni talking about Missouri State University's public affairs mission indicates that the organizational mission exhibits strategic ambiguity. Paraphrasing Eisenberg (1984) the mission confers agreement on the abstractions, yet at the same time promotes personal interpretation. Specifically, the three public affairs pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement serve as the strategically ambiguous key words of the mission that allow for a member apply to one's own life and integrate one's own stories. Without the three pillars, it would likely be more difficult for the public affairs mission to be embraced and to have endured as an organizational mission for over a quarter century. Likewise, the pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement are the required keywords (Williams, 2015) that enable the public affairs mission to be realized.

In the current study all 20 alumni participants reported a benefit of doing an internship while pursuing their undergraduate degree. The internship for several of the study participants served an important step in one's career. Internships conveyed other benefits including hands on experience, networking, and landing a professional job after college. Internships provided insights of what direction the alumnus may want to go in their careers. In a couple of cases alumni realized a change in career direction was needed. Several alumni talked about not even imagining the jobs they were doing currently. In such cases the student hadn't known about these jobs or the jobs hadn't even existed while he or she was still a student intern. Alumni participants spoke positively of how the internship experience continues to play an important factor in one's career such as ongoing communication with former supervisors and colleagues at the internship site. Thus, internships were high-impact experiences for these alumni. Asking if alumni made financial contributions to their alma mater was not raised in this study. Often without prompting, alumni participants did express that if asked they would come back and talk with students and participate in student mentorship and other alumni/disciplinary events. Several interviewees were eager in volunteering advice to current and future students thinking of doing an internship and hoped that internships that had an academic component (i.e. Communication 495) remained in the Communication program. This coincides with what Elliott (2006) asserts that alumni want to make sure that their alma mater provides students with similar or more experiences than they received. Proclaimed feelings of obligation from alumni are strong indicators for supporting higher education (Elliott, 2006).

Strengths and Limitations

Like all research this study has both strengths and limitations. One of the study's strengths is that it provides an "intellectual connection" between recent alumni with their alma mater. This study draws upon the scholarship of teaching and learning centering on the legacy of high impact practice courses specifically experiential learning in the form of internships. In addition, this research highlights feedback from recent alumni that should be of interest among institutions of higher learning. It also examines how the University's organizational mission of public affairs impacts its former students. Since it was not the study's intent interviewees were not asked about financial contributions to the University. Alumni participants in this study did express a strong emotional connection with their alma mater which research has demonstrated is predictive of giving in the future (Okunade, 1996). More than one interviewee did speak of a desire to "return" to the University to speak to students either in a class or another presentation.

This study invited recent alumni interpretations and applications of the university's organizational mission of public affairs. More feedback from participants coming from different concentrations of study would lead to more robust data. The strategies employed in this study could be utilized and built upon as ways to reach out to more recent alumni including more interviews. Questionnaires could be distributed that welcome alumni to talk about their lives as well as reflect on the three public affairs mission pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement. Findings will not only further scholarship on the organizational missions of higher education institutions, alumni narratives and engagement, they should lead to practical results including alumni lending their expertise, and in some cases financial support back to their alma mater.

Geographical locations of some of the participants prevented the researcher from conducting a face-to-face interview for a couple of the early interviews. There was no way the researcher could afford to travel across the country due to this project being financially self-supported. In person interviews were scheduled by grouping by location. For example, alumni living and working in and around a certain metropolitan area were scheduled at different times over a two or three-day period. Nonetheless, researchers must be flexible. Case in point, the COVID-19 pandemic changed things in this study. Instead of meeting alumni in their offices or workplace conference rooms, or at their favorite coffee shop or restaurant for lunch or dinner, necessity called for phone interviews and or Zoom meetings. Although online interactions were optional going into this research, it was not seen as the primary approach. Part of the "fun" for the researcher of doing this study was to enter the places and see where the alumni were. This provided a way to experience "in the moment" interchanges and serendipitous occurrences. It was also a way to be in the alumni participant's world where it was possible to bump into and meet one of their colleagues, or even interact with a supervisor. (These did happen.) It offered glimpses of seeing the participant intermingle with other familiar restaurant patrons or chatting with the barista who knew how the alumni preferred their coffee. (These happened too.) Whether it is intentional or not, such entering of the participant's space and observations of their engagement with such space can add richness and depth to the data (O'Toole & Were, 2008).

One limitation to this study is an acknowledgement of a participant self-selection process and being interested in sharing their stories. While the participants in this study shared unique experiences, other experiences should be welcomed and listened to. This includes those alumni who have negative attitudes about internships, their academic experience, and their alma mater. Efforts to contact alumni through LinkedIn, email, and phone messaging were carried out. Some alumni did not follow through with scheduling the interview when they said they would. Other alumni accepted connection invitations on

LinkedIn but did not acknowledge messages and invitations to participate in the project. A couple alumni did not return phone calls or text messages. This could be explained as mirroring the back and forth that occurs in communication attempts between higher education institutions and alumni. Another possibility is that the sudden onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in the middle of the research could have caused alumni to focus on other matters. Since this study is one that could be resumed in the future, efforts should continue of reaching more intern alumni when an interview works better in participants' life schedules.

