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Scholarly Articles

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Affectionate Communication and the Emerging Adult-Parent Relationship

Scott A. Myers & Christine Anzur 1

An Ethnographic Study in Freelance Sports Production

Joseph H. Moore 24

A New Understanding of the Looking Glass Self: An Autoethnographic Reflection on Interpersonal Communication Post-COVID

Dr. Nicole Freeman 44

State Advisory Showcase

It's Everywhere – Including in the Classroom: The Scholarship and Pedagogical Potential of Pop Culture

Scott Jensen 64

Teaching Resources

To ChatGPT or To Not ChatGPT

Janis Crawford 73

IPDA Introductory Packet

Kiefer Storrer 79

**Journal of the Speech and Theatre
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Volume 53, Fall 2023

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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 54 will be available in October of 2024 at the website for the Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri – www.speechandtheatre.mo.org

All submissions should in Microsoft Word and emailed to the editor. References should follow the latest edition of the American Psychological Association style manual. A separate page with abstract, author affiliation and bio(s) should be included. All submissions should be received by February 15, 2024, to ensure full consideration for publication.

Other inquires can be e-mailed or sent to the editor:

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Affectionate Communication and the Emerging Adult-Parent Relationship

Scott A. Myers & Christine Anzur

Abstract

Rooted in Floyd's (2006) Affection Exchange Theory, this study explored how emerging adults use affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, social support behaviors) in their parental relationships. Participants were 283 undergraduates enrolled at a large Mid-Atlantic university. It was found that while (a) female emerging adults use affectionate communication at a higher rate and consider affectionate communication as more appropriate for use with their mothers than either female emerging adults with their fathers or male emerging adults with their fathers and (b) emerging adults use affectionate communication at a higher rate and consider affectionate communication as more appropriate for use with biological parents than with nonbiological parents, (c) emerging adults' use of affectionate communication with parents is not differentiated by the number of siblings in their family. Furthermore, a positive relationship was obtained between emerging adults' use of affectionate communication and their relational satisfaction, commitment, and closeness with parents.

The period of time between leaving the parental home and settling into a stable career is a transitory period that most young people experience. This period is known as emerging adulthood, which falls between adolescence and young adulthood, capturing the feelings of instability and uncertainty that are present (Arnett, 2000). Emerging adulthood occurs between the ages of 18 and 25 years and is characterized by an exploration of self and an assertion of independence (Arnett, 2000, 2015). During this time period, emerging adults actively develop their identities through their experiences in work, school, and relationships (Arnett, 2007, 2015). Because emerging adulthood is a time of change, of particular importance is the shift in the relationship between emerging adults and their parents (Arnett, 2000, 2015).

As emerging adults leave adolescence and enter adulthood, their parents become less involved in their daily decision-making processes, but emerging adults usually rely on them for financial or emotional support (Arnett, 2000) and they work diligently to maintain their relationships with their parents (Myers & Glover, 2007). However, even for financially dependent emerging adults, parents take less of an authoritarian role (Arnett, 2015) and emerging adults' relationships with their parents become more satisfying as both parties engage in more open communication and experience less conflict (Lefkowitz, 2005; Willoughby & Arnett, 2013). During this period, the emerging adult-parent relationship changes from one of unequal power to one of mutual understanding and respect (Arnett, 2015; Lefkowitz, 2005). As emerging adults grow into this role, they adjust their communication and their behaviors to reflect this new relational dynamic (Arnett, 2015).

Yet, family communication researchers have not fully explored the communicative behaviors and practices that emerging adults use with their parents. One of these behaviors is affectionate communication, which Floyd and Morman (1998) conceptualized as “an individual’s intentional and overt enactment or expressions of feelings of closeness, care, and fondness” (p. 145) that can be conveyed in the form of verbal statements (e.g., expressing verbal sentiments such as “I love you” or “Our relationship is important”), nonverbal gestures (e.g., engaging in nonverbal behaviors such as holding hands, sitting close, kissing, or hugging), and social support behaviors (e.g., helping partners with their problems, sharing private information, or praising a partner’s accomplishments). While affectionate communication has been studied extensively in the father-son dyad (see Floyd & Pauley, 2011 for a brief review), much less is known about the role that affectionate communication plays generally in the parent-emerging adult relationship as well as specifically in other parent-child dyads (e.g., father-daughter, mother-son, mother-daughter). To correct this oversight and contribute further to this body of research, this study was undertaken.

Affectionate Communication

Affection Exchange Theory (AET; Floyd, 2006) posits that affectionate communication acts as “an adaptive behavior that both directly and indirectly contributes to human survival and reproductive success” (p. 160) with the ultimate goal of enhancing the relational bond

that forms between two individuals. Although the theory contains five postulates, it is the third postulate--“affectionate communication is adaptive with respect to human viability and fertility” (p. 164)--that serves as the premise guiding this particular study. This postulate states that not only does affectionate communication act as a motivating force for viability by promoting the establishment and maintenance of a relationship between two individuals (regardless of whether this relationship is either platonic or sexual in nature), but also it serves as a motivating force for fertility by inferring that an individual has the capacity to become a committed relational partner (e.g., spouse, parent, sibling) to another person. Although studied in the romantic relationship (e.g., Dillow et al., 2014; Hesse & Mikkelsen, 2017; Pauley et al., 2014), AET researchers recently have turned their attention to studying affectionate communication within the family as a whole (Hesse et al., 2014) as well as in dyads such as the grandparent-grandchild relationship (Mansson, 2013; Mansson et al., 2017), adult siblings (Myers, 2015; Myers et al., 2011), and the parent-child dyad (Curran & Yoshimura, 2016; Hesse et al., 2018; Zhang & Wills, 2016).

The study of affectionate communication can be traced to Floyd’s (1997a) work on examining how men and women differed in their communication of affection. He discovered that although men and women did not differ in their actual frequency of expressions of affection, women perceive that they engage more frequently and more intensely in this behavior than men, and female-female dyads perceive that they engage more frequently and more intensely in this behavior than male-male dyads. He also found that the expression of affection is considered to be more appropriate for women than men as well as for female-female dyads than male-male dyads. Subsequent research confirmed these findings in two ways. First, Floyd (1997b) found that not only do women report engaging in affectionate communication more frequently than men, but also that women perceive the use of affectionate communication to be more appropriate than men. Second, while Floyd and Morman (1997) corroborated that women consider the expression of affectionate communication to be more appropriate than men, they also identified that both men and women consider affectionate communication to be more appropriate for use (a) in an opposite-sex relationship than in a same-sex relationship and (b) in a sibling relationship than in a friendship.

Based on this work, it is possible that emerging adults' affectionate communication with their parents will differ based on the sex of the parent with whom they are communicating. Generally, emerging adults report that they have higher-quality relationships with their mothers than their fathers (Kaufman & Uhlenberg, 1998), feel closer to their mothers than to their fathers (Arnett, 2015), and attribute more warmth from their mothers than from their fathers (Nelson et al., 2011). This effect, however, is not dependent on child sex as both sons and daughters report feeling closer to their mothers than to their fathers (Kaufman & Uhlenberg). As such, it is probable that emerging adults will engage in affectionate communication at a higher rate and perceive this engagement as more appropriate with their mothers than with their fathers. To test to notion, the first two hypotheses are posited:

- H1: Female and male emerging adults will use affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) at a higher rate with their mothers than with their fathers.
- H2: Female and male emerging adults will consider affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) to be more appropriate for use with their mothers than with their fathers.

In addition to biological sex differences, whether emerging adults and parents are genetically related may influence the extent to which emerging adult children use affectionate communication with their parents. Although AET posits that affectionate communication is a resource parents provide for their children as a way to ensure that these children can attract a suitable relational partner, the theory of discriminative parental solicitude states that parents may not distribute this resource equally among their children if these children are not genetically related to them (Floyd et al., 2004). In one study of father-son communication, Floyd and Morman (2001) found that fathers communicate more verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors to their biological sons and adopted sons than to their stepsons; in a second study, Floyd and Morman (2003) discovered that fathers communicate more verbal support, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors to their biological sons than they did to their nonbiological sons (i.e., stepson, adopted son). They further found that

biological sons reported that their fathers communicate more verbal statements and nonverbal gestures to them than stepsons reported that their stepfathers communicated to them. To apply these findings to the emerging adult-parent relationships, the next two hypotheses are posited:

H3: Emerging adults will use affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) at a higher rate with biological parents than with nonbiological parents.

H4: Emerging adults will consider affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) to be more appropriate for use with biological parents than with nonbiological parents.

The number of siblings within a family, too, may exert an influence on the extent to which emerging adult children use affectionate communication with their parents. In another study conducted on affectionate communication between fathers and sons, Floyd and Morman (2005) found that the greater the number of siblings a son had, the less affectionate communication the son perceived receiving from his father. Specifically, they found that sons reported receiving (a) a lesser amount of verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors when they had a larger number of brothers and (b) a lesser amount of social support behaviors when they had a larger number of sisters. Given this finding, we were interested in whether the number of siblings an emerging adult child has would influence the frequency with which they express affectionate communication with their parents. The presence of multiple children in a household can affect the parent-child relationship in part because as family size increases, parents have fewer resources to share and less time to spend talking with each of their children (Downey, 1995). Furthermore, in families with multiple children, children may perceive parental favoritism toward siblings, even if the parents believe they treat both children equally (Kowal et al., 2006). In addition to differential treatment, there is evidence that suggests that children perceive their parents as having a finite amount of resources for their children (Jensen et al., 2013), which may lead emerging adult children with multiple siblings to engage in lesser amounts of affectionate communication with their parents than emerging

adult children who either have one sibling or no siblings at all. To investigate this notion, the fifth hypothesis is posited:

H5: Emerging adults who have multiple siblings will use affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) at a lower rate with their parents than emerging adults who either have one sibling or no siblings.

To date, family communication researchers have documented that affectionate communication is related positively to a host of relational outcomes in the father-son dyad, including relational satisfaction and relational closeness (Floyd & Morman, 2000, 2001; Floyd et al., 2004; Morman & Floyd, 2002). Most recently, Hesse et al. (2018) discovered a similar positive relationship exists between affectionate communication and relational satisfaction, relational closeness, life satisfaction, and self-esteem in the adult child-parent relationship, whereas Hesse et al. (2017) obtained a positive relationship between adult children's reports of affectionate communication received from their parents and relationship satisfaction with their parents. To extend these collective findings specifically to the emerging adult-parent relationship, the following hypothesis was posited:

H6: Emerging adults' use of affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) with their parents will be positively related to their relational outcomes (i.e., relational satisfaction, relational closeness, and commitment).

Method

Participants

Participants were 283 undergraduate students (117 men, 165 women, one participant did not report his or her sex) recruited from several introductory communication courses at a large Mid-Atlantic university whose ages ranged from 18 to 25 years ($M = 20.2$, $SD = 1.7$). They reported their race/ethnicity as Caucasian/White ($n = 213$), African American/Black ($n = 27$), Asian American/Asian ($n = 6$), Hispanic ($n = 6$), Middle Eastern ($n = 17$), Native American ($n = 2$), and Other ($n = 13$). The majority of participants reported their sexual orientation as

heterosexual ($n = 266$, or 94%). Forty-three participants ($n = 43$) were only children, 97 participants had one sibling, and 141 participants had two or more siblings ($Mdn = 3$; $Mo = 2$).

Procedures and Instrumentation

After receiving Institutional Review Board approval, data were collected in one of two ways. First, participants ($n = 170$) were solicited through their enrollment in one of several introductory communication courses. With the permission of the respective course instructor, the second author attended the beginning of a class session and distributed a cover letter (a) explaining the purpose of the study and (b) listing the inclusion criteria (i.e., participants must be between 18 and 25 years of age and have a living parent with whom they had recently communicated). Students who met the inclusion criteria were then provided with a questionnaire and an envelope. They were instructed to complete the survey outside of class, place the completed survey in the envelope, seal the envelope, and return the sealed envelope the following week, at which time the first author came to each class and collected the envelopes. Second, an announcement that explained the purpose of the study and listed the aforementioned inclusion criteria was posted on the departmental research board located outside the department office. Participants ($n = 113$) were directed to attend one of several data-gathering sessions, at which time participants received a cover letter, a survey, and an envelope. Upon completion of the survey, participants then kept the cover letter, placed the survey in the envelope, sealed the envelope, and deposited the envelope into a box located at the front of the room in which the data-gathering session was held. They were thanked for their participation as they exited the room. Participants received a minimal amount of course extra credit from one of their instructors for their participation, with the amount determined by each instructor.

Participants received a survey packet in which they were first asked to identify the parent with whom they had most recently interacted (i.e., in person, over the phone, through text or e-mail). Of these parents, 104 were men and 179 were women, 177 parents were biological, and 106 parents were nonbiological (i.e., 94 stepparents, 11 adoptive, 1 foster), and 206 parents were currently married. Their ages were reported as ranging from 22 to 69 years ($M = 49.2$, $SD = 7.0$) and their

race/ethnicity was reported as Caucasian/White ($n = 227$), African American/Black ($n = 23$), Asian American/Asian ($n = 6$), Hispanic ($n = 5$), Middle Eastern ($n = 17$), Native American ($n = 1$), and Other ($n = 4$). Most participants ($n = 223$) lived, on average, 412 miles from the identified parent ($M = 411.72$, $SD = 1129.09$; range = 1-9000 miles; $Mdn = 180$; $Mo = 200$); the remaining participants currently lived with their identified parent.

After reporting this demographic data, participants completed five measures in reference to their relationship with the identified parent. They completed the *Affectionate Communication Index* twice: first, to assess the *frequency* with which they used affectionate communication behaviors with their identified parent, and second, to assess the *perceived appropriateness* of using affectionate behaviors with their identified parent. The Affectionate Communication Index is a 19-item scale that measures individuals' use of verbal statements (five items), nonverbal gestures (nine items), and social support behaviors (five items). Participants indicated (a) the frequency with which they used each behavior with their identified parent using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never use*) to 7 (*always use*) and (b) the perceived appropriateness of using each behavior with their identified parent using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Prior Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .71 to .89 across the three dimensions have been reported in prior studies (Myers et al., 2011; Zhang & Wills, 2016).

Satisfaction with the parent-child relationship was measured with the 7-item *Relationship Assessment Scale* (Hendrick, 1988). Participants indicated the degree to which they felt satisfied with their relationship using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients of .91 and .92 have been reported previously for this measure (Hesse & Mikkelsen, 2017; Hesse et al., 2017; Myers & Odenweller, 2015).

Relational commitment was measured with Stafford and Canary's (1991) 6-item measure. Participants indicated how committed they felt to their relationship with their parent using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients ranging from .81 to .88 have been reported previously for this measure (Canary & Stafford, 1992; Myers & Odenweller, 2015; Stafford & Canary, 1991).

Relational closeness was assessed with the *Inclusion of the Other in the Self Scale* (Aron et al., 1992). This single-item measure consists of seven sets of overlapping circles, in which each set overlaps slightly more than the previous set, representing the degree of closeness that the participant feels with the other (i.e., the identified parent).

Data Analysis

Hypotheses one, two, three, four, and five were analyzed using a series of multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA). For all five hypotheses, the three dimensions of affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) served simultaneously as the dependent variables, whereas in hypothesis one and two, four groups (based on emerging adult sex and parent sex) were created to serve as the independent variable; in hypotheses three and four, parent genetic relatedness (i.e., biological, nonbiological) served as the independent variable; and in hypothesis five, number of children (i.e., one, two, three or more) served as the independent variable. Hypothesis six was analyzed using a series of one-tailed Pearson Product-Moment correlations.

Results

Table 1 contains a correlation matrix of all the variables as well as the mean score, the standard deviation, and the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of each instrument used in this study. Due to the moderate to substantial Pearson Product-Moment correlations (i.e., 0.56 to 0.76) that were obtained between the frequency of use of verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors and the appropriateness of use of verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors, the six variables were analyzed jointly for hypotheses 1 and 2 as well as for hypotheses 3 and 4.

