

Association for Business Communication

Proceedings of the 87th Annual International Conference October 3-8, 2022 Tampa, Florida, USA and Virtual



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Preface

The way things used to be. Don't we sometimes long for that? We may find ourselves longing for the way things were in as far back as our youth or as recent as the previous month. When we find ourselves in a place of uncertainty or change, we yearn for a more comfortable or pleasant state. This year's proceedings remind me of the way things used to be for two reasons, but this reminder brings a feeling of joy instead of nostalgia.

The first "way things used to be" is proudly proclaimed on the cover of these proceedings: "Tampa, Florida, USA and Virtual." Yes, indeed, we are back to hosting our conference in person, which is always very welcome. It's funny how we took having an in-person conference for granted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but that experience made the option of attending an in-person conference more welcomed than before. Even though Hurricane Ian threatened the Gulf Coast of Florida days before the conference, we were able to host our conference under the bright rays promised by the "Sunshine State."

The second "way things used to be" was the return of the Best Paper for Proceedings Award selection. While we did not make a selection this year, the process offers promise and insight for future Best Paper submissions. The group of papers marked for consideration covered an array of topics and scholarship and were truly a pleasure to review.

Speaking of Best Paper, I would like to think both those who submitted for that award, as well as my team of reviewers, who offered outstanding feedback and counsel as we reviewed selections. That team included Philip Hayek, W. Christopher Brown, Sam DeKay, Olga Yashenkova, Veronica Rice McCray, Raihan Jamil, and Nick Backus.

As I stated in the first paragraph, the "way things used to be" of which I speak this year isn't of nostalgia. It's of joy and of promise for a great future. A future for more wonderful in-person gatherings among business communication scholars and practitioners. A future for more scholarship recognized through the Best Paper for Proceedings Award. And of course, a future that includes more wonderful proceedings submissions like the ones you're about to read in this collection.

I close with my sincere gratitude to all those who submitted to the proceedings, reviewed submissions, and provided support along the way. My name may be listed as editor of this work, but it is truly the hard work of many that make this proceedings publication possible.

Leigh Ann Whittle, M.A., M.Ed.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Redrawing the Boundaries of Professional Attire: DEI Movements, CSR, and Virtual Work as a Catalyst for Change

Lorelei Amanda Ortiz
St. Edward's University

It seems such a simple, superficial thing—what are you wearing to work? Yet historically and currently the answer to this question could impact professional credibility, career mobility, and personal branding efforts. For centuries, an entire fashion industry has dedicated itself to workplace apparel and has played a role in shaping the trends and standards in professional attire. Professional clothing brands the likes of H&M, Old Navy, Banana Republic, Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Brooks Brothers, and Armani among others have created a broad spectrum of workplace attire options that runs across all price points from budget to mid-level to designer brands (Griffin, 2017).

Yet, aside from the labels themselves, other forces are influencing and in many ways reshaping how we think about professional attire. The seismic shifts resulting from a global pandemic and from cultural inflection points around environmental sustainability and diversity, equity, and inclusion are challenging all aspects of human existence including how we communicate, how we work, how we acquire and consume products and services, what we value, what we protect, and what we prioritize. The pandemic and remote work and learning have given us intimate glimpses into co-workers' lives, families, and homes. Although socially distanced, we came together in virtual spaces for continuity of work and collaboration. This blurring of the line between work/home introduced a previously unknown sense of informality into our interactions, a greater sense of empathy and bonding over the pajama bottom/dress shirt combos for Zoom work meetings that will likely have a lasting effect on professional attire post-pandemic (Arruda, 2020; Harter, 2020; Friedman, 2020). This is especially salient given recent figures from a 2022 Pew Research Center study of professionals which found that 60% prefer to continue working remotely if given the option, 64% of these workers citing improved work-life balance as the reason.

Powerful DEI movements loosened historically restrictive standards around what is “appropriate” in terms of clothing colors, styles, hairdos, and even what pieces of workplace attire are appropriate—with relaxing expectations around suit and tie for more comfort, more color, more personal and cultural expression of self. Transgender and gender-neutral workplace attire is included in this movement (Gender Neutral, 2021; Thoroughgood et al, 2020). Clearly, some workplace standards will remain, given the importance of organizational image and values and how employees represent these important components of an organization. But now more than ever, there is a recalibration towards self-expression in a way that encourages the balancing of organizational values/image, personal style, and self-expression.

DEI movements along with ever-increasing emphasis on corporate social responsibility have given rise to more conscientious consumers who value the lifecycle, origin, and manufacturing process of a garment as much as they value how the garment looks on them and how much it costs. Consumer demand for transparency into

processes and products is prompting fashion labels to offer “increased clarity regarding the conditions of their factories and the environmental impact of their fabrics” (Magnusdottir, 2020). As Magnusdottir explains, fashion titans like Ralph Lauren use blockchain technology that allows consumers to trace the history of a product, offering QR codes or other tracking numbers to allow customers to learn the history behind individual garments. In the last few years industry certifications have also been created to verify ethical business practices and the environmental impact of fabrics, and apps such as “Good On You” rank fashion companies based on their eco-friendliness, labor practices and treatment of animals (Magnusdottir, 2020). In sum, industry practices and social and cultural movements have made it possible for consumers to demand answers to whether a product is ethically sourced, produced by a company that values and supports sustainability, DEI efforts and minority-owned businesses, to name a few.

This session offers attendees a deeper exploration into these issues along with discussion of other possible influences on professional attire, culminating into implications for workplace dress in the post-pandemic future. The session is intended as a “position paper” to pilot the topic for future research in the area of professional attire, particularly as it relates to the influence of movements in DEI, CSR, and changing workplace realities around remote work and professional communication.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Cultivating a Culture of Yes, and Using Improv to Teach Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Kerri Cissna; Becky Crews
Miami University**

Modern leaders need to be able to leverage diversity on teams to create innovative solutions for complex business problems. This session focuses on the use improvisational comedy techniques to teach DEI in B-school curriculum design.

The rules of improv mirror the tools used in design thinking and creative problem-solving, including creating a “yes, and” culture, ensemble versus team mentality, co-creation, authenticity, failure, “follow the follower,” and active listening. This workshop summarizes the pedagogical use of several improv techniques in the First Year Integrated Core (FYIC) at Miami University’s Farmer School of Business. The FYIC, a requirement for all business majors, is an experiential, skills-based program designed to help students develop frameworks to solve some of the world’s most complex business problems. Students who learn improv techniques are more equipped to design high-performing teams that leverage diversity for inclusive decision making, co-creation, and collaboration.

The book *Yes, And*, which describes the use of improv in business settings by Second City Works Consulting Group (including many Fortune 500 companies), has been foundational for designing this supplemental B-school curriculum.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Engaging Cultural Differences for Empowering Design

Huatong Sun
University of Washington Tacoma

This hands-on workshop teaches participants to reconsider some commonly held design beliefs and routine design practices with a lens of cultural differences. It introduces strategies and techniques to create engaging and empowering business communication to bridge cultural differences in a globalized world at a divisive time.

As a professional communicator, you might wonder about these questions of cultural differences from time to time: Is simplicity and minimalism the universal design standard? What AI algorithms and design mechanism made “digital blackface” phenomenon on social media so popular? Why were women’s voices used as default for digital assistants? How can we avoid unintended stereotyping with user personas for inclusive design projects?

Cultural differences (Bhabha, 1994; Kerschbaum, 2012; Cushman, 2016) emerge from the various categorical identifications such as ethnicity, race, age, class, religion, gender, sexuality, and ability and manifests as ways of life. They provide design challenges because they are often regarded as a deficit or a threat to harmonious communication. Informed by Sun’s work in cross-cultural, multicultural, and global design (2012, 2020), this workshop shows that cultural differences are dynamic, relational, emergent, and contingent, and demonstrates ways of engaging cultural differences and turning communication deficits into generative design resources, as part of the social justice-oriented design.

In this interactive workshop, a new design instrument of discursive affordances (Sun & Hart-Davidson, 2014; Sun, 2020) is used to trace the interconnectedness of grand narratives (such as ideologies and cultural institutions) and everyday interactions, and to uncover design and innovation opportunities. Using the virtual stickers widely used in social messaging apps as an example for discursive affordances, at first, they were introduced by East Asian designers to help local users to convey subtle and sophisticated feelings in text-based communication. Later users developed a new communication pattern of having the entire conversation only using virtual stickers, and companies like LINE and KakaoTalk turned stickers into offline accessories and opened theme-based café and friends stores in metropolitan cities globally, nurturing new practices of cultural consumption. Discursive affordances stresses affordances as dialogic discursive relations. It connects critical design considerations for empowerment such as agency, structure, identity, values, ideology, and power on a macrosocial level with design implementations for efficiency and effectiveness out of concrete tasks and various modes of interactions on the micro level. Associating macro institutions with micro interactions to redress asymmetrical relations in everyday life, this approach turns differences into design resources for “togetherness-in-difference” (Mao, 2006) and co-creates culturally sustaining value propositions for local empowerment.

“Design is one of the fundamental ways of power distribution and redistribution” (Sun, 2020, p. 33). After real design cases are analyzed, design scenarios are provided to participants to explore innovative solutions with the discursive affordances approach in small groups.

This workshop will help professional communicators to think out of box to empower users for more inclusive communities and societies at this chaotic time for the globalized world.

Objectives

- a. Understand cultural differences as dynamic, relational, emergent, and liminal
- b. Decode design ideology behind everyday artifacts and information design practices
- c. Identify different aspects of activity-based affordances of digital and mobile designs
- d. Apply “discursive affordances” model to evaluate designs and explore design and innovation opportunities

Agenda

- Workshop intro with design icebreaker activity (10 min)
- What is empowering design in a globalized world? (20 min): Participatory lecture
- Understanding cultural differences (25 min): Participatory lecture & Workshop activity
- Break (5 min)
- Mapping affordances (25 min): Workshop activity
- Turning differences into design resources (20 min): Participatory lecture & Workshop activity
- Break (5 min)
- Practice session (40 min): Group workshop
- Group demo (20 min)
- Review, take-away, & feedback (10 min)

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Tattoos, Pronouns, and Other Dilemmas: How to Guide Students Through Self-Representation During the Job Search

**Amy Newman; David Lennox; Christina L. McDowell
Cornell University**

Guiding students through the process of self-representation in the marketplace comes with distinctive challenges and opportunities for faculty. As students learn to make decisions about how to represent themselves during the job search, faculty observe little agreement on core issues and can cite no universal models for today's student to follow. Not surprisingly, faculty often feel a unique, if challenging, call to help students prepare for increasingly complex and conflicting expectations.

From tattoos, piercings, and pronouns, to clothing and social media images, to race, ethnicity, languages, and physical and mental health, a wide array of topics may bear on the central question of how students communicate themselves to the public. Different, though overlapping, rules govern private and public self-representation, and communicators must find the balance. At the same time, we expect students to present a coherent picture for the outside world, one that “works” for workplace audiences.

While society and culture certainly influence the marketplace, organizations also provide guardrails and standards that guide behavior—and these vary greatly. For example, expectations for professional clothing or social behavior outside the office vastly differ among organizations and departments, often irrespective of industry. Learning to make professional decisions to meet in-flux expectations requires guidance that will outlast a student's first job and today's marketplace.

Arguably, the current global moment leads us to embrace difference and promote authenticity—to “bring our whole selves to work.” And so, faculty must acknowledge this difficult role: encouraging students to be heard, and be different, sometimes against the backdrop of a dominant perspective, while simultaneously preparing students to find their place in the competitive workplace. Additionally, students must navigate a job market brokered by employers who say they value difference but may engage in contradictory practices that do not support those differences. In this market, students naturally seek guidance from all those who influence their professional development—including faculty.

A January 2022 Chronicle of Higher Education article describes ways faculty are called to play an active role in preparing students for “life after college” (Toor, 2022). The author notes that faculty should direct students to trained career service professionals, but also observes that students trust faculty members and often develop a good rapport. This relationship enables faculty to help students in their development, including preparing students for the working world (2022).

The issue of self-representation and related topics are covered by academic presses (e.g., Newman, 2022), scholarly inquiry (e.g., Randazzo, 2020), mass market publications (e.g., Carnegie, 1981), news sources, and popular culture. How we present ourselves is a concern across industries, demographics, psychographics, etc.

Business communication faculty have the opportunity (and perhaps even more of a responsibility than other disciplines) to provide professional career guidance to students beyond the classroom. However, our training rarely prepares us to engage meaningfully on the question of professional self-representation during the job search. From the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) (n.d.) and other organizations, we know what skills employers require and how students should prepare a job package. We also rely on traditional discipline concepts (e.g., audience-appropriate language and tone) to help students communicate throughout the selection process. But current times call for faculty to engage in deeper conversations with our students.

This presentation offers faculty guidance as they help students make sometimes difficult decisions about how to represent themselves during the job search. Presenters will discuss ways to talk with students about balancing authenticity with impression management, avoiding potential discrimination/stereotyping, and finding places where they belong.

First, students find themselves in a tension between public and private representations of self. The job-seeker exists between a desire to be authentic to the self and a recognition of the importance of impression management. When multiple selves exist (e.g., online presence, professional demeanor, private behavior, life experiences), what students choose to publicly embody must be carefully considered in terms of meeting organizational climates and demands. To what extent should personal and private representations remain private? What parts of identity offer resources that could or should benefit the workplace?

Second, as jobseekers, students may develop their own ethical compass regardless of corporate culture. Students must understand issues related to discrimination in the hiring process: unconscious/implicit bias, blind hiring, and such technology as applicant tracking systems. To what extent should self-presentation challenge, say, stereotypes—even if those stereotypes work in a student’s favor? Are employees becoming complicit by joining a workplace that discriminates?

Finally, students share the human desire to belong, which offers a powerful incentive to “cover” essential differences that might threaten that sense of belonging. At the same time, students are driven to represent their unique selves and viewpoints. How does the student’s own moral reasoning provide guidance for such issues? What are the imperatives of “professionalism,” and are they different from the code of ethics that operate in many industries?

Our goal is to give faculty the confidence to guide students in these sometimes-difficult conversations. We aim toward an important set of outcomes—acknowledging difference yet preparing for a job market, protecting the self at the balance between private life and public professionalism, and making clear the long-term value of authenticity. Students can learn to surface and prioritize their own values, and they can be guided in the transition from student voice to professional voice. In its most elemental form, a professional voice is the voice used to express words in the workplace. However, and more importantly, faculty are called to guide students in finding a voice that prepares them for long careers and enriched lives.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity Research is Always Intersectional, and Accessible Design in Business Communication Pedagogy Can Be Fun

Sushil K. Oswal
University of Washington

Winners of the 2021 Distinction in the Practice of Diversity and Inclusion Award

The year 2018 marked an important milestone in the history of the Association for Business Communication. With the publication of the special issue “Enabling Workplaces, Classrooms, and Pedagogies: Bringing Disability Theory and Accessibility to Business and Professional Communication” in one of our two flagship journals, our organization has recognized that integrating disability and accessibility in our work is essential for the future of our field. As Melinda Knight, the Chief Editor of BPCQ pointed out in her article in this issue, “a scholarly agenda for accessibility and disability in business and professional communication is long overdue, with a need for studies that address both theory and practice.” (2018; p. 20). Sushil Oswal, who guest edited this special issue, argued for a change of perspective on disability stating that rather than connecting the concept of disability with people who have a disability, we focus on social structures, such as our workplaces, classrooms, and professional organizations, as the causes of disability (2018; p. 3). Zsuzsanna Palmer and Ralph Palmer, in the same special issue, reminded the ABC readers that accessibility was not only important because of the legal mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act but also was our ethical responsibility. Being aware then of disability not just as an individual trait of specific people but as a condition stemming from our social structures that can negatively affect everyone whether they have a documented disability, or are experiencing the effects of aging can be the first step towards ensuring that ABC will always be a welcoming place for all.

In our own work, we have addressed the goal of increasing awareness about disability and accessibility and changing perspectives on this issue in several different ways. In our presentation, we will briefly describe three of these projects through poster size visualizations and a talk. As an important example of our efforts towards this goal, our first project consists of a longitudinal intercultural collaboration project that focuses on accessibility. Each year, the project involves two instructors from the United States and one from Hungary along with more than 50 students. With its wide geographical and cultural reach, it has the potential to effect positive social change on a broad level. The project has two key goals - cultivating curricular diversity and inclusion in business and professional communication courses and engaging students in accessibility work with the disabled community so that they produce communication products that adequately meet the needs of disabled users. In its fifth year, the project has gone beyond employing the principles of accessible web design by involving participatory action research with the members of disabled community so that they could have a direct voice in defining their needs and preferences. Our students have found this client provider relationship among the three classes fun and enlightening. Results of the research based on this collaboration project for the first three years has already been published in different venues, including in the Proceedings of the ABC Conference (Oswal &

Palmer, 2018; Koris, Palmer, & Oswal, 2021; Oswal, Palmer, & Koris, 2021; Palmer, Oswal, & Koris, 2021). During our award presentation, we propose to provide a summary of results from this research as well as our reflections on this work.

In our presentation, we propose to also highlight additional projects we work on to further increase accessibility. Sushil will report on a project that looked at how information was being made available by medical institutions and local medical providers about COVID. The study aimed to assess whether information was made available in a way that would serve elderly people who had limited technological access, disabled people who had special accessibility needs, and low resource people who had access neither to technology nor had knowledge base for going to the right place to get COVID information and later get vaccine information. Results from a national health survey on this topic will be shared with sessions attendees (Oswal & Oswal, 2021).

Finally, we will report on insights from another shared project where we are looking at the problem why accessibility work is not catching up effectively. With this interview study, our goal is to find out at who the accessibility experts are, what qualifications they have, and how they acquired these qualifications. For this reason, we decided to do an interview based empirical project to learn about how accessibility practitioners join this field, train themselves, and practice their profession. We have completed ten interviews. We will share preliminary results from our analysis (Palmer & Oswal, 2022).

By presenting the wide array of work we do to increase accessibility and change old perceptions on disability, we hope to inspire session attendees to identify their own strengths and interests that they can use in the interest of ensuring that our social structures become more inclusive for disabled and elderly people. With a concerted effort in business and professional communication, we can arrive at more inclusive digital spaces and places for all.

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How Do You Teach Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

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**David Jon Olson
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**Pamela Bourjaily
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**Trey Guinn
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**Alicia Clavell McCall
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Samuel Head
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Stephen J. Lind
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Ruby K. Nancy
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Darius M. Benton
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It's been a tough year. Many of us have had to learn to teach in an era where an incredibly infectious epidemic has ravaged through not only the world of academia; it has also had an incredible effect on the world we strive to prepare our students for as well as the world in which we all live. As educators, we strive to create learning opportunities for our students so that they may be as well-equipped as possible to deal in today's business world.

COVID-19 has presented a challenge for everyone, but it is this generations reaction to the social climate that has been ever prevalent for the last few years. Our students will be entering a workforce that is still trying to adapt to the ever-changing social climate. This presents to us as educators with an incredible opportunity; teaching our students how to communicate in world with an increased emphasis on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

To find the best practices and ideas that work, these sessions will provide an opportunity for faculty to share how they teach Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It will offer real-world examples of "iron sharpens iron." The ability to share our curriculum ideas in a relaxed, non-judgmental environment and receive feedback is an invaluable experience for educators.

Teaching Diversity and Inclusion in Utah
Hailey Gillen Hoke

This presentation will discuss specific activities used to help students learn about diversity and inclusion in classes like organizational communication, gender and communication, and intercultural communication in the unique environment of an area culturally dominated by a single religion, the Latter-Day Saints (LDS) in the state of Utah.

Communicating for Results
David Olson

The author will share research into, and handling of, the real-world communication issue of accountability through the lens of corporate leadership, in furtherance of promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

Cross-Cultural Technical Editing Assignment
Amy Hodges

This assignment from a technical editing class encourages students to develop editing practices that embrace linguistic diversity.

DEI Practice is Communication Practice
Pamela Bourjaily

Student-led DEI Discussions in the Business Communication Classroom: Devoting 10% of instructional time to five student-led DEI discussions throughout the semester reinforces the central premise of our business communication curriculum that DEI practice is communication practice. Student-led discussions facilitate students talking to each other about DEI rather than being talked at. Readings and discussion questions for the five topics will be provided.

Discover the “I” in Communicate
Trey Guinn

Picture yourself as a water jug and learn a helpful way to explain why people communicate so differently. Life experiences and messages fill the jug, along with one's individual and unique flavors, like a Kool-Aid pouch. Part of our uniqueness is the distinct flavor of our Kool-Aid, but there is also a lot to be said for all those messages and experiences that fill our jug.

Student Spotlight Midterm Project
Alicia McCall

Learn how this presenter collaborated across campus pairing students from the School of Business with students from INTO – a university initiative to increase global diversity of our student body. Search the final projects on Instagram at #INTOUABStudentSpotlight and #GlobalBizCom.

Connecting Magnetic Hearts and Open Minds to Negotiate Around and Through Conflict at Individual, Organizational, and International Levels
Laura Lambdin

Learn about this management course taught as part of a unit on anger management that moves from interviewing a stranger sitting heart-to-heart to tapping into the earth's magnetic forces to become emotionally cohesive. This lesson becomes a reminder to be a helper rather than a bystander.

Land Acknowledgement Rethink
Carolyn Meyer

Territorial acknowledgements are commonplace at public gatherings and even now in email signatures, but their performative and superficial nature also make them controversial. This professional communication assignment invites students to research the land acknowledgement for their community and write one of their own based in learning and meaningful personal commitment to Indigenous peoples.

Your (Business) Culture is Showing: Using Real and Fictional Artifacts to Compare and Contrast Cultural Influences on Contemporary Business Practices
Evelyn Plummer

This learning activity encourages a deeper perception and understanding of the connections between cultural and micro-cultural values and beliefs and the operational dynamics of our organizations in subtle, yet powerful ways which often exist out of our conscious awareness. Structured, observation-based investigations are conducted through a variety of contexts, which can include in-person research, filmed footage, building design, marketing, branding, etc.

It's Not About Checking the Box...or Is It?
Philip Wagner

We often talk about the dangers of 'checking the box' in conversations on DEI. But can we redeem the boxes in any way? In this activity, participants will grapple with "the boxes" that define us and consider how those boxes shape organizational contexts and the greater conversation on DEI.

To find the best practices and ideas that work, this session will provide an opportunity for faculty to share how they teach Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. It will offer real-world examples of "iron sharpens iron." The ability to share our curriculum ideas in a relaxed, non-judgmental environment and receive feedback is an invaluable experience for educators.

Let's Talk Microaggressions!
Fadia Nordtveit

The dialogues, workshops, and assignments dealing with microaggressions in the workplace often take a pedantic and serious approach. This module takes a fresh and satirical perspective in creating an academic experience for the classroom on the topic of microaggressions. The session is created to be adaptable to longer workshop/assignment formats as well as a one-class teaching module. This module has been tested in undergraduate and graduate classrooms as well as corporate workshops.

Talking to Strangers
Stephen Lind

Substantively talking to someone that is a stranger is a daunting proposition for many, despite its commonplace occurrence across business settings. It is also a vibrant opportunity to engage and reflect on difference and diversity. In this activity, students are required to meaningfully “talk to strangers,” journal their activities and reflect on the experience. Readings and class discussion prompts guide students to reflect on and unpack ethics and tactics for inclusively engaging diverse people they encounter.

Team Report: DEI in the Workplace
Ruby Nancy

This presenter shares of project teams that do in-depth research on some aspect of DEI, using scholarly, industry, and business media sources; the teams then write a detailed informational report for a professional business audience. Reports may be recommendation reports, feasibility reports, comparative analysis reports, or summary reports of best practices.

Does Race and Gender Affect a Leader's Ethical Performance?
Darius M. Benton

This teaching activity requires students to reflect on course content by engaging a critical question that breeds differing perspectives, further challenging and deepening their own understanding of multiple concepts at once, including ethical leadership at the intersection of race and gender.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Lived Experience Matters: Purposeful and Persuasive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Storytelling

**Peggy R. Odom-Reed
Cornell University**

Theme

The proposed topic, “Lived Experience Matters: Purposeful and Persuasive DEI Storytelling,” aligns with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion track. The assignment challenges students to draw on their lived experience to tell purposeful and persuasive stories about diversity, equity, or inclusion (DEI) for a prospective employer. Lived experience represents a unique form of cognitive diversity (Harmeling, 2022), as individuals have gained insights from their experience (Gafni, 2021). Considering the increasing attention to DEI, organizations want to ensure their hiring practices support its DEI commitment (Owens, 2020). As such, DEI represents a critical topic for organizations, and its success depends largely on having ethical business leaders who decide to do the right thing (Underwood, 2020). A focus on DEI, therefore, can enrich the business communication curriculum.

Purpose

The presentation will discuss an integrative teaching approach for business communication instructors to coalesce DEI storytelling and video technology. This approach teaches students to use persuasive communication and video production techniques to create their DEI storytelling video. Storytelling is a critical skill for business leaders, as audiences are more likely to remember powerful stories (Choy, 2020).

The assignment engages students in personal reflection about diversity, equity, or inclusion; purposeful and persuasive storytelling for a job interview context; and discovery through the peer feedback and review process. This pedagogical approach focuses on both the opportunities and challenges of having students to reflect on their lived experience to understand what DEI means, emphasizing an applied versus theoretical perspective.

Goals

By attending this presentation, participants will understand how to use and adapt the assignment in their business communication curriculum. The presenter will identify necessary resources to facilitate student learning. The session will focus on multiple goals, as listed below:

- To understand how business communication instructors can use the DEI storytelling assignment to help students reflect on and learn from lived experience
- To discuss the learning benefits and logistical challenges in connecting this assignment with an in-class peer feedback activity as well as online Feedback Fruits peer review

- To familiarize business communication instructors with the assignment design including the learning objectives, prompts, deliverable and rubric, and assignment resources
- To consider how to adapt this assignment to respond to evolving student learning needs and to align with business communication curriculum

Methodology

The session will discuss a DEI storytelling video assignment that evolved from a previous leadership storytelling assignment to improve students' business communication skills in this area. The author utilized the DEI assignment in both Fall 2020 and Fall 2021 to teach 127 students including 42 graduate students and 85 undergraduate students in business communication courses at a business school located in the Northeastern United States.

As the presentation task, students created a one-to-two-minute video recording, sharing their personal DEI story for a final-round interview. With a focus on persuasive communication, students crafted a personal story to convince the audience about their commitment to diversity, equity, or inclusion. Drawing upon lived experience, students chose one of the DEI prompts listed below, with a focus on telling a story rather than simply answering the question:

- Diversity – Share how they have responded to a diversity challenge in which certain dimensions were significantly underrepresented such as race, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, physical abilities, ethnicity, and national origin. What did they do, why, and with what outcome?
- Equity – Describe a situation in which they took action to promote equity and social justice—to eliminate systemic bias, racism, or unequal pay or treatment—in an organization. What did they do and with what outcome?
- Inclusion – Tell us about a time when they served as a leader and encountered a major inclusion obstacle (i.e., people did not feel valued, were not invited to share their voice, and lacked a true sense of belonging) that impeded their team project. How did they respond and with what outcome?

Students are encouraged to tell an authentic and personal DEI story to connect with their audience, as highlighted in the selected topic examples below:

- Diversity – “Creating a New ‘Poker Association of Cornell’ Club to Expand Racial and Gender Representation of Poker Players” and “Establishing the ‘Minorities in Real Estate Initiative’ After Being the Only Minority at Cushman’s Summer Presentations”
- Equity – “Using Social Media Platforms to Promote Racial Justice After the Murder of George Floyd” and “Engaging in a Walkout to Protest Systemic Racism and Discrimination by the School’s New Administration”
- Inclusion – “Leading a Team to Confront the Inclusion Challenges for a LGBTQ Member” and “Serving as D&I Chair to Create a More Inclusive Fraternity’s New Member Mentorship Process”

Peer review enables students to better reflect on and improve their work after assessing the work of their peers (Wood & Kurzel, 2008). To facilitate student learning and discovery, students engaged in brainstorming to generate story ideas before class and then, practiced and received peer feedback during an in-class activity prior to submitting their DEI storytelling video. Students also provided post-feedback to three randomly assigned peers via an online FeedbackFruits peer review after the assignment submission. FeedbackFruits (Cornell

University Center for Teaching Innovation, 2022) offers a peer assessment tool to engage students in active learning. Although students read and reflected individually on their FeedbackFruits peer reviews, the author also included class time to debrief on students' reflections and discoveries from the peer feedback.

Expected Takeaways/Outcomes

Participants will understand how they can use or adapt the DEI storytelling video assignment to support ethical business communication in their curriculum. In particular, the session will identify important design considerations and resources to facilitate student learning and minimize logistical barriers. Participants will learn how to engage students in the discovery process by connecting the assignment to an in-class peer feedback activity before submission and an online FeedbackFruits peer review after submission.

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Prioritizing Intersectional Understandings of Disability in Standardized Digital Classroom Spaces through a Combination of User-Experience and Universal Design Methods

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Summary

Historically, online classes have been credited for prioritizing access by integrating tools and practices such as screen-reading technologies, asynchronous conversations, and flexible attendance (Kent, 2015). However, digital interfaces and those who design them may contribute to the marginalization of students with disabilities by engaging design practices and mandating behaviors that presume users of able bodies and minds (Moeller & Jung, 2014). Examining these normalizing processes, many business, professional, and technical communicators have noted how normative documentation and design practices may yield discursively and materially problematic impacts for disabled individuals (Palmeri, 2006; Gutsell & Hulgin, 2013; Melonçon, 2013). Specifically, previous research has found that when disregarding students' diverse embodiments, digital spaces may endorse ableist assimilation with "homogenous" standards that erase the experiences of students with disabilities (Oswal & Melonçon, 2014). This is further exacerbated by the growing popularity of standardized online degree programs that draw from "templates in their content/learning management systems" that are standardized and rarely evaluated in terms of their usability or accessibility, particularly for students with disabilities (Oswal & Melonçon, 2017, p. 65). This presentation argues that such standardized design practices have social justice implications for students with disabilities whose embodied needs, experiences, and knowledge-making practices may be invalidated and erased by such seemingly neutral norms.

Drawing from technical, professional, and business communication, social justice, and disability justice scholarship, this presentation explores methods for engaging with more socially just and equitable design practices through user-experience (UX) and universal design (UD). Challenging dominant, ableist neutrality, social justice encourages us to examine how normative design and discourse may contribute to the oppression of diversely intersectional populations (Walton et al., 2019). Coupled with social justice, disability justice advocates for the analysis of ableism's systemic influence across institutional spaces and its intersectional connection to other systems of oppression like racism and sexism (Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, 2018). In this presentation, I follow calls from social justice and disability justice scholars to interrogate seemingly neutral design practices by using UX (Greer & Harris, 2018) to explore the embodied experiences of students with disabilities in standardized online courses. Due to its focus on diverse user needs and experiences, UX has been celebrated as furthering goals of social justice. While usability examines an individual's satisfaction with a product or a tool's capacity to help them efficiently achieve certain goals (Petrie & Bevan, 2009, p. 2), UX "takes a more holistic view, aiming for a balance between task-oriented aspects and other non-task-oriented aspects...of eSystem use and possession, such as beauty, challenge, stimulation and self-expression" (p. 4). UX can thus offer designers of digital classes insight into students' embodied experiences with online learning. In

this presentation, I thus apply UX to analyze the interacting influences that shape students' unique experiences across digital interfaces and model collaborative design methods that position students as co-designers of the learning space. However, because UX has been critiqued for disregarding disability (Oswal, 2019), I integrate UX with UD, which prioritizes disability as integral to design (Hitt, 2018). Through a combination of UX and UD, this presentation reframes student users with disabilities from passive recipients of online learning to active designers of digital interfaces.