Another limitation with the current study that can be addressed in the future is to pay attention to more targeted data that asks about whether the alumni participant is first generation, one's race/ethnicity, and whether one was a traditional or returning student. Such data could lend to interesting results and may impact how the university may go about contacting alumni in the future. As examples--first-generation alumni may respond more to appeals that directly impact first-generation students; alumni of color alumni could be more apt to get involved with university efforts that affect students of color; non-traditional alumni may be more receptive to assisting with non-traditional students. In addition, asking the year that one graduated with his or her degree could be enlightening. This last question was prompted due to one participant's (F2) remark about graduating during the Great Recession of 2008-10 which "put me back" financially and career-wise. Such alumni may be more empathetic to appeals to help students who are going through school and facing a tough job market during a tough economic downtown. Furthermore, since these interviews took place before and during the COVID-19 global pandemic it might be of interest to observe if and how alumni attitudes were affected by the pandemic (once we safely see it in the rear-view mirror of history), especially in relation to the public affairs mission pillars of ethical leadership, cultural competence, and community engagement.

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The Pedagogy of Care: Sharing Empathy in Communication and Performance Learning Spaces

Scott Jensen

Abstract

The immediacy of communication and performance pedagogy is an important dimension of what we teach--both for students and educators. Never before has care in our teaching been more important. This program examines the journey through self-reflection and the dynamics of connection as the beginning of making care central to our teaching. Impacts of our pandemic and the endurance of its impact on our teaching and learning are included in this program that combines reviews of scholarship and reflections with best practices. The scholarship of empathetic teaching and delivery of care-based teaching and learning strategies will be focused on communication and performance learning spaces at multiple levels of teaching.

March 2020 began what would become an unforgettable and challenging teaching and learning experience for all of us. Over two years later, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education remains ever present. We hold meetings and classes virtually, we teach communication and performance on various platforms. Our forensic and debate tournaments are now both on-ground/synchronous, as well as virtual and asynchronous. At the same time we are returning to our pre-pandemic teaching and learning world with an acute awareness of how we will never see that world, as we once knew it, again.

Perhaps the most impactful result of pandemic and immediately post-pandemic education is how teachers and learners were changed. Many of us now understand that we are not what we seemed to be. We entered the pandemic world of education with assumptions that we soon learned to question.

Connecting virtually is largely the same as face-to-face…except it’s not.

We are stronger than we thought we were, except when we are more fragile than we realized.

We miss dining-in, plays and movies in auditoriums and theatres, and breathing without paper or fabric in the way of our mouths and facial expressions.

We fought to persevere, and then realized there is no shame in saying we need a shoulder, an ear, and a kind word from time to time.

This paper reflects on our teaching during and after the pandemic. While many educators have always seen themselves as empathetic and nurturing, the past two years in the classroom has helped us realize the potential for students to need teachers to listen and respond to what burdens them as not only learners, but as humans. This paper calls for a pedagogy of care—an approach to teaching and learning that acknowledges the fragility and strength of both students and educators, and how it is imperative to respect each of these states.

Our Students Have Navigated the Pandemic Uniquely

No person with any window at all into the world of teaching would argue that teachers "had it easy" during the pandemic. It is hard to believe any school district would have been prepared for learning that is entirely virtual. It is hard to believe any district had a plan for ensuring access to virtual instruction for all their students. Students had to immediately learn to learn from home on a device that may or may not have necessary connectivity to their teacher…assuming they had a device on which to learn. Learning in school is more than processing content, writing papers, and taking exams. It is about socialization, working closely with teachers and peers, and engaging a process that is often a back and forth of ideas. For some, the learning process is a more private, one-on-one connection that allows students to overcome challenges in ways only interpersonal immediacy can facilitate.

Suddenly students were thrust into learning that sent mixed messages and posed challenges for our students. They were told to be independent and start making choices, taking on the implications of those choices…but they were robbed of many of the choices normally available. We encouraged them to hone their skills and master their craft…but much of the epistemic nature of those experiences were profoundly changed. We continue to want our students to learn to be adults…but the adult models who are trying to manage their own lives are personifying a different meaning for what it means to be an adult. While not unique to the pandemic, our isolation from one another furthered the mixed message of telling students to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic by seizing moments to treasure people and connect with their world…but doing so still means rising above the realities of too many people who reject difference/resist empathy/are polarized/are barely hanging on.

As we continue to understand how to navigate our post-pandemic teaching and today's students, it becomes clear that teacher/student connection is essential. Many of our students—arguably more than March of 2020, yearn for teaching that is characterized by sensitivity and flexibility.