Table 1

Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>Rate</i>								
1. Verbal statements	--							
2. Nonverbal gestures	.71	--						
3. Social support behaviors	.74	.65	--					
<i>Appropriateness</i>								
4. Verbal statements	.70	.56	.70	--				
5. Nonverbal gestures	.59	.74	.57	.76	--			
6. Social support behaviors	.58	.50	.76	.86	.69	--		
<i>Relational outcomes</i>								
7. Satisfaction	.51	.34	.66	.53	.33	.59	--	
8. Closeness	.52	.44	.54	.41	.38	.42	.53	--
9. Commitment	.54	.38	.70	.62	.43	.70	.85	.47

Note. All correlations are significant at the $p < .001$ level (2-tailed).

The first and second hypotheses predicted that female and male emerging adults would use affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) at a higher rate with their mothers than with their fathers and would consider affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) to be more appropriate for use with their mothers than with their fathers, respectively. Both hypotheses were partially supported, *Wilks' Λ* = .73, $F(18, 722) = 4.99$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$ (see Table 2). Univariate effects were significant for rate of verbal statements, $F(3, 278) = 7.21$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$; rate of nonverbal gestures, $F(3, 278) = 14.05$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .13$; rate of social support behaviors, $F(3, 278) = 9.91$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .10$; appropriateness of verbal statements, $F(3, 278) = 11.03$, $p < .001$, partial

$\eta^2 = .11$; appropriateness of nonverbal gestures, $F(3, 278) = 17.89, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .16$; and appropriateness of social support behaviors, $F(3, 278) = 6.76, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$.

Table 2

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Affectionate Communication Rate and Appropriateness

Variable	1 ^a		2 ^b		3 ^c		4 ^d	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Rate</i>								
Verbal statements	20.31 _{abc}	7.50	16.89 _a	6.75	16.83 _b	7.82	15.38 _c	6.15
Nonverbal gestures	30.25 _{ab}	9.07	28.77 _{cd}	10.26	21.79 _{ac}	9.92	22.85 _{bd}	8.26
Social support behaviors	26.10 _{ab}	6.22	23.51	7.17	21.19 _a	7.19	21.10 _b	6.83
<i>Appropriateness</i>								
Verbal statements	27.35 _{abc}	6.91	23.37 _a	6.96	23.42 _b	8.67	20.67 _c	7.66
Nonverbal gestures	39.85 _{ab}	11.21	36.12 _{cd}	11.49	29.25 _{ac}	12.48	27.87 _{bd}	11.10
Social support behaviors	29.73 _{ab}	6.28	27.45	6.62	26.06 _a	8.64	24.87 _b	7.77

Note. Means sharing subscripts on each row differ significantly from each other. ^a113 female emerging adult/mother dyads. ^b65 male emerging adult/mother dyads. ^c52 female emerging adult/father dyads. ^d52 male emerging adult/father dyads.

A series of Scheffe post-hoc analyses revealed that (a) female emerging adults use verbal statements at a higher rate and consider verbal statements as more appropriate for use with their mothers than male emerging adults with their mothers, female emerging adults with their fathers, and male emerging adults with their fathers; (b) female emerging adults and male emerging adults use nonverbal gestures at a higher rate and consider nonverbal gestures as more appropriate for use with their mothers than female emerging adults with their fathers and male emerging adults with their fathers; and (c) female emerging adults use social support behaviors and consider social support behaviors as

more appropriate for use with their mothers than female emerging adults with their fathers and male emerging adults with their fathers.

The third and fourth hypotheses predicted that emerging adults would use affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) with biological parents at a higher rate than with nonbiological parents and would consider affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) to be more appropriate for use with biological parents than with nonbiological parents, respectively. Both of these hypotheses were supported, *Wilks' Λ* = .71, $F(6, 276) = 18.69, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .29$ (see Table 3). Univariate effects were significant for rate of verbal statements, $F(1, 281) = 47.21, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .14$; rate of nonverbal gestures, $F(1, 281) = 33.24, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .11$; rate of social support behaviors, $F(1, 281) = 80.82, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .22$; appropriateness of verbal statements, $F(1, 281) = 55.97, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .17$; appropriateness of nonverbal gestures, $F(1, 281) = 63.07, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .18$; and appropriateness of social support behaviors, $F(1, 281) = 79.62, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .22$.

Table 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Genetic Relatedness

Variable	1 ^a		2 ^b	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Rate</i>				
Verbal statements	20.16	6.56	14.37	7.31
Nonverbal gestures	29.54	8.98	22.82	10.27
Social support behaviors	26.21	5.46	19.34	7.34
<i>Appropriateness</i>				
Verbal statements	26.91	6.05	20.35	8.64
Nonverbal gestures	38.93	10.88	27.91	11.97
Social support behaviors	30.26	4.98	23.13	8.48

Note. ^a177 biological parents. ^b106 nonbiological parents.

The fifth hypothesis predicted that emerging adults who have multiple siblings would use affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) at a lower rate with their parents than emerging adults who either have one sibling or no siblings. This hypothesis was not supported, *Wilks' Λ* = .98, *F*(6, 556) = 1.15, *p* = .332, partial η^2 = .01.

The sixth hypothesis predicted that emerging adults' use of affectionate communication (i.e., verbal statements, nonverbal gestures, and social support behaviors) with their parents would be positively related to their relational outcomes (i.e., relational satisfaction, relational closeness, commitment). Based on the results of the third hypothesis, analyses were run separately for biological parents and nonbiological parents. For biological parents, this hypothesis was supported. Emerging adults' use of verbal statements was positively related to relational satisfaction, $r(177) = .36, p < .001$; relational closeness, $r(152) = .32, p < .001$; and commitment, $r(177) = .34, p < .001$. Emerging adults' use of nonverbal gestures was positively related to relational satisfaction, $r(177) = .17, p = .010$; relational closeness, $r(152) = .24, p < .001$; and commitment, $r(177) = .17, p = .011$. Emerging adults' use of social support behaviors was positively related to relational satisfaction, $r(177) = .56, p < .001$; relational closeness, $r(152) = .31, p < .001$; and commitment, $r(177) = .57, p < .001$.

For nonbiological parents, this hypothesis was supported. Emerging adults' use of verbal statements was positively related to relational satisfaction, $r(106) = .49, p < .001$; relational closeness, $r(89) = .55, p < .001$; and commitment, $r(106) = .54, p < .001$. Emerging adults' use of nonverbal gestures was positively related to relational satisfaction, $r(106) = .30, p < .001$; relational closeness, $r(89) = .46, p < .001$; and commitment, $r(106) = .36, p < .001$. Emerging adults' use of social support behaviors was positively related to relational satisfaction, $r(106) = .59, p < .001$; relational closeness, $r(89) = .47, p < .001$; and commitment, $r(106) = .64, p < .001$.

Discussion

Using Affection Exchange Theory (AET) as a theoretical framework, the purpose of this study was to examine emerging adult's use of affectionate communication with their parents. It was found that while emerging adults engage in affectionate communication with their

parents and perceived affectionate communication as appropriate for use with their parents, their use of affectionate communication differs based on the sex composition of the dyad and the biological relatedness of the parent and emerging adult child. Moreover, affectionate communication is not dependent on the number of children within a family but is positively related to emerging adults' perceptions of their relational satisfaction, closeness, and commitment with parents. One strength of this study is its examination of affectionate communication among specific parent-child dyads (rather than the family as a whole), which provides a more nuanced understanding of affectionate communication within emerging adult-parent relationship.

Taken together, the collective findings of this study support the third postulate of AET, which states that engaging in affectionate communication contributes to relational (i.e., survival, procreation) success (Floyd et al., 2008). Whether it is through female emerging adults engaging in affectionate communication more frequently with their mothers than with their fathers, female emerging adults believing that affectionate communication is more appropriate for use with their mothers than with their fathers, or emerging adults engaging in affectionate communication more frequently with their biological parents than with their nonbiological parents, emerging adults' use of affectionate communication may be one way in which they can continue to sustain their relationships with their parents. Although emerging adults are interested in becoming more self-sufficient through embracing responsibility, becoming financially independent, and moving out of their family home (Arnett, 2001), this interest in self-sufficiency does not mean that emerging adults want to sever their ties with their parents. Rather, it is during this time period that emerging adults desire to establish a relationship with their parents that is more egalitarian in nature (Arnett, 1997) and will continue to evolve over the life span. Affectionate communication, then, may be one behavior that emerging adults actively use to not only remain involved with their parents (and families), but also as a way to ensure that they are part of their family, given that affectionate communication is a behavior considered to be appropriate for sustaining relational development (Floyd & Voloudakis, 1999). This notion may be particularly more salient for female emerging adults--particularly when they interact with their mothers--due to the "kinkeeper" role that female relatives often play in family maintenance.

Furthermore, emerging adults reported that their use of affectionate communication is tied positively to their relational satisfaction and closeness with, and commitment to, their parents. Not only does this finding complement similar findings obtained in studies examining adult child-parent use of affectionate communication (Curran & Yoshimura, 2016; Hesse et al., 2018; Zhang & Wills, 2016), but also it supports Floyd's (2006) notion that affectionate communication promotes "the establishment and maintenance of significant human pair bonds" (p. 165), again aligning itself with the third postulate of AET. It is possible that emerging adults who use affectionate communication with their parents and subsequently are satisfied with their parental relationships, consider themselves relationally close to their parents, and are committed to their parental relationships cannot help but to establish and maintain a significant relational parent-child bond. This positive association between emerging adults' use of affectionate communication with their parents and the three relational outcomes also may influence the extent to which emerging adults experience positivity, happiness, and pleasure in their other familial relationships such as grandparents, siblings, and siblings-in-law, which is a direction that family communication researchers may choose to pursue in future research studies.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of this study, which also should serve as a direction for future researchers interested in examining how emerging adults and parents use affectionate communication with each other, is that the extent to which emerging adults experience affection deprivation--and whether this experience is tied to how they express affectionate communication with their parents--was not assessed. Floyd (2016) conceptualized affection deprivation as "a state in which individuals receive a level of affectionate expression from others that is inadequate to meet their needs" (p. 380). When individuals are affectionately deprived, they are more likely to experience issues with their general well-being, social well-being, mental health, and physical health (Floyd, 2014, 2016; Floyd & Morman, 2022; Hesse et al., 2022). Affectionately deprived individuals also suffer relational health issues in their romantic relationships in that they report less relationship satisfaction, closeness, commitment, and certainty (Hesse & Mikkelsen,

2017). For some emerging adults, then, affection deprivation may influence the rate at which they engage in affectionate communication as well as whether they view affectionate communication to be appropriate for use with their parents and should be explored in future research.

Conversely, because some parents are excessively affectionate with their adult children, which is negatively associated with adult children's relational satisfaction with their parents as well as with their life satisfaction and self-esteem (Hesse et al., 2018), future researchers should gather data on the targeted parent's frequency of use of affectionate communication with their emerging adult child. Because emerging adulthood represents a time when adult children are trying to express their independence, it is possible that when parents communicate too affectionately with their emerging adults, their excessive use of affectionate communication might actually prove detrimental to the emerging adult-parent relationship, particularly if emerging adults view these affectionate displays as manipulation attempts or expectations for reciprocity (Floyd & Pauley, 2011).

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that affectionate communication not only is a behavior that emerging adults use with their parents, but also it is a behavior that they believe is appropriate for use with their parents and is associated positively with their relational satisfaction, relational closeness, and commitment. The results of this study inform communication researchers about the role of affectionate communication in specific parent-child dyads during a developmentally crucial period of time. Despite the increased independence and self-reliance that characterize emerging adulthood, affectionate communication can—and does—reiterate the importance of the parent-child bond.

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An Ethnographic Study in Freelance Sports Production

Joseph H. Moore

Abstract

Examining through the lens of Geertz and Pacanowsky's cultural approach to organizations, an ethnographic study was conducted during the 2020 MIAA Basketball Tournament. Observations were made over the course of five days and interviews were conducted with the faculty and students participating. The intention was to determine if and how individuals can come together in the fast-paced world of sports broadcasting to form a cohesive unit and culture and what challenges are faced and overcome. Three general themes emerged that either supported or hindered cohesion and the development of a shared culture: repetition, trust, and communication. If the goal is to develop cohesion between groups, more repetition with common teams would breed familiarity and thus help foster trust. Clear communication among leaders and participants must be present. Clear expectations must be established, and fair, honest post-production assessments are necessary.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there will be a 29 percent increase in jobs for video editors and camera operators; a 24 percent increase in jobs for producers and directors; a 21 percent increase in jobs for broadcast, sound, and video technicians; and a 15 percent increase in positions for announcers between 2020 and 2030 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, July 8, 2022). Halberstam (2018) addressed the growing trend in streaming services and the subsequent increased demand for announcers. "From a training perspective, broadcast students in the past had one place to turn, the student radio station. Now, many student announcers call their college's video streams. It better prepares them for a career in television" (para. 10).

Those producers and announcers interested in occupations in media, sports and entertainment often work for themselves (Occupational Outlook Quarterly, 2013). Many productions today, including live sports broadcasts, are crewed by independent contractors, referred to as freelance personnel. Owens (2007) and Keally (2016) defined the freelance production worker and potential for the professional. Owens

offered that freelancers are “independent contractors who work for multiple organizations” and noted that “it is rare to find a remote production crew that does not have at least a few freelance personnel” (pg. 17). Keally added that personnel may work in “different cities 20 times a year” (para 2). He also pointed out personnel will work with a variety of producers, directors, and assistant directors and that they will constantly have to learn new terminology, based upon their area of operation. Thus, the importance of studying how these professionals can become indoctrinated into crews and develop a suitable, productive, and sustainable culture. Keally addressed this, stating “Your co-workers ... may be people you have just met or someone that you have known for 20 years” (para 3).

While NCAA Division I conferences ink multi-million dollar television contracts, 15 of the 23 NCAA Division II conferences have their own networks that utilize streaming services such as Stretch Internet and Blue Frame, and for these productions they use combinations of students enrolled in sports production classes, campus employees and freelance personnel. The Major Arena Soccer League streams through YouTube (branded as MASLtv), and outfits such as MidcoSN based in Sioux Falls, S.D.; Zimmerman Productions out of Kansas City, Mo.; and Prepcast and Colledgecast from St. Louis produce broadcasts and livestreams of high school, small college, and minor league sports. All employ freelance personnel.

As sports, film and television productions are turning to freelance professionals, we need to learn how these individuals--who come from all walks of life and experience levels--come together in a short time frame to form a cohesive unit to achieve the team goal (producing the broadcast or film). Further, if we are to prepare students for careers as freelance producers, they are going to need practice so they learn how to integrate, to form community, to adapt, and to take direction from a variety of leaders. However, little research exists that may help aspiring sports broadcasters learn to function in this dynamic setting. Halberstam (2018), Krikke (2004) and Clavio (2013) address the growth in opportunities. Bloggers and trade sites abound with advice for both students and professionals interested in becoming private contractors. But sports broadcasts, either live remote or in a studio, require multiple crew members, and none of these sources say anything about how freelancers may integrate into a production with other freelancers and

full-time professionals, often individuals with whom they have never worked.

With that in mind, several questions arise: Can and how do these individuals quickly come together in the fast-paced world of sports broadcasting to form a cohesive unit? Are they able to form a culture? What challenges are faced and are they subsequently overcome? To answer these questions, I spent five days with four member schools as they produced the various aspects of production at the 2020 Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association Basketball Championship Tournament. For this ethnographic study, I looked through the lens of Geertz and Pacanowsky's cultural approach to organizations (Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2019) to determine if and how team bonding might occur and if working with faculty and students from rival schools might prepare students for the dynamic field of freelance sports broadcast production.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Approach to Organizations and Ethnography

Griffin, Ledbetter, and Sparks (2019) discussed the cultural approach to organizations introduced by Clifford Geertz and popularized by Michael Pacanowsky. An anthropologist, Geertz defined culture as shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sensemaking. Pacanowsky applied Geertz's research to the study of communication in organizations. After comparing the success of Japanese-based businesses compared to U.S.-based businesses and noting that it was the Japanese workers' shared sense of loyalty to each other, Griffin et. al stressed that "Organizations look radically different depending on how people in the host culture structure meaning" (pg. 238).

Griffin et. al (2019) also stressed that subcultures may exist within the larger culture and said cultural performances are "actions by which members constitute and reveal their culture to themselves and others" (pg. 238) help members define their place within the larger culture. Finally, Griffin et. al (2019) addressed Geertz's use of ethnography and what he termed "thick description". In his seminal work, Geertz (1973) defined thick description as thinking and reflecting on an event and then reporting on the meaning. Where thin description describes the act, thick description describes why it is happening and

what it means. It examines who is involved, how it happened, why it happened at this particular time in this specific place.