Purpose

Through a combination of UX and UD, this presentation explores the intersectional implications of standardized digital course design on students with disabilities and advocates for collaborative design practices that can more effectively anticipate and support a range of diverse student needs, embodiments, and experiences.

Goals

The goals of this presentation are to:

- Challenge the concept of seemingly neutral design practices
- Discuss trends in standardized, online degree-granting programs
- Demonstrate how access is a matter of social justice through attention to social and disability justice
- Model methods for applying UX and UD to learn about student experiences in standardized online degree-granting programs
- Offer guidelines for engaging with and beyond standardized course design to make digital classrooms more equitably accessible for as many bodies and minds as possible

Methodology

This presentation reports on a case study of two sections of Business Writing offered through a large southwest university's fully online undergraduate degree-granting program. This particular course includes a standard curriculum from which instructors may not deviate. To gain insight into students' experiences with this standardized course, I used survey and semi-structured interview methods informed by UX and UD. Specifically, I surveyed students from two sections of this course after the completion of each class to ensure that student grades would not be affected by their participation. Survey questions inquired into students' navigation of the business writing course, particularly in relation to class aspects like assignment sequences, learning management system design, deadlines, peer interactions, instructor engagement, and course content. I then interviewed 10 student respondents of diverse intersectional identities, including disability, to gain additional insight into their experiences in the Business Writing class and the online degree-granting program as a whole. Interviews also provided students with opportunities to offer recommendations for future course design based on their uniquely embodied experiences. I then analyzed survey and interview data using thematic coding (Saldña, 2016). This presentation provides an overview of my analyzed findings and ultimately offers guidelines for designing digital classroom spaces in ways attuned to students' diversely intersectional needs and experiences.

Outcomes

Attendees will gain practical and pedagogical knowledge regarding

- The value of disability studies, social justice, and disability justice frameworks in constructing more equitable and accessible spaces in technical, professional, business, and pedagogical contexts
- Insight into the value of UX and UD in analyzing the embodied experiences of users with disabilities in digital spaces
- Methods for collaborating with those most impacted by design (like students with disabilities) to construct digital spaces and classes that anticipate and celebrate a range of bodies and minds
- Guidelines for designing more equitable and accessible digital classroom spaces based on students' intersectionally embodied insights and experiences

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Planning: Implementing a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging Mindset Into Your Department

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This presentation makes the case for using creative problem solving to create a strategic planning process for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB). The presenters provide a dynamic framework for participants to use in developing their own DEIB strategic plan. The goal of this presentation is to provide inclusive techniques for creative problem solving that can be used for DEIB strategic planning and direct experience with the efficacy of utilizing these tools.

In order to craft a dynamic DEIB strategic plan, the presenters introduce parts of the human-centered design thinking framework that assists in generating ideas from a place of empathy. The design thinking process is not linear (it is iterative) and allows participants to empathize, define the problem(s), ideate solutions, prototype/test, and implement. Throughout the design and development of a strategic plan, organizers should **empathize** with any of those who may not have access to opportunities in ways that others do. A deep understanding begins with a comprehensive consideration of the majority culture and respectively those who might become marginalized in a business school context within your particular demographic region. Time must then be spent on **defining** DEIB within the context of a program or department and a School of Business and clarifying any problems, challenges, and/or obstacles those in a marginalized group might face. Defining DEIB will naturally lead the group towards **ideating** solutions, goals, strategies, and action items for the strategic plan. All ideas should be considered at first, and then a system of convergence helps to categorize, prioritize, and discard ideas based on criteria that has been agreed upon by the team (e.g.: if it is timely, realistic, redundant, etc.).

Several **prototypes** of the strategic plan should then be developed and tested for different audiences. These prototypes are shown to various stakeholders in order to gain feedback from the user experience. This session's presenters share how they took their first prototypes out to a faculty team that teaches the first-year business students courses in the core curriculum, to gain insight into the practicality, feasibility, and realistic timeline for the suggested initiatives. Inclusion also increases participation and buy-in from those who are directly involved in the **implementation** process, which is the final step in design thinking. Although the "final" strategic plan is more of an iterative, fluid draft that will continue to develop and be revised over time, it is important to implement a project management tool that moves everyone towards a more dynamic DEIB mindset. Participants of this session experience a similar interactive and inclusive design thinking process, and they will leave with a template to begin the DEIB strategic planning process, using the creative problem-solving process.

Creating a Dynamic DEIB Strategic Plan

To combine the strategic planning process with design thinking, a five-step method is introduced: empathizing, clarifying, brainstorming (ideating), prototyping/testing, executing (organizing, assigning, implementing, and evaluating). The ABC workshop introduces academics to these concepts which cohesively align in the strategic planning stage for DEIB initiatives. What follows is a breakdown of each of these steps.

Empathizing/Clarifying

It is important for empathy to become the foundation for a DEIB strategic plan, as it is in the design thinking process. Empathy allows for consideration of any students who may not have access to opportunities in ways that others do. It is important to begin with an acknowledgement of those who have privilege, access, and lack experience related to being in a minority culture, and to recognize the challenges, barriers, and obstacles faced by students who are marginalized and/or lack privilege, access, and experience related to being in the majority culture. Empathy creates a foundation for clarifying the problems that need to be addressed. The clarifying stage can consist of research on diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging, and on the best practices that are found at other institutions. For strategic planning, and the design process, clarifying becomes the most time-consuming stage as clarity on the problems that needs to be solved will guide the following stages.

Brainstorming/Ideating

Ideation is the next step in creative problem solving which allows all unfiltered ideas to be considered. This inclusive process should be built on psychological safety, so that all ideas are welcome (Edmonson, 1999). Brainstorming with an interdisciplinary group of collaborative professors and paraprofessionals creates a flow of ideas that are broad in scope and integrative in approach. The ground rules for brainstorming, which create a foundation of trust and psychological safety, were used to guide this process (Osborn, 1953):

1. Go for Quantity: More ideas lead to better ideas. The principle of extended effort states that the "most preferred ideas" were likely to be found among the latter two thirds of the ideas that emerge (Basadur & Thompson, 1983).
2. Seek Wild and Unusual Ideas: We wanted everyone to feel safe throwing out their most unusual and novel ways of thinking about diversity, equity, and inclusion.
3. Defer Judgment: Let all ideas be taken into consideration for this first round of brainstorming.
4. Build on the Ideas of Others: Sharing ideas with others triggers additional thoughts and ideas to emerge.

Prototyping

To create a prototype for the strategic plan itself, several dynamic examples from other universities were identified that had been published by institutions that have previously implemented a DEI strategic plan. One strong example of a DEIB strategic plan came from UC Berkeley's College of Chemistry in 2021-2026. This plan included comprehensive definitions for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, was well organized, and laid out clear goals that drove each action item.

A second DEI Strategic Plan was identified from Oregon State University's College of Forestry. Similarly, to Berkeley's example, Oregon State University's example included clear definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and highlighted clear goals and action steps. Additionally, this example used a timeline with "phases" to prioritize action items, and provided "status" updates so readers can see progress.

Both of these examples illustrate the need to provide clear definitions, organization, and structure to students, faculty, and staff in the DEIB strategic planning. Additionally, the examples highlighted the need for DEIB strategic plan prototype that includes:

- Overarching goals
- Action steps
- Timeline
- Prioritization of action steps
- Ongoing implementation

Execution

With these exceptional examples in mind, and the ideas developed during the brainstorming process, the convergence process begins, and a DEIB strategic plan prototype emerges. This workshop groups tasks into main categories. Examples could include faculty, students, curriculum, departmental, administrative, programmatic, etc. During this process, redundancies of tasks are deleted, and a clear plan is set for executing, organizing, assigning, implementing, and evaluating tasks.

Organizing

Using the examples to guide organization, strategies are created for each category. Once an overarching strategy is defined, tasks are organized within each strategy.

Assigning

There are a large number of tasks included in a strategic plan, and in order to execute on the tasks; they can be distributed to committees. Committees can be identified in order to consider each assigned task, ability to complete the task, and provide a timeline for task completion.

If a department or a program does not have committees to help distribute the tasks within the strategic plan, it might still be helpful to assign some tasks to individuals or to create a temporary task force with the intention of implementing tasks.

Implementing

When it comes to DEI work, good intentions are not enough. Collaborative leaders must be willing to engage in genuine dialogue with diverse others, and these conversations can sometimes be frustrating, confusing, and time consuming. It takes patience to get everyone on the same page by communicating in a way that leads to co-creation. The presenters share examples of implementation after the development of the initial strategic

plan. Examples of implementation include adding DEIB agenda items (such as workshops to create an inclusive syllabus) to faculty meetings, setting expectations for inclusion of DEIB practices into goal setting, and evaluating DEIB practices in annual evaluations.

Evaluating

The important work of DEI is an ongoing process of iteration that will never end, although it may take different forms as the needs of the culture and climate change. The presenters share anecdotal evidence regarding an increase in students' DEIB mindset. Additionally, presenters share predictions for improvement of students' cultural intelligence with the explicit focus on DEIB. Assessment is critical in moving a successful project forward. Future research will focus on systematic evaluation of DEIB practices.

Conclusion

Much like the strategic planning writing process, the five steps in design thinking are iterative and constructive: empathizing/clarifying, brainstorming/ideating, prototyping, execution (organizing, assigning, implementing, and evaluating). The process is not linear; the strategic plan continues to be reviewed, and the brainstorming and organizing phases are revisited. As the tasks evolve, each of the strategies and resources are also revisited. The iterative nature of the plan is what makes it dynamic, fluid, inclusive, and evolutionary.

Design thinking embraces empathy, optimism, iteration, creativity, ambiguity, and keeps people at the center of the entire process (Kelley & Kelley, 2013). With a human-centered design focus, this presentation shares their process with students in mind. The presenters will use the feedback gained from participants of the workshop to revise their strategic plan further, to create an environment that best meets the students' needs, while also preparing them to lead the future of business.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion in the Exclusive World of Luxury: A Social Semiotic Analysis of 2020's Luxury Branding Discourse

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For decades, institutions, businesses, and individuals have engaged in the discourse regarding their commitment to building a better world. In 2022, however, we are still a long way from achieving sustainable development. While institutions have struggled to agree on common standards and regulations, businesses have shifted their corporate discourse to focus on environmental, social, and governance themes (ESG), which reflect their efforts to preserve the planet (E), generate positive societal impact (S) and operate in compliance with economic policies (G).

The luxury sector has historically been associated with qualities that do not naturally align with sustainability, such as overconsumption and social stratification (Veblen, 1957; Dean, 2018; Wells et al., 2021). However, as a result of corporate peer pressure, increased activism and consumer engagement on social media, and growing risks for reputational damage and financial impacts on corporations, luxury brands have worked to integrate ESG factors into corporate discourse. Recently, the sector has been subject to significant social pressures during the Black Lives Matter movement events, which raised consumers' social concerns regarding the role of luxury in spurring the discourse about social inequalities. Following these events, luxury companies had to quickly respond to mitigate reputational damages and, more specifically, address the sector's lack of diversity and inclusion.

Social semioticians, such as Thurlow and Jaworski (2017ab), have spent years investigating how luxury spaces contribute to social stratification, examining how luxury possessions portray the elite as a privileged social class and inevitably highlighting social inequalities. This study aims at investigating how the events of the Black Lives Matter movement worked as a catalyst to turn luxury branding discourse into a discourse of brand activism concerning those social issues.

The study adopts a social semiotic approach to analyzing Instagram posts shared by luxury brands in 2020. The multimodal analysis (Bateman et al., 2017; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001; 2006; Nervino, 2018) identifies the semiotic resources involved in the meaning-making process enabling the coexistence of luxury with discourse promoting diversity and inclusion. Preliminary findings show how the discourse shared on Instagram constructs social claims by deploying a diversified set of semiotic resources such as language and images enacting both conceptual and narrative processes and intertextual references; modes working as cohesive devices between posts such as colour and medium-specific features which articulate a call for collective action and play the role of a catalyst for certain causes. In this vein, brands discursively construct an alignment between their financial ambitions and long-term value creation for society to advocate, influence, and drive the sustainability discourse.

The findings demonstrate that the brands showed a timing response by supporting the movement through viral discourse built through black screens and hashtags and pledging donations to the cause. Besides a short-term reaction, the multimodal analysis also reveals that as a medium- and long-term reaction to those events, brands have changed their product development and advertising strategies to create a favourable image of the brand through disseminating discourse about diversity and inclusion. With time, what was a crisis management response during the pandemic provided the foundations to revisit communication strategies and values that resonate with consumers.

While sustainability practices enacted in response to outside forces can reflect poorly on a business if the public perceives the actions as insincere and out of line with a business' past vision, values, and model; greater awareness about sustainability-related challenges has emphasized that a company's culture and business model must change to undergo a meaningful sustainability transformation. In this context, corporate discourse becomes a reflection of how practices are organized and integrated into corporate identities and serves as a litmus test for inconsistencies in sustainability claims.

The study contributes to an overarching project concerning environmental, social, and governance issues constructed by luxury companies and disseminated across different genres to address an increasing variety of stakeholders. The project aims at contributing to the methodological and theoretical advancements in the investigation of a wider multiplicity of modes available to construe the meanings in the new media and push the boundaries of digital communication beyond the developed strategies and scrutinize the potentiality of computer-mediated genres (Hopearuoho & Ventola, 2009).

The study contributes to the local and international discussions on the contextualization of sustainability in the luxury sector, the integration of ESG factors in both discursive and practical terms, and the multimodal construction of corporate narratives. The study also generates pedagogical implications since it gathers a wealth of multimodal texts in business communication classes to train the next generations of leaders. Additionally, the study has managerial implications since it provides recommendations for corporate communication, sustainability professionals, and ESG strategists, thus affecting managerial practices.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to Foster Innovation

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Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) profoundly affect learning institutions and minorities. Society must respect and treat all individuals free of implied social bias in the DEI journey. DEI policies are dynamic and progress to increase the value they deliver in time; however, a question remains as to how they can influence creativity and cultural competencies among minority population growth. Over the years, more institutions have demonstrated commitment to DEI, but the increased rate of minority experiences has not aligned enough to show noticeable change to match DEI actions. This presentation discusses some of the hindering factors affecting creativity and the possible ways to influence it in a diverse population of cultures and interests.

Different race categories are on the upward trend. Since 2010, the Hispanic population in the United States reached 62.1 million in 2020, or a 23% growth. It has grown faster than the nation's growth rate of +7% but slower than the Asian population of +36% (Krogstad & Bustamante, 2021). In 2019, 42% of U.S. Hispanic adults had attended some college, and this number is up from 36% in 2010. According to Connors (2021), racialized colleges are considered one-for-all minority institutions and enforce state and local policies to advance DEI. They measure DEI progress beyond enrollment, persistence, and graduation. Ray (2019) explains that organizations are non-racial but apply racialization to strengthen resources, cultural objects, and emotions. School plans must include flexible pedagogies to enhance students' communications and intellectual work to guide innovation practices (Athanase. 2021).

DEI studies, when paired with creativity, have provided revealing findings. Hofstra, et al. (2020) conducted longitudinal studies with 1.2 million U.S. doctoral students from 1977 to 2015. The data showed that combining diversity and innovation in scientific fields leads to a paradox effect or "impactful innovation." Although minorities introduced more novelty contributions in the study, their race and gender were less likely to be rewarded when compared to gender and racial majorities. A novelty for minority groups had less impact because they showed as distal topics when innovations were grouped in semantic clusters. In contrast, majorities had contributions more proximal within their cluster set and topics. Therefore, the level of impactful novelty is positively correlated to racial and gender majorities. Similarly, diversity and innovation are affected in knowledge-intensive organizations if superior knowledge and expertise are not equally distributed among team members (Brunetta, et al, 2020). Gates and Caravello (2011) affirmed that culture influences innovation. Their study looked at Hispanic workers in the U. S. and found similar attitudes on pursuing innovation regardless of gender; however, gender opinions deferred on innovation purpose, perception, and who is best positioned to pursue it. Studies from Kristinsson, et al. (2016) determined that project teams with diverse knowledge and dynamic settings create more opportunities to engage minorities in idea generation.

Borman and Pyne (2016) observe that stereotypes negatively affect minorities' mindsets and their skills to innovate. When confronted, those individuals feel at risk and widen their achievement gap in the presence of racial and gender inequalities. The authors suggest relaxing cultural beliefs and societal stereotypes interfering

with intellectual abilities. Heaning (2022) discussed the “stereotype threat” as the reactive behavior to negative perceptions about gender and ethnicity hindering minority abilities to perform their best. The uneasiness of poor performance could lead to mental overload and block abilities that could follow for life. Commitment to DEI initiatives has driven change to improve achievement gaps and group barriers, but the results have been slow and incomplete.

Practitioners of DEI must consider thinking outside that scope. One must learn about who, what, and how can be done to mitigate stereotype threats and cultivate creativity among minorities, specifically for the three highest growing populations. For example, this writing has inspired several considerations offering a new understanding and collaboration of DEI initiatives. Inclusion can be addressed by discussing stereotype threat literature openly with students to bring appreciation and positive self-images. In-class assignments can encourage essays about students’ values, intellectual skills, and personal adequacy to live in a multicultural world. Second, diversity can be taught by fostering culturally diverse topics and creating self-esteem for students through competitive and innovative contests. Supporting creativity through impactful novelties would help students realize their full potential among themselves and other groups. That leap could provide a paradigm shift in competitive mindsets and self-worth attitudes that transfer to the workplace and society. Lastly, equity is probably the most challenging tenant to implement because it goes beyond gender and race as it touches on socioeconomic and disabilities factors. Equity can also borrow from inclusion and diversity by creating mediations and checkpoints to safeguard students from stereotype threats.

DEI is awareness, courage, persistence, and continuous work for a community. Drawing on these principles, challenges such as creativity and innovation can succeed and reverse inequity and the fear of stereotypes threats.

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A Meta-Analysis Comparing Impression Management Tactics Used by Leaders of Color

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Exploratory studies completed by Benton, Ceballos, and Burton (2020, 2022), determined there are preferences associated with how leaders of color attempt to control how they are viewed by their counterparts in the workplace. This prompted further investigation of the five Impression Management tactics indicated by the Jones & Pittman Scale (1982), which includes: self-promotion, ingratiation, exemplification, intimidation, and supplication. Consequently, a meta-analysis was conducted regarding Impression Management and gender to ascertain the affinity for leaders of color as they seek elevated positions of leadership or management within the organization.

Researchers completed a MANOVA and Factor Analysis to assess the 5-factors combined to create the Impression Management Construct. Out of 547 questionnaires completed by respondents, 495 were valid. The results indicated there are gender specific preferences associated with the Impression Management constructs. Therefore, this research provides theorists and practitioners with the narrative needed to understand an under researched topic and how the Impression Management constructs influence the leader's progression through an organization.

Impression management is defined as the desire to create and sustain a positive image in the mind of one's target (Benton et al, 2020, 2022; Carson et al, 2011). Previously, authors Benton, Ceballos & Burton (2020,2022) investigated the problems cis gendered leaders of color often face in the workplace as they advance in their careers. Authors began by completing an exploratory factor analysis with examining the five tactics used by women leaders of color first as indicated by Jones & Pittman's Taxonomy Scale (1982) and found that intercorrelation does exist. Some of the preferred tactics among the various ethnic groups were self-promotion, ingratiation, and exemplification. Conversely, the more women used intimidation as a tactic, the more it was found to hinder performance, which supports previous literature as illustrated in an article by Iedema & Poppe (1994).

According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (2021) as of 2019, women represent 57.4% of the workforce population, while the remaining 42.6 % represent the male population. Therefore, while this initial study was sufficient in supporting the notion of impression management being used in the workplace, unfortunately it only offers a limited perspective of the situation. This notion led authors to investigate the tactics preferred by male leaders of color.

An additional exploratory factor analysis study was conducted and found that both Black/African American and Latino leaders of color preferred the use of supplication and self-promotion. To some extent all leaders of color with the exception of Asians/Asian-Americans preferred used the intimidation tactic. With the need for healthy conversations surrounding race and ethnicity, as well as gender on the rise, the authors sought to compare both male and women leaders of color to determine if there were commonalities found. Results illustrated that there are commonly shared preferred tactics between both male and women leaders of color. For instance, while both genders prefer to use self-promotion, male leaders of color ($M = 2.83$) had a slightly higher mean score than women ($M = 2.41$). This indicates that male leaders of color are more likely to praise themselves versus women in order to be viewed as more credible. Additionally, both genders prefer the use of ingratiation, with male leaders of color ($M = 3.20$) once again having a higher mean score versus women leaders of color ($M = 3.04$).

It could be inferred that by creating these deliberate types of reciprocal relationships that male leaders of color as well as their white counterparts resort to this tactic more than women to expedite their professional advancement. Finally, the other tactic the two genders prefer to use is intimidation, yet women leaders of color had a higher mean score ($M = 5.70$) versus their male counterparts ($M = 5.65$) which as previously mentioned could hinder their performance.

Considering shifts in workplace dynamics, particularly as persons of color ascend to leadership and management roles once occupied predominantly by White men, concurrent with companies and organizations highlighting diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, this project is essential in assisting practitioners and researchers to navigate these dimensions.

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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

"I'm Offensive, But I'm a Good Worker": Shining Light on the Employment Experiences of Professionals with Tourette Syndrome

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Tourette Syndrome (TS) is a disorder that involves repetitive movements or unwanted sounds that cannot be easily controlled. In popular culture, TS is often exaggerated greatly, with characters in television shows like *South Park* exhibiting extremely offensive/vulgar vocal outbursts and YouTube sensations like “Tourette’s Guy,” over-exemplifying and dramatizing tics for sake of ill-advised humor. Thus, public perception of TS is wide-ranging, though often ill-informed.

The medical community, too, is surprisingly uninformed about TS. Though often classified as a “disorder,” many instances of TS go undiagnosed and/or misdiagnosed. This is, in part, due to the fact that TS is often regarded to be a comorbid disorder, often aligned with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive compulsive disorders or behaviors (OCD) and autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Still, the manifestations of TS—which may involve rapid, unexpected, distracting, and/or offensive interjections of motor or verbal responses—do not often fit neatly within common social conceptions of such comorbidities, thus further pushing those with TS to the fringes.

Of note, this isolation and stigma manifests all throughout the lifespan. Bullying directed towards those with TS has been so extreme that the CDC has published specific guidelines on how to reduce/address bullying towards individuals with TS. While some individuals with TS experience significant lulls in symptomology (i.e., they do not tic for an extended period of time), TS tends to endure throughout the lifespan. Of note, within the medical community, there is no known cure for TS (and as with many other neurodivergent pathologies, there is ongoing debate as to whether TS should be “fixed” and “cured” or whether the focus should be on refining and enhancing social understanding of the issue). Thus, pervasive stigma and misunderstanding have significant consequences in all areas of the lives of those with TS—familial, interpersonal, sexual, and beyond. Of importance to this study, TS has a significant impact on the professional lives and livelihoods of those with TS.

Little to no research has been done on TS, particularly in the social sciences. There are no known or reputable publications in the organizational sector on TS. Thus, this study seeks to address those noted holes in hopes of identifying and formulating practical insights for organizations on how to support workers with TS.

Still, while this research manifests against the backdrop of an absence of impactful social science research, it also manifests within a larger mediated social context where individuals with diagnosed, undiagnosed but presumed, and/or aligned symptoms of TS have intentionally sculpted communities of support for each other. Recently, “TikTok,” a sub-community in the larger TikTok social media landscape, has arisen to great

prominence, largely because of its ability to shine a light on the lived experiences of those with TS. While not all discourse in this space is positive—and it is ripe with skepticism, critique, in-fighting, territorialism, and voyeurism—it further necessitates investigations of extensions of meaningful support towards those living with TS.

This project contends that it is vitally important to better understand how professionals or pre-professionals manage TS symptoms, including the vocal and/or motor tics exhibited in the professional workspace. As noted above, little to no research has been done on TS, particularly in the social sciences. There are no known or reputable publications in the organizational sector on TS. Thus, this study addresses those noted holes in hopes of identifying and formulating practical insights for organizations on how to support workers with TS.

Through in-depth qualitative interviews with 12 professionals who have Tourette Syndrome, we explore the ways in which personal, relational, enacted, and communal TS identities are negotiated in professional communication encounters. Using Michael Hecht's Communication Theory of Identity and Hecht's work with Erica Jung on identity gaps, this study centers discussion of identity chasms, whereby these identity layers contradict one another. It also contends for a more accessible framework for understanding the performance of identity, calling into question the notion of willful acts of identity negotiation, and thus expanding relevant communication theories in ways that better acknowledge neurodivergent positionalities.

Results of this study reveal that the performance of professional identity is one that is inherently complicated by TS, and this plays out in both micro and macro conversational performances in day-to-day professional experiences of those with TS. Participants explore the role of outing (i.e., letting others know they have TS), negotiation of interpersonal boundaries, apologia (i.e., apologizing when behavior is perceived to be an embarrassment to the organization), and negotiating the bounds of career mobility in a professional world with very strict rules on professional propriety. Results also reveal the complex process of negotiating community, centering participants' own critical inquiry into TS pathology, alignment to/with the broader disability community, and the complex (sometimes traumatic) self-negotiation that occurs when symptoms (i.e., tics) change, wax, wane, adjust, dissipate, or seemingly disappear.

This study has significant implications for leaders and managers, as well as those who tend to the nuances of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, including in both service capacities (e.g., committee work) and formal capacities (e.g., human resources, legal affairs) within organizations. It also helps shed greater light on those living with TS and, we hope, helps ensure the needs of those with TS are more carefully considered when sculpting inclusive organizational environments.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Teaching Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Business Communication: Reporting From a Curriculum Enrichment Initiative

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This paper describes and reports on the outcomes of a significant DEI curriculum enrichment initiative in an upper-division business communication course at a business school that is part of a predominantly white regional state university in the United States.

By now, most business leaders have some sense of the importance and relevance of authentic efforts towards increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion in their organizations (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020). However, a clear understanding of these three concepts—especially as connected yet distinct from each other—is far rarer (Steen, 2022). Further, many claims of progress in diversity and inclusion are less than genuine (Morris, 2020) and often overstated (Tomaskovic-Devey & Han, 2022).

This gap in knowledge and lack of successful long-term change can be costly for organizations (Morris, 2020). Conversely, where policies and practices change in ways that promote equity, businesses tend to become more inclusive (Lawson et al., 2022) and more successful (Dixon-Fyle et al., 2020). Businesses—and thus, also, business schools—need to focus more on DEI to provide this critical content knowledge, preparing professionals to successfully work in and lead organizations that welcome diversity, practice inclusion, and work toward equity.

Challenged by a business school's unit change team and the dean's office to incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) content in an existing course, business communication faculty enhanced their course content to further focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion within the context of business communication. The curriculum project was at a regional state university in the U.S. that is a predominantly white institution (PWI), and this paper reports on findings from one faculty member's course enrichment.

Methodology

For a major business communication assignment with a significant research component, student teams were asked to explore issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace through reading and discussion. They then were asked to identify a specific topic to focus on—and pitch to the instructor—for their project.

Once the projects were greenlighted, students researched their chosen topics by exploring scholarly, industry, and business media sources. Based on their research, students then wrote detailed informational reports: recommendation reports, surveys of best practices, detailed analysis reports, and feasibility reports. These reports were written for a range of professional audiences: small businesses, local or regional organizations, entrepreneurs or investors, and leadership teams.

The range of projects was broad: Student teams wrote reports about company policies that promote inclusiveness of various faith traditions, pay inequity based on race and gender, mentoring programs for future leaders, the lack of diversity in corporate C-suites, unconscious and implicit bias, tokenism, psychological safety, diversity training programs, corporate diversity statements, hiring and promotion practices, and the use of data collection and analysis to quantify the benefits of expenditures on DEI initiatives.

After completing the assignment, students were surveyed to collect reflections on their engagement and learning. The survey was created in and distributed using Google Forms. The survey instrument included eight questions formatted as statements with a four-point rating scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree), two short-answer questions, and four questions inviting reflective responses. The survey also offered student respondents the option to have their name associated with their responses or to not have their name connected to their responses. Of 94 students enrolled across four sections of the course, 77 completed the survey.

Results

Overall, the student responses demonstrated that the specific attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the course had an immediate and significant impact on their awareness and understanding of these topics.

Almost every respondent (96%) indicated they deepened their understanding of diversity, equity, and/or inclusion (47 strongly agreed and 27 agreed). Most (97%) also agreed (35) or strongly agreed (40) that the curriculum enhancement “challenged me to consider how equity, diversity, and/or inclusion can impact organizations and individuals in professional settings.”

Similarly, 96% indicated that the DEI emphasis in the course “helped [them] better understand the experiences of people whose identities or experiences are different than [their] own” (38 strongly agreed and 46 agreed).

One student wrote that the DEI-focused research project “*made me understand and recognize how diversity, especially in leadership...can benefit the company as a whole.*” Another wrote “*I want to be a business professional with coworkers that can teach me, not blend in with me.*”

Generally, the student respondents viewed the focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion as beneficial. Almost all (97%) indicated the DEI content in the course “equipped me to be a more effective communicator” (38 strongly agreed and 37 agreed) and “equipped me to be a more effective team member” (34 strongly agreed and 41 agreed). Nearly the same percentage (95%) indicated the DEI content of the course “equipped me to be a more effective leader (31 strongly agreed and 42 agreed). “*The sources located for our report...helped me develop my understanding of DEI,*” one student said. Others had similar reflections:

“The research report was useful as it had me research and dive into the DEI part.”

“Our [research project] was extremely useful because it challenged us to focus on a certain topic that revolved around DEI. It allowed us to learn a lot of in-depth information about that one topic relating to DEI.”

“Reading all of the statistics was eye opening. It expanded my knowledge on the topic for sure and made me more aware.”

"The research I have done has helped me learn effective strategies for implementing DEI as well as the benefits received by having a diverse group."

Students also wrote about how they believe they have benefitted from this curriculum initiative:

"The focus on DEI as part of this course has made me more aware of diversity and taught me ways to approach difficult subjects."

"This course has given me more awareness [of] the importance of diversity in the workplace and in group settings. It is crucial for a team's success to have different views and beliefs."

"This project has helped me learn what equity is and how to be able to make things equal for all and include everyone in the workplace. I am now working to be more inclusive and implement equity in my daily life."

"This course has greatly helped me understand what DEI is and how to improve in that area by including others and diversifying. It made me realize how big of a topic it is and what we need to do to make others feel included."

Perhaps most importantly for a business school, students also reflected on how this DEI emphasis impacted them as emerging and early-career professionals. *"The more I learn now,"* one student respondent wrote, *"the better co-worker I can be, and potentially help a company grow."*

Other students also pointed to this additional focus on DEI as specifically impacted their professional lives, as these reflections note:

"My understanding of diversity grew stronger...I now feel more comfortable as a leader and as a coworker."

"As an aspiring business professional I want to learn how to be inclusive to all cultures and opinions of others in order to have a successful and welcoming workplace."

"I have always had a goal of being a business owner that cares about employees. Now I have expanded. I want to be a business owner that cares about who I [bring in as] my employees. I want to have a diverse workforce. I want to get comfortable with the uncomfortableness of inviting someone new to teach me...I want to be a leader that respects and can learn from my employees."