The Call for Empathy in Our Teaching and Learning Spaces

The pedagogy of teaching now includes an acknowledgement that students—and teachers—don't separate their authentic selves from their roles in the teaching and learning process. At the heart of this pedagogy is empathy, defined by Cherry as "The ability to emotionally understand what other people feel, see things from their point of view, and imagine yourself in their place. Essentially, it is putting yourself in someone else's position and feeling what they must be feeling" (2020, on-line). To teach with empathy necessitates connections between teachers and students, characterized by a willingness to understand, respect, and adapt to one another. More specifically, what is needed in today's teaching and learning is what we will call a *pedagogy of care*.

The Call for a *Pedagogy of Care*

As educators, we must recognize where our students **and we** are in our worlds of teaching and learning—and how we can best succeed in unique times. This requires intentional reflection and adaptation. A number of realities demand this empathic approach to teaching and learning.

Students were and in some cases are still forced to learn outside their preferenced styles.

Teachers are expected to teach outside their preferenced styles.

Resource challenges impede equitable opportunities to learn and to teach.

A world of increased tension at all levels—political, social, economic, etc.—motivates a resistance to connect with one another.

We are only recently emerging from a climate of uncertainty in which we all wondered if there would be tournaments, plays, or other aspects of our education in our futures. We are still adapting to a world that is beginning to look at what we knew pre-pandemic, perhaps with questioning of how much of our "normal" we will have.

Some of our students—including many college students—are in on-ground learning spaces without social distancing or masks for the first time in two years. Translated, our students are re-entering a world of teaching and learning with a challenge of remembering what that world was and at the same time not knowing what their current world is because it is the natural progression of challenges. This transition is coupled with our students learning to re-connect after extended periods of isolation and being denied important rites of passage, such as graduations, senior years of competition and activities, dances, and simply a world without risk of getting sick. Our students have become fragile—or have become less capable to masking the fragility they always had.

Our students are not the only participants in the education process who are emerging from the pandemic with challenges. Teachers were uniquely challenged by the pandemic as the individuals responsible for delivering content in a world we never imagined. Beyond the pandemic, today's teachers continue to face societal pressures posed by communities within and outside our schools and school districts. A pedagogy of care is an education ideal that has the potential to empower our challenged educators.

Pedagogy of Care as Self-Help

Teaching was and remains harder. Parenting, relationship management, and personal wellness were and remain harder. Their difficulty is compounded by one another. Dunn (2020) reflects on her own experiences as both an educator and a mother—a human—balancing her roles in ways that allowed her to be present for the individuals who needed her connection. "…the time and effort I dedicated to eliminating my professor guilt during the onset of the pandemic fueled my mom guilt. My work-life balance no longer existed as the pandemic eradicated the idea and possibility of balance. Work became life, and life became work" (on-line). Care in our teaching and learning manifests itself throughout our spaces. It is in our activities, our attitudes, our communication, and our relationships. Care is also something teachers should both seek to provide, and be allowed to seek. A pedagogy of care promotes the idea of balance, and acknowledging our humanness in striving for that balance.

Strategies for Our Pedagogy of Care

The empathy at the heart of a pedagogy of care requires understanding and respecting the uniqueness in each student and teacher. While we can draw certain assumptions about one another, we must resist codifying those assumptions in our communication. Empathy requires understanding our students and what they need to succeed as learners, and what they need to thrive as individuals. Umbaugh (2021) identifies six things today's students need: purpose, validation, mentorship, transparency, anti-racism/misogyny/decolonization, accessibility/accommodations to their particular circumstances. While these are essential needs for today's student, they should be delivered with an awareness of what each looks like for each of our students. There are a number of specific ways we might adapt our communication and performance learning and teaching to best fit within a pedagogy of care.

Celebrating Voice Over the Trophy

Goals for forensic and debate students vary from earning trips to nationals, to learning to speak or perform with a control over communication apprehension. Exploring these goals lends us insight that helps us understand and teach/coach with care. Inherent within forensics is an element of competition. While we are not able to deny the reality of competitive results, we can mitigate the importance of competitive success for each of our students. Some forensic students value forensics as an outlet for advocating and performing what they are feeling and thinking. For those students, forensic educators can let the expression be the "trophy."

Operationalizing the Pedagogy of Care—Behavior with Others

Communication and performance learning spaces are ideally suited for facilitating a pedagogy of care. Such an approach to education actuates the very communication principles we are teaching. We help our students understand and value audience, whether it be in a theatrical performance, interpersonal relationships, or a formal speech. Learning to connect with others is, perhaps, the most essential skill required for a pedagogy of care to achieve its potential impact. Calloway-Thomas (2018) explains this connection:

> "I maintain that communication programs at both the high school and the university level should have lessons and units stitched into them that model how citizens are supposed to behave in the presence of others, without violating humans' sacred rights, of course. Just by drawing connections between human dignity and behavior, we can help global citizens recognize that in the moral realm of things, respect for dignity is owed to all humans regardless of their standing in the community" (pp. 496-497).