The cultural approach to organizations makes three assumptions: 1) Each organization has its own culture with shared meanings and understandings; 2) In order for culture to exist, there must be shared meaning, shared understanding, and shared sense making; and 3) Culture is learned through stories and metaphors that clarify what is unfamiliar or confusing (Griffin et. al, 2019). The goal of the cultural approach to organizations, then, is to use an ethnographic approach to fully immerse oneself into the culture in order to study how the culture is formed and how its characters perform.

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), ethnographers are interested in these shared patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language. Generally, the unit of analysis is a larger group as the ethnographer focuses on an entire culture-sharing group. The process involves extended observations of the group, either through participant observation (where the researcher becomes immersed in the operations and takes part in activities) or through pure observation (where the research is present but not involved). The researcher starts with a theory and looks for patterns of communication and behavior with the ultimate goal to gain a better understanding of how the culture-sharing group functions.

Ethnography has often been utilized in the study of sport (Clapp, 2015; Gmelch and Weiner, 2006; Stephens, 2010); Trujillo, 1992). Clapp utilized the cultural approach to organizations to address culture related to sports broadcasting. He developed an hour-by-hour rundown of what a production day is like from professional sports producer Dennis Kirkpatrick. In this article, Kirkpatrick stressed the importance of taking care of the crew, right down to buying breakfast, coffee and/or snacks.

“Producing live sports is really about aligning a team of people toward a common goal. You can’t do it all, every individual on the crew has an important role that is essential to a smooth production. Buying breakfast might seem trivial, but it’s a small detail that goes a long way with the team” (para 11).

Trujillo (1992) conducted a long-term ethnographic study of the communicative actions and interactions of employees who worked at a Major League Baseball stadium in an effort to determine how culture is

developed. Ten years later he lamented the fact that more ethnographic research had not been conducted in the field of sport. “What’s more serious than sport?” he argued. “It’s a billion-dollar industry and shapes cultural values in our country” (pg. 69).

Gmelch and Weiner (2006) followed a similar path to Trujillo. They interviewed 21 professionals from all facets of baseball coverage--usher and broadcaster, beer vendor and sportswriter, clubhouse attendant, and field manager, ticket seller and owner, scout and general manager, mascot and player. This list they compiled in an ethnographic format as they examined the interaction between groups and the culture that developed.

Stephens (2010) was interested in how successful coaches develop winning teams and winning cultures. He conducted interviews with staff and attended team functions, games, and events to learn how such cultures are developed. Stephens examined everything from recruiting and developing talent to communication and interaction.

While these studies have examined the culture within organizations, studies related to the culture that develops from outside entities are lacking.

Freelance Production and The Future of Sports Broadcasting

In order to get a more personal understanding of what professionals expect and deal with as freelance personnel, I conducted interviews with four producers with whom I have worked as my program’s internship coordinator. Jeff Graham (coordinating producer of American Sports Network), Shawn Beldin (manager of content at Spectrum Sports), Brad Zimmerman (owner of Zimmerman Productions) and Kyle Haas (executive producer of MidCoSN) employ anywhere from four to 24 freelance personnel per event, depending on the size and scope of the production. Most of these crew members serve as camera operators, replay operators or graphics generators, though Haas noted that he has a smaller full-time staff, so freelance personnel may be called upon to direct or serve as talent. All four producers said they expect their crew members to be dependable, have a good work ethic and have some expertise in the field. Above all, though, they expect a “can do spirit”.

“You have to come in with a good attitude, no matter what is going on. Whether it is a bright and sunny day or if it’s cold or rainy or

wet, or combination of all those (K. Haas, personal communication, February 5, 2020).

“If they are there just for the paycheck, that can pose a problem because they don’t want to work as hard as they should (J. Graham, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

Subsequently their greatest challenges are when personnel come in with a bad attitude, are cocky and are not reliable.

Two of the professionals (Haas and Graham) noted that they do not have time for “babysitting”. Graham, Beldin, Zimmerman and Haas agreed that communication must take place from top down and that it must begin even before the crew arrives at the production site, but that once there, pre-production meetings are a must so everyone is on the same page. “The producer and director will talk beforehand, figure out where they want cameras, how they want replay done, and so forth,” Graham said. He noted that the producer and director will then convey this information to the crew. “That’s all pregame. Hopefully, from all those conversations, everybody knows the expectations and what’s to be done” (J. Graham, personal communication, February 10, 2020).

Finally, when asked how cohesion and culture develop, one term stood out: repetition. The producers agreed that the crew must work together and in the same positions at least two or three times before they really begin to gel. Beldin and Haas added that having dinner breaks together between pre-production and the event also helps.

Why is it so important to discuss freelance broadcast production and a cultural approach to organizations? Because content production, and thus the need for more freelance producers is on the rise. NFL viewership rose 5% in 2018 (Foley, 2019), which “translates into increased production opportunities for all of us” (para 1). The 2018 Super Bowl in Atlanta, for example, employed 5,800 credentialed media professionals to cover the event, with CBS bringing in 115 cameras. That trend continued into 2021, when TV ratings rose 10% over 2020 to 17.1 million viewers across television and digital platforms (Associated Press, 2022). Foley stressed that, as new technology provides new audio and video sources, networks will continue to take calculated risks to improve the viewer experience, which translates to even more opportunities. It is not just the NFL, either. Live sports attract some of the highest TV audiences in the United States, and that number is expected to rise (Statista 2022). Approximately 57.5 million viewers in the United States

watched digital live sports content at least once per month in 2021 in the U.S. That figure is projected to rise to over 90 million by 2025.

Dormer (2019) pointed to streaming as further reasons for the growth in sports broadcast viewership (and the subsequent need for more freelance staff). Dormer claimed that because of streaming, sports video content generated \$30.6 billion in revenue in 2019. He said operations such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Amazon, and Yahoo all wanted their “piece of the pie” and pointed to DAZN. Launched by British tech start-up The Perform Group, DAZN employed over a thousand staff members and offered more than 8,000 sports events “including the Premier League, Bundesliga, La Liga, NBA, NFL, MLB, Formula One, and is the host broadcaster of Japan’s J. League” (para 4).

As these opportunities continue to become available, it is critical for educators to prepare students for freelance opportunities, not just in skills, but also in how to acclimate and work with individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

Methodology

Ethnographic research “focuses on an entire culture-sharing group” and “involves extended observations of the group, most often through participant observation” (Creswell and Poth, 2018, p. 90). It is the appropriate qualitative methodology “if the needs are to describe how a cultural group works and to explore the beliefs, language, behaviors and issues facing the group, such as power, resistance, and dominance” (pg. 93). Key to beginning the ethnography is finding a gatekeeper or key informants who will allow the researcher access to the group. It then requires that researchers immerse themselves in the field for an extended period so they may witness the members in action to interpret their culture.

After receiving endorsements from the league commissioner and director of communication, I immersed myself within the group (the faculty and students from four rival institutions in the Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletics Association) to observe and interview key participants in the production of the conference basketball tournament. Data was collected over a five-day period at the 2020 MIAA Basketball Tournament, covering over 50 hours of field work. Participants were observed as they produced the live video feed; pregame, halftime, and postgame shows; video board highlights; social media posts; and

commentary for the five-day men's and women's tournaments. I also conducted interviews with faculty and students.

Before the tournament under study (in 2020), I brought my sports broadcasting course to the tournament in 2016, 2017 and 2018. My students were the first to produce the highlight packages to be displayed on the video boards between games. I had been a part of the pre-production meetings, supervised the editing of the highlights, and at times took an active role in the production of the livestream. Because of my experience, I was tempted to offer my services in various areas of the production, but I resisted. I believed my efforts strictly as an observer would allow me to gather more data in multiple areas; if I were tethered to a camera for a specific game, I would lose the opportunity to see the halftime show crew in its downtime or to capture information from the social media crew.

During my interviews and observations, I took extensive field notes and, when possible, captured verbatim communication among the students and faculty. I developed maps to remind me where groups sat during pre-production meetings, took special note of when students from rival schools worked together (as play-by-play and analyst, as director and camera operators, as show host and graphics generator, etc.). During lulls in the action, I reviewed my notes and clarified scribbles that might have been illegible. I took notes openly while I was observing. I was introduced to the students in the opening production meeting, so my note-taking behavior was expected. The participants often commented with things like, "Oh, wow, I forgot you were even here!"

Finally, interviews were conducted with each of the professors overseeing the various areas of production and with two-to-four students from each school. These interviews were recorded, the audio embedded into PowerPoint so that videos could be made and loaded into Panopto editing software, where closed captions could be added and transcribed.

The remainder of this article presents perspectives for how students (ostensibly freelance employees) from different schools came together and produced the various components of a college basketball tournament broadcast.

Findings

After observing the student crews and faculty interactions over the five-day tournament, and after interviews with 14 students and four

faculty supervisors, three general themes emerged that either supported or hindered cohesion and the development of a shared culture: repetition, trust, and communication. When these were present, students functioning in a freelance capacity were able to merge and produce quality content in a fun and relaxed environment. When they were not present, content was still generally good, but the experience was not as enjoyable, and chaos often ensued.

This section will first address the daily schedule observed at the tournament, as this provides insights into the interactions between students from participating schools. It will then address what expectations the students had coming into the event and if those expectations were met, how the students and faculty viewed the experience, and what challenges they faced. Finally, I will examine how repetition in familiar positions within teams of broadcasters, trust in one another, and communication within groups and between groups may impact the various components of a sports broadcast production.

The Daily Routine

Day one began with a production meeting as the professor from Pittsburg State (PSU) welcomed all students and faculty to the tournament, shared his vision for the collaboration, and asked participants to introduce themselves, an arduous task given 41 students were present, the largest gathering of students ever at the conference tournament (Note: As dean of the faculty at the tournament, the PSU faculty was the de facto leader). He encouraged the students to work hard but have fun, reminded them that “We are from rival schools, but we are one team this weekend,” and stressed the value of getting to know one another by sitting together at dinner, visiting with one another between sessions, and networking. These meetings took place the first three days.

After day one, each morning began with a meeting between the student producers. Students from the respective schools trickled in and sat together for breakfast. A brief pre-production meeting would take place, followed by a talent meeting in which the day’s play-by-play and color commentators would discuss their respective games, and the studio show hosts would get their assignments.

Production of the first two games of each day’s session took place, followed by a dinner break, and then the final two games of the day’s session. For the productions, Central Missouri (UCM) was in the

basement of Municipal Auditorium in a partitioned area for editing and recording voice overs. PSU found its production area for the live stream and video board productions in a six-foot by 32-foot storage closet under the bleachers. Northwest Missouri State (NWMSU) used a standing fly pack in an open area under the bleachers across an aisle from PSU. Their post-game productions happened courtside with reports provided by a MIAA employee. Fort Hays State (FHSU) was in a 26-foot by 21-foot meeting room on the third floor almost directly overhead from PSU.

An overall team post-production meeting and “breakdown” closed the evening. During the breakdown, all the students and faculty gathered in a circle at midcourt, faculty would recap the day’s events from their respective areas, and then two team members would be selected to “run the gauntlet,” high fiving everyone and showing off some dance moves before the whole team came together in one large scrum. One member would shout “When I say, ‘hard work,’ you say, ‘dedication.’” The leader would then shout, “hard work” to a chorus of “dedication.” This was repeated three times and then the evening was concluded. Students and faculty retired to their rooms or, in school groups, would convene at local bars and restaurants to unwind, but only in school groups, never as a mix of students from participating universities.

Given the four interviews with the professional sports broadcasters prior to the study, I paid particular attention during the mealtimes, during the breaks in action between games, and during these post-production gatherings. Beldin and Haas specifically mentioned that cohesion began to develop during mealtimes as crew members visited and got to know one another better. But time and again, the students and faculty sat with members of their own schools, rarely interacting with students from other universities. And in the post-production gatherings, students sat together in the bleachers, played hacky sack on the court with students from their own universities, or visited with their own faculty. The post-production faculty recaps were little more than platitudes with the occasional reminder (“Talent, be sure you are providing an unbiased call” or “Make sure you are clear on your assignment for each game”).

The Expectations, The Experiences, and the Challenges

Faculty agreed they wanted their students to have an enjoyable, unique opportunity. They also wanted their students to gain experience in something different. For example, the University of UCM students were experienced in providing live multi-camera productions of live sporting events, as they provided the video stream for as many as 60 sporting events in a year. But they never created highlight packages.

“In our current courses and the experiences they have at UCM, they don’t get a lot of experience with shooting, editing and writing for highlights,” the UCM faculty member said. “I want them to get good video footage for their demo reels. I want them to get writing experience. I want them to get voiceover work and talent work on air.”

Similarly, FHSU broadcasted live events, but they did not produce studio shows.

“You have some that want to be directors, producers, you have some obvious ones that want to be talent,” the FHSU faculty member said. “We want to put them in a spot where they can really get the most out of it, that will help them in the future.”

Likewise, the students were interested in developing skills and gaining experience. In that regard, producing the conference tournament did not disappoint.

“I think I’ve gained a lot of experience and knowledge in the real-world setting, and just learning how to work with different schools, with different co-workers, different students,” reported one PSU student. “Experience to put on a resume for one, and memories that I will never forget,” added a student from NWMSU. “I mean, this is truly one of the coolest things I’ve ever done in my sports broadcasting career.” And this from one of the FHSU students: “It is really good real-world experience and learning opportunities in the field.”

But while most of the students interviewed reported it was an enjoyable experience, at least one was frustrated by what she described as disorganization and poor communication.

“The lack of planning on the whole thing ... I feel like maybe someone from the MIAA should be in charge of the individual schools, and maybe there is, but I haven’t seen it,” she said. “But having Pitt State students in charge of everything is not going well because none of them are super organized.”

Throughout the weekend I did observe several situations where student producers scrambled to fill positions in the live stream and where crew members showed up late for productions. This repeatedly caused frustration among faculty and other crew members.

Many of those frustrations likely were caused by the volume of students present. Three of the four faculty members said that was the greatest challenge, and all agreed trying to create something unique caused issues. The PSU faculty member, who has been a part of the tournament broadcast production for 18 years, was one of the most vocal in this regard.

“You have more students up here, and they all want to do something,” he said. “There are only so many positions, and they all have different ideas on how to do things.”

One of the most uncomfortable interactions, in fact, involved this sort of conversation prior to the first game on day two. The student producer from Northwest was very vocal in his criticism of the PSU productions from day one, telling the PSU faculty member the production quality was “pretty bad” and that the camera operators need to “do a better job of white balancing” or they “need to be taken out of auto.” The Northwest student followed this the next morning at the pre-production meeting by telling the PSU student producers how they should be broadcasting (“You are doing X; don’t do that” and “You are doing Y; you should be doing Z”).

UCM’s faculty member also said integrating was a challenge. “Working with a Pitt State crew that has been doing this for many years and has a particular brand and style of doing something ... vision issues can occur,” he said. “Fort Hayes lives on an island to a certain extent because they are upstairs, so you’re trying to blend in with their crew. And Northwest just being added to the fold last year, they kind of live in their own cave, and then we’re in our own little cave down here in the media room. We want to believe that we can have this environment of community and working together, but I think we all still work in our own little silos.”

So, while the students did have an enjoyable venture and gained some valuable real-world experience, the overall goal of seeing four schools form a collaborative community was not achieved. Through observing the interactions in pre-production, production in each of the four areas, and post-production, and through interviewing students and faculty, three themes emerged that played significant roles in the

development of culture, or lack thereof: repetition, trust, and communication.

Repetition

This observation supports what I learned in my preliminary interviews with the four sports broadcasting professionals. When asked how long it takes cohesion to take place when working with a freelance crew, Jeff Beldin said, “I’m not sure that it ever becomes super cohesive if you’re just bouncing around from crew to crew” (J. Beldin, personal communication, February 10, 2020). This makes sense, given the cultural approach to organization’s second assumption, that culture exists only when there is shared meaning, shared understanding and shared sense making Griffin et. al (2019).