For business school leaders who are concerned with graduating students with more cultural competency, the responses related to students expanding their curiosity about the DEI topics are likely of interest. Though a less impressive statistic compared to others, 71% of the student respondents said the DEI-focused research project "motivated [them] to learn more about diversity, equity, and inclusion and/or inclusion – beyond what was required for the project" (22 strongly agree, 33 agree, 21 disagree, 1 strongly disagree).

Limitations to this study are, of course, mostly related to size and timeline. A further limitation is the study's focus on student impressions rather than on demonstrated change in competencies. Without collecting pre- and post-course data about student effectiveness as communicators and team members, for example, the study relies on whether students perceive these skills to be enhanced.

Closing

These findings do seem to indicate there may be important benefits from incorporating diversity, equity, and inclusion content in a course. Most of the results imply that students in any business course can benefit from this content; the results that focus on more effective communication and teamwork are the most relevant for business communication courses.

The model used for this curriculum enhancement may also have significantly impacted student reception to the added course content. Rather than a series of additional lectures or assigned readings focused on DEI, this project encouraged student teams to research some aspect of DEI that they found interesting or worthy of deeper research.

Further study of this topic should be a focus in our discipline, as many business programs and accrediting bodies have moved toward a focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion as integral to educating business professionals.

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Employment Issues

A Candid Dialogue About Business Communication Career Opportunities and Challenges: Lessons From Leading ABC Teacher-Scholars

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Gail Fann Thomas
Naval Postgraduate School

N. Lamar Reinsch, Jr.
Georgetown University

Peter Cardon
University of Southern California

The session is organized around several key career questions that are likely to be concerns for young and mid-career business communication professionals. Mentors should also find this session valuable. Four panelists will address such key questions as these:

How can I navigate a meaningful career in a discipline that is often marginalized? Are there approaches to aligning my work with the core values and curriculum of my department or school? Are there useful alliances I can forge with powerful external or internal stakeholders? Why should I care about research and publishing? Many schools or departments will have research and publishing requirements for tenure and/or promotion. How do I get started in research and publishing? Should I create a program of research? How can research and publishing improve my teaching? How can teaching help me in research and publishing?

How might I build synergy between my research and teaching? I want to find ways to better integrate my teaching and research. What are some innovative and entrepreneurial ways to do this?

How can I assess the advantages and disadvantages of taking on administrative roles in my department or university? Faculty are often offered such roles in their departments or positions on university-wide committees. What are the upsides of these activities? What cautions should faculty take before accepting such roles?

How can ABC and other professional organizations support me in advancing my career? ABC and other professional organizations are treasure troves for professional and career development. How can faculty at all levels take advantage of these opportunities? How can I develop strategies and priorities to ensure appropriate work/life balance while making maximum impact?

Panelists will share lessons learned from decades of research, teaching, and service. The session will be highly interactive. Panelists will offer short presentations, engage in discussion, and solicit questions from the audience.

Session Leader

JANIS FORMAN is the founder and director of the management communication program at UCLA's Anderson School of Management. For more than three decades she worked with student project teams. Her research and teaching focus on storytelling and strategy, collaborative communication practices, and corporate communication.

Other Panel Members

GAIL FANN THOMAS is associate professor emerita at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California. She taught managerial communication to MBA's and led executive programs in NPS's Center for Executive Education. Her research focuses on conflict management, strategic communication, and interorganizational collaboration.

LAMAR REINSCH is emeritus professor of management at Georgetown's McDonough School of Business, where he taught managerial communication and several other subjects. His current research interests include business ethics, and communication technologies in the workplace.

PETER CARDON is a professor of business communication at USC's Marshall School of Business. His research focuses on the intersections among culture, technology, and business communication.

For further understanding of the questions identified earlier, you may want to read the panelists' essays in a new anthology called *The Business Communication Profession: Essays on the Journeys of Leading Teacher-Scholars* (Routledge, 2023) edited by Janis Forman. The book includes ten essays written by leading business communication teacher-scholars who offer personal insights about the profession that may provide guidance for emerging teacher-scholars and suggest the future direction of business communication. The chapters offer stories about a diversity of paths for achieving personal and professional success in academe. They invite readers to think about what they can apply for their own career advancement and satisfaction. The book includes chapters written by each of the panelists: Debby Andrew's "Cultivating a Liberal Arts Perspective on Workplace Communication"; Janis Forman's "'Only Connect' Between Personal Life and Professional Choice, Scholarship and Teaching, My Generation and the Next"; Peter Cardon's "Collaborative Networking for Better Teaching and Research"; Lamar Reinsch's "To Summon the Future: Defining the Field and Deciding What to Teach"; and Gail Thomas's "My Experiential Learning Journey as a Management Communication Teacher-Scholar." Other chapters include Bertha Du-Babcock's "Developing from a Teacher to a Scholar Across Cultures: The Moves from the East to the West and Back Again;" Ron Dulek's "Take Two Xanax and Call Me in the Morning; or, Career Tension in Business Communication;" Charles Kostelnick's "The Visual Expeditions and Related Adventures of a Teacher, Scholar, and Administrator"; Pris Rogers's "Persisting in the Field of Business Communication: 'There's Really Something to It'"; and Daphne Jameson's *Selling My Soul: Moving from the Humanities to Business Communication.*

Employment Issues

Dillard's Inc Management Related to Adjusting Sales Due to COVID-19 Pandemic and Reviewing Profit Margins

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University of the Incarnate Word

Purpose

By 1993, sales at Dillard's had grown to \$5.13 billion, a six-fold growth over a 10-year period. Bad practices initiated a downturn for the company, with sales subsequently increasing only 9% (Smith, 2014). The willingness to predict or respond to changes in fashion trends and preferences in consumer brands could diminish brand and customer loyalty and affect the company's reputation (Dillard, 2021). Dillard's focus on growing its market by tapping into different sectors. These stores are designed to be a one-stop shop for customers for convenience and value. Consumers' benefits come from acquiring low prices, variety, and convenience (Delbert, 2012). Dillard's business depends on the operational process of receiving and distributing merchandise (Young, 2021). Overall, the success of big-box retailers has developed the retail industry as a whole.

This descriptive case study examines the 282-location department store Dillard's, Inc., highlighting two relatively distinctive product offerings, James Avery and Louis Vuitton. In the increasingly crowded upscale retail department store industry, the Little Rock, Arkansas-based Dillard's boasts a 2021 market cap of \$5.38 billion and annual revenue in excess of \$4.4 billion (Caldwell, 2021). Since its inception in 1938, they have pursued both a long-term competitive differentiation and niche strategy (Hlavaty, 2017).

Dillard's implements a differentiation strategy utilizing a number of strategic and tactical tools. This case highlights the relationship that Dillard's has fostered with the artisan jeweler James Avery. James Avery is a vertically integrated organization of nearly 2,000 craft artisans who design and manufacture primarily Christian-themed jewelry in the Texas Hill Country (Burns, 2019). The family-owned jewelry realized annual revenue of \$580 million in 2021 and, since 2014, has collaborated with Dillard's as it has expanded its distribution from 115 company-owned storefronts to an additional 250 point-of-purchase channels inside Dillard's location (Caldwell, 2021). James Avery offers a unique collection of designs for women and men constructed in sterling silver, gold, and gemstones retailers with every piece symbolizing strong beliefs and faithfulness. Dillard's has grown its jewelry selection to a completely new level with the inclusion of James Avery Artesian Jewelry. James Avery is more than jewelry. It's a symbol of faithfulness and comfort of strong held beliefs. Each catholic charms, pendants, and rings collection inspires religious and faith-based jewelry among friends and family. Dillard's was the perfect partnership for James Avery, since Dillard's and James Avery exceed annual revenue of \$4.4 billion (Caldwel, 2021).

Dillard's successfully pursues a niche strategy in several ways. Most interestingly perhaps is the sale of luxury goods from Louis Vuitton. Dillard's offers specialized and innovative products. The financial impact of Louis Vuitton luxury items at Dillard's falls under the responsibility of a dedicated management team. Analysts

recommend buying Louis Vuitton shares, since this brand remains a high-quality name with a unique diversification. Overall, company's works with additional luxury brands to gain a position in the fashion retail market. Luxury goods shares were raised after Louis Vuitton recorded revenue of \$16.8 billion dollars making 2020 up by 32% on previous years (Smith, 2021). The niche strategy is a unique marketing strategy Dillard's designed to sell pre-owned Louis Vuitton bags. This strategy focuses on selling unique luxury goods to a specific target market. The purpose of this case study is to define Dillard's operation management and financial dynamics in selling luxury goods from Louis Vuitton. Dillard's was the perfect partnership for Louis Vuitton, since Dillard's reach a market cap of \$5.38 billion in year 2021 (Caldwell, 2021).

In conclusion, this case study recommends focusing on differentiation and niche strategy significantly, since it contributed to Dillard's gross domestic product during the COVID-19 Pandemic (Smith, 2021). After reading this case study you will amplify your knowledge on productive luxury shopping experience. The best practice from this case study is exploring innovation products and the creation of distribution items. Future work could involve taking advantage of the classic theory of avoiding marketing myopia, the issue of not giving enough attention to the demands of consumers (Hayes, 2021). The implementation of the classic theory would allow the consumer to shape markets by letting companies know what types of products they want.

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Employment Issues

The First and the Future: Foundational Curricula for the Future of Work and Career Success of Business Undergraduates

Larissa Ramos
University of Miami

Samuel Martin-Barbero
Franklin University

According to a survey of 18,000 people in 15 countries conducted by the McKinsey Global Institute, the demand for a growing set of high-level cognitive, social, and emotional skills is one future undergraduate Business students will increase as they enter the workforce. With the rapid pace of digital transformation, further accelerated by COVID-19, how do we prepare our undergraduate Business students, especially as they enter the classroom, for the skills of the future, or at least, equip them with the learning strategies and curricula design that will pivot them for workforce competitiveness?

Backed by a literature review of research by thinktanks in industry, interested in the skills for the *Future of Work*, this presentation will examine whether or not the foundational undergraduate curricula at select top-ranked private undergraduate Business programs prepares students to succeed in their careers, based on the current industry outlook.

Focusing on top-ranked undergraduate Business programs that publish syllabi for foundational or first-year undergraduate courses at private institutions, this study engages in a qualitative content analysis to synthesize findings from industry reports positing the skills needed for the future workforce and compares them with the topics covered in undergraduate business education courses especially in first-year Business education.

Based on research conducted by the McKinsey study, *Defining the skill citizens will need in the future world of work*, published by the McKinsey Global Institute in 2021, higher proficiency in a set 56 foundational skills has been correlated with a higher likelihood of employment, higher income, and job satisfaction. In particular, leveraging its research in adult training, the McKinsey study identified 13 skill groups across four broad skill categories: “**cognitive, digital, interpersonal, and self-leadership**” that are foundational across sectors and likely to be beneficial in the highly automated and digital labor market, as displayed in the table below:

Cognitive		Interpersonal	
Critical thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Structured problem solving ● Logical reasoning ● Understanding biases ● Seeking relevant information 	Planning and ways of working <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work-plan development ● Time management and prioritization ● Agile thinking 	Mobilizing systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Role modeling ● Win-win negotiations ● Crafting an inspiring vision ● Organizational awareness 	Developing relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Empathy ● Inspiring trust ● Humility ● Sociability
Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Storytelling and public speaking ● Asking the right questions ● Synthesizing messages ● Active listening 	Mental flexibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creativity and imagination ● Translating knowledge to different contexts ● Adopting a different perspective ● Adaptability ● Ability to learn 	Teamwork effectiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fostering inclusiveness ● Motivating different personalities ● Resolving conflicts ● Collaboration ● Coaching ● Empowering 	
Self-leadership		Digital	
Self-awareness and self-management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understanding own emotions and triggers ● Self-control and regulation ● Understanding own strengths ● Integrity ● Self-motivation and wellness ● Self-confidence 		Digital fluency and citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Digital literacy ● Digital learning ● Digital collaboration ● Digital ethics 	
Entrepreneurship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Courage and risk-taking ● Driving change and innovation ● Energy, passion, and optimism ● Breaking orthodoxies 		Software use and development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Programming literacy ● Data analysis and statistics ● Computational and algorithmic thinking 	
Goals achievement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ownership and decisiveness ● Achievement orientation ● Grit and persistence ● Coping with uncertainty ● Self-development 		Understanding digital systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data literacy ● Smart systems ● Cybersecurity literacy ● Tech translation and enablement 	

Source: *Defining the skill citizens will need in the future world of work*. McKinsey Global Institute. June 15, 2021.

Considering the interpersonal skills category, for instance, when it comes to teamwork effectiveness, an employer survey by the Association of American Colleges and Universities reveals that only “only 48 percent [of employers surveyed] perceive recent graduates as “very well prepared” for working in teams. Even more striking is the perception of preparation for teamwork by students: 87 percent of 500 students sampled stated that they had received no real preparation in one of the skills most valued by employers.

Further confirming the changing skills valued for the future workforce are findings from a report on re-skilling by the World Economic Forum's Centre for the New Economy and Society, which predicts ten growing skills, such as analytical thinking and innovation; active learning; creativity, originality, and initiative; technology design and programming; critical thinking and analysis; complex problem-solving, among other rising competencies:

Growing	Declining
1 Analytical thinking and innovation	1 Manual dexterity, endurance and precision
2 Active learning and learning strategies	2 Memory, verbal, auditory and spatial abilities
3 Creativity, originality and initiative	3 Management of financial, material resources
4 Technology design and programming	4 Technology installation and maintenance
5 Critical thinking and analysis	5 Reading, writing, math and active listening
6 Complex problem-solving	6 Management of personnel
7 Leadership and social influence	7 Quality control and safety awareness
8 Emotional intelligence	8 Coordination and time management
9 Reasoning, problem-solving and ideation	9 Visual, auditory and speech abilities
10 Systems analysis and evaluation	10 Technology use, monitoring and control

Based on the findings of this qualitative content analysis of ten industry studies on the Future of Work and ten first-year introductory Business courses' syllabi, session attendees will be invited to ponder strategies to innovate the design of both foundational undergraduate Business curricula and that of capstone courses rounding out students' education prior to graduation.

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Timely Triadic Transdisciplinarity: Business and Professional Communication as Instrumental in Understanding and Advancing Positive Workplace Dynamics in the Higher Education Landscape

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**Janel Bloch
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Business and professional communication (BPC) is a growing discipline that, on a pedagogical level, contributes substantively to students' workplace communication abilities and, on a scholarly level, offers a transdisciplinary lens (Presenters, 2017) through which to examine workplace dynamics and communication practice, including those in higher education itself. With a combination of rhetorical finesse and multiply informed understandings of diverse organizational contexts, BPC scholars are uniquely well positioned not only to perform research on organizational and unit-level dynamics within higher education, but also to advance a research-based understanding of those dynamics as a part of efforts to enhance them over the longer term.

In this presentation, the presenters start with a question: As a transdisciplinary field invested in workplace dynamics, in what ways might business and professional communication research produce meaningful insights into higher education work contexts; help contextualize the communicative dynamics within those contexts; and, over time, develop actionable implications for enhancing academic workplaces and communications within them? For this presentation, this question will be exploratory and generative in nature, inviting audience participation and drawing on previous work that the presenters have developed through their ABC collaborations (Presenters, 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020), including:

- The inherent transdisciplinarity of BPC. As a field with strong transdisciplinary underpinnings, BPC is well equipped to solve wicked problems: those problems that Churchman (1967, p. B142, quoted in McMillan & Overall, 2016, p. 36) defined as “a class of social system problems which are ill-formulated, where the information is confusing, where there are many clients and decision makers with conflicting values, and where the ramifications in the whole system are thoroughly confusing”—much like the logistical challenges endemic to higher education and professionalization paths within it. The presenters will argue that a major part of BPC's value premise in higher education lies partly in its ability to utilize a transdisciplinary lens in navigating the complex sociorhetorical spaces of academia.
- The importance of collaborative mentoring. In prior research, the presenters established the importance of equitable, collaborative mentoring in developing scholarly and teaching identity among academics in BPC (Presenters, 2020). The presenters will strategically extend their argument for the kinds of collaborative mentoring important in BPC as essential for developing intuitive and cognitive sensibilities in building successful academic careers.

- Socially just workplace dynamics. With its emphasis on effective workplace communication and positive workplace dynamics, BPC research has prudently emphasized the importance of social justice in the workplace (e.g., Grant, 2007; Jones, 2017). Building on existing work in BPC and their own foundational arguments described in a previous ABC presentation on social justice pedagogy (2018), the presenters will discuss the necessity for a social justice mindset in continuing to reshape academic workplace dynamics more broadly.
- A triadic approach to professionalization. The presenters will argue that a model of professionalization (Presenters, 2019) grounded in reflection-in-action (Schon, 1987), critical reflection (Fook, 2011), and scholarship of application (Boyer, 1990) allows for a holistic evaluation of research and its impact, offering significant benefits to BPC and the institutions where it is taught, researched, and practiced. Incorporating their argument for collaborative mentoring practice in BPC, the presenters will extend the triadic approach to navigating complex post-pandemic spaces in higher education. Potential examples of this combined application will be discussed.

Attendees of this presentation will gain a greater understanding of the strategic importance of BPC research in contextualizing higher education as an evolving, sometimes confounding sociorhetorical space that can be better understood, navigated, and even improved over time by applying and building upon principles that BPC scholars are well equipped to incorporate in their own professional practice. The insights that result will help empower researchers and teachers in BPC to effectively analyze and engage with academic workplace dynamics—potentially becoming agents of positive change in their own institutions and units.

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The Problem With Entrepreneurship for MBA Programs and Their Students

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Steve Jobs was quoted as saying: “Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.” It’s easy to agree with Jobs’ statement, but does this sentiment help to capture or explain the rationale behind why students are seeking executive education and/or participating in MBA programs? Are these future “business leaders” seeking out programs in the hopes that simply upon completion they will love their work more truly, more deeply? Or are they seeking to enhance their existing skills so that they may continue to engage in their current vocation, only with a higher salary and more impressive job title?

Or are they seeking something else? Something new, something different, something challenging that ultimately changes their perspective and as a result helps them to see their word and their work in new lights that otherwise may have gone unnoticed? It’s likely a little different for each student, but this last reason, the idea that they are seeking new perspectives, fresh ideas and an opportunity to see their day to day challenges in new and opportunistic ways - that’s the one that really stands out for deeper consideration as it’s the most prophetic and likely most universally inspiring.

Until recently, entrepreneurship has not been a part of most MBA or executive leadership programs. Yet, entrepreneurial programs may be one answer to helping MBA and executive leadership programs unlock the full potential of their learners.

At the University of Connecticut, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation is housed within the School of Business. The recent addition of an interdisciplinary business communication faculty member created new opportunities to integrate entrepreneurship into the MBA curriculum with a particular focus on developing a more entrepreneurial mindset amongst students.

On the surface, the problem with entrepreneurship for MBA and executive students is that it has typically never fit their desired career or professional goals. A majority of MBA students are seeking to enhance their existing careers as opposed to the potentially daunting journey poised by the prospect of entrepreneurship. Yet, an entrepreneurial mindset may offer these aspiring executives and business leaders exactly what they are seeking.

An entrepreneurial mindset is one that holds a deeper value for the skills and abilities known to best support aspiring entrepreneurs, including: the ability to inspire and convey enthusiasm for new ideas, the ability to improvise, the willingness to experiment (and fail), the ability to be creative and use empathy to connect with others, and the ability to present and persuade others of your core value propositions.

Over the past year, the University of Connecticut has taken a direct approach to integrating entrepreneurial programming and mindset development into the broader MBA curriculum. For example, MBA students in the full-time program now have the ability to directly participate in accelerator programs, serve as graduate assistants in the entrepreneurship center, serve as business consultants for start-ups, and/or attend any number of entrepreneurial networking events. In addition to this, a series of entrepreneurial based assignments have been built into the program's core business communication course which places an emphasis on developing student's ability to clearly articulate their personal value propositions from a career perspective as well as their ability to apply an entrepreneurial mindset to organizational decision making.

For many students, the business communication course serves as their primary opportunity to develop critical presentation skills. By adding entrepreneurial elements to the course, students are presented the opportunity to challenge themselves to organize and present content in a manner that demonstrates their entrepreneurial skill sets (e.g., creativity/innovation, disruption/challenging the status quo, resourcefulness, etc.).

Henry Ford was quoted as saying: "Whether you think you can, or think you can't - you're right." The integration of entrepreneurship into MBA and executive leadership programs helps to challenge learners in these programs to see themselves and their strengths (and weaknesses) in a new light. Instead of seeing themselves only through the lens of their previous experiences, they are presented with the opportunity to determine how their skills may apply to new contexts. Individuals involved with MBA and executive leadership programs should consider identifying ways to integrate and build synergy between entrepreneurship and MBA curriculum. Entrepreneurial mindsets can be valuable even to those students (programs) seeking to enter a more traditional work role and it is likely that entrepreneurial education will continue to grow in demand.

Authentic Networking: Helping Students Connect--With Intention

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To retain its external legitimacy among industry professionals (Engstrom, 2019), the discipline of business communication has evolved over time to place more emphasis on interpersonal skills that professionals use to cultivate productive, creative relationships. These interpersonal skills, which received only moderate attention in service courses even a decade ago (Russ, 2009), are increasingly valued by employers (Clokie & Fourie, 2016), and business communication scholars have argued the need for strong interpersonal communication skills instruction (DeKay, 2012; Robles, 2012).

Professional networking, in particular, requires students to use interpersonal skills proficiently, so they may build relationships that will help them make successful transitions from the classroom to the marketplace. To network successfully and accrue higher levels of social capital, students must be given opportunities to continually practice and strengthen their capacity to make meaningful connections (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000). The confidence that students develop in making these connections equips them with a lifelong essential skill, as networking is not solely relegated to career readiness and the initial launch of one's career; rather, networking positively influences nearly all aspects of one's career—from career progression to innovation and performance (Sander, 2017). Thus, the earlier that students are introduced to effective networking skills in their professional development, the more prepared they will be to make social connections and maintain the social capital needed to flourish as professionals (Coughlan et al., 2012).

However, networking skills are not easily developed, and most students must be taught explicitly how to build robust professional networks (Gerard, 2012). Universities—and business communication and career development programs, specifically—play a primary role in teaching students not only how to network well, but also to appreciate the critical link between professional networking and career readiness (Beaman, 2014; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Chester et al., 2013). With respect to the new virtual and remote/hybrid workplace realities that have recently gained traction largely because of the Covid-19 pandemic, universities find themselves tasked with helping students develop professional networking skills both virtually and in-person.

In many ways, this “new norm” of connectivity—ripe with complexity and uncertainty—can make networking a seemingly stressful, anxiety-inducing experience for even the most earnest students. After returning to campus after a year of Covid-19-related disruption, some students admit to feeling “rusty” and awkward in forging new connections at networking events. Meanwhile, other students may confess in private that they fret over “bothering” working professionals with cold calls or requests for informational interviews (e.g., “life is stressful enough already right now, and I feel like I’m pestering them,” the thinking goes). Still other students may

express disdain for what they perceive as the largely transactional nature of professional networking. We are “wired” neurologically to connect with one another as human beings (Goleman, 1995), yet students increasingly wish for that human connection to feel authentic in professional contexts; in turn, the argument then follows, more authentic networking may seem more inviting: a chance to thrive and engage rather than a chore or nuisance to be merely tolerated—if not resented outright.

To help students more fully understand their negative emotions about networking and use these emotions to construct new ways of thinking about professional networking, business communication faculty and career coaches can introduce students to authentic networking strategies that make the links between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relations more explicit. Students who understand these links are more equipped to perceive, process, and regulate their emotions accurately and effectively as they prepare to develop new professional relationships and, in turn, use that information to guide their thinking and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Hence, students who wish to feel more self-assured and genuine as they build their professional networks can draw upon a certain intrapersonal “know-how” to better regulate their emotions as they take on some risk and seek to build new relationships.

Authentic networking also invites students to explore their assumptions about networking and even reframe the activity to foreground the developmental aspects of networking that point to growth and learning. For example, networking can be reconceived as an invitation to show generosity and empathy for others in ways that diminish—if not fully eliminate—transactional perceptions of networking (Hauwiller, 2021). Also, students can learn to view networking as a chance to bring their personal values into focus, inasmuch as positive emotions are associated with relationships and experiences that align with individuals’ core values (Drumgoole, 2019). Finally, with respect to professional development, students can be encouraged to practice intention setting before they prepare to make new connections, so as to self-regulate their learning and individual growth as they build new professional networks.

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Know When to Hold 'Em, Know When to Fold 'Em: When to Walk Away From a Consulting Gig

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**Karl Keller
Communication Partners**

**Jenny Morse
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Sponsored by the ABC Consulting SIG

Purpose

Professional poker players are experts at assessing risk versus reward, reading people, and making high stakes choices. A poker player must make tough decisions during the course of a game and must acknowledge when a situation is untenable. As country music star Kenny Rogers noted in his 1978 hit "The Gambler," a poker player must live by the mantra, "You've got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, and know when to run."

What better analogy for an oft undiscussed element of the professional life of a communication consultant.

For communication consultants, indeed for anyone who does freelance or contract work, it can be tempting to say yes to every client or project that comes your way. After all, who knows if an opportunity will arise again? For some, especially those just starting in consulting, saying yes to a consulting gig can seem much easier than saying no.

However, as seasoned consultants know, not every opportunity is worth it. Sometimes clients may ask for an engagement or training in which you are not prepared or may not be fully qualified to accommodate. Other times, clients may offer an opportunity that does not compensate well or that sets requirements that are

unrealistic. Sometimes consultants must deal with competing offers from multiple clients and must deftly consider how to navigate telling one client no. In other words, just like Rogers' "gambler," a consultant must know when it's time to make the tough decision, fold their hand, and walk away.

William Ury, the cofounder of Harvard's Program on Negotiation and author of *The Power of a Positive No* notes that "the most powerful and needed word in the language today is also potentially the most destructive and, for many people, the hardest to say. Yet when we know how to use it correctly, this one word has the power to profoundly transform our lives for the better."

This panel, composed of consultants across a wide spectrum of experience and specialization, seeks to shed light on an important topic for communication consultants: when and how should you say "no" to a consulting opportunity and, if you've already said yes, when to ultimately walk away.

Goals

This panel will strive to provide high value to the audience by giving real-world stories and case studies and provide actionable and meaningful takeaways for any ABC member interested in consulting.

Methodology

By presenting a variety of perspectives from both experienced and novice consultants, the panel will relay important lessons they have learned, in some cases, "the hard way."

The panel will be divided into two modules: (1) "Know when to hold 'em" and (2) "Know when to fold 'em."

Know when to hold 'em: Barbara Shwom will provide an overview of difficult client situations that may complicate a consulting engagement, present some "red flags" that consultants should be aware of, and discuss scenarios in which it may be a good idea for a consultant to concede to the client and say "yes."

Then, Karl Keller will provide advice about how to negotiate with a client as an alternative to conceding or saying "no." Karl will illustrate the advice with examples from his own consulting experience as well as his negotiation expertise.

Know when to fold 'em: James Stapp and Jenny Morse will share their insights—based on experience-- about the value of saying "no" to a client and walking away from consulting job. James will present his experience of not saying no to a client and the ultimate "mess" in which he found himself. James's story is one common to many consultants: struggling to define the core issue the client wanted to solve for its employees and agreeing to provide a training in which he was not fully comfortable. Jenny will share her valuable experiences--including the experience that led to her 2021 ABC award for Excellence in Communication--in which she has chosen to say "no" to a client. These experiences ultimately led both James and Jenny to some valuable lessons and insight into how to have difficult conversations with clients.

Finally, the panel will seek active participation from the audience, soliciting questions and facilitating discussion from others who have learned lessons from saying no, or wishing they had said no, to clients.

Outcomes

For those attending, this panel will provide three key takeaways:

1. Unique and varied perspectives on how to navigate a very difficult component of consulting.
2. Entertaining stories from those “in the trenches.”
3. Crowdsourcing shared knowledge and approaches to similar challenges.

My Favorite Assignment

**D. Joel Whalen; Charles Drehmer
DePaul University**

**Emily DeJeu
Carnegie Mellon University**

**Stacey L. Smith; Rachel Dolechek; Rose Helens-Hart
Fort Hays State University**

**Gregory Rouault
Hiroshima Shudo University**

**Sabrina K. Pasztor; Maria Elizabeth Colman
University of Southern California**

**Alicia Edwards
Northern Virginia Community College**

**Emily A.C. Goenner; Emil Towner; Heidi L. Everett
St. Cloud State University**

**Bruce Kingma
Syracuse University**

**Barbara L. Bolt
University of South Carolina**

**Ellis Hayes
Wingate University**

**Yingqin Lin
Cameron University**

**Suwichit Chaidaroon
National University of Singapore**

**Raihan Jamil
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh**

**Lynn Beth McCool
Drake University**

**Laura Barrett
University of Kansas**

**Ashly Bender Smith; Ashton Mouton
Sam Houston State University**

**Katherine Ryan
Indiana University**

**Rita R. Owens
Boston College**

**Marie-Louise Brunner; Stefan Diemer
Trier University of Applied Sciences, Institute for International and Digital
Communication**

**Virginia Hemby
Middle Tennessee State University**

**Christopher McKenna
Stephen F. Austin State University**

**Andi Coulter
Washington & Lee University**

**Kathryn Anne Canas; Georgi Ann Rausch; Aaron Thomas Phillips; Joshua Lenart;
Jessie Lynn Richards
University of Utah**

**Stacy Rosenberg
Carnegie Mellon University**

**Reid McLain
Hankuk University of Foreign Studies**

**Heidi E. Huntington
Catholic Courier**

**Samantha Jo Dine
Grand Valley State University**

**Tara Moore
Elizabethtown College**

**Lisa L. Barley
Eastern Michigan University**

**Sarah Clements
University of Arkansas at Little Rock**

**Kimberley Williams
University of North Carolina**

**Debra Burleson; Michal Horton
Baylor University**

**Tetiana Andriienko-Genin
Westcliff University**

**Matari Jones Gunter
Texas State University**

**Brenda Lynch Jones
Franklin University**

**Catherine Zizik
Seton Hall University**

**Oksana Shkurska
Dalhousie University**

**Reed Stratton
University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point**

**Fadia Nordtveit
Springfield College**

**Robin Smith Mathis
Kennesaw State University**

**Trent Deckard
Indiana University**

**Robyn Albers
Zayed University**

Every year since 2006, the ABC Teaching Committee has sponsored a popular session: My Favorite Assignment. These well-attended, lively programs give ABC members a venue to share one of their favorite assignments and/or learn about fellow members' teaching innovations. One of the treasured benefits of ABC membership is to share ideas with fellow business communication/business writing teachers and network.

In this proposed session attendees will have the opportunity to learn about the specific instructional techniques that colleagues find most effective with their students. Attendees can also take away assignments that they can employ to improve their own teaching.

Past My Favorite Assignment Sessions have been featured in *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* articles in 2007, and, 2009 to 2022. If this proposed session is accepted, we will submit papers for *B&PCQ* reporting the 2022 Conference's papers.

Discover the latest classroom assignment creations from your ABC colleagues. Come to share ideas and take home some techniques during this energetic, popular session.