Operationalizing the Pedagogy of Care—Benefits of the Perceptual Doubt

Our teaching and learning demonstrate care when they encourage and reflect kindness and approval of the uniqueness of others. Calloway-Thomas (2018) writes, "…goodwill lies at the very core of a pedagogy of empathy. It is made possible when we give people the benefit of the perceptual doubt. This cognitive, affective, and behavioral value orientation assumes that most individuals seek psychological comfort and congeniality. This is empathetic literacy in vigorous practice" (p. 497). Students increasingly need a "time-out" from pressures. Educators face heightened challenges of adapting to pressures outside of their classrooms to perform a particular way in their classrooms, while also appropriately prioritizing their own families. The balance between accountability, structure and rules, and flexibility to adapt to individual pressures looks different for each classroom. Still, a willingness to find a balance that allows for the benefit of the doubt for students and teachers is worth consideration.

Operationalizing the Pedagogy of Care—Strike Up a Conversation

Care is found in knowing one another in our classrooms, and seeking familiarity with others outside our teaching and learning spaces. Self-disclosure is a delicate part of classroom management. While an individual should not be forced to disclose beyond their comfort level, intentionally promoting awareness and connection within a learning space is invaluable in the effort to create empathy in that space. Ensuring each person knows one another's name is a great starting point. Ice-breakers and activities that allow a sharing of non-threatening disclosures increase the propensity that students will connect with one another. This awareness helps move a classroom community toward the humanizing Calloway-Thomas references when she writes, "…I advocate talking to strangers as a way of cultivating global friendships and participating in the shared, inter-subjective imaginaries that we create for ourselves. Talking to strangers can also become a public conveyor of meaning in our lives, as well as a kind way of humanizing the other" (2018, p. 497).

Performing Empathy

Students performing interactions reflecting the stories they know and feel from themselves and others highlights a physical experience with empathy that is dialogic and formative. Our communication and performance learning spaces are ideally suited for this kind of teaching and learning. An autoethnographic show I Got Your Back was conceived and written "in an attempt to bring awareness and humanity to discussions around the limitations of healthcare and to highlight the ways in which our care communities are crafted alongside a deeply flawed medical system" (Huell & Erdely, 2020, on-line). In a world of complex issues to process and divergent convictions and worldviews we are sometimes resistant to understand, performing the dynamic of connecting with one another is powerful in both its personal expression and narrative for the audience to process.

Crafting Empathy with Other and Self

Much of what transpires in our communication and learning spaces is within a community of teachers and learners. Beyond the desks and chairs in a traditional classroom, our students share bus rides and sometimes hotel rooms at forensic tournaments. They work together to construct sets, design costumes, and run lines with one another in stage performances. The pedagogy that unfolds in our spaces is dialogic, interpersonal, informal, and potentially authentic. Our students are in a perfect context, when effectively shared and managed by empathetic educators, to cultivate and grow a culture of empathy. Huell and Erdely (2020) reflect on what this looks like:

> "See, I think we're all crafters. We craft empathy. We tailor it to the other person and ourselves. It has to be about someone else, but without sacrificing the self. Sometimes we glue our fingers together. Sometimes we have to rip out the seams of a hem or put a zipper in for the 3rd or 4th time. You never know what circumstances will bring you to share your pain with someone or when someone will reach out to you when they're in pain. There's a give and take, a push and pull, a rocking back and forth" (on-line).

Retain and Adapt Community in Our Learning Spaces

We find comfort and encouragement in relationships built on homophily, trust, and respect. Our learning spaces are conducive to collective empathy. We should resist the potential for the pressures in society to challenge the group culture so common in our co-curricular activities. It is wise to reflect on the role of "fun" in how we promote and manage our co-curricular activities. Fun is not contradictory to upholding standards, insisting on commitment and responsibility, and striving for excellence; it can, in fact, promote success in many forms, not the least of which is engagement with the learning process.

Ethics of Care—Choices in Our Relationships with Students

Our daily interactions with students reflect the degree to which we genuinely relate to and with them. Things like knowing names, have some insights into the personal stories of our students, and listening to them when they seek advice, counsel, or assistance convey our connection with them. Umbaugh (2021) suggests that a pedagogy of care is grounded in an ethical approach to learning and teaching. He notes these realities regarding care:

- "Care undergirds and may explain the success of High Impact Practices and the best classroom pedagogies."
- "Caring practices season and flavor what we do. They help students get the "nutritional benefits" of the learning experiences we prepare."