This need for repetition was demonstrated as both positive and negative factors in cohesion. Within groups, as students from the respective schools worked with their classmates, cohesion bloomed. The UCM students developed a workflow that resulted in timely submission of highlight packages and no missed deadlines. The NWMSU students operated like clockwork; as soon as a game was completed, their gear was rushed courtside, assembled, and tested so when the MIAA host and interviewees were ready, the lights came on and the cameras rolled. FHSU had a workflow established on day one that meant they didn’t miss a single studio entrance or toss, and PSU produced 18 livestreams in five days. This would seem obvious, given the students were familiar with one another. But it also highlighted the value of repetition in similar positions that breeds trust and the need for familiarity to develop shared meaning and understanding and thus a shared common culture.

Several examples from the production side stuck out that demonstrate this need for repetition so a shared understanding could develop. The first involved the fifth men’s game of the tournament, on day three. PSU students served as producer and director with the NWMSU student producer as technical director. At one point in the game, a player was injured. According to PSU’s philosophy, this was part of the game and a part of the story, so the director called for a camera to capture what was happening. The Northwest student, as technical director, however argued the shot should not be taken so he would not select the camera that had the shot. The PSU student producer ultimately had to physically move his hand and select the desired shot.

This sort of scenario happened multiple times throughout the tournament. In another instance, a FHSU student directed and got aggravated with the camera operators for talking too much while the game was in play. The students (and PSU faculty member) told him they are instructed to do this because their professor wants “them to get used to the distractions and how to focus.” Several other incidents occurred with students saying to PSU students and faculty things like “that’s not how we do it” and “you should do it the way we do it.”

Other students voiced their frustrations toward PSU. An NWMSU student commented that, “I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but PSU seems to want to do their own thing, so it’s like ‘whatever’.” A UCM student echoed that sentiment, saying, “It feels like it’s Pittsburg State’s show and we’re just filling in.” The PSU faculty member felt the tension and criticism. “Like, take our score bug,” he said. “Students from other schools have looked at it and said, ‘I don’t like what you do here. I’d do it this way.’ It just gets frustrating.”

An example from a talent perspective where repetition was clearly lacking involved a studio show in which two inexperienced hosts, one from FHSU and one from UCM, were paired. Neither had hosted a studio show before (lack of individual repetition) and they were introduced just hours before the show (lack of familiarity). What resulted was a near catastrophic production that saw the FHSU production crew scrambling to salvage the show. While individually the two hosts did a fine job researching the teams and developing content, they did not communicate between games or at halftime. Despite these struggles, FHSU’s faculty member sought positives.

“That was not at the level you would expect,” he said, “but you try to find positive things to focus on. They took good notes. They had good information. But they just couldn’t deliver.”

In some ways, the lack of repetition in common positions with common crews throughout each of the productions was inevitable, even desired. “You know, sometimes I think this would be a whole lot easier if we had the same people in the same positions every game,” PSU’s faculty member said. “But I don’t think they would learn as much, and I don’t think it would be as much fun for them.”

Trust

Whoever said “Familiarity breeds contempt” clearly was not thinking in a business sense. Or, for that matter, of sports broadcasting. Recall Pacanowsky’s findings when comparing U.S. and Japanese-based businesses. He found Japanese workers’ shared sense of loyalty to each other—their trust in one another—made them more productive than their American counterparts (Griffin et. al (2019).

For the first two days, student crews kept primarily to their own areas. As a result, trust was slow in developing. While trust was an issue throughout the tournament (because of a lack of familiarity, the competitive spirit of the production crews involved, and lack of), one area where it developed rapidly was among the talent. From the first day, student producers for PSU and FHSU met with students who were to be play-by-play and color commentators during the games and who wanted to host the studio shows. On day one, there was some hesitation in signing up for events. But after the first day, these meetings were very productive, and during breaks talent from the representative schools sat together discussing the previous games, making plans for coverage in upcoming games, and comparing notes.

At one point I had a conversation with the two NWMSU students who served as hosts with the FHSU student who was producing a studio show. The production flowed nicely and was extremely informative. When asked how they had performed so efficiently, it was clear they had developed a high level of confidence in a short amount of time.

“We watched the first game to see how they work, and we saw they know what they are doing,” said one of the hosts. “I trust in the professionalism of my peers,” said the student producer. “They know what they are doing; they only send the best of the best to the MIAA Tournament.” Trust also routinely developed between talent pairs for the studio shows because often one tandem would observe their predecessors’ production before hosting the next game themselves as a way of showing support and, as one student said, “soaking it in so we know what to expect.”

This level of trust was not as present in all areas, however. For example, the UCM faculty and students never approached any other school about working with them on producing highlights, in part because of a lack of trust.

“I don’t know that I’d feel comfortable having them (other students from other schools) shoot,” one UCM student producer said. “I know they can run shoulder cameras, but I don’t know if they can edit, and I like to edit.” So, rather than having a conversation with faculty or students from other schools, UCM played it safe and produced all the highlights themselves.

There were also concerns among the PSU student producers as students from other schools were integrated into the live stream because of the limited repetition and lack of familiarity.

“Being able to fairly distribute the work and give the people what they want to work, giving them that opportunity has been a little more of a challenge than in years past,” one student producer said.

The PSU faculty member reiterated the point made earlier that each school had its unique way of doing things and often they were not shy in sharing those opinions.

“It used to be that we’d come up here and kind of enjoy ourselves,” he said. “We do a good job and go to bed happy. Now it seems like we’re always so critical of not only ourselves but of each other. It’s frustrating.”

That is not to say there were never moments when community was observed. At one point late in the tournament, the FHSU student producer came to the live stream control room and taught PSU students how they manage part of their productions. The PSU student producers, in turn, shared their operations. “That’s the nice thing about this,” PSU’s faculty said. “When we can learn from each other. That’s what I’ve been hoping for all along.”

While repetition played a role in the lack of cohesion, as did an overall lack of trust (in part because of the lack of repetition), one factor really made it difficult for all four schools to come together as one community.

Communication

Ultimately, the greatest factor when it came to the lack of unity and the development of a shared culture was communication. Here again, within groups this did not seem to be an issue. Each group developed its own routine and its own method for communicating with one another. UCM started a group chat and had wireless headphones during games, FHSU had a daily team meeting and utilized IFBs to communicate from

court to studio, PSU utilized headsets that are synonymous with a live production (from control room crew to camera operators), and NWMSU was always together.

But between groups, communication was a challenge. While daily pre-production meetings were held, there were no pre-game preproduction meetings for the livestream crews throughout the tournament. This meant that once students began integrating into the livestream crews, they frequently were unclear of expectations, how to perform in their positions or who was serving in which roles. On multiple occasions, beginning with the first game, the talent did not know that they should perform an audio check or how to work the play-by-play system. Students repeatedly showed up only minutes before tip-off. This became a major issue on day two during the third men's game (the seventh game overall) of the tournament. Two UCM students, two FHSU students, and a high school student were integrated into the production. None of the students from outside PSU had performed in their roles with PSU before this, so there was substantial coaching. But amid coaching the "outsiders," an inexperienced PSU student had to be trained on graphics and the PSU student producer assigned to the game was called away, so another student producer had to take over. The production went off quite well because of an experienced, talented director from PSU who was encouraging and worked to keep the mood light. At one break in the action, he said, "UCM, I want more of you up here (in the control room). You put up with my bull sh_t!" But the lead up to the game was chaotic. Given that the faculty agreed the most challenging aspect of trying to collaborate during the tournament was the number of students to integrate into productions, sound communication was vital.

Another issue with communication was the lack of forethought in making assignments for games, which frequently led to confusion. For example, on day two, one of the PSU student producers who was trying to assign positions for Friday's broadcasts wrote out a schedule, dropped it on a table at dinner, and said, "Sign up for what you want." One student's response: "Oh, is that how it is?"

Overall, based on several comments made, both overheard during the tournament and through my interviews, it became clear that no clear expectations were communicated before the tournament. This harkens back to something one of the professional broadcasters said during my pre-tournament interviews. "Having been a freelancer for a

number of years, I know there can be a lot of anxiety, so I try to stay in contact and give them as much information as I can before they get there to make it as easy as possible” (B. Zimmerman, personal communication, February 11, 2020). While two teleconference meetings were held among faculty and MIAA officials, student producers were not part of these conversations. Thus, questions arose during the tournament regarding who oversaw the overall production, whether students were to integrate in all areas or only in the live stream, who would be providing commentary and when, and other such concerns.

The PSU faculty member recognized the lack of cohesion that was desired before the tournament started.

“This year I haven’t felt the students get as close,” he said. “I think there’s been some comments from other students, and maybe from my students, that have rubbed people the wrong way. They just haven’t gotten as close as they could. If they’re not out there competing against each other all the time, you know, it can just be more fun, more casual, I think.”

Conclusion

Without intentionality, expecting groups from separate programs to form a community while they work on specific tasks does not lead to cohesion. Rather, it leads to silos. While the intention was to form one unified team to produce the 2020 MIAA Basketball Tournament, in reality PSU focused on the live stream, UCM focused on highlight videos, FHSU concentrated on studio shows, and NWMSU stayed with social media. While efforts were made to integrate, students and faculty stayed primarily in their own silos. Thus, camaraderie and division of labor developed within schools, but not between schools. Further, no leaders emerged who attempted to form bonds among schools.

To be sure, there were some positives from the tournament. Students reported they gained valuable experience, confidence, and adaptability. Unity within the groups seemed to grow as well so that classmates could go back to their universities and provide a more unified production as they developed content on their own campuses. But if the goal of such a production is to learn to form a community, to develop cohesion between groups, and to develop as a unified team with individuals with whom they are not familiar, several considerations need to be addressed. More repetition with common teams should be

considered, perhaps with students playing only two or three roles. This repetition with common teams would also help foster trust. Above all, clear communication among leaders and participants must be present. Conversations must be had pre-tournament and pre-production. Clear expectations must be established and fair, honest post-production assessments are necessary.

While this study was informative, it was not without limitations. A true, in-depth ethnographic study may take months, even years to develop. This study, however, was limited to five days because of the nature of the tournament. A longer time frame, such as the duration of the Olympic Games or Wimbledon might yield different results. Additionally, this research focused on college students who, while they have received much practice at their respective universities, were not experienced professionals. But the subjects were appropriate to this particular study as the goal was to determine how best to prepare college graduates for the world of freelance sports production. As communication scholars and educators, it is incumbent upon us to provide students with these opportunities, to critically analyze the experiences, and to continue to research these settings if we are to provide students the training necessary to succeed in sports broadcasting.

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**A New Understanding of the Looking Glass Self:
An Autoethnographic Reflection on Interpersonal
Communication Post-COVID**

Dr. Nicole Freeman

Abstract

Extensive research has been done investigating the various ways COVID-19 impacted education, mental health, and interpersonal relationships. However, there is very little research examining the unique connection between all three components. This autoethnographic examination explores how times of elevated stress and trauma impact the Looking Glass Self and interpersonal communication, advocating for a new, or perhaps more holistically informed approach to the teaching of interpersonal communication post COVID-19.

Communication scholars and teachers are no strangers to the importance of nonverbal cues, immediacy, and interpersonal connection in the classroom. We analyze the words and actions of our students on a daily basis and are keen to notice any change or shift in their attitude or behavior. While everyone is prone to an occasional bad day, we notice when those bad days begin to outnumber the good; thus becoming the norm or a repetitive pattern. We notice when our students seem to be stuck in a rut. And, when a seemingly simple question such as “how are you today?” evokes the response, “I’m so sad, and I don’t know why. And I don’t know how to not be sad anymore,” we don’t just notice. We become concerned.

Over the past two years, I have found myself having this, or a very similar conversation with multiple students. Based upon numerous conversations with my teaching colleagues, I’m not the only one. Our classrooms have changed, our teaching strategies have changed, and many of our students have most certainly changed. Pre-COVID 19, the entire education system was already beginning to experience a significant uptick in declining mental health amongst the student population at every educational level, pre-kindergarten through high school, as well as in higher education (The National Society of Leadership and Success, 2022). A 2019 study conducted by the

American Council on Education found that one third of the student population sampled “...met the criteria for a clinically significant mental health problem—[which] translates to nearly 7 million students nationwide” (p. 2). Then, COVID-19 occurred, propelling the world into a previously uncharted, isolating experience that significantly impacted nearly every facet of human existence; and those impacts were profound and continuous. The American College Health Association’s National College Health Assessment found in their 2022 study that over three-quarters of college students (77%) reported experiencing moderate to serious psychological distress often (p. 12-15). In a similar study conducted by The Office for Civil Rights in 2021, “Nearly all students [have] experienced challenges to their mental health and well-being during the pandemic...” (p. 5). As a result, anxiety, depression, and suicide rates increased amongst the college-age demographic (ACHA, 2022). The significant uptick in mental health challenges already occurring amongst our student populations quickly turned into a dramatic surge that continues to shape and challenge our students, our classroom environments, and as a result, our teaching.

However, those weren’t the only challenges brought on by the pandemic. Many educators, myself included, were challenged as well. Unfortunately, many of us struggled with those challenges in silence. In The Chronicle of Higher Education’s 2020 research brief “On the Verge of Burnout,” educators reported a significant decrease in their enjoyment of teaching, experienced challenges establishing appropriate work-life balance, and felt an increase in their overall level of mental exhaustion directly tied to their workload post-COVID (p. 10-13). Many educators felt overwhelmed, anxious, scared, and stuck, with over 35% of educators considering leaving higher education (p. 11). Several additional studies reported educators experiencing higher stress levels, as well as feelings of depression and anxiety throughout every iteration of the pandemic (Lizana & Lera, 2022; Leo, Holdsworth, Wilcox, Khan, Antonio, Avila & Tobin, 2022; Zamarrows & Prados, 2021).

According to a study conducted by Leo, Holdsworth, Wilcox, Khan, Antonio, Avila & Tobin from the University at Albany (2022), COVID-19 impacted female educators far more significantly than their male counterparts (p. 1). Female respondents reported having higher levels of stress, more pressure in both their personal and professional life, less control, and more exposure to conflict regarding work-life balance (p.1-3). Similarly, women reported experiencing much higher

levels of psychological distress than their male counterparts (Zamarrow & Prados, 2021). Many educators, myself included, who taught the importance of finding one's voice and using it to express and advocate for our thoughts and feelings, seemingly lost our own in the process.

Adams (2012) describes how autoethnographic research can be a tool to process, make meaning of, and create understanding with others through shared or similar experiences. He explains, "...autoethnography can make more meaningful, socially-relevant communication research possible" (181). Further, he identifies six joys of autoethnographic research. Three of them are extremely applicable to this evaluation: "...writing through pain, confusion, anger, and uncertainty; granting a person the ability to (re)claim voice on a taboo, silenced topic; and making life better" (181). While the impacts of COVID-19 are certainly not considered a taboo or silenced topic, too often, the feelings of pain, confusion, anger, and uncertainty that were/are our reactions to COVID-19, or any similar high-stress/trauma situation are difficult, if not impossible to express. When silenced for too long, those reactions can lead to the loss of voice, agency, and joy, resulting in the creation of mental, emotional, and physical messages which have serious, even life altering implications. Those messages began to impact my life, leading to this research and my own personal need to rediscover my voice.

My Story

As I reflect on the years of 2019-2022, I can honestly say they impacted me more than I would like to admit. As such, my teaching and mental/emotional space have shifted significantly, and continue to do so. When countries began to lock down in response to COVID-19, I was in the United Kingdom co-leading a study abroad trip. I vividly remember the feeling I had when I received a message from one of the Scottish students we had just met while debating. I can see where I was sitting and hear the song that was playing when I read her words. "I fear you are going to get stuck in London. I have contacted my friends in the area, and will do whatever I can to help you all find a place to stay if you need it." To this day, hearing that particular song, and even the act of typing out her message I received that day create a lump in my throat and an intense physiological reaction. That moment created a stress response I had never experienced. Moreso, it created a survival response; as one of the faculty leaders, the students looked to me to provide stability and

calm during that tense situation. Showing the fear I was feeling would have created more stress for the students, so I swallowed my fears and silenced my voice. My fears and uncertainty were silenced for the sake of leadership, guidance, and our students' wellbeing.