Emily DeJeu, 4 Rhetorical Moves for Motivating Teams and Displaying Strong Leadership Skills
Stacey Smith and Rachel Dolecheck, Brew Fest: Visualizing the Case
Gregory Rouault, Dissing the Disinformation for Student-led Discussions on Current Events
Sabrina Pasztor, Don't Fear the Financials! Teaching Non-business Majors Basic Financial Communication
Alicia Edwards, Maximize your LinkedIn
Emily Goenner, Mini-speeches: Preparing for a Presentation
Bruce Kingma, My Favorite Toy
Ellis Hayes, Organizational Development in a Managerial Communication Course
Rose Helens-Hart, Career Planning Infographics: Visualizing the Past, Present, and Future
Yingqin Liu, Teaching Cultural Differences in Politeness
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Kathryn Canas, Leadership and the Rhetoric of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI): Written Document & Mini-Presentation, co-author Georgi Rausch
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Heidi Huntington, Observing the American Factory: Using an Academy Award-Winning Documentary to Teach Intercultural Communication
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Virginia Hemby, Dr. Seuss, the Zax, and Conflict Resolution
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Sarah Clements, Understanding Cultural Differences
Kimberley Williams, Brand "ME" - A Visual Creation of Your Personal Brand
Debra Burleson, Our Emotional Intelligence and Communication
Tetiana Andriienko-Genin, Role Plays for Truly Inclusive Experiences
Michal Horton, Cover Letter Writing: Tell Me without Telling Me
Aaron Phillips, Compassion and Creativity in Crisis Communication: Learning from the Flint Water Crisis
Christopher McKenna, Eye-contact Practice Meets Whack-a-Mole
Matari Jones Gunter, Skills to Pay the Bills: Adding Professional Development Workshops to BComm Classes
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Catherine Zizik, Sizing" Up Language: Let's get Inclusive!

Ashton Mouton, Utilizing Open Innovation and the Assertion Evidence Structure to Facilitate Group Collaboration

Oksana Shkurska, Are You In or Out? Developing Business Communication Skills through Dragons' Den Simulation

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Robin Mathis, Incorporating Business Communication in ALL Courses with the Progress Report Memorandum

Joshua Lenart, But Professor, How Many References Do I Have to Have?

Trent Deckard, My Big Comic Book Idea: Transforming Aspiring Business Professionals into Creative Communicators

Jessie Richards, The Milk Jug: A Visual Rhetorical Analysis

Robyn Albers, AI Speech Analysis for Better Presentations

Social Media Plans for Feeding America

Brenda Lynch Jones

Social media platforms (SMPs) are established as an additional channel for organizations to communicate with stakeholders (Kerpen, 2019; Benthous et al., 2016). Monitoring social media is also essential to determine the success of engagement activities and needs to be measured and compared with other business performance indicators (Hanna et al., 2011).

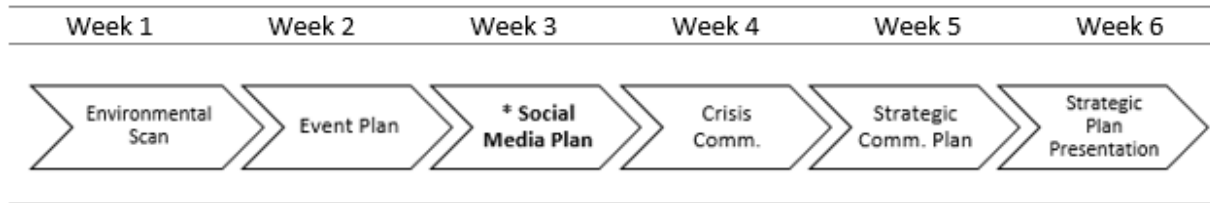
In this assignment, capstone students use research from the first two weeks of the course to inform the creation of a social media plan for a Feeding America affiliate that includes an original video message authored by the student. Teaching note: It is helpful to narrow the focus of the social media plan by connecting it to a specific fundraising event.

Best practices for social media strategies covered in this course are framed using Goffman's (1959) concept of self-presentation and Schlenker's (1980) concept of impression management. Further, students are provided with a social media plan model consisting of seven steps: 1. Planning, 2. Discovery, 3. Listening, 4. Measurement, 5. Management, 6. Content Strategy Integration, and 7. Engagement. Each step of this process includes a range of activities, such as measurement (step 4), establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) (Olafson, 2021), and management (step 5) encompassing monitoring (Hannah et al., 2011; Kerpen, 2019).

This assignment is one element of a course-long scenario in which the student plays the role of Communications Director for this organization; therefore, the students have researched this organization and its audiences before beginning this social media plan assignment (See Figure 1).

Figure 1

Feeding America Simulation Assignments



By focusing on a local Feeding America affiliate in their community, students can research a current real organization and propose a social media plan to improve audience engagement and achieve specific strategic goals. All assignments in the course also reflect Merrill's (2013) First Principles of Instruction, beginning with a situated problem, activation of prior learning, demonstration of competencies, application of knowledge and skills, and integration of learning in the course and for the program.

Target Learners: Seniors

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze social media strategies and tactics to meet the communication needs of a specific organization.
- Create a seven-step social media strategic plan.
- Author an original video message appropriate for the goals and audience(s) described in the social media plan.
- Present a social media plan appropriate for executive audiences

Time to Complete the Assignment:

Three weeks:

- Two weeks: social media in business
- Two weeks: research including stakeholder analysis
- One week: create a video and author a social media plan

Materials, Equipment, Special Considerations

- Access to library databases
- Readings on the use of different social media platforms in business communication
- Videos and readings on key performance indicators for social media
- Sample videos from the genre of social causes and food insecurity
- A seven-step model for social media plans with a sample plan.

Evaluating Outcomes: Grading rubric provided (Appendix A)

Support Materials

- Instructions for students
- Grading rubrics
- Sample student work product
- Links to online materials
- Online discussion for questions

Part 1

Write the **Social Media Strategic Plan** for your selected Feeding America affiliate using subheadings for each of the elements listed below. This plan should support ongoing communication strategy in social channels, not just promote one event. Your document should be 2-3 pages and include all the elements listed in each subheading. You are required to use a minimum of three sources using APA citation. Look at your textbook and assigned readings, as well as current blogs.

1. **Overview:** Describe in one sentence your current social media efforts. This summary is also called a "problem definition statement." Consider the clarity, currency, and effectiveness of your social media communications.
2. **Strategic Goals:** Determine what outcomes you want from social media communication. Ask, "What's in it for my organization?" List three objectives. These are your strategic goals to achieve through social media. Describe how social media will help accomplish these goals for your organization.
3. **Stakeholders:** Identify your target audience.
 - a. Review your previous Stakeholder Analysis from Module 1.
 - b. Define which stakeholders will be most active in different social media channels. You are required to answer the questions, "Where is your audience? What are they talking about? How do they prefer to communicate (two-way)?"
 - c. State who your biggest influencers are and how you identified them.
4. **Measurement:** Determine what success means for your goals and how to measure them. Think about [Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\) \(Links to an external site.\)](#)! These 2-3 paragraphs will help you select monitoring tools.
5. **Tactics and tools:** Determine which social media channels you'll focus on and describe why you selected these within the context of your organization's current overall objectives. Select the tools for social media that you'll use for different activities.
6. **Capacity:** Consider staffing and identify what support would be needed to roll out this strategic plan and keep it going.
7. **Integration:** Describe how the tactics and tools you identified will be integrated in the website and other forms of communications.
8. Cite all references using APA citations. Submit your 2-3 page Social Media Strategic Plan.

Part 2

Video and visuals, in general, have become more important and more integrated into social media channels.

For this part, you are required to:

1. Create a 1-2 minute "talking head" video that might be embedded in this organization's social media channels.
2. The topic should be related to a particular focus of your choosing from the [Feeding America Research \(Links to an external site.\)](#) page (e.g., teens, seniors, Latinos, poverty, or health), highlighting a need or showcasing a success story.
3. Upload your video to YouTube and share the link to the [Social Media Plan Discussion](#).
4. In your discussion post, describe the storytelling role of communications professionals and how similar videos are part of those narratives.

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Appendix A: Social Media Plan and Discussion Rubric

Criteria	Ratings		
Overview, goals, and stakeholders	40 to >31.0 pts Proficient Includes comprehensive background information, including current state, goals, and stakeholders.	31 to >28.0 pts Acceptable Includes background information including current stat, goals, and stakeholders.	28 to >0 pts Unacceptable Does not include background information, lacking current state, goals, and stakeholders.
Outcome Measurement, Tactics, and Tools	50 to >39.0 pts Proficient Presents a sound and well-rounded rationale for measuring success and choice of outlets.	39 to >33.0 pts Acceptable Presents a decent rationale for measuring success and choice of outlets.	33 to >0 pts Unacceptable Does not present a sound rationale for measuring success and choice of outlets.
Internal Considerations Staff capacity and integration.	30 to >24.0 pts Proficient Makes expert, logical decisions for internal questions.	24 to >21.0 pts Acceptable Makes logical decisions for internal questions.	21 to >0 pts Unacceptable Does not make expert, logical decisions for internal questions.
Video and Discussion - Initial Post	25 to >19.0 pts Proficient Video is relevant, engaging, and well-organized.	19 to >17.0 pts Acceptable Video is relevant and organized.	17 to >0 pts Unacceptable Video is not relevant, engaging, or well-organized.
Discussion - Response Post(s)	5 to >4.0 pts Proficient The response post(s) pertain to the discussion, provide relevant insights, share pertinent experiences, and contribute to class learning. The student's response demonstrates a high level of detail, reflection, respect, and tact.	4 to >3.0 pts Acceptable The response post(s) focus on most elements of the discussion and provide a substantive contribution. The student's response demonstrates detail, reflection, respect, and tact.	3 to >0 pts Unacceptable The response post(s) rarely focus on the discussion, does not contribute to class learning, and/or does not provide a substantive contribution. The student's response does not demonstrate detail, reflection, respect, and/or tact.

Total Points: 150

Innovative Instructional Methods

Escape the Mundane with Active Learning and Gamification: Using Free Interactive Online Tools to Increase Engagement

**Rachel Slivon; Anthony Coman; Amy Parziale; Jessica Sheffield; Sean Trainor
University of Florida**

Purpose: Flexible Approaches for Student Engagement

As business communication educators, we train students for future careers where teamwork and flexible communication skills are a top priority. As classroom instructors working in an increasingly unpredictable educational landscape, we need flexible teaching approaches that work well across multiple modalities. Given these challenges, how can we help train strong collaborators and make our activities adaptable, while ensuring our classes are memorable and engaging?

Goals: Participants Learn Several Activities to Engage Students in Different Modalities

To address these questions, our interactive workshop will show participants how to use gamification techniques and interactive technologies to increase student participation and engagement, regardless of modality. Each participant will learn through doing as they compete against the clock and against other teams in an “escape room” activity, which consists of timed active learning puzzles that participants work through in teams. In this workshop, the escape room activity will help participants develop interactive, in-class activities that use G-Suite, the Imgflip meme-generator, Canva, Jamboards, Kahoot, and more. The workshop leaders will teach participants how to effectively use these tools and demonstrate how they can be adapted for in-person, hybrid, and fully online course environments.

The approaches highlighted in this workshop are based on our teaching approaches in the Management Communication Center (MCC) at the University of Florida, where, over the past five years, we have incorporated gamification, active learning approaches, and collaborative technology into most of our undergraduate and graduate business communication course offerings.

Structure: Three-Hour Workshop in Two Parts

This three-hour workshop will begin with a one-hour instruction session. During this session, the presenters will conduct five mini-workshops on how to:

- Design and execute escape room course review activities
- Facilitate collaboration and peer review using free technology platforms like G-Suite and Canva
- Create memes to motivate student engagement and reinforce course principles

- Incorporate gallery walk activities to encourage engagement by all students
- Use Kahoot to gamify course concepts and focus in-class discussions

As part of these mini-workshops, participants will learn how MCC faculty use these techniques and technologies in their business communication courses. We will devote particular attention to how these techniques and technologies have enhanced student engagement and recall, while also facilitating collaboration across multiple modalities. Participants will also get hands-on experience with these techniques and technologies, learning how to incorporate similar approaches into their own classes

During the second, 90-minute section of the workshop, participants will take part in a timed escape room activity. The escape room will include several puzzles using the engagement activities participants learned about during the first part of the workshop session. These puzzles will challenge participants to create specific activities and practice strategies that they can use in their classes.

Finally, we will reserve 30 minutes at the end of the workshop for an open-ended question and answer session related to the topics of gamification, active learning, and collaborative technologies.

Outcomes: Participants Create Classroom Activities to Engage Students

Participants will leave this workshop with the ability to create and execute an escape room course review activity. They will also leave with a concrete grasp of how to use G-Suite, Canva, Imgflip, Jamboard, and Kahoot in their classrooms (face-to-face, hybrid, and virtual) to drive student engagement and facilitate cross-modality collaboration.

Participants will also leave this workshop with tools for helping their students meet the demands of recruiters. According to the 2021 Graduate Management Admissions Council, strategic thinking, communication skills, and versatility are the top skills recruiters look for in business school graduates (GMAC Corporate Recruiters Survey 2021). Active learning techniques and gamification, as the methodology section below attests, are indispensable tools for cultivating these qualities in students.

Methodology: The Importance of Active Learning in Corporate and Educational Settings

The approaches we highlight in this workshop reflect participant engagement and gamification trends in corporate training. For example, according to Jeanne C. Meister, by gamifying training, the Deloitte Leadership Academy saw an increase in participation: participants are “spending increased amounts of time on the site and completing programs in increasing numbers” and “show almost addictive behavior” with “a 37 percent increase in the number of users returning to the site each week” (Meister, 2013). Including games and active learning in corporate training can increase participation and engagement with the material.

These approaches also reflect scholarship on the pedagogical value of interactive learning and gamification. As J.R. Veltsos wrote in *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, “by incorporating elements of games into the design of business and professional communication courses, we may be able to engage, motivate, and empower our students while also helping ourselves reengage with the course and the practice of instructional design.” Despite this research, “some teachers,” Veltsos also writes, “have difficulty imagining how to

incorporate game elements into their courses. Others worry that gamification may trivialize the learning experience” (Veltsos, 2017). This workshop is designed to help instructors address these concerns and to provide actionable insights for incorporating both gamification and active-learning technologies into their teaching.

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Locked Down and Looking to Escape: Implementing Digital Escape Rooms in Your Curriculum

**Alisa Agozzino
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**Jamie Ward
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If we have learned anything from the Covid-19 pandemic, it's that educators are increasingly looking for creative ways to not only keep students engaged but also have them actively participate and contribute to classroom discussion. Within business communications classes, writing and presentations are typically interactive, but other denser information is difficult to keep lively. This is particularly important when teaching introductory courses that focus on topics that are predominately lecture-focused. To address these concerns, we have developed an escape room that focuses on public relations history with two primary objectives: highlight key industry professionals and help students understand the four public relations models. The content isn't the focus for this workshop, but instead how to set up the digital escape room for lecture-based curriculum in which attendees can adapt content within to address their classes. The digital escape room can be developed to have students either work alone or together in groups to interact in a story adventure via solving puzzles, games, and identifying key information in order to find clues to unlock new slides that reveal additional content. Ultimately the goal is to have students learn additional information by 'breaking out' of the escape room by solving all the different puzzles correctly in a set amount of time. Session attendees are guided through a 2-hour workshop that will teach them how to create a digital escape room and introduce them to a variety of applications to personalize the content including Google sites, Jigsaw Explorer and InShot.

Research shows escape rooms can increase motivation, engagement, and help students reach desired learning outcomes (Nicholson, 2018; Ross, 2019; Sanchez-Martin, Corrales-Serrano, Luque-Sendra, & Zamora-Polo, 2020). We found significant increases in comprehension in students who participated in escape room activities versus students who learned through traditional lecture-based instruction. Additionally, escape rooms can increase students' soft skills including critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving. This escape room utilizes Google slides as well as interactive digital puzzles and videos to move students through an innovative and engaging journey in PR history.

Digital escape rooms in any classroom can transform gameplay toward mission completion, i.e., breakout rooms, into deep, meaningful learning. We can gather through literature how use of games as a pedagogical method has been gaining momentum (Vlachopoulos & Makri, 2017). The specific student goal achieved through this assignment includes the following, "Demonstrate an understanding of public relations history including key time

periods and pioneers in the field of public relations, as well as firm grasp on the four models of public relations.” Assessment of this goal is done through ‘breaking’ out of the room and also followed by questions on an exam of the material covered within the escape room.

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Low and Zero-Cost Materials for Business Communication Courses: Benefits and Implementation Strategies

**Rose Helens-Hart; Rachel Dolechek
Fort Hayes State University**

**Laura Barrett
University of Kansas**

**Sarah Moore; Victoria Deen McCrady
University of Texas at Dallas**

**Zachary Goldman
University of Louisville**

The switch to low or zero-cost (LZC) educational materials for courses is motivated by two factors. First, it addresses concerns over the rising cost of a college education. Second, faculty may be able to develop or collect a variety of materials that suit learning objectives better than a traditional textbook. LZC materials support educational accessibility and curriculum flexibility.

Panelists will discuss how they decided LZC materials were right for their courses, and their motivations for investigating and switching to these materials. Then they will discuss specific LZC materials they have used to fulfill learning objectives. Materials highlighted will include open educational resources (OERs) (including self-published texts), institutional licenses and inclusive-access agreements for e-texts, popular or professional press texts, curated article lists, and professional editing tools. Attendees will be given the opportunity to discuss and brainstorm LZC solutions for their own courses.

Rationale for Low and Zero-Cost Materials

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020) confirms what institutions of higher education argue in the face of public scrutiny over the rising cost of college attendance: a college degree is a good lifetime investment. Those with bachelor's degrees will on average earn more and experience less unemployment than those with only a high school diploma. Yet, there is a need to respond to cost concerns and recognize how financial burdens influence access to education and student success.

Students at four-year public universities spend on average about \$1200 a year on course materials and supplies (Hanson, 2021). Steep price tags on books have led students to avoiding their purchase, selecting courses based on the cost of materials, and making sacrifices such as skipping meals to afford materials. Each of these

consequences leads to lower educational outcomes. Students that do not purchase required textbooks face a more difficult time acquiring knowledge needed to achieve course outcomes. Students selecting courses based on the cost of materials may skip exploring interests that could lead to satisfaction in their lives and careers and limit their exposure to faculty mentors. Finally, students that forgo meals or expenses otherwise dedicated to essential needs (housing) are put under physical and emotional stress, which could inhibit their academic performance. Moving to LNC materials could alleviate some of these concerns.

Considering options other than traditional textbooks provides educators with greater flexibility in curriculum design. Rather than ‘teaching to the text,’ where faculty may be lured into the convenience of using publisher syllabi, or feel obligated to use all of a text because students paid for it, faculty can focus on backwards design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). From a workforce development perspective, by focusing first on desired learning outcomes and then sourcing a variety of LNC materials to achieve those outcomes, faculty can be more responsive to changes in in-demand industry skills and knowledge.

Low and Zero-Cost Materials

Universities may set a standard amount to designate a course as “low cost” or “zero cost.” At the University of Kansas, courses are designated as “low cost” when required materials do not exceed \$45. At Fort Hays State University, a course is designated “zero cost” when it requires no student purchase of course materials. Panelists will provide several strategies used to successfully implement LNC materials in business communication courses.

Open Educational Resources

Open educational resources (OERs) are “educational materials (such as textbooks, problem sets, assessments, slide decks, videos, lesson plans, study guides, etc.) that can be used for free and without permission” (What is an open educational resource?, para. 2). For some courses, traditional textbooks and publisher content may provide needed structure, continuity, and conventional wisdom. OER textbooks may be an easy way to retain the comfort and practicality a textbook offers, while eliminating cost. Panelists will share several popular OER sites such as OpenStax and OER Commons and additional resources for faculty looking to adapt or write their own OERs.

Institutional Licenses

Faculty looking to cut material costs may work with their institutions’ librarians to request or utilize existing licenses for e-texts, which can be accessed online through their libraries.

Departments may negotiate with publishers a discounted ‘inclusive access’ textbook fee. This model arranges a one-time course material cost, which then grants students access to titles from that publisher.

Curated Article Lists

University librarians can assist faculty in searching for scholarly, trade, and popular press content to create reading packets and course guides. Students access these materials online, with the possibility of printing materials for physical use.

Popular or Professional Press Texts

Applied business communication courses may better achieve learning outcomes with popular or professional texts that will retain their value to students once they graduate. The Harvard Business Review Guide to Better Business Writing (Garner, 2012) is a favorite among the panelists and additional popular/professional titles will be shared.

Professional Tools

There are a host of professional tools such as Grammarly and Quinnia that universities may have multi-use licenses for or that offer free versions or trials that would extend over the life of a course.

Conclusion

To improve access to course materials and encourage flexibility and innovation in course design, LNC materials can be used in business communication courses. Panelists will provide practical insight into making the decision to pursue LNC materials and resources for attendees to browse.

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Innovative Instructional Methods

Virtual Exchange (AKA Collaborative Online International Learning): Setting Communication Goals and Monitoring Communication

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The Covid-19 pandemic limited university travel – leaving both instructors and students looking for ways to offer international experiences to students and to reinforce (or create) relationships with international partners. While Virtual Exchange (VE), also called Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), has been increasingly popular since the 1990s (SUNY), the past two years have spurred the creation of more virtual international exchange experiences. Data from a survey of partnerships and institutions will be shared.

While highly reliant on technology, and constrained by time zones, virtual exchange is an opportunity to provide groups of students with an international experience that is not dependent upon travel funds and unlikely to be derailed by lockdowns. Typically, a virtual exchange does not require a formal agreement between the two institutions, so it can also serve build the relationship that will eventually lead to a formal exchange agreement.

The typical virtual exchange is dependent on faculty collaboration and a one-to-one connection between two course sections (one at each institution). Those sections' professors usually embed the experience in a semester. The sections do not need to be in the same area; for example, the instructor of an English-language course in Poland could establish a virtual exchange with the professor of a marketing course in the United States. Students in the linked classes work with each other (or respond to each other) to achieve specific objectives, and students' work is evaluated by the professor for their own section.

Naturally, some of the earliest partnerships were pairings between students in language classes. Such exchanges allow students in the class to practice the language that they are studying with native speakers – or even to have a verbal presentation evaluated by these native speakers. These continue to be popular. In these cases, the communication goals and channels are often very clear. For example, students might be expected to synchronously spend 15 minutes on Zoom speaking in English about a particular topic. During the next 15 minutes, the students switch to the other language. To avoid the time zone issue, students in one class might be assigned to record a group presentation for native English speakers (posted into a shared Microsoft Teams team). The native speakers in the class that they are paired with might evaluate the video and give structured feedback in the other students' language.

Business communication professionals have an opportunity as they build communication expectations for these interactions. Virtual exchange includes communication challenges common in work with colleagues across cultures and continents. A thoughtfully constructed virtual exchange program for business communication students can prompt greater reflection about the communications themselves (e.g., message successes, failures, best practices) and more nuanced analysis of communication elements and expectations.

At this point, COIL sounds overwhelmingly positive. It offers a low-cost way to give students, particularly business students, a relevant, meaningful international experience? So, what are the potential issues?

Time: A successful partnership takes time to establish (often as long as the experience itself) and the faculty partners often meet at least once a week. Examples of different types of COIL partnerships, and their timelines, will be shared.

Technology: Establishing the platform or platforms for virtual exchange, and being able to anticipate communication issues is key to a successful COIL experience. Several different platforms that have been used for partnerships will be presented.

Expectations: Particularly for business students, a COIL experience will include failure and failure analysis. So, the collaborating instructors must agree on communication standards, channel(s), frequency, and response times. Instructors must convey the expectations to both groups, clearly, and address the inevitable issues that arise. Obviously, technology will also tend to glitch, and that should be anticipated. Business and COIL-appropriate alternatives should be available. Expectations for different types of COIL experiences, and methods for conveying these expectations, will be reviewed.

Evaluation: Instructors usually only evaluate the students in their own sections, but the paired sections can only understand their international counterparts' behavior if they understand their goals and how they are evaluated. A structured evaluation should be part of each interaction, and it will often be paired with a student reflection. Formal feedback from one set of students to another should be evaluated by instructors before distribution.

Monitoring: Data and privacy concern our students. Students should understand exactly where and how their interactions are being monitored – and what is expected. The level of monitoring can vary greatly depending on the learning objectives for the course, the length of the students' interactions during the COIL and whether those interactions are synchronous or asynchronous.

Reflection: A reflection component, particularly at the conclusion of the interaction, should be incorporated into the student learning objectives. In communication courses, this often requires specific details about interactions (usually saved in the online channel) that went well and poorly. At this point, the student can begin to analyze interactions and incorporate communication concepts.

Jumping Out of the Digital Black Box: Examining the Potential of Hybrid Online Education in Business and Strategic Communication Programs

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In a technological age at the turn of the century, pedagogies were forced to adapt to a generation of online learners that, as Baird and Fisher (2005) noted nearly two decades ago, expected “self-paced, customized, on-demand learning path(s).” Since that time, despite the enormous growth in online course offerings to fit this demand (Allen & Seaman, 2015); despite the increased institutional priorities being placed on online learning (Kentonor, 2015); and despite a fourteen-year growth in online enrollment (Friedman, 2018), research has shown that online learning has the potential to be significantly stifled because of limitations with online technologies. The separation between teacher, peers, and learners has been shown to negatively affect aspects of the learning experience in many ways:

- learners often have unrealistic expectations about turnaround times and feedback (Li & Irby, 2008);
- learners are often less self-motivated and less self-directed than is required by online learning (Mayes et al, 2011);
- learners can feel isolated and disconnected (McInnery & Roberts, 2004);
- successful learning requires a sense of belonging, purpose, and norms that technology can impede (Koole, 2014);
- effective engagement often requires enhancement with interpersonal communication, in addition to text-based asynchronous conversations, so that learners can elaborate better than in written communication only (An & Frick, 2006)
- instructors often teach with pre-determined content, creating a lack of empowerment (Evrin, Correia, & Thompson, 2011);
- instructors have a difficult time incorporating their own experiences into the content (Rennert-Ariev, 2008);
- adjusting content once the course has started to fit needs of learners or situations is often very challenging (Evrin et al., 2011)
- multimedia used incorrectly can be detrimental to learning (Yue, Bjork, & Bjork, 2013);
- and so forth.

Recognizing the disconnect that technology can place in the learning process, educators today are faced with the task of incorporating learner-centered approaches that move beyond online instruction, even in entirely online courses and programs. Kebritchi, Lipschuetz, and Santiago (2017) note several important factors needed to create effective learning environments, factors that often require a more hybrid—or what I call,

“confluent”—learning structure: collaboration with peers; social interactions with teachers; reflective activities; personalization to each student; synchronous learning (as opposed to solely asynchronous interactions); and both formative and summative assessment.

In this presentation, I offer a representation of several practical curricular and pedagogical options for instructors and administrators in business and strategic communication to transition their online programs from static, asynchronous, and disconnected technological platforms into engaging, synchronous, high-touch learning environments that offer personalization, social interaction, and deep-rooted reflection.

In particular, I use the Westminster College Master of Strategic Communication (MSC) program in Salt Lake City as a case study to describe how an online competency-based, self-directed learning program attempted to enhance traditional online learning. Identifying the unique curricular features of this online program—in-person residencies; client-based, large-scale service-learning projects; a cohort and team-driven learning model; the inclusion of coaches in addition to faculty mentors; and one-on-one faculty-student video calls—I will provide practical options for engaging online students. In addition, I emphasize how an all-inclusive international trip in partnership with an NGO to do in-country strategic communication work has provided meaningful, reflective, and intercultural experiences rarely found in traditional online programs.

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Handbook in Lieu of Syllabus: Student/User-Centered Document to Share Power and Create Autonomy

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This presentation will discuss the use of a handbook for the course, Workplace Writing, in lieu of using a traditional syllabus. This handbook was a live document where students were asked to create content and revise policies to design the course to align with their expectations and goals. This handbook allowed students to share in the decision-making power of course design including their assignments and assessments. Students also took autonomy through their choices: content, design, and rhetorical. This presentation will discuss the implementation of the handbook and its successes and failures to create a more user-centered course while providing students real-world work as they align their choices with the style guide the university uses.

Since the pandemic, many students and instructors have struggled with engaging with our teaching and our scholarship. But to reengage and to reconnect with students, this presentation will focus on how changing the format of the traditionally used syllabus into a real-world document—a handbook—provides students the opportunity to obtain and create applicable knowledge which can be used outside of the university setting. The syllabus, as traditionally used, provides little autonomy or real-world experience to students.

T. Bers and B. Taylor (2000) analyzed content of syllabi from social science and business courses in 1995 and 1997. Their findings uncovered that many of the syllabi were not explicit in outlining expectations of assignments, grades, and due dates which were criteria that students voiced preference on needing clear, precise information. In a survey—which listed 20 items that could be found on a syllabus and then asked students to rank which they found to be most important to find on a syllabus—students reported that the most valuable piece of information that they wanted on the syllabus was how they were going to be assessed: the instructor's grading policies.

But the power and the politics involved with gate-keeping this generic, academic knowledge is in the hands of the instructor who has the choice of allowing access to her students. Kill (2006) discusses the influence of uptake within the classroom, not only the uptake of information but of identities. Students enter into the classroom with previous knowledge and experiences of what to expect—“they have substantial discursive resources on which to draw as they approach the myriad rhetorical situations of the university”—and yet instructors, in one way or another, “want” something from an assignment or activity in the classroom. Kill reinforces this point: “our performances of self, do not succeed because we are successful in communicating our intentions; they succeed because we place them effectively within an already established series of signs.” Therefore, according to Kill, instructors' syllabi and assignments will accomplish what they want, when they look like assignment sheets, and they act like the authority figures that their students expect.

By using and creating handbook, alongside students, the power and choices about their education and goals for the course is shifted into the hands of the students providing them with real-world consequences and decisions.

The purpose of this presentation is to challenge how courses can be taught in professional and technical writing courses. By showing students how real-world documents are live and every changing, students must make choices which affect them. This shifts the power of their education into their hands. By implementing and utilizing current style guides students already have access to through the university, students learn workplace rhetoric and design. By changing the look and design of the course through the use of the handbook, the course reengages and reconnects students and instructor to their education and to obtaining real-world, applicable information.

This presentation's goals are to

1. Challenge the thinking behind the design of a syllabus and its ultimate purpose in a course
2. Reengage with students and reconnect them to obtaining real-world skills and introducing them to the power and autonomy that comes with content creation
3. Reinvent assignments to use every opportunity and instance as a learning opportunity for student growth and learning

This presentation will focus and outline the handbook used within an upper-division writing course, Workplace Writing. The presentation will showcase the initial handbook and discuss the various stages it underwent as students created content and revised current university and course policies, including assignments and assessments. By using google docs, the various version of the handbook will be shown and discussed in terms of student design and rhetorical choice.

This presentation reengages teaching technical and professional writing courses with real, applicable skills students will need once they enter the workforce. This presentation will challenge instructors to rethink and rework their own courses and practices to create more user-centered documents by placing more power and autonomy in the hands of the students allowing them to take control of their own education and course design. Participants will leave with an example of how this implementation can work in a course and how they can think about redesigning their own courses. Participants will be asked to critical reflect their own choices about their courses and how they can provide more opportunities for their students to engage and work with real-world workplace documents. This presentation offers new ways of thinking about innovation within teaching: to create realistic contexts and documents for students to create, revise, and engage with to better their educational experience and prepare them for their careers.

Color My World: A Visual Approach to Feedback

**Susan Lynn Luck
Pfeiffer University**

One of the great banes of teaching is grading papers. Interacting with students in the classroom, be it a face-to-face classroom, a hybrid remote delivery classroom, or the asynchronous online classroom, can be stimulating and enjoyable. However, grading the products of assignments that students turn in as evidence of their learning is often tedious, daunting, and frustrating.