- "Timely feedback, building relationships, mentorship, validation, learning communities, undergraduate research, and so on all express care for students as persons. These practices meet students' deep needs" (on-line)

Emotion in Relationships between Students and Teachers

A pedagogy of care requires that we both know our students, and that we care about them. It is hard to operationalize a pedagogy of care without establishing an emotional connection with our students. Quinlan (2016) suggests that we can establish meaningful and appropriate emotional connections with simple efforts. We should seek to know our students by listening with perception checking, knowing their names, and interacting with them through their fields of experience. It is important that we periodically check student perceptions about our shared learning space—and show attention to their feedback. We can also increase our accessibility, understanding (1) the anxiety some feel when approaching a teacher, and (2) the increase in challenges for students to reach out to teachers. While all of these steps are potentially impactful, we should employ them with an appreciation that clarity and consistency in our communication and expectations are paramount in building connections with our students.

What Happens When We "Care" …

Our empathy brings experiences—ours and our students'—together. Dunn (2020) writes:

> "Incorporating an ethic of care…involves practicing sincere concern for students, not only as learners but as holistic beings who have different identities, needs, and circumstances within and beyond the classroom. The complications and struggles stemming from the pandemic necessitated an ethic of care; a realization that became especially clear when I met my students where they were at and consequently became privy to the complexity of their lives. I saw them as multidimensional people who, like me, were struggling in the midst of a pandemic, worried more about surviving than thriving" (on-line).

When we unveil our empathy for our students, we shape their perception of their learning—including what they think about us. Anderson et al (2020) reported their research regarding what students see in effective teachers. They report that students believe the following about "good" teachers:

- Good teachers care about the discipline.
- Good teachers care about teaching (and learning).
- Good teachers care about students.
- Good teachers demonstrate care as a (joint) responsibility within the marketised university (on-line).

The bottom line is that myriad benefits result from exercising a pedagogy of care. Not only does this empathy help our students navigate challenges and the changed world in which they live, but it prepares them to contribute to the shaping of a better world. Calloway-Thomas (2018) writes:

> "…a pedagogy of empathy is a meaningful way of interrupting coarse language and generating trust and goodwill among global citizens. Furthermore, I claim that practicing empathy inclines humans toward sociability and can lead to a more peaceful civil society, one that respects all humans, regardless of ethnicity, class, ideology, profession, religion, race, or sexual orientation" (p. 496).

In other words—a pedagogy of care positions us to collaborate with students in shaping a world we share with others who value and seek "being fully human."

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Debate in a Day: Addressing the Practice of Critical Thinking

Eric Morris, Heather Walters & Kristen Stout

Abstract

This teaching resource focuses on teaching the skills of critical thinking, cost-benefit analysis, and persuasive argumentation. This resource can be used in introduction to argumentation courses, critical thinking courses, or in any course where there is a desire to examine both sides of a core issue. Students will learn how to process credible information quickly, how to examine and refute others claims, and how to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of implementing policies, processes, or ideas. This teaching resources includes the necessary instructions and other information that will be useful when teaching through in-class arguments.

Goals and Rationale

Critical thinking was an idea originally conceived from the ancient Greek ideal of ‘living an examined’ life. As such, it is not possible to think about how we engage in thinking just one time and call it good. The goal should be a sustained and developed process of integrating the goals of critical thinking into our daily lives. Dr. Richard Paul, former director of research and professional development at the Center for Critical Thinking argued that critical thinking was the “art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view of improving it” (Paul & Elder, 2006, p. 4). This means critical thinking is a process, continuous, and a skill able to be constantly improved via practice.

Critical thinking is an art that requires sustained imagination. This includes imagining new ways for us to see the world and thinking more about how others view the world as well. Analyzing our thinking includes gathering information, questioning whether we should continue to rely on our previous conclusions, and developing standards to evaluate our future decisions.

Training in argumentation makes us better at critical thinking. A study by Sandes and Wiseman (1994) proved argumentation is a vehicle for teaching critical thinking. Specifically, this study compared students who had completed a course in argumentation with those who had not completed such a course and "revealed that those students trained in argumentation were better able to identify logically weak arguments than those who had not received such instruction" (Sanders & Wiseman, 1994, p. 28). Ideally, long-term benefits of students with more developed critical thinking skills will include more productive disagreements with less verbal aggression, more informed decision-making, superior problem-solving skills, and more innovative thinking. This activity serves the essential purposes of building critical thinking skills and practicing how to effectively utilize credible information in an informed decision-making process.

The in-class argument has benefits similar to holding an in-class debate, but there are several distinct benefits. First, debates are often disrupted by no-shows, but this format can adapt to whomever shows up on a given day. Second, the speeches are shorter, so students find it easier to prepare. The "think tanks" mean that students have built in assistance if they need help figuring out what to say. Third, the format explicitly emphasizes on-point refutation – something which is often limited in a traditional novice debate. Fourth, the time limits are designed for a short class, but it is easy to adjust prep time or speech times if needed. Fifth, it pulls from the benefits of both evidence-based and limited-prep debate. Finding a couple of articles before the debate helps them, but not knowing their side or role lets them adapt. Finally, it is easily repeatable. We've often had 5-6 per semester of a college class, and they could be a weekly activity in a high school setting. That repetition allows changing the topics if needed to increase student engagement, and they will notice the improvement after the first ones.