We returned to the United States one day after former President Trump imposed the U.S. travel ban and were all immediately quarantined. When our travel induced quarantine period ended, the entire country began to enter a quarantine lock-down. Shortly after, I, along with every other educator, took our face-to-face classes on-line, forcing us to quickly adapt instruction on a daily basis depending on current world and university policies. The speech and debate community figured out how to run virtual tournaments within a matter of weeks. Every day, we were learning and adapting to new technologies and practices to care for our students. This would last not only for the rest of the semester as we had all anticipated, but continued on into the summer, fall, and spring semesters the entire following academic year. Albeit difficult, I found myself extremely happy with the instructional changes I had made and the level of support I was able to provide to my students. I felt I had weathered the storm, and fairly successfully at that.

What I was not prepared for, was the return to the state of so-called "normal," and the subsequent storm that followed. I had grown to really enjoy working from home. I still loved teaching, but I was able to find ways to remain connected to my students in the virtual learning environment, so I didn't feel that I was missing the interaction component as much as my colleagues seemed to. I enjoyed having my weekends to myself and not traveling nearly every weekend with the speech and debate team. I loved having more control of my schedule, and the resulting routine was peaceful and calm.

The return to "normal," however, offered few, if any of the adaptations to my work life balance that I had grown to both appreciate and need. It meant going back to having much less control over my time and space. And the return was extremely bumpy. This "storm of so-called normalcy" felt even more chaotic, uncomfortable, and unpredictable than the stresses of the pandemic. In her Dare to Lead podcast from Sept. 13, 2021, Dr. Brene Brown interviewed Dr. Amy Cuddy, social psychologist, professor, and author, on the concept of "Pandemic Flux." Cuddy gave words to my feelings as she explained that COVID-19 forced many people to adopt a "flux" mindset, which increased anticipatory anxiety and left people feeling powerless,

overwhelmed, guilty, and stressed for an even longer period of time than expected (para. 49-75).

As a chronic overthinker and deep feeler, my “longer period of time” that Cuddy described was significantly longer than I had hoped or expected. During this time, I also experienced a vast shift in my social circle and an unexpected health scare. While these events can cause stress on their own, they are very regular occurrences in adult life. And in a normal situation and state of mind, resiliency would aid in coping and adaptation. However, this was not a normal situation; this was a perfect storm. My resilience was already depleted from feeling the long-term impacts of the pandemic. This, along with the ebb and flow of personal life, led me to feeling ‘stuck,’ for lack of a better word. Though I couldn’t fully articulate it at the time, mentally and emotionally, I was numb. I struggled to feel passionate about anything scholarly, academic, or even socially-related. I was calm, for the most part, but experienced a void of emotions; emphasis on the void. But it went beyond mere thought or emotions. All of this felt stuck in my body; deep in my core, like nothing I had ever felt before. It was a deep, visceral physical manifestation of a black hole. And much like my students’ response, I didn’t know how to not be ‘stuck.’ I had never experienced this. I could not think or talk my way through it, and to be honest, it terrified me. I began to wonder how I could teach others to effectively communicate if I couldn’t even communicate with myself.

I dove into reading about the pandemic’s impacts on education and educators. While I was relieved that I was not the only one feeling this way, it reiterated a much larger problem. So many people felt stuck, unable to explain, understand, or move through this shared experience. And so many felt powerless. This led me to begin researching “the stuck.” What I discovered put a description to my feelings and made so much sense. It explained what I was, and what I can assume others were feeling. While some may say the following observations and research lean towards psychology and physiology, I believe it is the perfect example of how blended the communication discipline truly is.

In the field of communication, we study the sending and receiving of messages. We study the messages we send to others. We study the messages we receive from others and how said messages impact our sense of self in relation to others. We study the words used to convey thoughts and emotions. We also study what our body communicates to others through nonverbal messages. We acknowledge

our body as an entity that creates and sends messages when we discuss physiological responses to various situations and stimuli, such as speech anxiety. But rarely do we go beyond that and deeply investigate the messages our brains and bodies communicate to self, and how those messages impact our relationships. This blending of the socio-psychological, socio-cultural and phenomenological traditions of communication theory strongly link the concepts of internal interpretations, external messages, and relationships.

The socio-psychological tradition seeks to identify trends within interpersonal interactions. These trends, or links, are often accumulated through observation (Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2023). In this tradition, there is an emphasis on identifying influences of interpersonal communication and relationships upon self and society. The socio-cultural tradition examines how culture is produced and reproduced through communication, both verbally and nonverbally (Griffin et al., 2023). Here, the emphasis on interpersonal interactions continues, but deeper nuances surface, such as how nonverbal communication impacts cultural understanding. In addition, the phenomenological tradition explores how to better understand one's self through life and experience, highlighting specifically how our interpersonal relationships significantly impact the creation and understanding of self (Griffin et al., 2023).

This research, along with self-reflective data, seeks to better understand the connection between the Looking Glass Self and the central nervous system, as well as how that connection impacts our interpersonal communication and relationships by addressing the following research questions:

- RQ1: What causes the feeling of being “stuck” felt in the mind and body?
- RQ2: How does the “stuck” impact our interpersonal relationships?
- RQ3: How do we effectively use these insights in our teaching of interpersonal communication?

Review of Literature

Theoretical Framework

According to Floyd (2009), “Your interpersonal communication begins with you and your understanding of yourself” (p. 83). In order to better understand the concept of self, it seems fitting to use two of the most foundational concepts used in the explanation of self in interpersonal communication. George Herbert Mead’s work on self-concept eventually led to the creation of the commonly used Symbolic Interaction (SI) Theory by Herbert Blumer (Griffin et al., 2023). SI discusses the creation and impact of self on our relationships with others. The theory posits that both the creation and understanding of self is socially constructed, and is rooted in the perspectives, perceptions, expectations, and judgements of others (Griffin et al., 2023). Thus, individuals must be members of a community before the conscious self can be created and actualized. These communities and their expectations lead to the creation of the generalized other, which impacts our thoughts and actions, thus having both internal and external influence. Because our communities change regularly, the self then, is in a constant state of flux and change (Griffin et al., 2023).

Symbolic Interaction is often associated with Charles Cooley’s notion of the Looking Glass Self. Similar to SI, The Looking Glass Self asserts that individuals use social interactions as a mirror to measure their self-concept, behaviors, worth and value (Griffin et al., 2023). This process includes perceiving how we are thought of by others, weighing the impacts of the perceived judgements of others, to then developing feelings about and responding to said judgements (Griffin et al., 2023). Floyd (2009) explains, “...we develop our self-concepts based on those evaluations. For example, if people seem to think positively of you, then you would think positively of yourself” (p. 89). The Looking Glass Self also impacts the lens through which we receive and interpret messages, as well as the framing of the messages we send.

While both theories rely heavily on the perceptions of others that may or may not be accurate, one cannot ignore the critical importance of social connection, relationships, and community in the creation of self. This complex process can have staggering effects on one’s self-image, concept, and esteem. Hensley (1992) went so far as to say, “...we have a tendency to become the person others say we are” (p. 8). In a balanced,

healthy, and positive environment, this often leads to a balanced, healthy, and positive creation of self. However, there can also be adverse effects when a healthy and positive environment is lacking. For example, if our belief of self is so firmly rooted in the expectations of others, when those expectations are violated, the negative responses of others can severely impact how we both view and feel about ourselves. We internalize the messages we receive and perceive, and begin to view ourselves through a warped or broken mirror, thus recreating the self subconsciously, and usually, this mirror casts a much more negative reflection.

When our brains get trapped in a negative thought pattern, our perception of self-response is not viewed as favorable. We begin to judge ourselves more harshly, lose confidence, and perhaps even question our worth. When trapped in that mental state, our communication to self and others changes, our willingness to be vulnerable decreases, and our desire or ability to connect with others is limited (Floyd, 2009). Obviously, our interpersonal connections will be negatively impacted. Essentially, if a healthy, secure sense of self is lacking, healthy relational communication and connection with others will likely also be lacking.

The Central Nervous System

Much of what we teach in our discipline revolves around the creation and sending of messages to external sources, as well as how we receive and respond to external messages. However, we are remiss if we do not acknowledge the internal messages sent to the self, and how said messages impact our relationship with self and others. While it is easy to assume that most message creation and dissemination would take place in the brain, it is only one small part of the internal communication process. Without understanding the full system, our ability to fully understand internal message creation and reception is lacking.

According to the United States Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health Division (2018), the nervous system is divided into two parts: the central nervous system and the peripheral nervous system. The brain and spinal cord comprise the central nervous system, whereas the nerves that attach to the spinal cord and extend throughout the body make up the peripheral nervous system (para. 1). The nervous system is essentially the message medium, sending messages that connect the brain and body, thus controlling our ability to think, respond, and react (para. 2).

At a macro level, the central nervous system can be broken down into parasympathetic and sympathetic systems. According to the Cleveland Clinic (2022), these two systems have opposite, but complementary roles. The sympathetic system “...carries signals that put your body’s systems on alert, and your parasympathetic carries signals that return those systems to their standard activity levels” (para. 4). The sympathetic system is most commonly associated with one’s “fight or flight” response to stress. In an ideal situation, when a stressful stimulus is encountered, the sympathetic nervous system reacts, sending messages focused on survival to our brain and body. When the stimuli is gone, the parasympathetic system re-engages and begins to send messages of safety being restored to the body and brain, bringing one back to a state of “rest and digest” (para. 5-6). However, the actions, response, and messages sent by the sympathetic nervous system “...can strain the body systems when it is active for too long” (para. 5).

Essentially, when we find ourselves in an extended state of stress/trauma, our central nervous system, the communication hub in the body, is hijacked by the sympathetic nervous system. And the longer our sympathetic nervous system is in control of the messages being sent to our bodies and brains, the more at risk we become of getting ‘stuck’ in a fight or flight response pattern of thinking and communication. The messages sent throughout our bodies and brains lock us into a hypervigilant, reactionary-based state.

Perhaps a more simplistic way to conceptualize this is to consider Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs in relation to the depth and breadth of communication. When we are so focused on survival, our body short-circuits our internal communication process that creates and solidifies a healthy sense of self. Our ability to deeply and richly communicate, process information logically and rationally, and connect with others becomes difficult at best. Little to no self-actualization is possible, leaving our Looking Glass Self in a very fragile and compromised state.

COVID-19

As COVID-19 quickly escalated into a global pandemic, it became abundantly clear that as a society, we had little to no experience responding to something of this magnitude. As such, we were unfamiliar with how to react, forcing our nervous systems into an elevated

reactionary state. We stayed on guard as we assessed potential threats daily. As the pandemic continued, our collective elevated reactionary state extended, and continued to escalate in tension. Every facet of life was impacted; physical, mental/emotional health, economics, and our political system all became rife with angst, sadness, anger, and confusion. We were ill prepared, shocked, and stuck in a state where we felt vulnerable and had very little control over our environment.

In 2021, the Pew Research Center conducted a study on Americans' response to COVID-19. Feeling isolated was the most significant trend identified, with 41% of respondents commenting on interpersonal relationships being most impacted by the pandemic (para. 5). Symbolic Interactionism and the Looking Glass Self rely heavily on connection and relationships with one's community. As such, there is a cyclical impact on our perception of self and ability to foster and maintain stable relationships with others. COVID-19 created the perfect storm to disrupt the interconnectedness of both the creation of self and connection to others. Due to stress and the unpredictability of COVID-19, our abilities to effectively adapt our sense of self were impaired. Externally, there was a sufficient loss of social interaction and connection, reducing the messages we received and used from others to create and reinforce a healthy sense of the self. If messages were received, they were quite possibly coming from a sender experiencing a fragile state, thus impacting the quality of messages sent. Internally, and perhaps even more impactful, messages received by others, as well as those sent to ourselves were short circuited and interpreted through a lens of survival. In more extreme cases, the messages were blocked completely. The Looking Glass Self cannot thrive when stuck in a survival state.

Lasting Impacts

In 2002, researchers Fredrickson and Joiner conducted a study analyzing the effect of positive emotions on attention, cognition, and overall emotional well-being. The researchers hypothesized that an influx of positive emotions not only contributes to one feeling good in the present moment, but also increase one's feelings about, and in the future. Consequently, elongated negative states decrease one's ability to cope with stress and adversity effectively (172-173). Their research concluded that "...positive emotions initiate upward spirals toward

enhanced emotional well-being” whereas downward spirals of thinking were often associated with higher levels of depression, pessimistic thinking, and worsening negative emotions (p. 174). The longer the negative thought spiral continues, the more damaging and lasting the impacts become.

This premise is both reflected and reinforced by the findings of the aforementioned 2021 Pew study regarding the pandemic. Nearly 30% of respondents described a continual decline in their physical and mental health, even post-pandemic, identifying prolonged states of anxiety, stress, and depression amongst themselves and others (para. 11). The longer our sympathetic nervous system controls the messages being sent throughout the body, the longer downward spirals and negative thinking will likely remain center, thus impacting our mental health, our relationship with self, and our ability to effectively communicate and connect with others interpersonally.

A healthy sense of self, self-disclosure and reciprocity are foundational to relational growth and stability (Floyd, 2009). The pandemic impacted our ability to engage in a regular or expected practice of relational growth and connection, thus impacting our perception of self. When the Looking Glass Self is clouded, it can lead to feelings of loss, confusion or angst. Our self adapts to this new set of expectations and perceptions, and as such, our interpersonal relationships are forced to adapt to this new iteration of self. If the dyad struggles to accept this change and relational conflict arises, the self takes on yet another set of messages, perceptions, and expectations that may impact the self further, once again showing the cyclical relationship between self and other. In summary, the longer one is in the state of “stuck,” the more likely the sense of self, and ability to connect with self and others is impacted.

Discussion

While research-backed, these observations are primarily self-reflections of my own individual experience. However, I do believe it begins a timely and important conversation regarding our sense of self, our students, and our approach to the instruction of interpersonal communication.

As Cuddy explained in her interview with Brene Brown, many people felt stuck in the midst of, and following the pandemic, but were unable to articulate why. Without understanding why, it's difficult, if not

impossible to move forward, or become “unstuck” (para. 49-75). My personal response to COVID-19 and life thereafter, impaired, and severely damaged my perception of safety, both physically and mentally, thus negatively impacting my perception of a stable sense of self. What caused this stuck state of mind and body? Much like the world in quarantine, my nervous system was locked into a shutdown state of survival, leading to me feeling “stuck.” The longer it remained stuck, and locked in the survival state, the more my central nervous system (my body) impacted my brain’s ability to communicate effectively with myself, and consequently, with others, thus answering the first research question.

Essentially, this impaired my ability to adapt my sense of self effectively through the co-constructive nature of Symbolic Interaction. Firstly, there was a lack of sufficient positive external social interaction, thus limiting the number of positive messages and feedback used from others to reconstruct and reinforce earlier positive perceptions of the self. Furthermore, given the tumultuous state many were in, the messages that were received were rarely constructive. This forced the creation of the Looking Glass Self to rely more heavily on internal messages. However, when the nervous system is sending threat messages throughout the body continuously, and is unable to re-regulate, positive messages are blocked from the brain. Everything becomes neutral, negative, or a threat.

When a significant portion of the community I deemed important was removed from my daily interactions and life, I felt lost. I felt it in my core; and it certainly impacted my perception of self, purpose, and personal value. I was always one that was more “other-focused,” and when my “others” disappeared, it felt like a large part of myself disappeared as well. It felt as though my purpose was lost and my value decreased significantly. When this negative thought pattern began, it leached into how I communicated to myself. Because a large part of what I thought was my stable and positive community was missing, I was left to fill in the gaps. My Looking Glass Self became clouded. I questioned myself, my career, my worth. I was stuck in a cyclical and predominantly negative thought pattern regarding who I was, and it impacted how I felt about myself significantly. My confidence was destroyed, and I felt more angst than ever before. Consequently, this began to impact my relationship with others. I felt uncomfortable around people, to the point where I preferred solitude. If I was around people, I constantly questioned my words and actions, and wondered if I was being judged.

Then, I would overanalyze and replay every social interaction I had. I couldn't connect with people anymore. That frightened me because I had always been a person who was deeply connected to others. Because my nervous system was usurping my ability to communicate effectively to myself and sending threat-based response messages continuously, most interpersonal interactions felt forced, risky, and uncomfortable. In response, I chose to disengage. It is difficult to foster healthy connections with someone who is unwilling or unable to engage interpersonally, and eventually, those relationships will suffer. As stated above, if a healthy, secure sense of self is lacking, healthy relational communication and connection with others will likely also be lacking, thus answering the second research question.