Use of rubrics is helpful for determining if students have grasped the major course content objectives, yet there is currently limited research as to the effectiveness of rubrics alone, without commentary or additional feedback (Crusan, 2015; Ene & Kosobucki, 2016). For those who teach in the liberal arts, humanities, or communication disciplines, as well as those who teach non-quantitative courses in business schools, the grading process requires not only an evaluation of how well the student has grasped the material that aligns with the course learning outcomes but also requires giving feedback to the students so that they know where they've gone wrong and how to improve for the next time.

Some scholars have estimated that this grading process can take an average of 11% of the professor's workweek (Flaherty, 2014). This percentage greatly increased when the grading and feedback must be done online (Vord & Pogue, 2012). Clearly instructors intend for their feedback to have positive impact on the students' learning. Yet the question arises as to whether the result of the intent actually occurs.

Researchers such as Johnson (2013) and Pitts (2005) have found the students in general do not use this feedback. Others such as Chanock 2000; Carless and Boud 2018 have found often students cannot correlate the feedback they're given with how to improve their own work. Finally, many students lack the critical thinking skills or even some basic content knowledge to apply the feedback. Often these course learning outcomes are specific to the course discipline highlights, which unfortunately leave some of the underpinning skills, such as being able to express an idea come outside of the evaluated area mandated by the learning outcomes. Add to these aspects the fact that very few courses in higher ed or even K-12 education outside of an English course include learning outcomes that indicate students will learn to write clear and concise and polished sentences.

Students in today's world increasingly do not read (Mikšíková, 2018) and when they do read, they are reading at a 19% slower rate than their counterparts from 50 years ago (Anderson, 2019). Publishing is becoming a dying industry; many newspapers are shuttering their hardcopy format, opting for an online version where stories can be clickable and then forgotten. The world is visual and audial; the number of users of audiobooks, for instance, has increased by look up while advertising and news has gone to Instagram, TikTok, and video format.

Add to these aspects the fact that very few courses in higher ed or even K-12 education include learning outcomes that indicate students will learn to write clear and concise and polished sentences. Yet no matter the discipline, students must be able to articulate what they have learned, and articulate that learning in a polished

manner to be able to compete in careers after their college days. Bernoff (2016) found that poor writing skills in employees who were college graduates costs companies an average of \$396 billion per year (Quinlan, 2019). Bernoff also found that the average businessperson writes about two hours a day, spends 25.5 hours per week reading, a third of which is reading email; and that 81% of what is being read is ineffective because it is unclear, poorly written, disorganized, vague, and evasive—all of which is destroying the company's productivity (2016, paras 3-4).

So why are professors spending so much time giving written feedback? Obviously, the feedback is not resulting in graduates who can write. Is there a better way? If today's students think in visuals, would visual rather than written feedback have a greater success?

The purpose of this session is to demonstrate one professor's attempt to meet the students where they are. The methodology of the research was to identify the top five writing errors that are mentioned in the majority of business articles about poor writing at work, then code it in visual terms. The professor then spent two semesters comparing the improvement in writing and understanding the course concepts feedback among students in an MBA program who received the feedback in written format and those that received it in color-coding format. For the third semester, two colleagues were recruited to try the color-coding method of feedback. All professors reported an increase in student understanding of the writing errors, efforts to remedy the errors on their own without the professors or tutors' help, and a stronger outcome in clearer and more polished prose.

The goals of the session include demonstrating to participants how the color-coding system works, gives evidence of its effectiveness, and showing participants how they can make much more effective use their grading time by applying it.

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Finding New Methods of Teaching Business Communication in a Post-COVID World: Using Adobe XD to Create Student App Prototypes

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Introduction

According to Business of Apps, there were over 142 billion app downloads in 2020 when compared to 64.4 billion just five years previously in 2015. While there are a number of variables for this growth, a large contributor was the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, many businesses communicated updates to customers and received orders for curbside pick-ups through apps. In 2020 alone, Adobe Analytics reported that curbside pick-ups jumped an astounding 208% as an increased number of people preferred to avoid crowds.

Despite this upward growth in the app market during the pandemic, there is comparatively little emphasis placed on apps in the business communication classroom. For example, a quick search through the literature in Business and Professional Communication Quarterly using the keyword “app” yields a small number of articles. One of these articles includes Young and Hinesly’s (2014) research on how to use various forms of social media to enhance internal communication. Another article is by Anders (2016) which explores the rise of collaborative writing apps used by students. However, there are no articles completely devoted to better understanding how apps are used, and, more importantly, how their design can be integrated into the business communication classroom. As a result, this presentation will present a case study of how one business communication instructor incorporated the development of an app prototype project into an undergraduate-level course during the Spring 2021 semester.

The course was taught using a hy-flex model; one that was taught both face-to-face and live streamed via Zoom. Given its hy-flex format, the instructor saw an opportunity to teach students the ways in which technology both enables and constrains communication not just in the classroom, but also in the business world. As Hannah (2021) recently explained, using the term “learning loss” to describe education during the pandemic is unfortunate because this period of time also provided an opportunity to better meet student needs.

Methods

The presented case study will explain how students began the semester by completing a reflection of their own current communication practices and how they use technology. The students were provided with the following questions to help guide their work:

1. Consider your typical day and list 5-7 communication technologies that you use the most frequently (i.e., Microsoft Word, Adobe Photoshop, Instagram)?
2. Which features of the communication technologies used do you find most productive?

3. Do these features support your current needs?
4. What opportunities are you missing by not using other available communication technologies?
5. What sort of other communication technologies would you want to learn more about? Do you have any barriers to access with these other option(s)?

The next assignment then built on that initial reflection by asking students to connect with a business professional to expand their understanding of communication technology used in the workplace. Then students transferred what they learned to identify a possible current communication problem that could be solved by creating an app.

To create the app, students worked in groups and used the free trial version of the Adobe XD program. Adobe describes the XD program as, "a vector-based user experience design tool for web apps and mobile apps, developed and published by Adobe Inc. It is available for macOS and Windows." Most noteworthy is that the program allowed for a manageable learning curve since students did not need to learn computer code.

This presentation will share the ways in which the Adobe XD program was integrated into the course and will demonstrate the user-friendly nature of the interface. While a new digital tool, like Adobe XD, can certainly seem intimidating, the presentation will emphasize the ease with which it can be used by students.

Discussion

This presentation will end by sharing suggestions for those instructors seeking to use Adobe XD in their own classrooms. By using Adobe XD, instructors will be able to help students prepare for new innovations in business communication. For example, as this case study demonstrates, designing app prototypes will help students learn more about business communication problems and solutions.

Many businesses, as mentioned above, found that apps provided a solution to business communication problems during the pandemic. For example, many businesses communicated updates to customers and received orders for curbside pick-ups through apps. While these situations will change with better times ahead, according to Forbes, the trend of using apps is still expected to stay, if not increase, into the next year, especially given the wider availability of 5G technology.

Providing students with the digital skills needed for the future, then, will help them open new doors and opportunities. For example, listing the ability to design an app prototype on a résumé could lead students to unique internships or cutting-edge graduate school programs. This presentation, as a result, will answer the conference call to "innovate our teaching" since it focuses on new ways to connect students to real-world scenarios.

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Incorporating Role-Play Into Virtual Classrooms of Business Communication Courses for Enhancing Undergraduate Students' Team Communication Skills

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Overview

During the COVID-19 pandemic, tertiary institutions in over 192 countries were closed down with over 1.7 billion learners being affected (UNESCO Report, 2020). The impact includes the sudden shift of teaching and learning from face-to-face to online, the cancellation of physical classes and activities, and the formation of a “new normality” in higher education (Tesar, 2020). Under the new normality, the instructors have faced a lot of challenges to engage and motivate students in virtual classrooms. Team communication is one of the most important and common topics among business communication courses (Moshiri & Cardon, 2014). To many business communication instructors, “how to enhance students’ team communication skills in virtual classrooms” has become a complicated question during pandemic. This presentation describes our attempts to create an experiential learning environment for undergraduate students using the role-play approach in a business communication course.

Role-play is defined as the act of imitating the character and behaviour of someone who is different from oneself (Collins English Dictionary, 2018). It is an instructional method which promotes active learning, positive student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction, as well as increased student engagement and motivation (Bawa, 2020). It is commonly adopted by instructors for addressing one of the most persistent challenges in academic English classrooms by sustaining cognitive challenge and simultaneously creating the conditions for improved linguistic competence (Pally, 1997). This paper discusses how instructors can integrate role-play into virtual classrooms as a student engagement and motivation strategy for enhancing EFL students’ team communication skills. A role-play activity which was successfully implemented in an undergraduate-level business communication course will be described in the presentation to demonstrate how role-play was adopted as an effective pedagogy. The intended learning outcomes, the methodology and outcomes will also be discussed in the presentation.

Objectives of Role-Play Learning

The fundamental reason for adopting role-play in language courses is not simply the hedonic value, but the challenges brought to students cognitively and linguistically (Shapiro & Leopold, 2012). However, engaging students who attend online business communication classes in the EFL context can be even more challenging.

When we designed the role-play activity, the following questions suggested by Shapiro & Leopold (2012, p.123-124) were considered:

Questions About Cognitive Challenges

1. Is the topic of the role-play intellectually rigorous and relevant to participants?
2. Does the role-play require participants to employ any higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and metacognition?
3. Are participants required to research their roles, as opposed to merely inventing them?
4. Does the role-play bring forth divergent perspectives?
5. Does the role-play encourage participants to draw intertextual relationships?

Questions About Linguistics Challenges

6. Does the role-play complement the linguistic goals of the curriculum?
7. Is there an information gap? That is, does each participant hold a different piece of information needed to complete the task?
8. Does preparation for or performance of the role-play lead to greater linguistic, discourse, strategic, or sociolinguistic competence?
9. Does the role-play encourage participants to adopt greater versatility in lexicon, register, or syntax?
10. Are participants using multiple language modalities including speaking, listening, reading, and writing to prepare and perform the role-play?

Role-Play Activity

The role play activity we designed involves the instructor assigning the team roles and specifying the workplace context for undergraduate students to act in an online class. The students were then allocated into breakout rooms of group size of five. Some preparation time was given to students for brainstorming and writing down the keywords to be used in the conversation. Then, they were asked to use their imagination and creativity through actions and words in the role-play. The instructor joined the breakout rooms one by one as an observer and provided comments to individuals after the activity. In this way, the instructor can evaluate the students' engagement and motivation to understand their team roles during the role play, and facilitate students' enhancement of team communication skills by experiential learning.

Role-Play as an Effective Student Engagement and Motivation Strategy

While the advantages of eLearning include high access flexibility, absence of geographical barriers and convenience, instructors should also notice that the high flexibility is also the drawback to students (Tan, 2013) which may lead to low engagement and motivation of learning. As lecturers and tutors who strive to enhance students' team communication skills at workplace, we should identify effective pedagogy to engage students in elearning under the new normality. With the increasing acceptance of elearning among students worldwide, we should devise contingency teaching plan to adopt interactive role-play activities for providing practical team communication experiences in classroom environments.

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COVID-Exposure, Empty Seats, and Hybrid Classrooms: Strategies for Repurposing Team Writing in a Post-Pandemic University

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Overview

Now, almost exactly two years since words like coronavirus, mRNA vaccine, and endemic saturation entered our lexicon for many of us for the first time, the pandemic's influence on the university is still largely unknowable in the long-term. What we do know is that its effects on teaching in the short-term seems forever changed, for better and worse. Omicron and unenforceable attendance policies, requests for live-stream lectures where such accommodations are difficult or impossible to accommodate, even rising prices at the pump which are cost-prohibitive for students at commuter schools, have all had significant, unintended, and perhaps permanent impacts on how students and instructors navigate these new workplace realities. And while remote connectivity and the option to work from home has helped "slow the spread," and has encourage faculty to reinvigorate their teaching practice in innovative ways, such changes to the teaching endeavor can oftentimes act as a crutch or stumbling block for students who oftentimes need the most time and attention.

Further complications arise for faculty now tasked with information technology (IT) issues, students' mental health, and arbitrary or fluctuating departmental standards and policies. Nevertheless, because all major academic and professional milestones (research reports, conference papers, journal articles, and grant proposals) in almost every business-related field are based on one's ability to communicate technical information effectively in writing, this current historical moment presents business communication educators with a rare opportunity to embrace certain changes ushered in by the pandemic while collectively strategizing how to refashion our teaching practices moving forward. One such promising strategy benefiting for students and faculty is to use team writing more intentionally and deliberately than many of us had prior to COVID-19.

In an effort to foster more robust team writing and organizational communication instruction, this research chronicles an innovative pedagogical method for coordinating multi-participant, research documents in an upper division professional communication course. Indeed, as Clokie and Fourie (2016) and others have argued, employers are increasingly interested in hiring graduates with strong communication skills and significant teamworking and team-writing experiences (Brewer et al., 2017; Chase et al., 2020; Gray, 2010; Jackson, 2013; Remedios, 2012; and Wesner et al., 2018). The theoretical rationale for this presentation centers around recent developments in active learning scholarship (Brooks & Field, 2020; Estrada, 2016; and Schinske, 2017) as a means of fostering greater classroom inclusivity in hybrid classrooms while remaining sympathetic to the very real challenges (physical, mental, social) that the pandemic has presented to our students.

Purpose

Centered around collaborative partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), this presentation details a method for coordinating multi-participant, semester-long technical reports comprised of fee schedules, ROI analysis, stakeholder value(s) assessment, grant funding RFPs, and a community outreach and action plan for partnering organization(s). This particular example showcases how a cohort of students, worked collectively and individually, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to generate a feasibility study on several habitat enhancement and riparian restoration efforts that the agency is looking to implement in a popular, heavily trafficked creek drainage. The resulting document was presented to the USFS and used as a supplementary scoping report which complemented their ongoing efforts to improve stream conditions for imperiled Bonneville cutthroat trout and restore vegetative habitat on the national forest. This presentation demonstrates how to guide students through the research, analysis, and consensus-building stages of writing a robust feasibility study while operating in a hybrid classroom setting. This approach was developed by combining active learning techniques (Chan & Bauer, 2015; Gavassa, 2019; Theobald et al., 2020) with a revamped application of a tradition triple bottom line (TBL) framework (Ferro et al., 2019; Sánchez-Chaparro, 2022; Vanclay, 2016).

Methodology

Long used within business administration, management, accounting, environmental dispute resolution, and other related fields to encourage everything from corporate social responsibility to environmental health and wellness, this study utilizes the triple bottom line (Elkington, 2001) to provide business majors and professional communication students with a framework for structuring the following five learning goals:

1. Framing a task or project around a research question which guides the work in a comprehensive and systematic manner
2. Partnering students with real clients to produce authentic workplace documents (as opposed to simpler, memoranda or conceptual documents)
3. Developing a synthesized decision matrix to evaluate client and stakeholder values for project planning and decision making,
4. Proposing a series of alternatives for the project and recommending a course of action to the partnering organization(s)
5. Utilizing the strength and benefits of online communication platforms like Zoom, Miro, and Goggle Hangouts to enhance collaborative relationships.

Significantly, this presentation provides business communication educators with a toolkit for enhancing student preparedness for hybrid workplaces by helping them better tailor their writing to meet the needs of their client(s) and/or vested stakeholders. After most undergraduate institutions made the

collective shift to online teaching back in March 2020, it appears now more than ever that the proverbial genie may truly never be put back in the bottle where it concerns in-person versus remote learning: a trend that is especially true of any collaborative writing effort.

Outcomes

The outcomes of this presentation will provide instructors with: 1) a method for organizing large-scale, team written research projects in a comprehensive and systematic fashion, 2) a series of concrete examples for ensuring that students are exposed to a holistic, inclusive framework for operating in hybrid settings, and 3) a set of active learning strategies for organizing coursework to address some of the multidimensional challenges they will encounter in this new, post-COVID working environment. Because the collective, temporary move to Zoom forced many instructors back to static lectures and one-way assignments, reintroducing faculty to active learning strategies in hybrid settings may very well be the most important contribution of this presentation. Ultimately, this presentation demonstrates how collaborative partnerships, coupled with a strategic approach for organizing research, can be highly engaging for students and greatly improve their abilities to write and research in teams within any setting, virtual or otherwise.

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Reconnecting and Reengaging Master's Students Through Enhanced and Differentiated Communications Programming

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The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has strained business colleges' abilities to connect and engage with their students. While this new dynamic has been the subject of countless faculty meetings and committee agendas across the nation, the needs of graduate students are frequently left out of this discussion. As a comparatively small but important subset of the student population, Masters students tend to be more professionally minded than undergraduates, but not as academically oriented as doctoral students. This unique perspective requires colleges and programs to tailor specific curricula and resources to prepare their master's students for the professional world. In order to meet this need, the Master of Accounting (M.Ac.) program at the University of Iowa leverages the strength of the department's Accounting Writing and Communications Program to connect with its master's students. Indeed, the program serves as proof of concept that communication initiatives can increase student engagement and professional development.

From an employer perspective, it is no secret that companies across most industries view strong communicators as competitive candidates. Employers and professional organizations agree that it is crucial for business professionals to communicate effectively with the wide range of audiences they encounter, from colleagues in different departments, to clients, to industry professionals. In fact, possessing institutional and technical knowledge is only as valuable as the ability to convey it coherently to others. However, many graduate programs in business tend to prioritize students' absorption of technical knowledge while only paying lip service to communication skills. We know that these skills are essential to professional success, but the question remains: how can a program successfully provide this breadth of instruction?

A M.Ac. course at the University of Iowa entitled Taxes and Business Strategy taught by Professor Harald Amberger provides a framework for delivering the specific support master's students require. On a technical level, this course teaches students how to recognize the effect of taxes on business decisions, including investment strategies, compensation policies, mergers and acquisitions, and financial reporting. Like every instructor teaching in Tippie's M.Ac. program, Dr. Amberger collaborates with the Accounting Writing and Communications Program to offer students a well-rounded curriculum that teaches them not only how to master the complexities of the field, but also how to display that mastery through well-crafted written documents and presentations. While reflecting on his Spring 2022 section, Dr. Amberger noted, "I believe effective communication skills combined with solid institutional knowledge are key assets in public accounting. These skills should help students to win and retain their future clients." Dr. Amberger's perspective isn't unique. Accounting entities and professional organizations alike, such as the Journal of Accountancy, the Harvard Business School, and Indeed.com, list institutional knowledge alongside communication and critical thinking skills as necessary for an accountant's success in the workplace.

What does preparation to meet these demands look like in accounting, specifically? Students can learn how to interpret financial information and how to convey it legibly to different audiences. They can gain experience in conducting data analysis in programs like Excel and Python and how to present the material with concision and clarity using slides that adhere to best practices for visual design. Together, these skills help build a foundation for the type of student that instructors like Dr. Amberger hope to cultivate. Furthermore, this approach can provide a blueprint for other business programs outside of accounting.

These expansive goals comprise the central focus of the Accounting Writing and Communications Program at the Tippie College of Business, which aims to prioritize communication and critical thinking skills throughout the curriculum, using an approach that the AACSB has described as a “model for the academic community” and “a significant advantage for Tippie’s accounting students” in previous accreditation cycles. By providing an accounting-specific “communication within the curriculum” initiative, one-on-one access to professional communication consultants, along with positive and constructive feedback on communication assignments, the Accounting Writing and Communications Program engages its master’s students while preparing them for successful, fulfilling careers.

The Accounting Writing and Communications Program

Many forms of communication skill development currently in use do not sufficiently engage master’s students. Despite the rise of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) initiatives, many universities continue to silo writing pedagogy from major-specific content, especially at the graduate level. Typically, graduate students rely on generalist university tutoring centers or supplemental courses offered in writing and speaking instruction—either within the university or from a third-party vendor—to continue to hone their skills from the undergraduate level. These services are not typically specific nor technical enough to result in increased enthusiasm or engagement from master’s students.

The Accounting Writing and Communications Program provides a unique model that encourages participation by embedding communication assignments within accounting course curricula, thus allowing students to develop their skills with each progressive course as they move through the program. In practice, the program director works with accounting professors at the Tippie College of Business to design assignments that prepare students for the technical demands of the industry while also prioritizing communication components.

As students move through the program, the communication assignments become more complex. To support students in their efforts, the program employs professional writing consultants with backgrounds in English, creative writing, or communication (or with extensive business experience) to assess and provide feedback on these components. For example, an auditing memo is evaluated by the course instructor for its technical accuracy and by the consultant for how effectively the argument is stated and supported, proper utilization of the document’s form, and use of language. As a result, students receive feedback about the content of their message as well as the effectiveness of the deliverable.

This specialized approach recognizes the importance of continued writing instruction at the graduate level but also the specialized needs and priorities of graduate students, who are at a different stage of learning than undergraduates. At the undergraduate level, writing instruction is aimed at familiarizing students with professional communication practices, teaching them how to appeal to different audiences, and learning the

building blocks for clear and persuasive communication. At the graduate level, however, students need to go a step further by developing their critical thinking skills, particularly in writing, by substantiating claims with self-guided research, identifying implications, and relating various accounting concepts to one another.

Furthermore, these groups are motivated differently: while undergraduates tend to prioritize grades over skill development, Master's students generally do the opposite. Consequently, M.Ac. students are typically more open to receiving feedback from consultants and are more likely to incorporate that feedback into an ongoing process of skill development that will continue to benefit them once they finish the program.

To be sure, establishing writing competency is not the program's sole mission. The program director collaborates with instructors on assignments requiring presentation components by teaching best practices for data visualization and slide design. Altogether, the program's resources work to maximize contact and interaction with students as it seeks to encourage active learning and reengagement after the most restrictive phases of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Communication and Covid-19

The ongoing pandemic has further necessitated that college-level curricula reconnect and reengage students' capacity for effective and purposeful communication. As is well documented, students across the globe experienced an unwelcome interruption in their learning trajectory. According to the Chronicle of Higher Education, during the pandemic, emotional stress, health concerns, and financial worries were the primary causes for the 8 percent enrollment drop among undergraduates in the U.S. alone (Donaldson, 2022).

Not only have students been asked to accept the new reality of living with the virus, but they've also had to stretch their communication skills to apply to a variety of new mediums, such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts, and other digital platforms. The PEW Research Center reports that during the pandemic, 40% of Americans have used technology in new ways. (McClain et al., 2021). Indeed, students in higher education suddenly encountered widespread virtual and hybrid learning modalities, online proctoring services, and the stressors of preparing for a rapidly changing workforce in their respective fields. All of these programs require specific practices for effective communication, something which most students are unaware of, but still held accountable for by faculty and employers.

Given the pandemic's impact on our modes of communication, it is now more important than ever that students preparing to enter the professional realm have a strong foundation in communication and a solid grasp of what works for different mediums. Confidence in communication is already hard-won and difficult to maintain, as most writers and speakers feel some level of self-doubt. For many students developing these skills, the isolation of the pandemic amplified those feelings of self-doubt and, furthermore, those who experienced painful losses may have had their priorities shifted in different, more pressing directions.

Yet, the requirements for effective communication in our professional culture have not changed. Business professionals are expected to exercise a certain level of audience analysis, logical framing, and clear phrasing to convey a business message. Students with the capacity to pivot and apply their writing and speaking skills to different mediums will feel more confident in their ability to communicate with clients, employers, and peers in

a world where methods of communication are constantly shifting. Embedding communication pedagogy throughout the curriculum has multiple benefits: it reinforces the centrality of communication to professional success, encourages flexibility and preparedness for communicating across different mediums, and allows students to gradually build upon a skillset they will utilize for a lifetime.

The Program in Practice—An Overview

Curriculum design in the M.Ac. program requires a two-pronged approach designed to engage and connect with students: teaching technical content and refining communication skills. The program is designed to help students become active learners through engaging them with resources and opportunities to learn outside of the classroom. Ongoing collaboration between M.Ac. instructors, the director of the Accounting Writing and Communications Program, and the program's consultants ensure that students learn how to apply accounting knowledge and communicate it effectively. The course instructor with specialized accounting knowledge educates students on accounting principles, whereas the program director and consultants provide support and instruction on how best to communicate the message.

To help prepare students for each assignment, the program director coordinates with the instructor to arrange a classroom visit by the program director. In these sessions, the director offers specialized instruction on the type of medium required by the assignment and its standard conventions be it a memo, client letter, slide deck, or other type of deliverable. The program director supplies students with tip sheets and pre-recorded tutorials that the instructor makes available on the course Canvas (online course management system) website.

For each assignment cycle, students have the option of attending dedicated office hours, either virtually or in-person. During office hours, students receive preliminary feedback on a draft of their assignment from either the program director or the consultants assigned to support the course. These appointments require students to reengage with their education and career goals as they receive feedback, edit their own work, and take a more active role in their learning. It is not uncommon for students to frequent office hours to discuss multiple drafts of an assignment, a process of revision that is not often encouraged—or available—for documents considered to be more functional than creative. Assignments are then scored by both the instructor and consultants using multiple rubrics. While the instructor chooses their own method of assessment, consultants grade with a rubric that evaluates the strength of the students' communication skills.

Consultants' feedback is just as important as the grade they assign. The program utilizes feedback as a teaching mechanism that is geared toward helping students improve their communication skills. For each assignment, consultants leave marginal comments in addition to a summative paragraph-length comment. Both types of feedback prioritize praise by identifying strengths in the document's argumentative structure and quality of prose, following Donald Daiker's assertion that "positive reinforcement, or lack thereof, is crucial to a student's level of writing apprehension" (156). In other words, writers who feel more confident in their work typically find the writing process less difficult and may even produce better writing as a result. Of course, consultants also focus on identifying aspects of the writing that need improvement, pointing out missteps that with continued practice, students can begin to recognize on their own.

Employers are quick to note that, while writing skills continue to be essential to professional success, new hires must also be skilled at presenting effectively and creating informative, clear visuals. To meet this demand for Master's students, the Accounting Writing and Communications Program has integrated live presentations and Q&A sessions with real-life stakeholders, as well as complex data analysis assignments performed in a variety of

commonly used programs. Students also draft and iterate PowerPoint slides, which frequently include the data visualization elements they optimized in Excel, Tableau, Python, or R. While these programs are effective tools to analyze data, they are not programmed to produce easily readable visual content, so students receive training to analyze their audience and determine how to optimize the visuals the programs produce.

The program also uses skill assessment as a key method of engaging with students. In order to determine that students are benefiting from interacting with the Accounting Writing and Communications Program, the department requires each Master's student to take a writing assessment, which measures skills essential to effective written communication and the critical thinking skills employers expect M.Ac. program graduates to possess. The data this assessment yields enables the program director to make curriculum changes, offer new forms of support, or update resources for student use. This form of nimble programming keeps communication skills, about which students are rarely enthusiastic, as a relevant topic for Tippie's M.Ac. students.

The Program in Practice—A Single Class

Each individual course in the M.Ac. program offers an opportunity to build connections and engagement between M.Ac. program faculty, Writing and Communications Program staff, and students. The Writing and Communications Program director and its consultants remain purposefully involved in every aspect of the process, from assignment design to assessment. For example, in the Spring 2022 Advanced Auditing course, students were tasked with composing an audit planning memo examining Target's recent financial statements. The purpose of the assignment was to show evidence that students were advancing their audit risk assessment skills and their technical writing skills.

The program director first gave an in-class presentation on the audit planning memo and discussed how to best structure its message using narrow, argumentative, and clear claim statements supported with evidence. In addition, handouts and tutorials on the conventions of memo writing and claim formation were posted to the course site. Opportunities to connect continued with other program staff—this time with a professional writing consultant. During the consultant's office hours, students received preliminary feedback on a draft of their audit planning memo, with open, reciprocal engagement. Finally, the audit planning memo for Advanced Auditing was evaluated using multiple rubrics. The instructor used their own evaluative methods to determine how well students applied their risk assessment knowledge to the auditing process. At the same time, consultants employed their rubrics to determine the strength of the writing and provide feedback that could be applied to future writing assignments in the same course.

For the audit planning memo, an "A" paper had to contain a clear thesis, analysis paragraphs beginning with claims, evidence to substantiate claims, and specific and precise language. None of these elements would be particularly surprising for an "A" level paper at the undergraduate level. However, for graduate students, "A" level papers must also demonstrate an ability to make connections between concepts and synthesize information instead of just focusing on one idea, thereby demonstrating elevated analytical and critical thinking skills. This pairing of critical thinking and communication skills yields intellectual and professional dividends.

Former M.Ac. student Alex Duff sums up the relevance of strong communication to his professional responsibilities: "My current work involves mostly internal controls that companies have in place around their IT

systems and reports on those controls. The controls have to be precisely worded as they determine all other procedures that we perform to issue our reports. I have no doubt that the communication and writing skills that I learned through the M.Ac. Program have helped greatly in my career.”

A Unique Program With a Unique Challenge

The Accounting Writing and Communication Program’s professional consultants are the key differentiator between passive and active learning in a “communication within the curriculum” initiative. Many faculty who includes writing or presentation assignments in their courses have neither the time, capability, nor confidence of providing the support master’s students need to improve their communication skills. The program’s consultants fill this need, but due to their relative lack of technical knowledge, face unique challenges.

It is no secret that accounting is a specialized field with an equally specialized language, one that most general readers struggle to comprehend. Furthermore, students who are just beginning to learn the specialized language of accounting are also more likely to misuse it themselves. Similarly, consultants with a background in the humanities don’t typically possess the training to understand the complex programming language of Python, R, Tableau, and even Excel, all of which are commonly utilized in M.Ac. courses. Just like the challenges inherent in writing, accounting students attempting to use higher-level applications of these programs will inevitably create presentations, graphs, and slides that are lacking in clarity. In short, the complex accounting principles and programs that M.Ac. students learn in the program are often not in consultants’ prior repertoire of knowledge.

Yet, these challenges can easily become opportunities, and even assets, when viewed through the right lens. First, one goal of the program is to help M.Ac. students communicate complex information to a more general readership. Ryan Chabus with the Journal of Accountancy reinforces the need for this skill, stating: “professionals need to have exceptional communication skills, both written and verbal. Important projects need to be communicated in an easy-to-understand way to executives and colleagues (especially if they are unfamiliar with accounting or finance terminology) to ensure proper completion” (2021). Consultants can educate themselves to some extent about accounting principles, especially those related to any given assignment. In doing so, they position themselves as an informed general audience, which also makes them the target audience.

If an individual with an advanced degree is struggling to understand the content of a memo or slide, it is likely that the author would benefit from strengthening the document’s argument, clarifying connections between ideas, using more precise language, or employing stand-alone-sense headers to help guide the audience. Additionally, the program director provides support and clarification for the consultants in instances where the content appears to subsume communication skills. In all, it takes a programmatic approach to support both consultants and the students they serve.

Communication Within the Curriculum as a Method of Engagement

Master’s students have always brought with them a different, more career-driven perspective than their undergraduate peers. Now, as we emerge from a pandemic that had significant effects on engagement and connection from students at all levels, new and innovative solutions are needed to restore the drive for active learning. The increased levels of student contact that the Accounting Writing and Communication Program provides is a key element of how the Tippie College of Business is striving to reengage and reconnect with students.

The program's slate of resources for students both inside and outside of class to improve communication skills, and just as importantly for master's students to develop critical thinking skills, results in students who are better prepared to achieve their academic and professional goals.

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Innovative Instructional Methods

Engaging and Reengaging Students Via Alternative Discussion Platforms

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Introduction

During Spring and Summer of 2020, we (along with most other educators around the globe) took our classrooms 100 percent online. We knew from the start we would face challenges with student engagement and student writing proficiencies as the in-person class sessions allowed the students to engage in real time and provided time for students to ask questions over the grammar and style guidelines we provided during our lectures. We resorted to using Canvas modules to disseminate information and Canvas discussion boards to build student engagement. Our courses were asynchronous, but we offered virtual class sessions and meeting times during the week so students could receive a lecture if they preferred.