Student Learning Outcomes

At the end of this activity students should be able to:

- Utilize critical thinking skills in the research and construction of an argument
- Persuasively advocate for a given position or issue, including responding to the arguments of the opposite side
- Use cost-benefit analysis to evaluate both sides of a given topic and determine which side is stronger

- Create detailed notes which aid in the development of responses to arguments and to evaluate a debate in a wholistic manner

Directions

In Class Assignment Overview / Pre-class information

Based on your input, I've assigned the In Class Argument topic. For each ICA, you need to locate at least one article on this topic and bring it to class. Be sure that:

1. You have/list the publication information for the article
2. The article gives you information you can use for either side of the topic (you can bring 2 articles to achieve this if you prefer)
3. You have read the article before class
4. You bring the article to be turned in on the day of the In Class Argument

Also, the day of the argument, you should hand in (at least) two pieces of paper, one for each side of the argument. Each should contain at least 3 pieces of supporting material to serve as evidence for a relevant claim about that side of the topic (e.g., facts, statistics, expert testimony, examples, etc.) Each piece of supporting material should have a heading stating the claim supported by the material, and each should contain a full citation of the source of the material.

You will not know your stance on the topic or your role in the argument until the day of the argument. When you arrive in class, you will randomly draw a piece of paper that says whether you are arguing for the resolution (AFFIRMATIVE) or against it (NEGATIVE). This paper will also identify your role (INTRODUCTORY ARGUER/1ST REASON/2ND REASON/3RD REASON/1ST RESPONDENT/2ND RESPONDENT/3RD RESPONDENT/ CONCLUDING ARGUER/TEAM CAPTAIN/THINK TANK MEMBER). Each of these roles is described below. Once class starts, some think tank members may be reassigned if not all positions are filled.

Time Structure (Total Time Required: 64 minutes)

1. Draw for a side and a role (As you come in, early arrival can get you a head start)

2. Getting Situated (Within 5 minutes)

3. Initial Preparation Time (10 minutes)

4. Affirmative: (Total minutes: 8)
   Introductory Arguer (2 min)
   1st Reason (2 min)
   2nd Reason (2 min)
   3rd Reason (2 min)

5. Negative: (Total minutes: 8)
   Introductory Arguer (2 min)
   1st Reason (2 min)
   2nd Reason (2 min)
   3rd Reason (2 min)

6. Respondent Preparation Time: 10 min

7. Affirmative: (Total minutes: 6)
   1st Respondent (2 min)
   2nd Respondent (2 min)
   3rd Respondent (2 min)

8. Negative: (Total min: 6)
   1st Respondent (2 min)
   2nd Respondent (2 min)
   3rd Respondent (2 min)

9. Concluding Preparation Time (5 min)

10. Negative: Concluding Arguer (3 min)

11. Affirmative: Concluding Arguer (3 min)

Descriptions of possible roles

INTRODUCTORY ARGUER

Clarifies your side's stance on the topic. Provide historical context for the dispute. Explain why this is an important issue to discuss. This includes defining terms (if needed), establishing a criteria (if appropriate), and previewing the next three arguers for your side. If it is a policy topic, you should give a proposal for a specific policy change.

1ST REASON

Your group should come up with three different arguments in favor of your side of the topic. You present ONE of those three arguments. Please attempt to somehow PROVE the argument, instead of just stating it. Use as much different, recent evidence as can fit into your assignment limits.

2ND REASON

Same as "1st Reason", except you will be using a different argument than the "1st Reason" speaker.

3RD REASON

Same as "1st Reason" and "2nd Reason" speakers, except you present the third and a different argument for your side.

1ST RESPONDENT

You are responsible for refuting the argument put forth by the "1st Reason" speaker for the opposite side (if you are negative, answer the affirmative's first reason). Remember, refutation isn't ONLY saying "that's not true"—you can also minimize the argument, argue its not important—or less important than other arguments, or show how it proves your side. It might be good to have more than one response.

2ND RESPONDENT

Same as "1st Respondent", except that you refute the argument made by the other side's "2nd Reason" speaker.

3RD RESPONDENT

Same as "1st Respondent", except that you refute the argument made by the other sides "3rd Reason" speaker.

CONCLUDING ARGUER

You get 3 pages to think about all the arguments that are advanced. You can consult with your Team Members or work alone. Explain why, on balance, your side has the strongest arguments and thus has won the argument. Consider what the other side's "Concluding Arguer" might or did say. This should be the speech most responsible for deciding which side wins the argument.