Application & Future Research

The final research question is best answered by exploring the implications of these findings in regards to application for the classroom and future research. How do we use these findings in our teaching of interpersonal communication post-COVID?

Blum & Dale (2021) explain the importance of stressing compassion and care above productivity and performance during what they consider to be “inhumane” times, which included COVID-19. In their duoethnographic reflection, the researchers explained how important it was to adapt teaching strategies that emphasized more humanized pedagogies in times of stress and trauma. While the most pressing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have passed, we continue to see the long term effects on our students and educational system. We cannot simply ignore the past, expect they have overcome it, and assume it isn't impacting their current and future selves and relationships.

First, we must acknowledge the changed mental state of our student population. In their longitudinal study, Sutin, Stephan, Luchetti, Aschwanden, Lee, Sesker & Terracciano (2022) reported that young adults, our students, experienced significant declines in social and emotional intelligence due to COVID-19. Specifically, there was a significant decline in extroversion, willingness to trust others, and overall ability to connect with others, while there was a significant increase in stress/neuroticism (para. 14-17). Our student population continues to wrestle with the aftereffects of this life-changing event. Their perspectives on life, the world, and themselves have changed. We must

acknowledge this shift in mindset and mentality as we instruct them on how to foster interpersonal relationships and communicate effectively. We must first know where our students are before we can meet them there, and then teach them how to communicate and relate with others effectively from that place. Their foundation is now vastly different, and we must construct the interpersonal scaffolding that is appropriate for this new foundation. They have changed; thus, it is time for a new era of interpersonal communication that reflects these changes, and we must adapt our teaching accordingly.

This is why it is critical for us to analyze how and why we teach Symbolic Interaction and the concept of the Looking Glass Self in a way that acknowledges a stressed mental and bodily state. We preach the importance of audience analysis on the process of message creation. We preach the importance of nonverbal cues in the communication process. Our goal as communicators is to create a clear message, crafted intentionally for our target audience with little room for misinterpretation. Yet we rarely consider these components when we communicate with the self. When we understand the body's impact on communication both to the self and to others, we are better able to monitor and address the failing channels of communication and therefore, create a clearer message less likely to be misinterpreted.

Approaching our instruction through this framework has a multitude of benefits. First, if our students are in a regulated state, they are in a place that allows them to be more cognitively and socially engaged in their learning. Secondly, it significantly increases the interpersonal warmth and connection felt within the class environment. And finally, it provides a wealth of applicable content and techniques students can use for the rest of their personal and professional lives. Understanding how and why the central nervous system impacts our communication during times of significant stress and trauma is not exclusive to experiences with the pandemic; it can be used anytime extended stress or trauma exists.

There are simple, yet effective ways to begin implementing this framework into our teaching. During the 2022 spring semester, I began to incorporate techniques to down-regulate the central nervous system, such as guided writing and breathing techniques into my Conflict Management course. Often, these would be my "bell ringer" activities. Breathwork is one of the most effective ways to down-regulate the central nervous system. I integrated the central nervous system's impact

on mind and communication to our approach to conflict management and resolution, making it part of class content. I incorporated much more movement, music, and class “outside” of the classroom. Sometimes we would meet outside, sometimes at a coffee shop on campus, or sometimes just in a different room that was more inviting and comforting than a traditional drab university classroom. This change of scenery, often integrating in a more inviting space, provided a calming and less-threatening environment. I also changed my approach to assessment. I had many traditional-looking objective assignments that allowed for a more typical analysis of learning, but anything labeled as a “test” or “final” (typically viewed as high stress assignments) was more personal and application-based. Finally, I included much more time for individual and group work within the course schedule. While this was more about practicing humanized pedagogy than nervous system deregulation, I found the shift to have significant impacts on my students’ stress levels, which aided in a more relaxed mental and physical state, overall. Based on course evaluations and general feedback from my students, this pedagogic shift was extremely well received and greatly appreciated. I also found it led to the production of higher quality work, greater levels of group collaboration, and higher grade averages overall. These practices were simple, small changes with great impacts.

As I prep my fall classes, I intend to take this shift in thinking even further. I will be including units that address the body’s role in Symbolic Interaction and the Looking Glass Self, examining the interconnectedness of body, self, and relationship with others. Additionally, I plan to conduct a pre and post-test based research study with my classes that will identify whether or not including this information aided in their ability to re-regulate the nervous system, as well as if it had an impact on their ability to better relate and communicate with self and others rather than relying solely on observations, evaluations, and hunches.

Prior to turning our attention to our students, however, we must be willing to look inward and examine our own mental and bodily state. I know I am not alone. I know many people felt, and perhaps continue to feel “the stuck”. I know many people also felt a loss for accurate words; unable to articulate what was happening. And I know I am not the only person who felt it so deeply in my body, making it impossible to simply think or talk my way through and out of. I was in “the stuck” for a very long time, just hoping that it would go away on its own or with time. I

continued to force myself into existing or familiar patterns, which reinforced my heightened state. It wasn't until I acknowledged what was happening and sought ways to address it, that I was able to return to a regulated, safe, and more rational self.

Some may say this teeters the line of psychology. Others may say it is physiology. I would argue however, that at its very core, it is communication. Our brains and bodies are complex and interconnected systems sending constant messages that impact self, others, and our relationships. To teach communication effectively, we must first re-establish the balance in our own self-awareness, creating a more accurate and accepted reflection of self. We must re-open the channels of positive, healthy communication between the nervous system and the brain. In doing so, we can find our own voices again and remember what it means to be a deeply feeling and connected person. And while that might feel scary at first, it is not nearly as scary as continuing to remain stuck.

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It's Everywhere – Including in the Classroom: The Scholarship and Pedagogical Potential of Pop Culture

Scott Jensen

Abstract

The influence of pop culture on how societies communicate is undeniable. Whether it be fashion, a top 40 song, a social influencer, or an all-star athlete – pop culture finds its way into our daily lives. This program examines pop culture from both scholarly and popular perspectives, including the ways in which it permeates our communication. It helps shape our self-identity and informs our interactions. We use pop culture messaging to advocate, entertain, explain, and connect in any one of a number of ways. The program builds upon its discussion of communication and pop culture, suggesting ways to integrate pop culture into communication and performance classrooms as both stand-alone activities, and elements in lessons and assignments.

I've always believed that stories make great teaching and learning tools. The narrative approach to communication emphasizes the utility of experiences for illustrating ideas. We learn about leadership through the journeys of successful coaches, business executives, philanthropists, educators, or other individuals who have excelled in their fields of experience. We understand international relations through the examples of war, treaty negotiation, and nation building. I've also always believed that the immediacy of injecting a little of ourselves in our teaching is an effective strategy for connecting with students. This might mean sharing our interests and experiences in relevant ways with content in our teaching spaces. Popular culture is a great example of how this sharing can work – particularly in communication and performance teaching and learning when relationships and identities are critical as both literal class content and contexts in which we apply class content.

This paper synthesizes a program examining both the rationale and strategies for integrating popular culture into communication and performance teaching and learning spaces. With popular culture including topics ranging from sports to film, and from fashion to

advertising, there is no shortage of illustrations that help explain ideas. Further, the readily available illustrations from popular culture provide the educator with a range of examples that can easily connect with students, making teaching immediate and dynamic.

Understanding Popular Culture

Traditions are often manifest in the messages we receive from cultural outlets such as sports, music, art, literature, fashion, dance, film, cyber culture, and television. These messages are processed by cultures of people within the general population, helping them to become popular as shared and generally recognized (<https://www.thoughtco.com/popular-culture-definition-3026453>). Sellnow (2018), in her text on popular culture as a focus for rhetorical criticism, describes popular culture as being "...composed of the everyday objects, actions, and events that influence people to believe and behave in certain ways...They do so through subtle messages proposing a particular perspective about what is "appropriate" and "inappropriate," "desirable" and "undesirable," "good" and "bad," and so on" (p. 3). Framing popular culture as a window into both how we communicate, and the valence of our communication demonstrates the relevance of these examples to our efforts to understand the world around us.

Another characteristic of popular culture is how readily available it is for integration into our classroom. It is not uncommon for me to lead a discussion or share content, and spontaneously go to a YouTube video or another image or Internet site to illustrate an idea. The range of potential course content is seemingly limitless. Sources of popular culture abound, including but certainly not limited to news, entertainment, politics, fashion, language choice (including memes and slang), and sports. This range of available content also helps to navigate the breadth of how our students – and we – value specific popular culture messages, as well as sources of those messages. Our choices of "pop" is not always going to be "popular" to our students. When we consider pop culture we must also consider that each individual embodies their own sense of what is good/bad, elite/common, "high" culture/ "popular" culture, etc. Integrating pop culture into our discussions may sometimes focus on the pop culture message as an illustration of a more general concept or theory. We must allow for the pop culture message to be the

referent for the analysis or illustration and not focus of the teaching and learning (Rodman, 2016).

Popular Culture and Relevance to Communication and Performance Pedagogy

Pop Culture permeates our communication and identity formation. We often model ourselves after opinion leaders and models in our fandoms. A forensic coach who is a sports fan might model his forensic coaching around a model coach – perhaps the coach of their favorite team. A performance teaching and learning space may well include scenes that reflect content important to a school’s student body or even the teacher’s personal preferences. The popular culture messages we bring into teaching reflects and shapes what society and members of our immediate classroom spaces values, reinforcing cultural values and norms. Popular culture also motivates our socialization, making it easier to connect with people and contexts when our experiences are shared.

It is not hard to see how popular culture is central to communication and performance pedagogy, as well as to the connections educators and students make in their teaching and learning. Consider what we have already noted. Our students’ lives and identities are shaped by pop culture. They understand the world around them through pop culture influences. Our students largely communicate on platforms and through channels that are central features in the contemporary pop culture world. Pop-culture reflects what Knoster and Goodboy (2021) reference as outside relevance when they review literature, engage in experimentation, and conclude that integrating what students find relevant in their world with in-class instruction results in stronger connections between teacher and student, and between student and content. The inherent element of identities, relationships, audience-centered performance, and advocacy of salient and relevant ideas make it even more likely that inclusion of popular culture enhances communication and performance pedagogy.

As another central dimension to what we teach as communication and performance educators, popular culture also reflects the power of language in society. We teach, implicitly or explicitly, that discourses – and some parties who control them – are positioned to shape societal values and directions. Today’s discourses are controlled by social media platforms, corporations, and individuals with social

influence...all found in pop culture. Consider the people who make news headlines. In the face of wars, disasters, political exigencies, or economic news, a marriage or birth in Great Britain's royal family will likely be the lead story on most national newscasts – and certainly for morning news magazines such as Good Morning America or Today. We preference what is newsworthy – or important – at a societal level based on the agenda-setting function of popular culture (Bouvier & Machin, 2018).

Teaching is made more impactful when it is immediate to students. Knoster and Goodboy (2021) note that relevance between what we teach and our students striving to learn is more likely to “facilitate positive affective responses...and thereby stimulate students’ cognitive engagement in the learning process...” (p. 20). This relevance is achieved “by using examples related to recent events, news, and popular culture that their students are familiar with, or otherwise connect instructional materials to the “real world”” (p. 21). An important takeaway from what these researchers suggest is that using popular culture is not enough, nor a guarantee that teaching and learning are enriched. Knoster and Goodboy conclude that “it is the content of examples which seems to ultimately impact students’ relevance perceptions” (p. 22).

Contexts and Illustrations

There seems to be no limit to ways that popular culture messaging can be integrated into communication and performance teaching. Consider, for example, that much of popular culture is manifested in fandoms. These cultures typically include immediacy to individuals, teams, messages, and ideas. Consider the popularity and presence of parasocial relationships, fantasy sports leagues, fashion, language choices, and more general rituals and symbolic representations of the fandom community. Fandoms exert strong influences on how we communicate and what we value. These fandoms provide content for integrating particular popular culture messaging into our teaching spaces.

Popular culture is also a vehicle for illustrating hegemony and counter hegemony through social images and messaging. Clothing, films, music, and even apologia to frame language and behavioral choices are some of the many ways pop culture messaging illustrates, reinforces, and creates hegemony. Examples abound, such as Barstool Sports and the controversy of what some argue to be excessive misogynistic content.

The music industry is often the subject of criticism for video and lyrical images. Sports teams are placed in positions of justifying choices when they sign players who face accusations or bring histories of immoral behavior. Klein (2016) provides one fashion-based illustration of sleeveless t-shirts, often called “wife beaters,” that are viewed as symbols representing dating violence and abuse.

Race, ethnicity, and gender are among the most popular referents in popular culture messaging. Pop culture is ubiquitous in our society – including reflecting and shaping how we understand the identity of both ourselves and others. Much of pop culture is grounded in particular identities with a concentration on how those identities are represented and performed. Pop culture provides both the models and the content for our choices. Classroom assignments and discussions can and should highlight identity connections found in the symbolization of pop culture messaging. When considering identity and communication, representation is the visual depiction of bodies or appearance. Performance is how individuals present themselves and shape their own identities. The two are mutually exclusive, and at the same time inform one another. In any given illustration they may be both incongruent and congruent, which is the start of a rich discussion (Billings & Butterworth, 2022).

One particular strategy related to identity is asking students to collect and analyze combinations of messages that they see as related to single messages from history, entertainment, politics, sports, etc. While this activity can easily focus on any identity, Williams (2020) explains the Black digital syllabus. The movement represents the efforts of several educators and scholars over an extended period of time. As Williams writes, it is:

“a curated list of revered cultural works with profound lessons that relate to contemporary issues and art is one that emerged between 2014 and 2018 as the nation wrestled with racism and experienced a burst of Black creativity. These syllabi, created by Black professors and students, help to bridge the gap between pop culture, politics, and scholarly work and gave birth to what I call the Black digital syllabus movement – a digital phenomenon fusing pop culture, academia, politics, and Black digital culture to connect to the canon of historic Black work to contextualize Black excellence and oppression” (p. 494).

This kind of extended and collaborative creation can become a dynamic exercise that chronicles an extended period of time for a school or school community, a national community or identity, or even a culture within a single academic year and classroom.

Like race, sex and gender permeate pop culture messaging of identity. Representations of sexual preference, gender identity, and identity politics regarding sex and gender are readily available in texts and individuals. One direction of activities is to have students seek pop culture messages that reflect sex and gender, or any other identity for that matter. Similarly, instructors can provide students pop culture examples from the past and ask for contemporary signs of their evolution or stagnation. Another direction for activities is to ask students to critically examine either messages they find or those they are given. Encourage students to identify the social meaning of a referent based on a pop culture illustration of it. An effective teaching choice to illustrate identity in pop culture is to make comparisons among identities. Gender is particularly conducive for contrasting genders within shared contexts.

International illustrations are also convenient when modeling ideas through popular culture. Pop culture is not an uniquely American concept, although it is often convenient to be Americentric in our references. It exists throughout the world as a reflection and creator of identity within cities and countries. Asking students to discover pop culture in countries other than their own is an exciting way of internationalizing communication and performance study and helping to create global citizens better able to understand their world. Discovery of pop culture in other countries can branch out from students identifying the American pop culture influences – and then finding and comparing those same influences in other countries.

Place is another essential consideration when seeking to understand communication. The context of a message often helps shape the “definition” of that message. Context can also provide a framework that is critical to understanding meaning and significance. Teaching that helps students better understand places that are influential in their lives is unique and potentially invaluable in their understanding themselves and the places of focus. Teachers can ask students to define place by the pop culture messaging found within it or understand pop culture messaging by analyzing it within its place. One such example is a paper looking at the sounds and images of an area within Los Angeles (Barrios & Wong, 2020). Like this California example, students are able to also identify and

critically analyze popular culture images and messaging within their own communities, or any other place that interests them. This kind of critical analysis allows students to better understand how place can inform the popular communication that becomes commonplace in our worlds.