We discovered that student engagement on the Canvas discussion board platform was low and lacked stimulating conversations. We define student engagement as the time and physical energy students spend on activities, such as studying a subject, obtaining feedback, and solving specific problems (Kuh, 2003). Students often logged on to the discussion board near the end of the week, answered a question with simple, often ambiguous opinions, responded to their peers in the affirmative without adding significant content to the discussion, and then logged off.

Our students were also underperforming in our writing skills assessments. We had to teach business writing skills and style in online environments where students could not easily ask questions or receive immediate feedback. Assessments that had previously been delivered in face-to-face classrooms now became Canvas quizzes. Lessons in business writing skills and style that were once delivered in person were now being delivered as multimodal content which removed opportunities for interactive discussions with students over course content.

By the end of Fall 2020, we noticed that student engagement and writing proficiencies in online courses remained low. The few in-person classes we offered had more student engagement (despite students wearing masks) and higher assessment scores in grammar and style. Given that we learned our department would continue to offer online sections of our course indefinitely, we decided to test alternative online platforms to see if we could improve students' writing skills and increase student engagement.

Literature Review

The discussion board platform native to Canvas includes a rubric to guide students as they write, but as Rose (1980) argued in his seminal work “Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer’s Block,” students suffer writer’s block when they feel assailed with writing skills and style rules. We understand the community-building aspects of students’ experience as an important engagement insight (Lund Dean & Fornaciari, 2013). By using a discussion board platform which does not use rubrics, we believed students would be more engaged and inspired to contribute to an online discussion. In addition, Estrem (2015) suggests in her work “Writing is a Knowledge-Making Activity,” writing is an action through which knowledge is made rather than a subsequent action to learning. This logic suggests students who write more make more knowledge or at least learn through recursive actions. Other studies have shown students are more likely to engage with platforms resembling social media rather than platforms embedded in LMS (Hou et al., 2015). This led us to investigate alternative discussion platforms outside our LMS that better resembled social media platforms. We believed such a platform would increase student engagement and writing skills proficiencies.

Methods

In the Spring of 2022, we implemented Yellowdig (an online student engagement platform) into one of our online sections. Yellowdig describes itself as, “A community-building platform that turns learners into co-creators of knowledge and empowers them with robust performance analytics as they cruise through their learning journey” (2022). In our study, the control group used the Canvas discussion board while the experimental group used Yellowdig to test whether the application would increase student engagement and improve writing skills. We measured engagement by the amount of content each student contributed to the online platform, the frequency by which the student engaged with the platform, and the student’s reflection of their own engagement in the course. We measured writing proficiencies via a summative assessment consisting of fifty multiple-choice questions and a formative assessment in the form of a professional email given through the LMS to students in the experimental and control groups.

Results

While we will not have the final results of the study until the final assessment is given in May 2022, we have been able to see preliminary results.

Student engagement is higher on Yellowdig than on Canvas discussion boards. Students are spending more time throughout the week on Yellowdig; however, students in both groups contribute about the same amount of content on a weekly basis.

Discussion

After collecting the final data, the presenters will discuss their findings and invite participants to discuss effective ways online platforms can achieve student learning outcomes.

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Innovative Instructional Methods

Storied Leadership: Empowering Students to Collect and Deploy Narratives With a Strategic Story Inventory

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"It was April 20th, 1998, and I was driving home from the hospital, having completed my last night of trauma call as a general surgery resident at the University of Wisconsin- Madison. It was as I turned onto the road leading to my apartment that I first noticed it. Ahead was a bus with black smoke billowing from it. I thought at first that this had to be some sort of mechanical problem. As I drove closer, I saw multiple smaller objects off to the side, also giving off black smoke. Confusion was replaced with horror as I realized that the smaller objects were actually human bodies. The scene was one of eerie slow motion, quiet. One of the bystanders informed me that a bus passenger splashed gasoline on the other passengers, and then ignited them. Having just finished trauma call, I notified Life Flight thinking it would be faster than 911. It was.

"Within minutes the scene was changed to pure pandemonium with swarming ambulances and police cars. I did my best to assist with the initial resuscitation and triage of patients. As soon as the last ambulance left, my pager beeped. I was being called back to the hospital to assist with the mass casualty.

"The frenetic pace continued in the burn unit, which now smelled like a mixture of gasoline and charred flesh. In every room, I could see one of my friends fighting desperately to keep a patient alive. After what seemed like both hours and just a few seconds, the attending surgeon caught my eye. He approached with his hat pushed back on his head and his hair matted to his forehead with sweat. All he said was, "Good work, go sleep."

"I left with two realizations. The first: The only reason these patients had a chance to survive was that the incident happened so close to a burn unit. The second: I was good at burn.

"I dedicated my career to becoming a burn surgeon. I did a critical care fellowship, followed by a burn fellowship (where I met my wife), and lastly a plastic surgery fellowship. Now, over twenty years later, I find myself back in Central Wisconsin to help (a regional clinic) develop a burn unit. My story ends where it begins, and I could not be more grateful."

Plastic surgeon, Dr. Michael Harl (2020), mined this story as an MBA student in my class using a Strategic Story Inventory. Stories like Harl's abound in graduate and undergraduate students' experiences, and the research acknowledges their value for both persuading and "sensemaking" (Weick, 1995) as business leaders. Leaders must be adept at using narration as "a sequence of events that stimulates a visual, sensory, and emotional experience that feels significant for both the listener and the teller" (Simmons, 2007; as cited in Muir, 2007).

This strategic sequencing of events moves stakeholders to action (Denning, 2011; Buck et al, 2015) and is crucial for engaging emotion (Kryder, 2003; Buck et al., 2015), communicating data (Dolan & Naidu, 2013; Duarte, 2019), building trust (Auvinen et al., 2013), developing new leaders (Ready, 2002), interacting across cultures (Barker & Gower, 2010), managing change (Denning, 2021; Wilson, 2019; Brown et al., 2009), and improving strategy alignment (Baker, 2014). The persuasive power of storytelling makes it an essential skill to teach future leaders in business communication. The renowned psychologist Howard Gardner (1995) even said, "The artful creation and articulation of stories constitutes a fundamental part of the leader's vocation" (p.43).

Despite the importance of leadership narratives, it's difficult for business students to mine, collect, organize, and deliver stories in communication courses. In the literature, Janis Forman (2007) does offer prompts for empowering leaders in MBA programs to tell stories. Christine Seifert and Russell Clayton (2021) emphasize storytelling by integrating short fiction pieces in their MBA programs to initiate conversation. Some MBA programs such as the University of Richmond ("Strategic Storytelling," 2014), Columbia Business School (Shachar, 2018), and the University of Minnesota ("Storytelling for Leaders," n.d.) even offer storytelling courses, but practical tools for mining and collecting stories are limited in the research.

This presentation equips business communication faculty-- whether teaching graduates or undergraduates—to help students operationalize their experiences. Its design is rooted in Weick's (1995) Sensemaking framework. Students rarely view their experiences as meaningful for persuasion in leadership, but sensemaking helps them to "recognize, act upon, create, recall, and apply patterns" (McNamara, 2015) to impose meaning. In the inventory, students classify their experiences by the story types Paul Smith (2019) identifies in *The 10 Stories Great Leaders Tell*. The classification system helps them recognize patterns in and impose order on their experiences. As seen in Dr. Harl's story, completing the inventory helped him sense-make the horrific Madison bus fire of 1998 as formational to his leadership style and values. With his story collected in the inventory, Harl could then "sensegive," or create understanding for audiences that influence their own sensemaking (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991) as he made his case for opening a burn unit in Central Wisconsin and convinced followers of his passion for burn surgery.

The session will introduce the Strategic Storytelling Inventory to business communication faculty and situate it in the scholarship of storytelling, leadership narratives, sensemaking, and sensegiving. The talk will explain how to implement the tool and use it to help your own students mine, shape, organize, and deliver leadership stories.

Dr. Harl discovered his powerful story by locating meaning in his experiences and then deploying that as a narrative to influence his stakeholders; your students can do the same. Storytelling is universal, timeless, and powerful, but if you've struggled to help students make sense of their experiences through narrative, consider this 20-minute session to see how a Strategic Storytelling Inventory can help.

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Inclusivity in an Online Class Through Teamwork and Role Play

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Abstract

Fostering inclusivity as a learning environment property and the aspired leadership characteristic is problematic in an online class due to lack of social contact and informal interactions. Using team assignments, and especially role plays, gives the students an opportunity to see the others' perspectives and step into somebody's shoes, enhancing social contact, uniting the team, and developing the inclusive mindset through valuing diversity. Via complex methodology, the author looks into the ways of developing inclusivity in teams, and explores the effectiveness of two teaching techniques – team learning and role plays – as the tool for developing inclusivity in an online class setting in business communication classes.

Introduction

With global business becoming increasingly diverse and multicultural, the focus of business communication studies is shifting more towards enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Yet with developing understanding of the benefits from diversity, more attention needs now to be dedicated to inclusivity as a necessary condition of effective and satisfying performance of work groups. With work teams becoming more multicultural and diverse, the push for diversity “needs explicit supervisory attention to create an inclusive climate in which the potential benefits of diversity actually can be realized” (Ashikali et al., 2020, p. 497). This invokes the efforts to cultivate inclusivity, inclusive mindset and inclusive leadership.

The **purpose** of this article is to look into the ways of developing inclusivity in teams, and the **goals** are to explore the effectiveness of two teaching techniques – team learning and role plays – as the tool for developing inclusivity in an online class setting.

Methodology

This exploratory study was preformed via complex methodology combining literary review, analysis of statistical data, observation, self-reflection, anonymous surveys and unstructured interviews.

The tendencies observed and confirmed by statistics demonstrate continuous growth of ethnical and cultural diversity in student populations, along with the diversity of mindsets, interpretational frames and communication cultures. At the same time, literature reviews evidence that diversity may work as an adverse factor, unless special efforts are made to cultivate a positive and inclusive atmosphere in the team (Ashikali et al., 2020; Leroy et al., 2021).

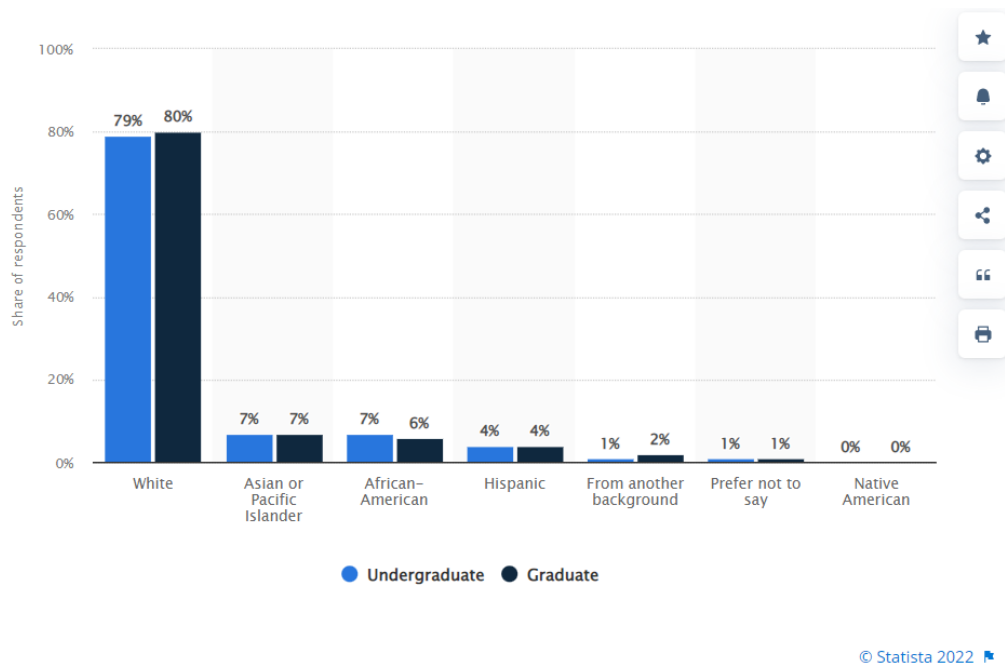
Projecting the prior research findings onto the classroom environment, we aim to establish, by observation, self-reflection, unstructured interviews, and student feedback, possible problems of communication and collaboration within diverse online classes that might result in isolation, miscommunication and exclusion of some students.

Based on the allocated problem fields, working in a traditional classroom setting and within assigned content of communication courses, some assignments were offered to students to be accomplished in online teams, and to be performed as role plays. The subsequent performance results, observation of the students' emotional reactions, conversations, informal anonymous surveys and unstructured interviews were used to assess the contribution of team assignments and role plays to the purpose of cultivating inclusivity based on the 'value-in-diversity' mindset in an online classroom.

Research findings and discussion. With the growing diversity of the workforce, DEI has now become one of the government priorities (The White House, 2021). US higher education is also undergoing continuous diversification, with the numbers of foreign students almost doubled between 2005 and 2019 (Statista, 2022 (1)), and huge gaps found between different ethnic groups, especially in the online setting. Taking the ethnocultural differences as just one example of diversity in the student population, we observe striking gaps, as well as obviously underserved populations in this category (See Fig. 1):

Figure 1

Share of Students Studying Online in the United States in 2020, by Ethnicity and Education Level



Source: Statista (2022(2)).

For communication courses, ethnic diversity signifies, in addition to varying worldviews and mindsets, the differences in original communication styles, value hierarchies, perceptions and interpretation frames, emotional reactions, and so on, which may be added to by insufficient mastery of the language of instruction.

Keeping in mind the findings of prior research “that harvesting the benefits of diversity, without also cultivating value-in-diversity beliefs, has a negative effect on team-derived inclusion...” (Leroy et al., p. 798-799), and that “simply enhancing the representation of more diverse employees is not enough; [...] organizations need to focus on including them” (Ashikali et al., 2021, p. 498), we developed, through observations, self-reflection and informal discussions, the list of potential problems that diverse online classes may face if no special efforts are made at fostering team inclusion. The problems that were generalized, along with their negative impacts, are summarized in Table 1, with the view to designing solutions to them.

Table 1

Communication Problems in a Diverse Online Class and their Impacts on Communication and Learning Outcomes

Communication Problems in a Diverse Online Class	Negative Impacts on Communication and Learning Outcomes
Lack of understanding of the content	Due to language barriers, differences in educational backgrounds, worldviews and interpretation frames, some students may lack the understanding of the class content, or interpret it differently, as a result, being unable to apply or analyze the concepts.
Anxiety in the new environment	The online classroom environment itself may cause psychological uneasiness as a result of dealing with new technology, class rules etc. This may be added to by technical problems, and lead to frustration, lack of motivation, feeling isolated and excluded.
Fear of speaking in class	Familiar to most, the fear of speaking in public may be aggravated in a diverse class because students cannot predict how people of other cultures may react. Students from high-power-distance cultures feel uncomfortable speaking without being authorized to. As a result, many valuable ideas may be left unsaid.
Fear to express a different opinion/arouse disagreement	Disagreement being differently handled in varying cultures, students may fear to express an opinion opposing their classmate's, or may be expecting that the only 'right' answer exists. The fear of disagreement deprives discussions of their value, and 'depletes' the potential diversity of opinions and solutions.

To fully unleash potential benefits of diverse teams, researchers suggest making deliberate and focused efforts aimed at creating inclusive atmosphere (Mor Barak, 2014; Shore & Chung, 2021). If in the workplace it is the function of inclusive leadership, the classroom situation should evidently be managed by the teacher (professor/instructor) who may plan and implement coherent measures aimed at creating a really inclusive classroom environment in which the students will fully benefit from diversity.

Inclusion as a complex construct “involving the satisfaction of both belongingness and uniqueness needs” (Shore et al., 2011, p. 2) has been widely appraised as a necessary condition to enhance workplace performance and employee satisfaction. It allows to capitalize on the unique value of diverse individuals (ibid, p. 30) fostering

team creativity (Leroy et al., 2021), and to manage diverse teams effectively (Ashikali et al., 2021). Inclusion is viewed “as key for the sustained competitive advantage of organizations as well as the health and well-being of their employees” (Korkmaz et al., 2022, p. 1). From leadership/managerial perspective, an inclusive leadership style involves fostering employee’s uniqueness (at the individual level), strengthening belongingness within a team (at the team level), showing appreciation (at both individual and team levels), and supporting organizational efforts (at the organizational level) (ibid., p. 5-6).

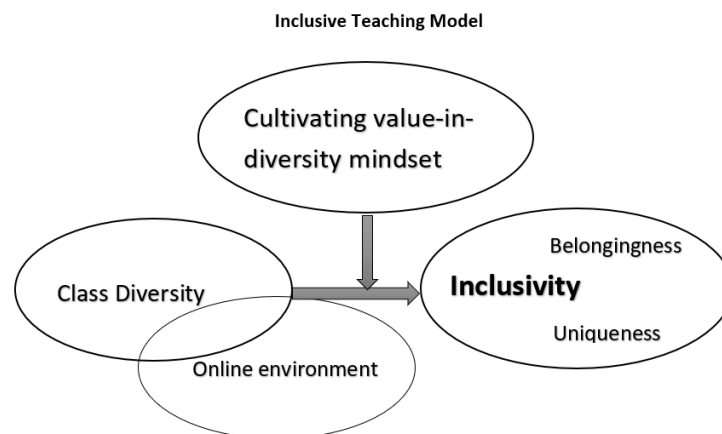
Accepting the definition of inclusion as “intentional, ongoing effort to ensure that diverse people with different identities are able to fully participate in all aspects of the work of an organization, including leadership positions and decision-making processes” (Tan, 2019, p. 30-31), in this article, I focus on inclusivity as “the quality or state of being inclusive” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), to describe the permanent feature of the work or classroom environment in which diverse individuals are valued as respected members and are welcomed in an organization and/or community.

With more companies going to virtual online teams nowadays, a new focus for organizational communication scholars and practitioners has been on building inclusivity in online teams. Virtual teams as “geographically distributed collaborations that rely on technology to communicate and cooperate” (Morrison-Smith, 2020, p. 1), are believed to be central to maintaining the increasingly globalized social and economic infrastructure (ibid.) This infers the importance of developing inclusive team collaboration and leadership skills both at colleges and in the workplace.

Online setting poses additional challenges to creating the inclusive collaborative environment, with the need for special curricular interventions being recognized and their effectiveness proved (Letaw et al., 2021). In a diverse online classroom, the leading role belongs to the teacher (professor/instructor) who may foster inclusivity through classroom management techniques, teaching strategies and purposeful instructional interventions. The conceptual model of inclusive teaching is presented in Fig. 2.

Figure 2

Inclusive Teaching Model



According to this model, inclusivity (in its two aspects of belongingness and uniqueness) is created in a diverse online classroom via cultivating value-in-diversity mindset). Of many possible approaches to cultivating value-in-diversity mindset and building/enhancing inclusivity in an online class, this article focuses on teamwork and role play.

Team assignments are valuable because they imitate a real work environment: as reported by working adult learners in surveys and unstructured interviews, the majority of tasks completed at the workplace are performed in teams. Thus, including team assignments in syllabi of communication courses is a necessary response to the request of the time.

On a team level, inclusivity is enhanced by the leaders through ensuring equity, building relationships, sharing decision-making, recognizing efforts and contributions (Korkmaz et al., 2022, p. 5). Gast et al. (2017) believe team-based professional development interventions to be beneficial on team and individual levels of interaction. Studying team learning in the context of higher education, they conclude that “team-based professional development interventions can be successful in fostering teacher learning...” (ibid., p. 762), as they enhance learning and create positive attitudes (ibid.). Team assignments in online setting have been proved effective in developing intercultural business competence, team-building and decision-making skills, as well as enhancing relationships among students (Andrienko et al., 2021).

Providing the platform for equal participation, team assignments promote equity and collaboration. United by the common goal, students feel included in a joint activity. Many admit that speaking with peers in a team is much easier for them, than in the presence of the entire class and the teacher. The students experiencing language difficulties have more time and resources in an informal atmosphere. In my observation, students who seldom take initiative to contribute to the class discussion, in a small group breakout room easily unmute and interact with their classmates. Smaller team of equals reduces the anxiety and ‘otherness’: students feel equal in a friendly atmosphere, especially when nobody judges their speech for correctness of their opinions or grammar. This creates the atmosphere of belongingness: mutual acceptance and openness to diversity of opinions and approaches.

Reflecting upon their teamwork experiences, online students state that teamwork helped them better understand and apply course concepts through analyzing the course materials together and explaining them to one another. Overwhelming majority acknowledged that teamwork helped them improve their planning and organizational skills, and that in a team they could accomplish more than when working alone. From communication perspective, the students noted that teamwork fosters the development of self-presentation, debate, and negotiation skills. Especially valuable are the assignments in which each team member can demonstrate their unique experiences, cultural concepts etc. By demonstrating the benefits of diversity, team assignments enhance the feeling of uniqueness and foster creativity, which is in line with findings by Leroy et. al. (2021).

Thus, using team assignments in communication classes, I discovered their power in overcoming potential problems of the diverse online classroom: working in teams, students found it easier to integrate into a small group ‘outside’ the classroom, to overcome the fear of speaking before the whole class. With the necessary explanation of ethical communicative behavior in the situations of disagreement, students begin to perceive diversity of opinion as a natural state of things and dare expressing their opinions openly. Finally, working in

teams with other students helped better engage with the course concepts, because, in addition to better understanding, they had to apply many of communication concepts consciously in the acts of negotiating their parts in the team, presenting their value to the teammates, arguing their perspective/suggested course of action, etc.

Additionally, team assignments are valued as the tool for developing professional competencies (Gast, 2017; Reams, 2021). This suggests that, along with the focus on 'value-in-diversity' approach, team assignments become a powerful tool to build appreciation of uniqueness, equity and inclusivity, while developing essential professional skills and competences.

While team learning has been proven effective and is widely recognized as a tool for developing the necessary communication, collaboration and leadership skills, role plays are so far used mostly in developing communication and foreign language speaking skills (Pinatih, 2021), mathematics, history and social sciences (Kilgour et.al., 2015). They are viewed as a method of humanizing business students' education, and, along with other assignments, allow the business students to practice public speaking, develop their research skills and gain an understanding of the management and legal perspectives' application in the business environment (Reams, 2021, p.11).

Being team-based by their nature, role-playing assignments enable simulation of various life and professional situations within the scope of a specific course. The value of role plays for business training cannot be overestimated. Role playing, defined as "an active learning technique in which employees act out situations under the guidance of a trainer" (Fuller, 2018, para 2), allows employees or business students to take on a role in each scenario and act out the scene as though it were real (ibid.).

This potential to simulate the reality is of great educational value. Role plays base on two major cornerstones: the **roles** and the **scenario**. The scenarios may be 'close-ended' or 'open-ended':

- In a 'close-ended' scenario, the whole course of action, from beginning to end, is prescribed to the participants as in a theatre play, and their task is to act it out as actors, applying their course concepts in this play.
- In an 'open-ended' scenario, the participants are set the problem which they are going to resolve, but the outcome of their interaction is up to them. In this case they may apply the course problems to resolving professionally relevant tasks, emulating life situations.

In the classroom setting, the educators usually choose the type of scenario depending on the learning goals and course content, but also with the account of the students' readiness to create solutions independently.

The array of roles may vary depending on the content of the course, the players' age and interests, professional and social roles that the students are preparing for etc. Before designing role plays, I ask or survey students about the professions, people and situations that are of interest to them. Playing a role opens an opportunity for the players to temporarily change their identity and walk a mile (or at least a few steps) in someone else's shoes. Sometimes it opens new perspectives and changes the understanding of relevant concepts and situations.

Setting a role play in class, instructors may determine either both the roles and the scenario, or one of these elements, based on the course content and the expected learning outcomes. The roles and scenarios may be selected with the view to practicing future professional interactions, developing certain communication functions, exploring specific cases in case studies etc.

However, what is not widely discussed so far, is that using role plays in education is also a great opportunity for the students to 'try on' the roles that they do not perform in real life: professional, social, situational etc. In a role play, students often select roles opposite to their professional or social functions in real life: sales associates choose to be 'buyers/customers', older students prefer to act as 'kids' of their younger classmates, etc. This enables them to see the situation from a different perspective and develop a different understanding of the situation. As was discovered from unstructured interviews with students, apart from just 'having fun', acting in a 'different' role naturally creates greater understanding and empathy, as well as openness to other's views.

Thanks to their great emotional and creative value, role plays remove numerous barriers that exist in 'earnest' communication, relax students emotionally, including their feelings of fear and anxiety. Role plays contribute immensely to ensuring equity among participants, returning the adult learners to the days when they played with their friends. At the same time, roles and scenarios related to the course purposes and content enhance the understanding and enable the application and evaluation of the theoretical concepts. Participation in a joint activity contributes to building relationships, shared decision-making, recognizing efforts and contributions by each member. This grows feeling of belongingness, especially when students are allowed to be creative on their parts and scenario, making them 'conspirators' in an exciting endeavor, removing the barriers to suggesting a different

opinion/perspective. On the other hand, each participant can best disclose their uniqueness in the role play, because they are allowed to go beyond the traditional frameworks and limitations, and appreciate the uniqueness of the others. This results in a more inclusive classroom environment and provides opportunities for more informal communication with peers, partially compensating for the lack of social contact in an online class.

Conclusion

The conducted exploratory research allowed to reveal beneficial impacts of team assignments and role plays in an online classroom on the development of value-in-diversity attitude, building social ties, empathy, and mutual appreciation, resulting in creating a more inclusive classroom environment which satisfies individual needs for uniqueness and belongingness.

The discussed activities enhance the understanding of the course content through communicative interactions with the classmates, relax the anxiety that many students experience in the new, particularly online, environment, and reduce the fear to speak before the class or to express a different opinion. Thus, they help overcome or prevent the most communication problems that may develop in a diverse class or team, if no specific efforts are made to cultivate the value-in-diversity mindset.

Team assignments and role plays allow the students, while still at college, to perform various roles they will be able to take after graduation, and interact with diverse classmates in various capacities, discovering different perspectives. This opens the opportunity to see value in diversity and prepare to enhance inclusivity in the future diverse virtual work teams.

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The Value of Asynchronous Digital Mock Interviews

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Preparing college students for employment-related issues, such as professional interview preparation, provides valuable assistance to students in their career search upon graduation. An emphasis on interview preparation at the undergraduate level has existed for many years having been incorporated into a required junior/senior level course activity conducted by the institution's career center (the "Center"). Previously, the Center conducted in-person or telephone mock interviews. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, mock interviews moved to an asynchronous digital interview format (Lorin, 2020), as courses moved to remote instruction starting mid-semester Spring 2020 and through Fall 2021. Beginning in Fall 2020, the Center adopted an asynchronous digital mock interview process utilizing a commercial virtual interviewing platform followed by a post-interview, live Zoom meeting with Center personnel to discuss the student's resume and cover letter, and their virtual interview evaluation. The virtual interview platform required students to videorecord themselves answering interview questions. Students received two chances before recording each interview question. The videorecorded questions and answers were then reviewed the Center's representative prior to the post-interview meeting with the student.

This paper discusses findings from an action research project which garnered student feedback regarding their experiences with the asynchronous digital mock interview process and was also conducted determine if this option should be continued when course delivery returned to normal delivery modes.

Mock interviews are a simulation structured to resemble real interview processes; they can be used as tools to help professional candidates equip themselves with the necessary confidence and training to successfully confront any real interview challenges. Mock interviews provide applicants with demonstrations of the types of inquiries to expect in a real interview as well as practice in responding to those questions successfully (Huss et al., 2017, p. 25), utilizing an active learning pedagogy (Crandell-Williams, Wyche & Johnson 2017, p. 12).

New mock interview formats (virtual, computer-mediated, pre-recorded, or enabled through artificial intelligence), help students develop skills requisite for success in actual interviews. These innovative formats are utilized in interview rehearsals and academic coursework to translate benefits to students.

Mock interviews aide candidates in developing behavioral, communication, and language skills required to succeed in seeking employment (Tan et al., 2016). Mock interviews develop and sharpen understandings of the interview process, the student's chosen industry, and strengths and weaknesses (Rowell & Mihuta, 2016). Practice interviews help students to "...think through the answers to potential questions, polish your verbal communication skills, and gain confidence that will show in the interview. They'll give you a chance to get feedback and advice from professionals" (NACE, 2017 as cited by Huss, et al., 2017, p. 26).

Virtual mock interviews help students to practice, skill build, and boost confidence before real interviews. They are designed to replicate in person experiences to assist those with poorer social skills for interview success (Stanica et al., 2018). Virtual reality interviews aide individuals in controlling stress, dealing with rejection, and building the skills necessary to see an interview through to a successful conclusion (Kwon et al., 2013). Virtual interviews have an increasingly augmented presence both in academia and in the job market, thus, it is valuable for students to practice and understand how to navigate a virtual interview. Despite the benefits outlined in most of the research, debate is ongoing regarding the benefits of virtual interviews vis-à-vis in-person interviews, and under which circumstances each may be the more appropriate medium (Campbell et al., 2015; Huss, et al., 2017; Rasipuram & Jayagopi, 2018; Seifi et al., 2020; Shapka et al., 2016) .

Automated interview approaches may revolutionize job interview practice (Langer, et al., 2016; Naim, Tanveer, Gildea, & Hoque, 2018). Automated approaches use sensor devices (i.e., devices capturing human behavior, e.g. nonverbal behavior through cameras), automatic extraction and evaluation of data (e.g., through tools trained to automatically evaluate applicant performance), and visualization (e.g., using virtual environments) to automate entire interview processes” (p. 217). However, the effects of automated interview approaches on interviewees remain largely unknown. (Blacksmith, Willford, & Behrend, 2016; Langer, et al., 2017). The asynchronous digital mock interview platform used in this study is similar to the commercial product described in Hansen, Oliphant, Oliphant, & Hansen (2009).

The paper will examine participants’ overall satisfaction with the asynchronous mock interview process, pre-interview confidence levels, and post-interview confidence levels. The paper also explores the effect of participants’ mock interview preparation activities on overall satisfaction results. Participants consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in several sections of a business and interpersonal communication course, as well as students enrolled in previous semesters of the course.

Survey methodology was utilized as it is an efficient way to collect action research from a relatively large group of participants in a short amount of time. The survey for the study was developed by the researchers to assess participants’ opinions about and experiences resulting from the Center’s asynchronous digital mock interview process. The survey was administered near the end of the semester as students are completed the virtual mock interview experience administered by the Center.

Part A included a demographic subsection including age, gender, classification, major, and whether participants are graduating seniors. Part B investigated participants’ previous interviewing experience both as an interviewee and an interviewer to account for prior exposure to interviewing questions and processes.

Satisfaction scores are derived from a 6-item subscale of the survey (Part C. “Satisfaction with the virtual mock interview experience”) derived from 5-point Likert scale items, with a high score equating with 5=Strongly Agree to a lower score equating with 1=Strongly Disagree.

Pre-Mock Interview Confidence and Expectations scores are derived from a 4-item subscale of the survey (Part D. “Pre-Mock Interview Confidence and Expectations”) derived from 5-point Likert scale items, with a high score equating with 5=Strongly Agree to a lower score equating with 1=Strongly Disagree.

Post-mock interview confidence and expectations scores are derived from a 4-item subscale of the survey (Part E. “Post-mock interview confidence and expectations”) derived from 5-point Likert scale items, with a high score equating with 5=Strongly Agree to a lower score equating with 1=Strongly Disagree.