TEAM CAPTAIN

Your job is to coordinate the team, making sure people know what their jobs are. Your job is like a film director—work behind the scenes to make sure the finished product looks good. Know everybody's roles and the schedule by heart. Help others formulate arguments, respond to arguments, and create the concluding remarks.

THINK TANK

Your job is to provide helpful research and arguments to the reason, respondent, and concluding arguments. You are evaluated on how effective you are at providing additional guidance to participants in the argument. You should be quite active in the team discussion in order to facilitate quality argumentation.

Evaluation:

Please type answers to the following questions and submit them in APA format. Your post-evaluation is worth up to 25 points. It should be at least two full pages. Providing specific examples is very helpful.

1. Which side of the argument do you suspect is really correct, regardless of the arguments advanced in this exercise? Why?
2. Which side do you think did a better job of arguing, regardless of your opinion on the actual issue or which side you were assigned to? Why? (You must choose one side as the "winner")
3. What did you learn about argument from this exercise?
4. How did this argument contribute to your overall learning experience in the course?

Grading:

The whole exercise is worth 75 points, as follows:

1. The article and pages you turn in: up to 25 points for preparation. These are due at the end of the class on the ICA day, and you should remember to put your name on them. Graded on the quality and utility of information gathered.
2. Performing your role in the In-Class Argument; up to 25 points.
3. Post Argument evaluation: up to 25 points, depending on the quality of response.

Time and Modifications

This activity is designed to take one class period – or around 75 minutes but can be altered to fit other class formats. The students bring at least some research to class the day of the argument to allow the activity to happen in one class period. An evaluation of the argument by the students is usually due in the following class.

The model can be adapted to fit a variety of class sizes. The number of reason speakers and corresponding response speakers can be increased or decreased as necessary. Additionally, conclusion speeches can be divided up into two separate speeches. One speaker can answer the attacks made by the respondent speakers and the other can give a formal conclusion to the debate. Feel free to add (or remove) additional roles as necessary to fit the needs of your classroom.

The research element of the activity can also be easily altered to fit the needs of any classroom. For example, the number and type (internet, book, journal article, etc.) of article can be increased or decreased to better fit the specific goals of the instructor. Additionally, if an instructor would like this to be an in-class activity only or students are not ready to include the research element, the instructor can simply provide the articles or research each side will need.

Some other modifications for the activity could include:

1. Letting students pick a side to draw, assuming some students are agnostic enough draw at the end to balance the numbers.
2. Asking a couple of students to find definitions instead of just articles about the topic.

3. Pre-selecting the closing speakers (captains) if you have reliable students with more experience.
4. Letting the students have input into the topics, perhaps by brainstorming in a class, using a google form, etc. You can still pick and write the final topic wordings while trying to integrate things they want to talk about.
5. Expanding the prep or speech time for the respondent speeches to improve clash.

Appendix 1: ICA Flow Sheet / Note Template

In Class Argument # _____ Topic: _____________________

Date: __________ Your Name: _________________________________

Aff	Neg		Conclusions		Aff	Neg
Reason 1	Respond 1		Neg Conclusion:		Respond 1	Reason 1
Reason 2	Respond 2		Aff Conclusion:		Respond 2	Reason 2
Reason 3	Respond 3				Respond 3	Reason 3

Appendix 1: ICA Flow Sheet / Note Template

Aff: Intro Arguer	Neg: Intro Arguer
Aff: 1st Reason	Neg: 1st Reason
Aff: 2nd Reason	Neg: 2nd Reason
Aff: 3rd Reason	Neg: 3rd Reason
Aff: 1st Respondent	Neg: 1st Respondent
Aff: 2nd Respondent	Neg: 2nd Respondent
Aff: 3rd Respondent	Neg: 3rd Respondent
Aff: Concluding Arguer	Neg: Concluding Arguer
Aff: Team Captain	Neg: Team Captain
Aff: Think Tank	Neg: Think Tank

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“Tough Crowd” Exercise

Adam Blood

Abstract

This exercise encourages students to consider different types of nonverbal listening behaviors. Through a simulated speech activity, students are grouped into four sections, with each representing a different type of audience- supportive, hostile, indifferent, and confused. Students are then asked to respond to a speech with embellished nonverbal behaviors that would demonstrate how an audience member would convey these reactions. The lessons and discussions from this exercise can pertain to nonverbal communication, audience adaptation, and effective listening.