Simple Steps and Final Thoughts

The breadth and depth of popular culture as part of the experiences and ideas we teach and illustrate in communication and performance classrooms is hard to over-state. Similarly, our students understand their worlds through the lens of pop culture messaging that shapes their worldviews. The utility of pop culture as a central characteristic of our pedagogy is clear. Synthesizing this connection, consider these strategies for incorporating relevance through pop culture:

- Use examples of some sort that clearly illustrate course content.
- Understand that instructor self-disclosure is effective only when connected with course content.
- “Read the room...” and understand the topoi of examples that are likely to connect or not connect with your students’ fields of experience.
- Solicit student feedback on their interests—then use that feedback in preparation.
- Stay up on news—all news, from both inside and outside the campus environment (Knoster & Goodboy, 2021).

Popular culture is everywhere; why ignore it? Teaching through pop culture is relevant to students, innovative and exciting, illustrative of the world that we share, encompassing of countless areas of interest that have the potential to connect the most different of backgrounds, and applicable to myriad concepts and skills. Pop culture is also adaptable to any level of teaching and extremely immediate to the content at the heart of communication and performance teaching and learning. Consider capitalizing the term – “Pop culture” is, indeed, a popular idea for teaching that makes a difference.

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To ChatGPT or To Not ChatGPT

Janis Crawford

Abstract

This paper explores the transformative potential of ChatGPT, an advanced artificial intelligence language model, in the domains of education and forensics. ChatGPT, powered by OpenAI's GPT-3.5, has the capacity to significantly enhance speechwriting by efficiently generating content, structuring speeches, and offering valuable insights for both students and debaters. Furthermore, the paper delves into the implications of adopting AI-driven tools like ChatGPT, addressing concerns related to bias, knowledge limitations, and its impact on the future of education. While acknowledging the challenges, the paper underscores the invaluable role of ChatGPT in revolutionizing pedagogical practices, preparing students for a technology-driven world, and augmenting the capabilities of small debate teams.

Using CHATGPT to write a speech can be an effective and efficient way to craft compelling presentations. CHATGPT, powered by its extensive knowledge base and language generation capabilities, can aid in various aspects of speechwriting, from content research to refining the final draft. This approach allows speakers to focus more on delivery and presentation skills, ultimately enhancing the quality of their speeches. For instance, CHATGPT can swiftly gather up information on the chosen topic, sift through various sources, and distill key points for inclusion. In addition, it can help maintain a coherent structure throughout the speech, ensuring that ideas flow logically and the audience remains engaged.

Furthermore, CHATGPT can assist in crafting engaging opening and closing statements, which are crucial for leaving a lasting impact on the audience. It can provide recommendations for incorporating storytelling, anecdotes, or rhetorical devices to make the speech more compelling. This AI-driven tool can also help speakers adapt their language and tone to suit the specific audience and occasion, a critical aspect of successful speech delivery. By leveraging CHATGPT's

capabilities, speakers can save time and energy on the research and initial drafting stages, enabling them to focus on practicing and refining their delivery, ultimately resulting in a more effective and well-prepared academic speech.

CHATGPT can be effectively used to write speeches by streamlining the research and drafting process, helping with structure and audience adaptation, and enabling speakers to focus on their delivery. As AI language models continue to advance, they offer a valuable resource for educators, students, and professionals looking to deliver impactful speeches in various academic and professional settings. (OpenAI, 2023)

The above three paragraphs were written by ChatGPT about itself.

As educators, we must embrace the newest technology to help our students develop into critical thinkers who are focused on the future. We are going to look at what Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT are, how they can be used and the implications that they have for our students. Students are using it. I did an informal survey, and 80% of my college-age students have already used it either while in high school or in college. Our job is to figure out how to help them use it effectively.

WHAT CHATGPT IS

According to (Hughes, 2023), “ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that can answer questions, tell stories, produce essays and even write code. The chatbot is so sophisticated that people are suddenly starting to see the true potential of AI and how, for better or for worse, it could define humanity's future.... GPT-3 (Generative Pretrained Transformer 3), GPT-3.5 and GPT-4 are state-of-the-art language processing AI models developed by OpenAI launched in November 2022. They are capable of generating human-like text and have a wide range of applications, including language translation, language modelling, and generating text for applications such as chatbots.”

In Forensics, it is assumed that students are writing speeches for competitions on their own, perhaps with the assistance of a coach or mentor. This artificial intelligence program can write speeches for them using patterns that match the norm in Forensics, including organizational

patterns, language choice, and outside sources. One of the problems with ChatGPT is citing sources. Many of those sources aren't real. Source hallucinations sound plausible enough, and when students cite them verbally in a speech, the judge may have no way of knowing if they are real or not. Another issue is that ChatGPT only includes information up to 2021, so newer information isn't available.

In their blog included in the journal *Inside Higher Ed*, Rutter and Mintz argue that “much as Google devalued the steel-trap memory, electronic calculators [sped] up complex calculations, Wikipedia displaced the printed encyclopedia and online databases diminished the importance of a vast physical library, so, too, platforms like ChatGPT will profoundly alter the most prized skills.” The ability to ask the right questions, think, and act on those thoughts is what will make our students better citizens of the world. We must train them to use artificial intelligence in the most beneficial ways.

APPLICATIONS

ChatGPT has applications in both forensics and education. In forensics, students are allowed to get help in creating outlines, refining arguments, and creating contentions in debate. When our students write platform speeches, they are using a very structured organizational pattern. This structured format plays to ChatGPT's strengths. You can plug in the pattern (Problem, Cause, Solution), and it will generate a speech that follows that pattern. You can even specify the number of sources and the length. The average person speaks about 120-150 words per minute, so ChatGPT will generate a speech with a word count that matches that rate.

Students in debate can use it to write contentions. They just need to plug in the resolution and ask for arguments for the affirmative and for the negative. For example, “This house believes that electric cars should become mandatory by 2030.”

This is what I typed into ChatGPT:

“This house believes that electric cars should become mandatory by 2030.” please give me the strongest arguments for this proposal.

In less than one second' ChatGPT produced this:

Certainly, here are the strongest arguments in favor of making electric cars mandatory by 2030:

1. **Climate Change Mitigation:**

- Mandating electric cars by 2030 is a critical measure to combat climate change. Electric vehicles (EVs) produce zero tailpipe emissions, significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. With the transportation sector being a major contributor to global emissions, this policy would play a pivotal role in meeting climate targets and limiting global warming.

2. **Air Quality Improvement:**

- Electric cars produce no exhaust emissions, leading to a substantial improvement in air quality, particularly in urban areas. Poor air quality contributes to various health issues, including respiratory diseases. By making electric cars mandatory, we can protect public health and reduce healthcare costs associated with air pollution.

3. **Resource Conservation:**

- The transition to electric vehicles reduces the demand for finite fossil fuel resources, such as oil. This conserves valuable resources for future generations and mitigates the environmental impact of resource extraction. Additionally, EVs can be powered by renewable energy sources, further reducing the environmental footprint. (OpenAI, 2023)

The debater can then use these arguments to do further research and create their first affirmative speech. It also allows them to do the same thing with the negative side of the argument so they can get a glimpse of what the other side might contend.

In education, ChatGPT can be a powerful tool to prepare our students to navigate a highly technological society. “In a US survey of 1,002 K–12 teachers and 1,000 students between 12 and 17, commissioned by the Walton Family Foundation in February, found that more than half the teachers had used ChatGPT—10% of them reported using it every day—but only a third of the students. Nearly all those who had used it (88% of teachers and 79% of students) said it had a positive impact.” (Heaven, 2023) It can be used to grade papers, create syllabi, and generate discussion questions. Faculty need to embrace the new technology just as we had to embrace the ball point pen, calculators, and computers. The learning curve is fast but exciting.

IMPLICATIONS

There are negative and positive implications of this new technology. Many are finding that Large Language Models seem to have

a racial bias. ChatGPT was created by white Americans and has difficulty with racial, ethnic, or regional dialects. It might lead to the devaluation of writing and authors if they are replaced by AI. As mentioned previously, ChatGPT has a limited knowledge of current events. It is difficult to use for Extemporaneous speaking in competitive forensics because of this limitation.

In debate, it will act as a great equalizer for small teams. If you have a large team in your prep room, you can get help from your teammates, but small teams are at a disadvantage. ChatGPT can equalize that difference. Student run speech teams can use ChatGPT to help them create outlines for their speeches and do research.

Other positive implications for the future abound. One of the big benefits is how much time it will save educators and students in the future. Business documents, like resumes and cover letters, will be completed in seconds. It can summarize and write bullet points to help you understand difficult reading, or it could re-write it in less technical terms. It can be used by anyone with internet access. It will automate many mundane tasks for you as an educator. It can generate assessment questions, check essays for grammar, and create digital demonstrations.

Educators need to teach students how to use the program effectively for writing essays. One tactic is to have students scaffold their work so that they begin with a thesis, then an outline, then the full essay. This can prevent them from using AI and force them to think through the writing process. Perhaps they could re-write the essay, which will focus them on the process of writing rather than the outcome. Exercises that involve AI directly in the writing process can also help those concerned about the possibility of cheating. Give students an in-class writing prompt and have them put it into ChatGPT to see what they get back. Ask them to check the sources. Are they real? Have them examine the writing style. Does it sound like their voice?

ChatGPT and other platforms, such as Google's Bard and Microsoft's Bing Chat, will change the way we think, write, and learn.

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Additional Resources

<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>

https://www.iesalc.unesco.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/ChatGPT-and-Artificial-Intelligence-in-higher-education-Quick-Start-guide_EN_FINAL.pdf

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IPDA Introductory Packet
Kiefer Storrer

Abstract

Debate formats seem to be ever changing and new ones are continually being added. On the college level, one format that has been growing seems to have really taken root in the college community is International Public Debate (IPDA). This resource serves as a guide for coaches new to this format, as well as coaches and students needing to refamiliarize themselves with a sense of norms, structure, and fundamentals. It aims to provide a universal context to a popular format of debate that tends to have some regional differences. I believe, like many debate formats, a sense of universal, shared basics and fundamentals provide a rising tide that lifts all boats. If this sense of basic structure, argument framing, and even entry-level round strategy gets picked up program-to-program, region-to-region, IPDA debate and the greater community will benefit from that sense of shared normalcy.

Index

WHAT IS IPDA?

Definitions

Genre Differences

Stylistic Differences

IPDA STRUCTURE

Speech Structure

Case Structure

Policy Resolutions

Stock Issues

Value Resolutions

Fact Resolutions

Metaphor Resolutions

Judging Criteria

IPDA STRIKING

What is Striking?

Disclosure

Striking Strategies

BEST PRACTICES AND “GAME THEORY”

What is IPDA?

Definitions: IPDA stands for “International Public Debate Association,” and is a more communicative alternative to some of the high flow, technical norms of other formats. Additionally, IPDA primarily is a 1 on 1 format, so people without static debate partners can compete (Team IPDA exists as an alternative).

Organizationally, while there is an IPDA Nationals and leadership associated with the format, at times it feels like IPDA is in a “Wild West” state of anarchic affairs, searching, constantly, to find its own identity. Sure, regional differences exist in High School Policy, and the various college debate formats, but IPDA is another step in the direction of ambiguity.

Genre Differences: Take a step back and consider our oft-cited explanation that “there is no Sabermetrics in Debate and Forensics”; how rounds, positions, and competitors themselves are evaluated is more up to judge discretion than in other competitive events. While a team might gain a victory, it’s not done through accruing more runs or points, and debate “defense” goes beyond just blocking goals. However, our experiences provide us a pedigree of success to base best practices off of regarding most, if not all, of the events we compete. IPDA isn’t a stranger in this instance, it just is a bit more ambiguous than other events.

Stylistic Differences: Oftentimes it is more similar to an individual event than a debate one. Sometimes, the best IPDA rounds are viewed as dueling extemp speeches. IPDA’s by-laws and Constitution suggest a preference for “lay”/community judges; establishing the idea that anyone off the street should be able to come in and evaluate a round.

So, speed, debate jargon, and various other norms are (generally speaking) meant to be avoided. This carries with it both benefits and drawbacks, which will be explained throughout the rest of this document.

IPDA Structure

Speech Structure:

5 Minute Affirmative Constructive

2 Minute Cross Examination by the Negative

6 Minute Negative Constructive

2 Minute Cross Examination by the Affirmative

3 Minute Affirmative Rebuttal 5 Minute Negative Rebuttal

3 Minute Affirmative Summary

5 Minute Affirmative Constructive

This speech (and the following Negative speech) is pretty intuitive. The Affirmative speaks first, establishing the definitions and parameters of the debate, the judge's role in how the round should be evaluated, and 2-3 contentions supporting their side of the Resolution. 5 minutes allows for 3-4 "sheets of paper" to be delivered and extrapolated on at a reasonable speaking pace.

2 Minute Cross Examination by the Negative

The Negative then asks questions of the Affirmative relevant to the debate. Strategically, these questions can fall under three categories: defensive, clarifying, and offensive.

Defensive: "Could you restate the main points of your second contention?" is an example. The reason that this is defensive is because the cross examiner is admitting to the round that they didn't take adequate notes. Still, a particularly muddy first affirmative could provide a reason for asking.

Clarifying: "Could you explain how your second contention relates to the resolution?" is more of a middle of the roadway for you to subtly ascertain information and make your opponent sweat a bit. Maybe the opponent made a leap in judgment or skipped a few warrant steps. Pointing out this discrepancy can spotlight logic gaps to the judge you can then take advantage of in your next speech.

Offensive: “How will your increase in military readiness in X/Y/Z region account for an increase in colonialism?” - Questions related to arguments you are about to run that can “turn” your opponent’s arguments against them. Questions in this direction allow you to preview the arguments you are about to run and have the idea of your opponent’s own tools working against them locked in the head of the judge.

6 Minute Negative Constructive

The extra bit of time provides the Negative the opportunity to both attack the affirmative, and also provide their own case. While there should never be a 4:1 split in either direction, this time should be used to challenge any definitions/round parameter arguments made by the Affirmative, to attack the Affirmative case, and to provide counter-contentions.

Many schools of thought would argue that if a negative only attacks the affirmative case, the affirmative case should win, because minus a slew of damning turns, at least some aspects of the affirmative will survive any amount of negative mitigation, which can be a more compelling scenario than the status quo. Thus, it’s important for the negative to read their counter-contentions before attacking the affirmative contentions. Sometimes the definitions debate has to happen first, regardless.

However, only relying on counter contentions is also not the move. Especially in the world of IPDA, which has limited opportunities for new arguments to be made, completely conceding entire contentions of the opponent makes those contentions look fundamentally correct. Even if the warrant game is weak, if someone doesn’t point that out, it rarely becomes a factor in a judge’s decision. Additionally, it’s a lot easier for either side to weaponize a contention or conceded point in their favor if there is no ink on it.

2 Minute Cross Examination from the Affirmative

This Cross Examination is similar, but the questions ideally need to be more measured and strategic. The toughest speech of the round follows this, so whatever the Affirmative can do to strengthen their initial

rebuttal is really important. So, maybe preemptively getting the opponent to admit one of their points doesn't directly refute an Affirmative contention can then be exacerbated.

3 Minute Affirmative Rebuttal

This is arguably the hardest speech in debate. Aside from cross-ex, it comes directly after 6 minutes of negative argumentation. Six minutes of attacking the affirmative and providing their own counter constructives. The affirmative only has three minutes to respond. Strategically, this is where cross application, broad brushstrokes of argumentation, and sound rhetoric can prevail.

Remember, IPDA isn't about high flow debate or line-by-lining. And, while it's entirely possible a high flow debater could double clutch their way out of this three-minute corner, the affirmative is at least benefited with the normative knowledge that they don't have to cover everything. And, because this is the first time a debater responds to a response, they have the advantage of setting the tone of those dropped arguments. So, if the negative drops important bits of contentions 2 and 3, and the affirmative undercovers counter contention 1, the affirmative theoretically gets out of the gate pointing out why drops lose rounds...quicker.

Ultimately, the affirmative needs to try and survive through this speech and keep their opponent on their toes as much as possible in order to make the eventual Affirmative Summary as effective as possible.

5 Minute Negative Rebuttal

Theoretically, this speech is talking about way less than the first negative speech, with only one minute less. The negative needs to respond to any currently standing affirmative arguments and crystallize the voters that the judge should be evaluating to give the ballot to the negative. Here is a great example where the concepts of debate should continue to be pervasive in the practices of IPDA, just without the jargon and tech.

It SHOULD be explained to judges where they should ideally be evaluating the round. Those explanations just don't have to be called "voters." Similarly, the magnitude (the intensity of the impacts), timeframe (how quickly the impacts happen), and probability (the likelihood of the impacts happening) should all be explained in the rebuttals in less jargon ridden terms.