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Co-Teaching in the Business Classroom

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Coteaching can be a rewarding experience for both faculty and students. While not as common in business schools, this chapter will review the benefits of co-teaching and how this innovative form of instruction can be applied to business education, especially during disruptive conditions like those caused by COVID-19. Having two faculty members teach one course offers students multiple perspectives on complex topics, a more engaging classroom environment, and a relationship-centered learning experience brought about by increased individualized attention to connect with students on multiple levels.

This presentation will introduce the concept of coteaching and recent research on the topic. The presentation will then detail the lack of coteaching in a business education and the clear applicability for business students, especially as a viable teaching option for a post-COVID education wherein up to 70% of students have noted a desire for online/hybrid teaching. Finally, the presenters will use anecdotal evidence of “Team Teaching” from a graduate-level business course, in which the presenters cotaught. They will conclude by offering rationale for coteaching, which attendees can take back to their own universities, as well as best practices.

Defining Coteaching

Cook and Friend (1995) defined coteaching as “two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single physical space” (p. 2). Chizhik and Brandon (2020) detail multiple models of coteaching, each defined and characterized by the role that each instructor serves. These models include: one-teach/one-assist (i.e., one instructor focuses on primary content delivery while other offers tangible assistance), station teaching (i.e., students rotate to multiple stations led by each instructor), parallel teaching (i.e., instructors divide the class and teach in parallel), alternative teaching (i.e., one instructor teaches most of the class, while other tailors a lesson for small group), team teaching (i.e., both instructors engage equally with students with parity in responsibilities) and supplemental teaching (i.e., each instructor provides individualized support). While these classifications and a growing number of studies indicate an increased prevalence of coteaching, the integration of this innovative form of instruction has been slow in business education.

Benefits of Coteaching and its Future in Business Education

Whether teaching accounting or business communication, most business instructors (and non-business) consider themselves lone wolves. This traditional reliance on independent instruction may come at the expense of student learning, especially during times of turbulence and disruption. Kliegl and Weaver (2011) argued that coteaching can enhance instruction and bring life back into stale content. Additionally, coteaching research has shown support for the value of coteaching to increasing student communication skills and higher quality student-teacher relationships (Cockburn-Wootten & Cockburn, 2011; Dugan & Letterman, 2008; Helms et al.,

2005) if instructors are willing to focus on their shared values, a mutual trust for one another, have complementary expertise and a willingness to experiment (pp 208-210). Co-teaching also shows tremendous promise and perhaps offers its greatest pedagogical value in hybrid learning environments, such as during COVID, wherein students attempted to learn in multiple modalities at once with new distractions competing for attention.

The utilization and systematic investigation of coteaching in business education is lagging, but not entirely nonexistent. Rehling and Lindeman (2010) chronicled their journey as co-teachers in a professional writing program with a “yin and yang” framework—instructors had different approaches to the content and highlighted their differences as a marker of success. Counter to the yin/yang approach, Gaytan (2010) responded to the AACSB’s decree that business schools need more innovative teaching methods by discussing coteaching as one possibility that instructors can use to “blur their disciplinary boundaries” (p. 82). As two business communication instructors versed in storytelling scholarship, we have found that when instructors offer a commonality to the source material, yet with noticeable differences in research interests, backgrounds, and approach to relevancy, coteaching offers students the “best of both worlds” and thus optimizes the learning experience for all involved.

Team Teaching During the Pandemic

In the spring of 2020, Drs. Zachary Goldman and Abby Koenig, both instructors of business education, were asked to coteach a graduate-level course on storytelling with data. This course had previously been taught either solely or with a graduate teaching assistant to facilitate the large grading load. When the pandemic hit, these two faculty members had to move all of their content online and facilitate a synchronous version of the course. Doing so, afforded the faculty an opportunity to lean on each other more than they might have without the constraints of a Covid teaching environment. What they found through trial and error were several benefits worth exploration.

Breaking the Wall Between Education and Work-Life

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Great global forces of change impact education and work-life in the 21st century. These forces will impact our lives despite where we are located. As an example, up to ½ million Finns need a new education in the near future. According to the Finnish Government's (Valtioneuvosto, 2020) parliamentary reform of continuous learning, combining different skills and agile ways of updating skills are the keys for both private and public sector actors to sustain growth now and in the future. According to Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund, "We must dare to create new, bolder solutions between the demands of lifelong learning and the chosen education policy. The future is ahead of us in a more surprising and rapidly changing way" (Pantzar, 2020, p. 13).

In addition to higher education, work-life is also changing radically requiring new skills and competencies (Finnish National Board of Education, 2019; Työ 2040, 2017; Digitoday, 2007). In addition to digitalization and automation, this is influenced by the changed meaning of work (Työ 2040, 2017) and increasing complexity (Niemi & Kräkin, 2019). Formal educational institutions struggle to respond to this demand. Additionally, learning takes largely place outside the education system and hybrid educational models are needed to provide agile cooperation between enterprises and formal education systems. (Koponen, 2018; Työ 2040, 2017). Surely, there is a demand for future learning ecosystems, where learning is constructed from an individual learner's perspective in a real-world setting and fosters lifelong learning (Walcutt & Schatz, 2019). Such ecosystems permit new ways for learners, teams, teachers, and work-life experts to build relationships and interact (Walcutt & Schatz, 2019).

The new world of work emphasizes self-direction, interpersonal and teamwork skills. A good leader is no longer an authoritarian delegator, but a coach of interaction who nurtures employees' inner motivation and helps them find meaning in their work. Teamwork, team intelligence and team learning can respond to the increasing complexity of work-life (Fillion et al., 2015; Hiila et al., 2019). There is evidence that well-functioning teamwork leads to better results and greater job satisfaction than hierarchically managed individual work. Successful teams share a common set of agreed norms and goals. A good team is psychologically safe, its members produce on average the same amount of speech and pay attention to each other through non-verbal communication. The diversity of individuals is respected and exploited. (Duhigg, 2016.) The importance of generic skills has also grown and continues to grow in the field of work-life skills (Atsar, 2017). Soft skills include teamwork, listening, dialogical skills, empathy, self-direction, and social skills. (Azim et. al., 2010.)

Similar phenomena most probably exist in other countries too and not only in Finland. In the light of all these facts, it is evident that a new model of education is required to match work-life and education better. An education model that considers both the development of communication skills of individual students, communication within and across teams, and the more general communication between work-life and

education. Tampere University of Applied Sciences (TAMK) has created a model that embraces these facets. TAMK has developed a novel multidisciplinary degree program where communication and learning happen in a completely new learning ecosystem.

The foundation for a successful and agile operating learning ecosystem is the internalization and implementation of dialogue. So-called dialogue diamond (Isaacs, 1999) principles include listening, respecting, waiting for your turn and talking straight from the heart. Practicing these essential communicative skills is done in a team throughout studies. Practicing dialogue skills will enable team learning which is the pedagogy used in the program. Team learning is a collective capability of a team, acquired through continuous disciplined and reflective practice, which helps the team to succeed – to achieve the valuable goals that the team has set for its activities (Senge, 2006).

In the new ecosystem team members will improve dialogical and all other skills and knowledge through planning and implementing real work-life projects assigned by companies and organizations from various fields. The integration of theoretical and practical knowledge and the use of a diverse network of experts is an essential part of this new learning model. This is supported, for example, by research by Anthony and Garner (2016), who found that the best methods for learning soft skills include the use of external experts and practical, reality-based assignments that engage students.

Real-life and real-time projects are key learning opportunities also for work-life organizations. Various studies (e.g., Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995) emphasize the continuously increasing significance of knowledge creation in teams also for organizations and companies. Learning plays a crucial role in the well-being and success of both staff and organization in the future, and development of professional skills are the best safeguard against change in an ever-changing and complex work-life.

To create and maintain a successful systemic ecosystem where learning happens to all participants – work-life representatives, organizations in general, students, coaches, teachers – a role of motivating and engaging system convenor is essential. A systems convener or systems convening team sets up spaces for enabling new types of cross-border conversations between people who are often located on different sides of a boundary. (Wenger-Travner, 2021.) For work-life organizations it is essential that an educational actor takes the role of a system convenor and facilitates the co-learning situations. TAMK's learning ecosystem operates exactly as one; it will connect companies, organizations, and universities as one.

This is a systemic learning ecosystem where learning takes place through dialogical communication between all participants, where the location of learning can be outside the formal educational institution, and where empowerment and meaningfulness of learning and creating new competencies create commitment and motivation. Characteristics of this new learning model can be applied and implemented in any degree program in any country.

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Moving From Monologue to Dialogue: Reimagining How to Teach Oral Communication

**James Stapp; Andrew Quagliata
Cornell University**

The main objective of our panel is to ask, how can we, as instructors of communication, move from monologue to dialogue? How can we provide activities, assignments, and approaches to our classes that spend just as much—if not more—time in collaborative dialogue as we already tend to spend in lecture and presentation?

Picture this: there you are, closing out a perfectly delivered 70-minute class lecture on how to give a great workplace presentation. Your slides were impeccable, your jokes all landed, only half your students seemed to not be paying attention. You did it. The old sage on the stage routine. You came. You taught. You conquered. You made a difference.

Or did you?

This panel will actively engage the audience in reflecting on our teaching practices. We will encourage lively discussion of how we all currently model oral communication in the classroom and we will crowdsource ideas, tips, and tricks to move our classes away from strictly monologue to more dialogue. As instructors of oral communication, we often don't consider how our own individual approaches to teaching model important concepts and behaviors to our students. Or how our own lectures and lessons in our communication classes contribute to our students' sense of what is "right" and what will be expected of them as professionals.

Mary Munter's popular Tell/Sell/Consult/Join model allows instructors of business communication to frame different communication scenarios that students will face in a simple and memorable format. While some instructors may focus on the importance of all four channels of communication in class discussions, we find that all too often our class lectures and assignments rely far too heavily on "telling" and "selling," at the expense of valuable experience putting into practice the styles of Consult/Join. As Munter notes, "Instead of trying to find one 'right' style, use the appropriate style at the appropriate time and avoid using the same style all of the time."

So, the question must be asked: are we as communication faculty doing enough to prepare our students for the way oral communication truly functions in the workplace? Are our lectures and class activities focused too much on Tell/Sell in the form of speeches, presentations, or pitches? Are we really following Munter's advice?

A 2019 alumni panel of the Cornell SC Johnson School of Business revealed some valuable insight from alums: though the alumni expressed finding value in Management Communication classes they completed, they noted that their professional experiences rarely required them to "present" in the formal way in which they were

taught while students. Most were using guided conversations, deep collaborations, and workshop facilitation to guide clients to viable solutions. As students, these alumni practiced presentations with low dialogue and high content control. As working professionals, this dynamic had flipped. In other words, as professionals they found themselves required to engage in far more “dialogues” than “monologues.”

Dialogue, as defined by William Issacs, the Founder of the Dialogue Project at MIT, is “a way of thinking and reflecting together.” Issacs acknowledges that dialogue is an old idea, but one that is not practiced enough. He argues that practicing dialogue helps us to listen to ourselves and others, respect differences, suspend opinions, and find our authentic voice. Our students benefit when we help them communicate in uncertain situations. The world is too complex and the challenges we face are too great to unintentionally give students the impression that a one-way flow of information will yield change.

The panel will be divided into three parts covering the key components to transforming your classroom approach to teaching and presenting. First, we will spend time personally reflecting on our own teaching practices and brainstorm ideas to shift our approach. Panelists will relay stories of both shortfalls and successes in approaches to lecture and class activities, including the success of using interruptions and requiring interaction as key focal points for presentation and speaking assignments.

Next, the panel will present some ideas for modifying typical speaking assignments that many instructors use in business communication. Panelists will present specific assignments and class activities that have helped them move toward a dialogue-driven approach. For example, as a replacement for a typical team presentation assignment, using Amazon’s method of “study hall” in a meeting—in which participants silently read a memo, then discuss and question the presenters—will be explained.

Finally, the panel will facilitate a look forward to innovating new assignments and will engage the audience in contributing their own ideas for the benefit of all. We will share ideas from assignments we have designed to facilitate more dialogue. For example, part of one team assignment includes 20 minutes of questions and answers where classmates roleplay audience members and are encouraged to ask follow-up questions when appropriate. We will ask, “How can we design assignments that require students to stop talking, listen to members of their audience, make sense of what they hear, and respond in an authentic way?”

Come prepared to be challenged and to participate in this lively and vital pedagogical presentation.

Innovative Instructional Methods

Designing and Delivering Communication Training to Industry Using a Coaching Model

**Jenny Morse
Colorado State University**

This presentation describes how I developed a remote training program for the agricultural bank, CoBank, and then adapted that program to allow any professional to benefit from learning and applying the techniques and strategies that build trust in writing.

The first part of the presentation reviews the particular needs of my original client and how we started with a one-on-one coaching strategy at their request. As a result of experience providing one-on-one coaching, limitations to that technique became clear. One-on-one coaching is kind of like therapy. We would talk for one hour once a week for a few weeks; each time I would try to identify what they were struggling with in their writing, we would review some of their writing, and I would make recommendations for how they could improve. But between those sessions, the individual didn't have sufficient structure to practice what we discussed, and I wasn't able to give them regular feedback on their writing. While the client expressed satisfaction with the coaching, I had no proof that I had helped the employee improve their writing, and I doubted that I had.

So, I decided to build an online course to better serve these one-on-one coaching clients. The course would have videos and exercises that they could work through independently during the week. Then they would send me some of the writing they had done that week for feedback. We would meet to discuss that feedback and what they had learned during the week.

The middle of the presentation describes how the sudden shift to a remote work environment in early 2020 allowed me the time, circumstances, and client need to create my online course and how I designed the training curriculum. I ran the first session of the course in July 2020 for 3 participants. The participants loved the program, and I loved that I had evidence their writing had actually improved. By the end of the course, their writing samples were substantially stronger—clearer, more concise, and more considerate—than when they began working with me.

The training program works similarly to my original vision. It consists of 20 video lectures by me, 20 handouts (provided), 12 readings, 12 open-ended questions, and 16 quizzes divided across 6 modules. Each module ends with participants submitting a writing sample for feedback. I provide written comments, and we discuss the feedback in a small group coaching session for the week. Over six weeks, participants complete the 6 modules, get feedback on 6 writing assignments, and meet for 6 one-hour coaching sessions.

The purpose of the program is to improve employees' business writing overall by helping them understand how trust is established in writing, use a 7-question process for planning their writing, practice strategies for crafting clear and complete messages, apply sentence-level strategies for concise and considerate messages, recognize effective formatting for messages, and proofread their messages efficiently. The goal is to make professionals faster, more effective writers so that they can focus on the work they're responsible for rather than the writing that transacts that work.

The primary audience of the program is native or near-native English speakers who work in high-trust fields where credibility must be established quickly even if they rarely meet with their audiences in-person or speak to them over the phone.

Finally, the presentation reviews the results from the program. In the last 18 months, I have run the program 7 times. All participants have reported that they found the program enjoyable and beneficial with more than 83% calling the course "excellent" and 66% reporting that the course was "incredibly useful." Ninety-seven percent described the weekly coaching sessions as the most vital part of the course, keeping them accountable for their progress and helping solidify the lessons they worked on independently during the week.

More importantly, 2/3 reported spending more time both planning and revising their writing, areas that they typically report as lacking in the Initial Assessment survey. At the same time, 1/2 reported that their overall writing time decreased.

This program empowers professionals with the tools they need to become both faster and better writers, building their confidence in their communication skills and making them more effective in connecting with their audiences and getting their jobs done. While the program continues to serve the banking organization for which it was originally designed, participants have come from myriad fields: manufacturing, government agencies, public relations, psychology, consulting, engineering, and others. I'm pleased that the course I've designed has received such a positive response and helps professionals become more efficient (fast!) and more effective (clear! concise! nice!) writers.

Incorporating Digital Badges and Micro-Credentials Into Undergraduate Business Programs - Part Two: Lessons Learned

**Caron L. Martinez; Sara Weinstock
American University**

Micro-credentials and badges recognize learning and provide information to relevant stakeholders. However, incentivizing students to complete any “extra” activities can be a challenge. The 2021 National Survey of Student Engagement showed what we all know to be true: students are challenged to concentrate and apply themselves to their academic work given continuing effects of the pandemic. To overcome any potential reticence around “extra” work, we embedded pathways for completion of badge activities into existing coursework in the business core curriculum.

Our first academic micro-credential, shown by a digital badge, demonstrates competency in Oral Communications. To acquire the badge, students must successfully complete tasks to demonstrate proficiency in the following four areas:

- Listen Actively
- Speak with Clarity and Precision
- Use Appropriate Tone and Words
- Tell Stories to Express Ideas

At last year’s ABC Conference, we described launching our pilot program. Our goal for this year’s conference is to report on our findings and implications after the first year of micro-credentialing in the event our peers in business communications are considering a similar effort to demonstrate students’ acquisition of these essential skills. By sharing the process, challenges, and wins of setting up a micro-credentials process, we can assess how well we’re bridging the gap between academics and the professional world, and establish whether we would recommend this avenue confidently to our peers.

Our pilot program focused on a new cohort of incoming first-year students in our required first-year Intro to Business course. At Kogod, this cohort is 300+ students divided into 11 class sections. All students in all sections do a “News Talk” for the class, and successful completion of the News Talk according to the designated criteria on the rubric would satisfy the requirements of the ‘Speak with Clarity and Precision’ activity for the badge. 179 students completed the News Talk successfully in the class, as assessed by the professors in each section, vs. 111 who did not pass. The overall pass rate was 62%.

Key Takeaways

Badges Can Effectively Incentivize Mid-Level Achieving Students

In our pilot, we wanted students to self-enroll in “Microcredentials @ Kogod” - our Canvas “hub” - as a way of demonstrating their interest in badge-earning.

The data indicate that a badge might be a good way to incentivize the mid-tier performers to work on their professionalism skills. Our highest enrollments of any kind came from students who performed in the “B” grade range. The data also indicate that students with the lowest grades weren’t interested in doing anything “extra.” It may be that those students are largely unreachable.

Recommendation: While we hate to lose this data point, we will not ask students to opt-in in the future. Instead, we'll co-enroll them in badges when they enroll in the first-year course, so they can receive our support emails and notices of upcoming workshops.

KSB-100 Instructors Were Mostly Consistent Scorers; Two Were Outliers

The section breakdown is overall encouraging, showing that most instructors passed students at an approximately 2:1 pass/fail ratio. Two professors appear to be outliers - one passed all students in the section, and another failed all students in their section.

Recommendation: Assessment norming among instructors for all sections of the course should be part of the training for professors going forward so that we/they assess students more equitably across all sections.

Students Struggle Most in Two Rubric Areas: Using ‘Hooks,’ to Spark Interest up Front, and Speaking with Confidence

“Uses a Hook” and “Speaking with Confidence” are the two areas where KSB-100 students failed the most, meaning those items were the most common barriers to moving forward successfully in their badge journey.

Recommendation: The CBC and professors can use this data to assist the next cohort of KSB-100. Knowing the two most common areas of failure, we can target additional instruction and support towards these two areas of deficit/improvement in public speaking.

Students Self-Report a High Level of Understanding and Motivation to Pursue Badges

According to the survey results, 65% of first-year students rated themselves at a 7 or higher (out of 10) to score their awareness of how microcredentials are a tool to increase their attractiveness to potential employers for internships and jobs. 35% rated themselves at a 6 or lower.

The final question in the survey asked unenrolled students, “Why have you not yet enrolled in the 'Microcredentials @ Kogod' website?” Many responses for the unenrolled can be summarized as, “I wasn’t aware of its value/didn't know how to enroll.”

Recommendation: The Center will need to continue to work with professors and sections to make students aware through email, class visits, and encouragement from professors and TAs. Building a culture of practice, fun, and social interaction in our new Center for Professionalism will hopefully build a cohort of "gatekeepers" - those students who try and succeed and recommend that their friends do the same.

Key Challenges

W-I-I-F-M

Students are transactional and want to know "What's in it for me?" We see great value in students getting instruction, practicing, perhaps failing, and repeating the cycle until they develop confidence and muscle memory to succeed in all rubric areas. For students, the main selling point of badging is to be more attractive to potential employers when graduation rolls around.

Recommendation: Dedicated space and time where students can practice to complete an activity towards a badge with other students with our Center's peer consultants as coaches was shown to have appeal in a dedicated workshop in March. We believe we can incentivize students once they've begun their badge journey with a class assignment to do more on their own.

No Student Has Yet Re-Attempted a Failed News Talk

It's discouraging that no student re-attempted the News Talk, and only 5 students made an attempt to complete another deliverable.

Recommendation: We will need to try different methods to encourage a culture of engagement and try, try, again. Again, our March workshop around the "Listen Actively" requirement, with food, a 'fishbowl activity,' and one-on-one peer coaching is a solid model to build on.

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Innovative Instructional Methods

Close to Home: Partnering With the Department for Class Client Projects

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The process of finding, recruiting, collaborating with, and maintaining community partnerships for service-learning projects can be daunting and time-consuming for business communication instructors. Taylor (2006) affirms “Teaching client-based projects is labor intensive, and maintaining close contact with the client adds to the teacher’s workload” (p. 135; see also Huckin, 1997). However, one way to simplify the process is for instructors to partner within their own department. I argue that academic departments run like a business, with business-like hierarchies, procedures, and goals. Students embedded in that setting can receive professional experience working with(in) an organization.

While there are several different benefits for designing these close-to-home partnerships, they can mostly be categorized by what I call writing AS the community. This term comes as a response to Thomas Dean’s (2000) service-learning framework where he describes that projects fall under three categories: writing FOR the community, writing ABOUT the community, and writing WITH the community (p. 109). Although these three approaches cover many communication programs, treating universities and communities as separate entities does not fully capture the possibilities of community-engaged pedagogy. I argue that this fourth paradigm—writing AS the community—actively situates work in the classroom as pertaining to communities, agencies, and institutions to which students, faculty, and classes already belong. Participants in this fourth paradigm are not necessarily separated based on perceived locations, but instead foster partnerships as stakeholders within their own local communities or on public issues. Adopting a “writing AS” perspective allows students and faculty to view their own communities as sources to enact service and social change through writing.

In this scenario, to establish a course and a partnership for this project, instructors can start by coordinating and developing relevant class projects with the department key stakeholders (department chair, communications staff, etc.). From there, depending on the project, the “client” of the project may change to be other specific department members responsible for the area being communicated about (course leads, faculty advisors, committee chairs, etc.).

Examples of business communication projects include

- designing promotional material for department events or groups (flyers, posters, emails)
- writing technical material to advise students about major and career opportunities (brochures, infographics, web-content)
- researching business problems for the department (surveys, reports, usability tests)
- developing branding concepts for the department to use (templates, color palettes, branding packets)

- creating recruitment materials for attracting and retaining students to the department (videos, social media posts, marketing campaigns)
- drafting instructional materials for office staff or faculty to use to ensure continuity of operations (manuals, operating procedures)
- editing materials produced by the department for content, plain language, organization, and copyediting needs

These named projects are only a few examples of the kinds of communication needs a department may have, and there are many others that other courses may take on.

Barring unfortunate department drama or authority disparities, instructors can more easily develop partnerships with colleagues in their own department. Similarly, students may be working with department members they have previously encountered during their time in the department. Moreover, the students are more likely to feel a certain amount of ownership and investment in the project because they belong to the community that the projects are helping. This embeddedness can also benefit students as they design messages for other students similar to them. By being the “target audience,” students have a better understanding (even sometimes than the instructors) of their audience’s needs and values. They are closer to the target audience for message and usability testing.

This partnership can operate successfully since instructors may already know other involved the faculty and department members associated with the specific class projects and have easy “physical” proximity to them. Participants theoretically could “just go upstairs” to their partner’s office if they had any questions. I have designed such class projects to operate similarly to an internship, with the instructor as the “supervisor.” Students would come regularly to class to learn the relevant media and composition skills and to workshop their materials with each other and the instructor. Since the objective would be to contextualize students within a professional setting, the professor and the students could work closely with their relevant “client” within the department to ensure that the projects composed by the course would be effective for the department’s business needs.

In one model of the class, students would divide themselves up into multiple groups to each design and develop different projects for the department. Ideally, such a partnership could also be planned for the course in every semester, thus continuing the partnership with the department and allowing projects started by the course in the first semester to be carried forward and perpetuated long term.

My poster (and short presentation) will highlight this model of partnering with one’s home department and suggest ideas for successful client projects within this model. I will draw on my experience working with these kinds of partnerships at The Ohio State University and Brigham Young University–Idaho. Moreover, I will offer a wide range of potential projects that I have developed with my students as well as a potential assignment sequence that could be used.

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A Three-Dimensional Approach to Teaching Conflict Styles

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Purposes and Goals

Conflict is prevalent in the workplace, whether it is small or large, intense, or mild. It is estimated that employees in the United States are involved in conflict almost 2.8 hours every week (“Workplace Conflict,” 2022). If not managed effectively, those conflicts can be time consuming and costly. Conflict resolution has become a highly sought-after skill by employers. One of most widely used instruments in conflict resolution training was developed by Thomas and Kilmann (1974). In their model Kilmann and Thomas (1975, 1977) classified five conflict handling styles based on two dimensions: assertiveness (concern for self) and cooperativeness (concern for others). These five conflict styles are avoiding, accommodating, compromising, competing, and collaborating. When avoiding, an individual doesn't address their and others' concerns immediately and/or withdraw from the conflict. Accommodating occurs when a person sacrifices their personal interest to please the other party in hopes of maintaining a harmonious relationship. Opposite to accommodating, an individual using the competing style will pursue their own goals at the expense of the others. Compromising is identified when the two parties in conflict meet in the middle ground, and both give up some of their interests. Collaborating means the two parties work together to identify a mutually satisfying solution, and it is often considered a win-win style.

When teaching these five conflict styles, I have implemented a three-dimensional approach, which incorporates role-play, self-assessment, and critical analysis. To be more specific, the following learning objectives will be achieved:

- To visualize and experience the five conflict styles through role-play
- To enhance awareness of one’s own conflict styles through self-assessment
- To evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each conflict style through critical analysis

This three-dimensional approach can help students gain a comprehensive understanding of those conflict styles and apply this knowledge more effectively.

Methods

The detailed procedure of the three-dimensional approach is outlined below:

1. **Introduction.** Most students never heard of these five conflict styles prior to the class session. It is necessary for the instructor to explain the differences among these styles before starting the role-play activity.

2. **Preparation.** Divide the class into five groups and assign each group a specific conflict style. Each group needs to design a skit to demonstrate the given conflict style. All the members in one group are required to participate in the role-play activity. Students will have the freedom to develop their scripts and roles. In the past I have done two versions: the first version is giving all the groups the same conflict scenario (such as a supervisor-subordinate conflict) and let them use different styles to handle that situation; the second version is asking each group to create their own conflict scenario. Both versions have been proven effective. It is important to point out that the purpose of this activity is not to ask students to find out the best way to handle their conflict situation. Instead, they need to demonstrate how to use the designated style (such as accommodation) to deal with that conflict. I usually give students 10 minutes to prepare their skit.
3. **Perform and identify.** Each group takes turn to act out their skit in front of their classmates. After each skit, the rest of the class will guess which conflict style is exhibited. Based on my previous experiences the performing group often accurately demonstrated the assigned conflict style. However, sometimes students might be confused about the differences between comprise and collaboration, and between accommodation and comprise. Make sure to clarify the confusions, and applaud students for their creative and dynamic performances. This step takes approximately 10 minutes.
4. **Self-assessment.** After the role play activity, I let students do a survey to assess their conflict styles. It is an opportunity for students to reflect upon their own approaches for dealing with conflict. This step takes approximately 15 minutes.
5. **Critical analysis.** Next, I ask students whether they think the survey instrument is accurate and valid. The responses I have received tend to be a combination of yes, no, and unsure. This is a perfect time to critically analyze these five conflict styles. Some discussion questions include: In what situations is it appropriate and not appropriate to use each conflict style? What are the limitations of a two-dimensional conflict model? What other factors that may influence conflict management? This section encourages students to think beyond the obvious and engage in critical learning.

The entire procedure takes approximately one hour.

Outcomes

I have used this three-dimensional approach to teaching conflict styles in both undergraduate and graduate classes. This approach will help stimulate student interest and promote active participation in the learning process. Through the process of performing, self-reflecting and critiquing students will be able to internalize the knowledge in the textbook and become more mindful and effective in a conflict situation.

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Information Literacy in the Business Writing Classroom: A Scaffolded, Progressive Approach to Professional Research

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Purpose

This presentation will introduce an innovative approach to teaching research, developed by integrating information literacy methods with research focused on professional resources. We will discuss our solution to the on-going challenge of engaging students in large research projects.

Goals

In sharing our solution, we hope to open a new conversation about the challenges we all face in teaching research in professional contexts. In addition, our colleagues may find some inspiration and ideas from our interdisciplinary approach, and we are open to learning about others' practices.

Methodology and Outcomes

Getting our undergraduate students to practice authentic research, which we define as research for the purpose of learning or discovering, is a challenge. Most of our students think of "research" as a quick Google search to find something – anything – that will provide a quote or a factoid they can include in their paper and check off the "required research" box. However, in their study Dale Cyphert and Stanley Lyle found that "the [in]ability to recognize what information would be needed to answer a specific business question" was a source of deep employer frustration (p. 62).

Teaching students how to conduct authentic research, however, is fundamental to teaching business communication. Even when we point out that they do authentic research for personal reasons all the time: when they choose a major or student org, when they buy a new phone or select an app, it is difficult to convince them that it is important. Our instructional team is continually considering ways to help our students develop these important research skills while at the same time beginning the process of professionalization by letting them experience what research looks like in their future fields. Because students are unaware of the publications and places where members of their discourse communities gather for conversation, one of our primary goals is to introduce them to these locations and how to engage with the material they find there.

In August 2017, our instructional team held a retreat to consider this question in a focused way, approaching it through the perspective of information literacy. Up to then, we had conducted the standard training in doing research using the library databases and, over time, refining a set of definitions of standard source types (newspapers, popular and trade magazines, scholarly journals, etc.).

During our retreat, we focused on three main topics:

- A. Threshold Concepts: how can we help students understand that the skills they learn in our class can be transferred to other classes as well as their future workplaces? Building from Barry Maid and Barbara D'Angelo's (2017) argument that "[transfer] moves ... towards a pedagogy that teaches students how to apply what they have learned in the classroom to other classrooms and other areas of life" (p. 43), we wanted to underscore ways professionals find information to solve workplace problems.
- B. The Research Process Itself: authentic research involves doing a broad sweep of available information, then refining questions and researching again, until we are able to come to an educated conclusion. In effect, as articulated by Katt Blackwell-Starnes (2017), "Educators need to separate the preliminary research and topic narrowing from the final assignment, encouraging a research process that narrows an interesting topic, determines the information needed, and effectively locates needed information ... Separating the preliminary research from the formal research assignment and introducing low-risk, graded preliminary research assignments aids students' [Information Literacy] skills while also opening classroom discussions about the research process" (p. 143).
- C. The Ethical Imperative of Professional Competence: with ethics and integrity being a central focus of many business writing classrooms, we wanted to emphasize that being fully informed isn't optional. We drew primarily from Mark Forster (2017), who writes "An ill-informed professional is a potentially incompetent, even dangerous, one. A professional who has failed to develop, or sought to develop and maintain, the ability to identify information lack, search for and identify all relevant information and critique it ... practises from that incomplete knowledge base, is practising unethically" (p. 86).

In sum, we wanted something that would allow for students to practice authentic research in a low-stakes environment (Blackwell-Starnes, 2017), while also recording and reflecting on their research processes (Wojahn et al., 2016). To this end, Frances and Melanie developed and piloted a series of research log assignments that would allow students to cast a broad net, analyze the styles and purposes of different source types, and practice assessing credibility.