Exercise: “Tough Crowd”
Time: 10-15 Minutes, plus Discussion.
Skills taught: Nonverbal Communication, Audience Adaptation
Level: High school and College

Instructions: The instructor will divide the classroom into four groups. Each group will be instructed to act out a particular type of audience. Once the groups have been divided, the instructor will pretend to deliver a speech in front of all four “audiences” at the same time. Since these groups can be a considerable distraction, it is recommended that the instructor simply read a short block of text. Here are the instructions to be given to each group:

Group 1: This is a *supportive* audience. The group should think about what behaviors a supportive audience would engage in if they were eagerly listening to a speech.
Group 2: This is a *hostile* audience. This group should think about how audience members would react if they were vehemently opposed to what the speaker had to say.
Group 3: This is an *indifferent* audience. Rather than the explicit enthusiasm of the supportive audience and the disapproval of the hostile

audience, this group should consider how an audience member would demonstrate indecision or apathy toward the speaker's message.
Group 4: This audience is *confused.* Rather than being supportive, indifferent, or hostile to the message, this group should consider how an audience member would look and behave if they are genuinely struggling to make sense out of the speaker's message.

After giving these instructions and before delivering the sample speech, the instructor should make it clear that this only works if all four groups dramatically embellish their reactions. The hostile audience should make it undeniably clear that they have disdain for what the speaker is saying, and the supportive audience should do the same with their ardent support for the instructor's message. The more the instructor can get the students to "over-act," the more demonstrable behaviors the students will be able to discuss after the simulated speech has concluded.

Rationale and Discussion:

This exercise is a useful way to teach speakers how to interpret and adapt to audience behaviors. The engaging (and often humorous) part of the exercise is the more outlandish series of behaviors that students will use to demonstrate their hostile, supportive, indifferent, or confused reactions to the speech. Having done this exercise multiple times, some of the more pronounced reactions have been both funny and genuinely thought-provoking. Here are some examples:

1. In one iteration of the exercise, students in the supportive audience coordinated chants in favor of the message, as though this was a campaign rally and the instructor/speaker was running for President.
2. A student in the "hostile" group once got up and left the room. We actually had to go find him after the exercise was over.
3. Students in "indifferent" group started getting out their phones and laptops, while other students mimicked the act of falling asleep. In the post-exercise discussion, a student said, "I'm not sure what the speech was about, but I was able to get caught up on my emails."

While these more exaggerated reactions make the exercise entertaining, they serve as a useful entry point into the more subtle nonverbal reactions that an audience might have to a speech. These insights, in turn, become meaningful discussion items in a broader conversation about audience adaptation and/or effective listening.

For example, the *supportive* audience group is essentially demonstrating what it means to convey both attention and encouragement to a speaker. The more subtle signs of support can include smiling and nodding to demonstrate that the message is meaningful and that the speaker is valued. A person delivering a speech can use these as signs that the message is well-received, and in interpersonal settings, these same behaviors can be meaningful nonverbal signs that a communicator is listening and values what the other person has to say. Inversely, the *hostile* audience group demonstrates a whole host of behaviors to which a speaker should be able to interpret and respond. The more understated signs of hostility can be adverse facial expressions, rolling of the eyes, and any gestures (like crossed arms) that close off the audience member from the speaker. In some instances, students might even genuinely self-reflect and think of times that they were inadvertently conveying hostility while listening to other people.

The other two groups, the *indifferent* and the *confused*, demonstrate a whole host of behaviors that can be difficult for a communicator to accurately interpret. For instance, a number of "indifferent" behaviors, when pushed to excess, can go as far as to communicate hostility toward the speaker. When a listener consistently looks away from the speaker, this can convey either indifference, ("I don't care about the message") or hostility ("this speaker doesn't deserve my attention"). An audience member who goes to great lengths to convey the message "I do not care," can eventually result in the message, "I do not like this speaker." The more restrained signs of confusion are also worthy of discussion. One of the most common ways students in this exercise have demonstrated confusion is to look at other audience members. Essentially, an audience member might survey the room to see if other people in the crowd appear to also be confused. An adept speaker, therefore, might add more explanation to a particular point in a speech whenever audience members start looking at each other.

The most powerful message that comes out of this message is that *we are still communicating while others are speaking.* For students, this often can be an impetus to take inventory of their listening behaviors. In lessons on interpersonal communication, this can be a meaningful way to teach listening and to discuss nonverbal communication. In public speaking classes, this can lead students to strongly consider the way they act as an audience member. One of the best assets in a public speaking class is having a welcoming supportive audience full of good listeners. Thus, the instructor can take the behaviors, both positive and negative, and use them to promote a classroom environment full of welcoming and encouraging audience members. This makes each speaker feel more at ease when delivering speeches, and can promote an environment where every student gets a chance to meaningfully improve their communication skills.

Ultimately, this exercise is designed to dramatize and accentuate a series of behaviors that are often elusive and difficult to interpret. For speakers, this promotes the ongoing effort to craft and deliver an audience-centered message. For listeners, it can be a chance to analyze small but meaningful behaviors that affect the outcome of interactions with other people. For instructors, it can be a way to promote a healthy classroom environment where classmates consider how their behaviors affect the communication ability of the people around them. All of these can result in lessons that promote and facilitate competent communicators.

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