The negative should choose 2-3 specific arguments that prove why their side should be voted for under the criteria established by the affirmative at the start of the round, or the counter criteria brought up by the negative. Most of the time, the best strategy is finding a way for both criteria to be winnable for either side.

3 Minute Affirmative Summary

Again, this is a challenging speech for the affirmative. The important thing to remember in any debate format is that whatever points that still exist "on the flow" that the Negative has brought forward, need to probably be answered. Thankfully, because of the speech structure of IPDA, if the Negative rebuttal is *only* "voters," that's the only thing the affirmative needs to address before bringing out their own voters. In keeping with the idea that IPDA is more rhetorical, the Affirmative can do a lot of work excising negative arguments because they don't fit under the framework/criteria provided in the 1AC. They just need to make sure THEIR contentions fit the parameters they establish.

Case Structure

9/10 times your IPDA rounds should look like this:

(Aff)

Page One: Definitions and Criteria Page Two: Contention One

Page Three: Contention Two Page X: Contention X (etc.)

Negative should be placing their definition and arguments directly on the Affirmative Page One, or making their own Page One if for some reason the Affirmative messes up and doesn't set parameters. Beyond that, though, they should implement two-three pages of counter contentions.

Here are some examples of how this structure looks like:

[After introducing yourself, thank yous, and reading the resolution]
“Observation 1 is my Definitions and Criteria”

The Words

Of the Resolution

Should

Be Defined.

Judging Criteria

How the round should be evaluated

Lens

Where that evaluation should be focused

“Moving on to Contention One”

Contention One: [The overall subject of this page of argumentation]

A: [Tag]

B: [Tag]

C: [Tag]

Tags are brief snippets of argumentation that you then expand upon. In theory, your contentions should function as a flow chart of argumentation. A should logically flow into B which should then logically flow into C. If you are familiar with advantage structure from Policy/Parli, you already have an idea of how you should be structuring your contentions. You just (again, 9 times out of 10) don't want to be using “debate jargon” like links/internal links/impact while explaining your contention.

You can also default to Toulmin's Model of Argumentation, which looks like:

A: Claim

The overall argument you are making

B: Warrant

The proof you have of that argument

C: Impact

The good or bad that comes from this argument naturally playing out (by voting in support or against the Resolution).

Overall, the casual nature of IPDA allows for some experimentation with setting up your contentions. Beyond providing definitions, criteria, and these contentions themselves, you can structure things how you like. The benefit of having multi-subpointed contentions is that it provides more ammo for you to pull across and expand on if your opponent drops something. Or, if they just have blippy one sentence contentions, you can provide a more rhetorically effective strategy of pointing out their lack of subpoints. If they only have one sentence for their contention, chances are it's a warrant without a claim, which is toothless, or vice versa, and also just...not effective.

Policy Resolutions

Much like Parli, IPDA has different styles of resolution. Most of the time, unless you have a judge with a paradigm that specifically says "I view IPDA as 1 on 1 Parliamentary Debate," the overall design of your structure will not change. However, it is important to note that certain resolution differences should be kept in mind. Rather cleanly, Aristotle's 3 Artistic Proofs align themselves with the "trichotomy" of resolutions. Similar to *logos* is policy.

Actors and Action Verbs: Across formats of debate, policy resolutions are denoted by the inclusion of actors (USFG, EU, African Union, This House, etc.) and action verbs (should, shall). To a more frequent extent than other resolutions, resolutions of this nature point towards

roleplaying the actor taking a policy action to alter the Status Quo (the current world being affected by the resolution). Outside of IPDA, policy resolutions tend to base themselves around the governmental body (actor) passing a specific policy resolution such as a bill, referendum, executive order, etc.

In most IPDA rounds, the affirmative just needs to provide contentions saying why the resolution is a good idea, without necessarily specifying a plan of action. Negative, on the other hand, needs to address why the resolution is bad and potentially what bad might result from affirming the resolution.

(For those with judges who view IPDA as Parli Lite)

Some judges might want Policy IPDA rounds to differentiate themselves by having plans, advantages, disadvantages, and stock issues. Most of this is cross-applicable from Parli, but the direction certain judges might expect IPDA to traditionally go in actually mirrors high school policy debate.

Stock Issues

While Plans, Advantages/Disadvantages, and Solvency pages are all still pretty commonplace (along with Topicality), the traditional Parli-IPDA judges also look for what are called *stock issues*. These stock issues are as follows:

Solvency: Along with Topicality, this stock issue continues to be prevalent in debate in general because it just makes sense. Pipe dreams of plans shouldn't be voted up if they aren't capable of solving problems that exist in the status quo. The level of solvency is a consideration judges should evaluate. Solvency comes in many ways, including:

- Empirical examples: These are historical occurrences that are used to prove that the plan/policy/argument is effective and sound. For example, using Portugal as an example of Drug Decriminalization, or the United States freedom fighting as imperialism.
- Solvency advocates: These are statements made by experts in fields related to the argument, in order to provide a stronger link

of ethos than just a college student making an argument. Think Noam Chomsky on US interventionism. That being said, not all Solvency advocates are great; Dr. Stella Immanuel wasn't the best person to talk about COVID.

Topicality: Topicality is a fancy word for evaluating whether or not the Affirmative aligns itself with the Resolution. So, if an Affirmative calls for a No-Fly Zone in Ukraine as a method of sanctioning Russia, the Negative could argue that sanctions are related to aid, and the

Affirmative could respond that they are sanctioning the air. Topicality is a far more in-depth concept for Parli/Policy debate writ large, and even in IPDA for a traditional Parli-Lite judge, it tends to not be a common argument.

- The downside here is that the Negative can sometimes be outflanked by the vagueness (or breadth, even) of an Affirmative strategy. Topicality has built-in concepts of “standards” and “voters” that make it a compelling check against Affirmatives being squirrely. Because IPDA asks for a limiting of debate jargon, it is sometimes tough to win on a definitional debate. Still, providing a counter definition, or an indictment of an Affirmative's (or in some cases, Negative's) definition can be done with a few strong warrants.

Harms: Here we enter the territory of stock issues that are hardly referenced anymore. They are both intuitive and argumentatively insignificant. But, what harms means, is that the Affirmative provides evidence of things going bad in the Status Quo that it will presumably solve. The thing is, from most judging criteria standpoints, even if an Aff can't solve certain harms in the Status Quo, the provided advantages probably outweigh. So, at that point, “Harms” doesn't really mean a lot. But, things might be different for traditional judges. It's just important that when you write your arguments, that there is a logical consistency to what you talk about. And it's a perfectly acceptable argument to say that your opponent isn't solving for your OR their bad things.

Significance: Harms also need to be significant. To cascading effect, this rhetoric can get pretty problematic, which is probably another reason that

stock issues aren't the flavor of the month anymore. At the end of the day, significance is conceptually pretty redundant: you don't need to label the idea that "the things I solve for are more magnitudinal than my opponent's."

Inherency: Inherency is simply what is keeping your plan or the Resolution from being adopted in the first place. Outside of the scope of the archaic concept of Stock Issues, it is sort of a first step, basic argument; "if your argument is so good, why isn't it being passed?" as if Universal Health Care, housing for all, etc., aren't "good ideas." Inherency probably doesn't function too strongly in IPDA, but again, it is a stock issue.

Examples:

- The United States Federal Government should decriminalize marijuana
- The United Nations should grant statehood to Palestine

Value Resolutions:

Similar to *pathos* we have value resolutions. Value resolutions are rooted in the idea of embracing one of two/many different values, and the implications of that embrace.

Evaluative Statements and Values: Value resolutions tend to be denoted with evaluative statements such as "when in conflict" or "on balance," as well as emotive statements such as "environmental protection" or "economic gain." All value resolutions provide the affirmative a value to defend, and most also provide another for the negative to defend.

That being said, a really nifty thing about the negative side of things, is that just because a resolution says that X should be valued over Y, doesn't mean the negative has to prove the inverse (that Y should be valued over X). The negative can simply say that X and Y should be equally valued.

Value resolutions are always argued through the use of contentions. Both sides can discuss reasons why the value is important as well as the

implications of embracing the value. Because of the emotive nature of these rounds, there is an increased chance of specific philosophies being the backbone of discussion. Here, the indictments of philosophers can absolutely be made. Like the fact that Mao genocided people, so why should we be supportive of Marxist-Leninist Maoism?

Examples:

- When in conflict, security should be valued over liberty
- On balance, national sovereignty is more important than human rights

Fact Resolutions

This is where things start to get a bit confusing (before the upcoming analysis of metaphor resolutions that truly jumps the shark). Fact Resolutions are most similar to Aristotle's *ethos* in which the truthfulness and character of an idea is tested. Fact resolutions are rooted in the evaluation of statements "of fact," and the process of the debate is the truth testing for that resolution. The tough thing about this, is that, while at the end of the round the judge's ballot should be *proving* whether or not a statement is factual, it is actually bad to be too "correct" in pointing out the truthfulness of something. This is called a *tautology (or truism)* and it is bad. Because it is impossible to debate.

The more details provided for something increases the level of debatability and clash that can be gained. Like, someone should have to defend the statement that "slavery is bad," but a discussion can be had about the extent the slavery era of the United States still exists/how that significant, bloody, dehumanizing part of history influences current day policy actions like carceral "justice", policing, etc.

Like many forms of debate, the more you compete in fact rounds, the better you'll be able at threading the needle of fact resolutions.

Examples:

- The Gulf War was a Just War
- Separation of Church and State has outlived its usefulness

Metaphor Resolutions

Metaphor resolutions are just what they sound like. The debaters are given a metaphor (or a metaphor and an actor, or sometimes two metaphors a la value rounds), and are told to let loose. In some regions, especially for metaphors, *disclosure* is a thing; where the Affirmative explains to the Negative what direction they are going to go in. This isn't a blanket rule, though, although it is encouraged by the national IPDA body.

The Affirmative, as always, has the right to define the metaphor. The negative can also get a chance at defining. In terms of the strength of those definitions, it's pedagogically important that debaters research what the metaphor might mean. This at least limits some of the ambiguity.

So, if the resolution is "The United States Federal Government should put a ring on it," the round should probably be about some semblance of relationship between the USFG and some other body.

Diving deeper, if the resolution is "Blood is thicker than water," a cursory Google will find that this is a truncated reading of "The blood of the covenant is thicker than the water of the womb."

So, arguments could be made that the true meaning of that metaphor has to do with evaluating chosen families providing more significant relationships than birthright.

Metaphors are tough. Down the line, this packet will discuss striking, and there are many schools of thought that say immediately getting rid of the metaphor resolution (especially if you're negative) is the move to make.

At the end of the day regarding metaphors, is the thought process for debate, which feels pretty supercharged for IPDA; sometimes debate isn't about knowing lots of things. Sometimes, it's about being the best debater in the room, having the best round vision, debate-psychology, etc. This sounds ambiguous, and it is, but there is a certain intangible

level that people reach the more they do this activity, and sooner or later it will just click.

Judging Criteria

As stated before, judging criteria explains how the round should be evaluated. Given the ambiguity of debate, it can be important to provide the judge(s) specifics as to how they should be making their decision. *Net Benefits*, for example, (when explained) tells the judge that they need to evaluate the advantages of the Affirmative against the disadvantages of the negative. Of course, in the rebuttal, both sides should be doing some impact weighing to help the judge make their decision.

Common Policy Judging Criteria: Net Benefits is quite a popular criteria to use with Policy, but across the board, *Preponderance of Persuasion* is a perfectly acceptable criteria. That just should be explained by saying “the debater and side who best wins arguments based on logos, pathos, and ethos.” This allows debaters to discuss not only the nitty-gritty of big impacts, but also their likelihood to happen, as well as their systemic, emotional-appealing effects.

Common Value/Fact/Metaphor Judging Criteria: Preponderance of Persuasion specifically pairs really well with Value and Fact rounds (and metaphor) because those rounds are a bit more complicated than just whether or not a policy is a good idea. Emotion should obviously always play a part in policy-discussions (and ethos-related checks against biases/character is also important), but since values and “the truth” can be such esoteric concepts, it needs to be all hands on deck.

IPDA STRIKING

One interesting aspect about IPDA is the tournament norm of *striking*. Where most Parli tournaments have a centralized resolution for all of the debates in a round, IPDA has 5 different ones, per round. You and your opponent will determine the resolution you debate through the process of striking.

The debater on the negative side strikes first, choosing 1 out of 5 resolutions to veto from the debate round. This is done to ensure that the debater on the affirmative side is the one that ultimately “picks” the last resolution (striking from 2 resolutions down to 1). While this implementation increases the amount of work people running tournaments have to do (because they have 5 times the normal amount of resolutions to write), it provides a new, strategic nuance to the debate realm.

In an ideal world, the genres of offered resolutions are evenly distributed. You might have 5 resolutions that look like:

- Policy Resolution
- Policy Resolution
- Fact or Value Resolution
- Fact of Value Resolution
- Metaphor Resolution

However, there aren’t really any hard and fast rules about how resolutions are written/ordered. Sometimes they’re themed. Sometimes they’re pretty random. But, at the end of the day, that is what striking is like.

Disclosure: The broad nature of the various topics and genres can be overwhelming. To address this, a lot of the IPDA community writ large has normalized “disclosure.” Similar to College LD and some formats of policy debate, this concept involves the Affirmative telling the Negative how they are interpreting the resolution. One would think that this is done to prevent the “not-T but totally T” arguments negative debaters might find themselves making if the Affirmative interpretation is indeed, untopical/vague/squirrely.

Most of the time we won’t have to worry about disclosure (also we shouldn’t be disclosing, it’s uniquely different in IPDA, which has 30 minutes of prep, and LD, which has arguments disclosed throughout the year with a decent amount of outside-of-round prep time kept in mind). But, just remember that the nature of IPDA means that even if a debater responds to your “not-T” with “I disclosed my interpretation,” that doesn’t mean the interpretation isn’t bad. An abusive interpretation is

still an abusive interpretation, even if the negative knows what it's going to be for 30 minutes.

Striking Strategies: Like many debate and forensics-related conventions, you want to ultimately do what sets you up for health and comfort. Success comes pretty naturally when you feel intuitive about things. Here are some best practices on striking.

The two most important rules are:

- 1) Think about how much you know about the topics
- 2) Think about the side-bias for the topics.

To put it plainly, do you know a lot about one of the resolutions? Do you know enough about it to realize that you would be on the right side of it? You probably want to go for that one. However, if you know a lot about a topic, but are on the wrong side of it, you might want to strike it.

The latter involves other thoughts on striking. For example, if you are negative, you should probably strike the metaphor, unless the other resolutions are terrible, or you have a keen knowledge of the etymology of the metaphor (or feel it's Googleable).

Don't get too in the weeds about theorizing "if I do A, opponent will do B." There is something to be said about seeing an absolutely awful topic, and assuming your opponent might strike it. However, they might be thinking the same thing.

At the end of the day, keep the two rules in mind. How you want to prioritize them is up to you. Personally, unless the side-bias was egregious, I would always just, in general, want to talk about the topic I knew the most about; even if I was on the "wrong" side.

Best Practices and Game Theory

As previously stated, IPDA is potentially a more ambiguous version of an already ambiguous competition. The speed, tech, line-by-line analyses, and rebuttal strategies that are fundamental strategies for

success in other debate formats aren't as advantageous (or in some cases, existent) here. Here are a few tips to keep in mind.

Practice. Practice striking, practice prep, practice debating. Re-do your speeches. Figure out your most comfortable way of delivering those internal rebuttals.

Always cover your opponents' arguments, spotlight when they drop yours. Even if you only provide mitigation, arguing that "My second contention outweighs this implication," gets some level of ink on whatever way the judge is flowing you. You can control the round by making sure you have more ink on their paper than they have on yours. Again, it sounds vague, but the more work you do regarding IPDA, the stronger you will come out.

At the end of the day, you can do everything right in a round and still lose, by way of a judge's decision. And, even if you feel like you did everything right, that decision is unarguable. Your job is to debate your best, round-in and round-out. Yes, IPDA is a more vague format in terms of preparation and competition. It's your job to figure out what "being the best debater" means, and it's our job as coaches to help you.

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