In the new assignment sequence, students complete the research logs before receiving the main research project; this forces them to engage in the process without the ability to look for "the answer." These assignments consist of a series of tables (in Word documents) that students fill out as they investigate and analyze different professional sources, choosing articles that exemplify the characteristics they've identified and that discuss aspects of communication. Each assignment also asks them to reflect on what they learned from the previous log. Once the research logs are completed, students receive the instructions for the investigative report; because much of the research has been completed, the students can take what they've already gathered and build on it.

The results have been positive. We have revised the assignments as a group and individuals have put their own stamp on it, but in general it has fulfilled a number of our stated pedagogical goals. It has effectively exposed students to a broad range of sources and allowed students to start reading as professionals – reading to understand what is going on in their field, how outside events affect their field, etc. It has introduced them to source types that are new to them, and allowed them to see the benefits of accessing multiple sources and multiple articles within given sources.

While we continue to refine and adapt to the shifting information ecosystem, overall, we consider these to be a success.

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Brahmanical Idealism vs Strategic Pragmatism: Contrasting the Negotiating Practices in India and China

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India and China are now emerging as major players in the global economy. Flows of foreign direct investments have surged in these countries, and especially so in India. They are attractive markets in their own rights, but they have also given birth to global firms. The institutional environment of India and China stands in marked contrast to that of advanced developed economies. One key dimension of institutions is national culture, and, in this presentation, I outline how national cultural differences influence their negotiating behavior.

Indian negotiating behavior has been shaped by a mode of thinking that is idealistic. Brahmanical idealism is focused on attaining the perfect solution (Kumar, 2004). Idealism has a long tradition in Indian philosophical thinking (e.g., Lannoy, 1971; Moddie, 1968; Nakamura, 1964,). As Kumar (2004, p. 43) notes: "According to Lannoy (1971) Indians follow a non-sequential logic in which actions are judged primarily for their own sake rather than for the effect that they produce". An ideal solution is a theoretical abstraction that exists in the mind but not in the external world. As we navigate in the external world, we are confronted with problems that need to be resolved in a time dependent manner.

How does idealism impact the behavior of Indian negotiators? If the initial expectations are over inflated or unrealistic, then an agreement is hard to come by. The search for an ideal solution suggests that negotiators have high expectations. Accordingly, the Indian negotiators pursue a contending strategy. A contending strategy means pursuing a win lose strategy with any concession being seen as a loss. There can be no basis for making a concession as such a concession would prevent the ideal from being achieved. Trust will decline and the actors may be drawn into a tit for tat negative spiral. It is hard to extricate oneself from such a spiral as it is unclear as to who will make the first move without losing face. Idealists will be slow to display flexibility. As they are operating on the basis of principles, how can one compromise if this would involve betraying our principles.

Strategic pragmatism is a doctrine that is focused on attaining desired outcomes. This stems from their holistic mind set (Nisbett, Choi, Peng & Norenzayan, 2001). Holistic thinking assumes "... multidirectional causality, accepts ambiguity, and is pragmatic in nature" (Kumar & Worm, 2004, p. 315). The recognition is that in any negotiation there is ambiguity, but the goal is to make the ambiguity work for you. Strategic pragmatism implies that those negotiators need to constantly make adjustments and shift their strategy as the environment shifts. Strategic pragmatism also lessens the need to be emotionally committed to any strategy. A lack of emotional commitment allows the Chinese negotiators to potentially pursue a wide variety of strategies. In pursuing a range of strategic options, the Chinese negotiators do not prematurely limit the various possibilities that may be open to them. This is strategically advantageous as it might keep the opponent on their toes. As the emphasis is on final outcomes and less on the process, this approach is likely to yield tangible results which may make it easily sellable to their constituents. Chinese are ruthless in pursuit of strategic goals even though they are

adaptable in how they achieve them. There is a silent but a ruthless ambition to be successful. A classic example of the role of strategic pragmatism is the opium wars. There were two opium wars in 1839-42 and 1856-60. China lost these wars and had to make territorial concessions. The humiliation that China endured during this period has not been entirely forgotten and the lesson that the Chinese learnt was to be strong so that they would not be overwhelmed by outside powers. The only way to prevent humiliation was to become strong and this necessitates strategic pragmatism to achieve the objectives. When China opened up under Deng Xiao Peng in 1979, the intention was to revive the Chinese economy and to strengthen China. In order to achieve this objective Chinese invited foreign investors and created a red carpet for them. In a span of just about four decades the results have been truly impressive. China is now the world's second largest economy.

The contrasting approaches to negotiations are rooted in historically derived institutional practices and the cultural logics that have governed these societies. In the Indian case Indian philosophical thinking with its emphasis on the ideal has been the dominant influence whereas in the Chinese case Confucianism has played an important role. The presentation will also spell out practical advice for negotiating in these different cultural contexts.

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Business Storytelling in Virtual and Traditional Study Abroad Opportunities

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Abstract

Storytelling is a key component of business communication and convey values, lessons, and morals while connecting audiences to the experience of the teller. A business communication lecturer and doctoral student in global leadership used observations from a Virtual Study Abroad in Ireland and a traditional Study Abroad in Greece can begin to inform on how storytelling can serve leadership development, classroom pedagogy for business students, and guide further study.

This presentation makes the case for a greater understanding of storytelling in global contexts. Storytelling is important as business communicators and global leaders relate to each other and are exposed to narratives that “create order in, and make sense of, the real world and the past” (Hansen, 2012, p. 696). As a familiar device, storytelling serves as a connective way that speaker and audience relate through simplistic patterns that often contain “a beginning, a middle, and an end” (Aristotle, c. 335 B.C., p. 12; Freytag, 1863, p. 115). Storytelling is just one of the many ways that speaker and audience can connect through identification, inform, and persuade culturally (Burke, 1950). Harvard Business Review adds that speakers must tell stories and tell them well (Fryer, 2003; Margaritis, 2018).

While storytelling has common plots and narratives, stories in global business communication need more opportunities for more rigorous academic review of how they are commonly constructed, or the similarity and differences across cultures, and their effect on organizational members (Booker, 2004). The author of this proposal used a Virtual Study Abroad in Ireland and a traditional Study Abroad in Greece to observe business communication and leadership storytelling firsthand. Using Narrative Paradigm Theory authored by Fisher (1985) the author makes sense of the storytelling observed while on the study abroad opportunities. Both formal and information communication by global storytellers in Greece and Ireland were observed for their use and some commonalities.

Theoretical Framework

As conceived by Fisher (1985) Narrative Paradigm Theory offers that each speaker is a storyteller. Humans connect via this storytelling, making decisions to embrace, reject, and interpret the words of others as they make meaning in the world from an audience perspective (Fisher, 1985). These perspectives allow this decision-making “for different people, at different times, and in different places” (Goby, 2021, p. 606). Narrative Paradigm Theory, offers Fisher, allows for speakers to connect via storytelling in many ways better than communication centered on logic or ration. This narrative-driven framework centered on storytelling, storyteller, and audience provides then the ability for qualitative inquiry that can transcend culture, experience,

and arrive at interaction of storyteller and audience, permitting the researcher to be both seeker and interpreter (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). As part of naturalistic inquiry taken during as part of a participant observational study, the researcher was able observe storytelling through the lens of the five senses and record findings (Beuving & de Vries, 2015).

Rationale

Storytelling has a growing history in being evaluated for its practice in the highly professional settings of business communication, leadership, and multi-disciplinary approaches. For business communicators, storytelling has been deployed for a range of items including brand awareness to entrepreneurial pitches (Wachtman & Johnson, 2009; Margherita & Verrill, 2021). Leadership scholarship have long contended the use of storytelling to persuade audiences and its magic-like effects on audiences (Takala & Auvinen, 2016; Auvinen et al., 2013; Denning, 2006). Use of storytelling has been reviewed for its use in faith organizations, the legal system, and in college choice (Peterson & Garner, 2019; Johnson, 2017; Burns, 2015). The prevalence of storytelling in this research indicate that its use is getting noticed and is deserving of a larger review for its properties across global context.

Methodology

The Virtual Study Abroad in Ireland was conducted over a three-day period while the researcher was able to join the journey from computer and Zoom technology while observing experiences. The Greece Study Abroad was traditional in nature and occurred over an eighteen-day period which was extended due to the researcher contracting COVID-19. In both experiences while keeping with naturalistic inquiry, observations were made and recorded into notes (Beuving & deVries, 2015). This use of observation via naturalistic inquiry complimented the application of Narrative Paradigm Theory and permitted the researcher to occupy the valuable role of audience member, participant, interpreter, and seeker on storytelling inquiry. Following the observation, notes were examined per the observation questions.

Observation Questions

The following questions guided research on storytelling during the two Study Abroad experiences in Ireland and Greece, respectively:

- What kinds of storytelling took place and what were the characteristics, components, and features of the storytelling? How did they compare across cultures, study abroad modalities (virtual and traditional), and how can those observations be applicable to international business students in the United States?
- What common and differing narratives, if any, emerge from this business storytelling? What question beg further exploration or research to refine the narratives?
- What are perceivable impacts on audiences and organizational members of this business storytelling? How does the observed business storytelling relate to cultural dimensions as explored by Hofstede or others?

Findings

The author found that storytelling was done in abundance during both visits. In both study abroad visits, storytelling was present in nearly every site visit, whether in-person or traditional. Storytelling was utilized to guide discussions at every level of importance from classroom visits to cab rides or historic site visits to modern businesses. Stories were used to construct identity, circumstances, and vision for a variety of individuals, organizations, and sources. Further, stories ranged into discussions of faith, history, myth, science, and technology. These stories were regularly utilized to comment on morality, winners, or losers, and were so plentiful that they blended well from formal and informal communication. Storytelling was so abundant during the study abroad, that the researcher struggled at times to discern where one story stopped, and another began. Interpersonal storytelling occurred informally among study abroad participants while storytelling was being readily conducted by academics, site hosts, and tour guides. The results, which will be discussed more expansively by conference presentation, indicate a plethora of storytelling in constant use and deserving of consideration by business communicators, global organizations, and scholars.

Conclusion

These initial observations from these two study abroad experiences provoke the need for further study in global leadership storytelling, inform and enhance classroom teaching and pedagogy on business storytelling in global context, and may potentially be a source of knowledge for future business communicators. Students and practitioners alike, should become familiar with its usage while centering on the prevalence of its use. Research should also attempt to address why such storytelling is so prevalent and where appropriate, provide terminology and recognition equal to its use and type.

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Evaluation of Disability Accommodations in Higher Education: A Comparison of International University Students' Perspectives on Deaf Faculty

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Introduction

Study Purpose

Many universities have developed disability services and research projects advocating for disabled students (Gibson, 2012; Harpur & Loudoun, 2011). However, few universities have developed disability services and research projects to advocate for disabled faculty members (Saltes, 2022; Smith & Andrews, 2015). Few studies have discussed the issues of the lack of accommodations for disabled faculty, including accommodations to improve disabled faculty's contributions to teaching, research, and professional activities. Accommodations for deaf and hard-of-hearing faculty have higher costs compared to those for other disabled faculty members.

Therefore, this study investigated university students' valuation of classes taught by deaf faculty members and the experiences of deaf faculty members, particularly focusing on how accommodations have helped enrich their teaching, research activities, and professional services. This study used a mixed-methods design and consisted of two parts. The first part collected quantitative and qualitative data to compare university students' valuation of classes taught by deaf faculty and actual accommodation costs for deaf faculty members. The second part gathered quantitative and qualitative data and compared deaf faculty members' experiences with accommodations at their current, former, and alumni universities.

Research Questions

1. What are university students' valuations of classes taught by deaf faculty members?
2. What are university students' perspectives on accommodations for deaf faculty members?
3. By receiving accommodations, were deaf faculty members able to be actively involved in teaching, research, and professional activities? By not receiving accommodations, were deaf faculty members prevented from these activities?
4. What are the differences between student and faculty support systems?

Methodology

This study focused on university students who took classes taught by deaf faculty members at universities and deaf faculty members who work at mainstream universities internationally.

Explanatory Analysis of University Students

The study adapted the explanatory design, which initially collects quantitative data, followed by qualitative data to explore the in-depth findings from the quantitative data (Creswell & Clark, 2011). First, I conducted a contingent valuation survey on payments (Mitchell & Carson, 1989) to determine university students' willingness to pay for classes taught by deaf faculty members compared to those by non-deaf faculty members, with answers provided by checking an item of money value from between \$10 and \$500. The questionnaire included university students' social attributes, such as nationality, major, and disability status, to identify a relevance between willingness to pay and social attributes. I used the chi-squared test and t-test analysis.

Next, I collected qualitative interview information from hearing and deaf university students who participated in the quantitative survey. In interviews with international college students, I used Japanese Sign Language, American Sign Language, Japanese, English, and sign language interpreters. The interview guide asked about the benefits that the students obtained from classes taught by deaf faculty members, reasons for valuing these classes, communication barriers, and suggestions for improving support systems for deaf faculty members. I utilized content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). I divided data from interview transcripts into five categories: student background, class background, contingent valuation method, benefit and experience, and suggestions. In addition, I divided quantitative survey information into four categories: student background, class background, contingent valuation method, and benefit and experience. Subsequently, I compared quantitative and qualitative data using an explanatory analysis.

Exploratory Analysis on Deaf Faculty Members

I adapted the exploratory design (Creswell & Clark, 2011), which collects qualitative data, followed by quantitative data to generate qualitative data. Previous studies did not include interview questionnaires regarding deaf faculty members' contributions. Thus, I developed a questionnaire on the differences in support systems between current, former, and alumni universities, outcomes of deaf faculty members with and without accommodations, and suggestions for deaf faculty support systems. This study aimed to identify a causal relationship between deaf faculty members' contributions and accommodations. I used content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) and divided interview data into eight categories: faculty background, university background, current university, former university, alumni university, comparison, suggestion, and other. In interviews with international deaf faculty members, the researcher I used Japanese Sign Language, American Sign Language, British Sign Language, International Signs, English, and Japanese.

Next, I distributed quantitative surveys to international deaf faculty members to validate the causal relationships identified from qualitative interview data. The questionnaire inquired regarding differences in accommodations between current, former, and alumni universities, teaching, research, professional outcomes of deaf faculty members with and without accommodations, suggestions for improving deaf faculty support systems, and social attributes, such as nationality, specialization, and communication method. Then, I divided quantitative data into eight categories to provide a posteriori justification from qualitative data based on exploratory analysis.

Comparison of Perspectives of College Students and Deaf Faculty Members

From quantitative and qualitative collections, I compared differences in perspectives between university students and deaf faculty members and their suggestions for improving deaf faculty support systems.

Results

University Students' Willingness to Pay for Classes Taught by Deaf Faculty Members

I examined international college students ($n=104$) who took classes taught by deaf faculty members using an online quantitative survey. University students were from Japan, Canada, the United States, Ghana, Sweden, India, and Hong Kong. Furthermore, I conducted qualitative online interviews with university students ($n=19$) who studied at universities in Japan, the United States, Canada, Sweden, and Ghana.

The results identified differences in tuition based on country, country of origin, university policies, and major. University students ($n=89$) on average were willing to pay JPY10,095.51 per year. I examined the reasons that university students were willing to pay for classes taught by deaf faculty members. The answers revealed added value in classes taught by deaf faculty members compared to those taught by non-deaf faculty members ($n=44$), desire to support deaf faculty members ($n=37$), interest in attending a class taught by a deaf faculty member ($n=35$), lack of specific reasons but willingness to pay ($n=9$), and other reasons ($n=13$).

Moreover, I analyzed the differences in university students' willingness to pay based on country of origin and nationality. I used the chi-squared test to compare willingness to pay among three groups: the United States/Canada ($n=45$), Japan ($n=22$), and Ghana ($n=16$). There was a statistically significant difference between the three groups ($\chi^2=31.269^{***}$). Furthermore, I utilized a t-test to compare differences in the average willingness to pay within each group. There were no statistically significant differences between the United States/Canada and Ghana; however, there was a statistical difference between the United States/Canada and Japan ($t=3.875^{***}$) and between Ghana and Japan ($t=-2.205^{***}$). Japanese students' average total values were lower than those of American, Canadian, and Ghanaian students.¹

The interview results regarding university students' criteria associated with willingness to pay revealed varied responses, with values based on tuition, lecture fees, and textbook fees. Some students indicate the influence of faculty members' specialization rather than disability status. Some hearing students identified direct communication access without the use of sign language interpreters, as they wanted to improve their sign language skills. Overall, students valued classes taught by deaf faculty members.

Conversely, students who responded with a value of zero reported reasons such as free tuition, tuition being an additional charge, the course topic and context being more important than a faculty member's disability status, and lack of difference between classes taught by deaf and non-deaf faculty members. However, the first and second responses were associated with tuition exemption policies in different countries or lack of understanding of the contingent valuation survey method. These responses would be "protest bids" to the contingent valuation method; therefore, they were excluded from the data analysis. The rest of the responses related to unwillingness to pay for a class based on disability status while valuing the course topic and context.

Lastly, I estimated Japanese students' willing to pay for classes taught by deaf faculty members. Japanese students' ($n=22$) average total value was JPY3181.82. Average Japanese university tuition was JPY817,800 per year (Asset Management One, 2021), which means 0.39% of the valuation. The total number of Japanese college

¹ *** indicate significance at the 1% levels, respectively.

students in 2020 was 2,916,000 (Obunsha Educational Information Center, 2020). Therefore, 0.39% of the total value of classes taught by deaf faculty members was estimated at JPY9,300,000,000 (=JPY817,800 per student \times 2,916,000 students \times 0.39 \div 100). This result indicates Japanese students' total values on deaf faculty classes.

The Status Quo of Deaf Faculty Support Systems

I conducted qualitative interviews with deaf faculty members ($n=25$) who worked at mainstream universities in Japan, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, and Ghana. Moreover, I conducted a quantitative survey of international deaf faculty members ($n=57$) from the above countries as well as Finland, Turkey, South Africa, Australia, and Belgium.

According to the survey results revealed the following responses: "I received both student and faculty accommodations" ($n=35$), "I received student accommodations, but I did not receive faculty accommodations" ($n=7$), "I received faculty accommodations, but I did not receive student accommodations" ($n=13$), and "I received neither student nor faculty accommodations" ($n=2$). Furthermore, deaf faculty members ($n=38$) also worked at past universities, and some of them ($n=6$) did not receive accommodations.

I coded open-ended answers regarding differences between current and former universities. The participants indicated that the support systems at current and former universities were the same ($n=9$), the support systems at current and former universities were different ($n=20$), the support systems at the current university were better than at former universities ($n=6$), the support systems at former universities were better than at the current university ($n=2$), and the support systems at the current and former universities were poor ($n=2$). One respondent explained that the former university was better because it had a large deaf student population.

Moreover, I coded open-ended answers regarding differences between student and faculty accommodations. The participants reported that student accommodations were better than faculty accommodations ($n=15$), faculty accommodations were better than student accommodations ($n=6$), student and faculty accommodations were the same ($n=2$), student and faculty accommodations were different ($n=21$), and student and faculty accommodations were poor ($n=4$). Other respondents ($n=3$) answered that no accommodations were present. One respondent explained that their university was for deaf students, and it was not necessary to request accommodations.

Interview results indicated that the quality of student and faculty accommodations for the deaf differed, and the quality of accommodations at current and former universities differed. Some deaf faculty members did not receive student accommodations and did self-study for their bachelor's degrees; however, they requested accommodations for their master's and doctoral degrees due to experiencing the need for accommodations. Some deaf faculty members received different accommodations while they studied and worked abroad. Furthermore, the quality of sign language interpreters and contents of activities influenced the outcomes of teaching, research, and professional services.

Even if the deaf faculty worked at the same universities. Furthermore, accommodations differed between departments in the same university. Several deaf faculty members mentioned that they received accommodations in their departments but were unable to receive accommodations in other departments, such as during events. Therefore, it is essential to increase awareness of deaf faculty accommodations outside their departments. In addition, university systems for student and faculty accommodations differed by country. For instance, universities in Japan and the United States are financially responsible for accommodations, whereas in

countries such as the United Kingdom and Europe, governments are financially responsible for accommodations. Thus, deaf faculty members from in Japan and the United States emphasize increasing funding resources for accommodations, whereas those in the United Kingdom and Europe focus on the quality of academic sign language interpreters and funding resources for international sign interpreters.

Conclusion

Interviews with university students and deaf faculty members revealed the importance of increasing the number of deaf faculty, improving university support systems for deaf faculty, expanding deaf faculty networks, increasing the number of academic interpreters, and improving the quality of academic interpreters.

The results demonstrated that university students had high willingness to pay. Moreover, the findings indicated that accommodations helped enrich deaf faculty members' teaching, research, and professional activities. This suggests the necessity to engage and improve awareness of deaf faculty members' contributions, academic interpreter training, and providing funding resources for support systems for deaf faculty members at universities internationally.

Ethics

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Tsukuba (2021-204A, 2021-205A).

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Recalibrating Intercultural Communication Instruction in the Technical Communication Classroom: An Analysis of Students' Definitions and Perceptions

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Considering the flux of current happenings worldwide, attention on intercultural communication (IC) must persist. As of the writing of this extended abstract, Russia continues to ruthlessly invade Ukraine, and we are still recovering from the effects of a worldwide pandemic, Covid-19. At the same time, we feel the long-overdue urgency to address diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within education, industry, nations, communities, and everywhere, including in the classroom. Without a clearer understanding of the dynamics of IC, especially in today's contentious environment, we, collectively, will continue to fail at reaching a peaceful state that prioritizes social justice, the notion that "inextricably involves human dignity and human rights, since it is by definition concerned with the agency of oppressed people" (Walton, 2016, p. 411).

As communication instructors, scholars, and professionals, we define and conceive of IC in nuanced ways. Alexander et al. (2014) demonstrated this variability by collecting Communication Studies scholars' IC definitions into one article, all of which described a distinct version of IC. Likewise, in our field of Technical and Professional Communication (TPC) Yu (2012) argued that "Given the difficulty of defining technical writing and the well-known difficulty of defining culture, a catchy and proper definition of what intercultural competence means for our field is probably too much to hope for" (p. 170). Along similar lines, our teaching of IC as both a concept and a practice varies between instructors and even shifts semester-to-semester based on a changing student body and an ever-evolving context. In response to these complexities, we instructors continually update our course materials so that we can prepare our students for IC experiences they will encounter in their futures as professionals and civil members of society.

During course preparations, then, we update assignment due dates, assess what activities we want our students to do, decide on what articles we want them to read, and ensure our assignments convey clear language indicating what we expect of our students. What most of us do not do, however, is consult with students themselves about their understanding of IC prior to covering it within our courses.

In an effort to recalibrate our teaching of IC, we surveyed 44 students in two TPC classes, Business and Professional Writing and Technical and Professional Writing, at a midwestern university. Our research question is: how do students define and perceive IC before and after the Trans-Atlantic and Pacific Project (TAPP) collaboration? We expected students' responses to change from the pre-survey to the post-survey indicating a

more developed IC competence. Prior to participating in a 5-week TAPP collaboration, we asked students eight questions related to IC. We then asked the same eight questions at the end of the 5-week collaboration. The survey questions, distributed using Qualtrics, asked students to define IC, describe their IC experience, explain their opinion on the importance of including IC experiences in the classroom, and more. We then analyzed students' responses using collaborative coding.

Overall, the results showed that students defined IC in similar ways in both the pre- and post-surveys. They often associated IC with these key words: "people," "different," and "cultures." In the classroom, students associated IC with different attributes, such as location, background, identity markers (age, race/ethnicity, and gender), and professional field. They described prior experiences with intentional incorporation of IC in the classroom, such as TAPP, a service-learning course working with Somali immigrants, and working with students from other countries for language classes. They also conveyed emotions, including understanding and open-mindedness, which indicated how they felt about IC. In the post-survey, no students reported IC as "not at all important" to themselves, their instructor, the classroom, their profession and their friends and family. Students indicated that IC is more important to those groups after having done the TAPP collaboration. Altogether, 100% of students indicated that IC instruction in the classroom is important.

When commenting on professional experiences, like jobs and internships, students again associated IC with different attributes (location, background, identity markers, and professional field). Students also conveyed emotions, sometimes expressing respect for and support of colleagues, but sometimes displaying resistance and indifference to IC. They also mentioned the incorporation of IC with ideas like community building. Finally, they mentioned the importance of technologies, both in regard to their chosen media for collaborating and in regard to considering which technologies an audience has access to. All students thought IC was relevant to their profession.

Overall, students displayed similar answers in their pre- and post-surveys. They also conveyed a narrow view of IC attributes and recognized the cultural influences involved in interactions only when explicitly asked to reflect upon them. Finally, they demonstrated that IC is a deeply personal experience, affecting one's own identity. The takeaways from this research include the following:

- Providing direct instruction of IC in conjunction with classroom practice. For example, teaching students about IC alongside practicing an IC interaction such as TAPP.
- Scaffolding IC instruction in the classroom. For example, providing students a series of resources to guide their learning of IC.
- Preparing students for and demonstrating the importance of IC in daily professional lives. For example, sharing examples of professionals' experiences with IC in the context of their day-to-day tasks.
- Continuing social justice values. For example, emphasizing human dignity and DEI as being at the core of all interactions.
- Preparing students for disruptions in their sense of identity. For example, acknowledging and discussing both the fluidity and complexity of one's cultural identity.

This study revealed students' responses did not change much from the pre-survey to the post-survey despite having participated in TAPP, a quite involved collaborative opportunity. We believe that providing more scaffolding and conversations about IC in the classroom is critical. This study sheds light on our students' starting point, without which we cannot provide the appropriate level of scaffolding. Wass and Golding (2014) note that

“scaffolding provides assistance for a task so that students learn to do the task independently” (p. 677). On one hand, providing too much assistance leads to students not being able to solve a related problem independently in the future; on the other, providing too little scaffolding leaves students overwhelmed and unable (and perhaps unwilling) to approach the task at hand. Without that balance, students could fail to understand IC’s complexity and rely on cursory and fallacious ideas of culture and difference in general. Furthermore, ill-fitting classroom instruction could lead to students relying on learned stereotypes and resorting to uninformed and misconstrued understandings of the behaviors and communication styles of someone deemed different than themselves. How TPC instructors scaffold IC, then, is crucial to preparing students for later IC experiences that they will manage themselves and, ideally, even enjoy in a professional setting.

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Teaching Business Communication in BELF through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and Task-Based Learning (TBL)

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This paper discusses experimental MBA business communication lessons in English as an additional language at a Japanese university through Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), with three different universities overseas. Specifically, we conducted three sessions of one-off Task-Based Learning (TBL) projects with three classrooms in three countries that are spread out geographically: Germany, Hong Kong, and the USA.

The objective of the MBA course is to train Japanese MBA students to use English effectively in a business setting, with specific emphasis placed on the use of English as a business lingua franca, or BELF (Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen, 2013; Louhiala-Salminen et al., 2005). BELF theorises business communication rooted in ELF, English as a lingua franca (Jenkins et al., 2011). ELF has shifted the paradigm of English research to reflect the reality of the diversified use of English in a globalized world from the conventional approach to English confined by standard English norms.

The class had five master level students who had at least three years of work experience, and the small size of the class enabled us to set joint sessions flexibly over different time zones. Students were guided to imagine their L2 self (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) in their future professions, using English as a tool to communicate with a wide variety of people from different linguistic, cultural, and national backgrounds.

Research on “ELF-aware teaching” (Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2017) sheds light on TBL (Kordia, 2020) as a valuable pedagogical framework. TBL creates an authentic communicative environment in the classroom for achieving their tasks in English, within which the learners can develop pragmatic competence in context (Kordia, 2020). TBL can be particularly meaningful for BELF-aware teaching, as research into BELF has shown that business communication is goal-oriented and requires both linguistic and sociopragmatic competence to achieve one’s business goals (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010). That said, implementing BELF-oriented TBL in Japanese universities is often challenging, since students must perform tasks among all L1 Japanese speakers.

However, forced by the pandemic, technology has revolutionized the English learning environment in classrooms, and we are now able to connect to classrooms in distant geographical areas in an instant. Taking advantage of the situation, I started exploring COIL (Appiah-kubi & Annan, 2020), communicating through Zoom with classrooms overseas to perform tasks in English in tandem with them. COIL complements TBL to make classrooms more effective for students to develop sociopragmatic competence in English (De Castro et al., 2019), since students have to work collaboratively with peers from different linguacultural backgrounds. COIL is particularly valuable for future BELF users because communication skills in English among cross-cultural teams and meetings are an essential part of BELF competence (Pullin, 2015).

The contents of TBL projects were original and purposefully designed with different aims and contexts, working together with three diverse educators in the three different countries.

The first TBL project focuses on cross border business meetings to build up professional relationships. Students took on roles of actual companies, a German fast-moving high-tech start-up for German students, and a traditional, successful retailer for Japanese students. During the pre-task phase, students conducted research on the companies and developed scenarios for the possible collaboration of the two companies. With goals preset, students had a mock meeting as the initial contact of the two companies. During the debriefing session, students jointly reflected and discussed their pre-meeting plans and strategies, as well as their outcomes.

The session was an excellent learning experience for students, as they could jointly explore the other team's behaviour through the cultural lens, both distinctively different corporate cultures (a German start-up vs an established Japanese firm) and different expectations influenced by different business practices in the two countries.

The second project was to practice cross-cultural negotiations using a negotiation case of "Alpha and Beta" (Gladwin, 2010) with students in Hong Kong. The negotiation case was used as a "realistic negotiation simulation" (Shi, 2010), and this case was selected due to the cross-cultural factor involved. Using the case in the COIL, students could learn not only negotiation skills in English in a competitive setting defined by the case, but also different negotiation styles influenced by the different cultural backgrounds in two classes in Hong Kong and Japan.

The session was fascinating because the post-task debriefing conducted with both sides of students highlighted the significant communication misunderstandings they had, showcasing the real-world problem of cross-border negotiation in English.

The final session focused on a discussion with the theme of "effective use of English in business," jointly with the "World Englishes" class of undergraduate students in the USA. In this session, Japanese MBA students were invited to share their experiences of using English in the real world, followed by a small breakout room discussion to explore implications for the use of English in a BELF setting. Japanese MBA students gave presentations in English about their perspectives on BELF and chaired the small group discussion of younger future businesspeople from entirely different cultural perspectives. Students in the US could learn from Japanese MBA students' experiences with different professional and cultural viewpoints.

To sum up, students could develop their awareness of the diversity of BELF through joint sessions and skills to use English in their future professional careers. This paper first introduces the outline of the preparation and implementation of the three projects, followed by issues, challenges and future implications for the BELF-aware teaching of business communication. The paper ends with a call for more action research into BELF aware teaching using COIL and TBL.

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The Use and Implications of Multilingual Strategies During Performance Appraisal Interviews

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Processes of late modern globalization have drastically altered the transnational flows of people, capital, and communication for corporations (Appadurai, 1996), and as a result, they have also altered the ways in which companies and employees make use of language. This presentation examines such globalized forms of language use at a small-sized service-oriented Belgian company that is active in 59 countries across the world. More specifically, we focus on how performance appraisal interviews are conducted between managers who work at the company's headquarters in Belgium (L1: Dutch) and sales agents who work for the company from these different places all around the world (L1: not Dutch). Due to the physical and linguistic distance between the interlocutors, this presentation thus examines the specificities of a multilingual and virtual workspace (Jacobs, 2004) where communication between the managers and the sales agents solely occurs remotely and always requires a strategy to bridge the lack of a shared L1.

Although there is no shortage of research on performance appraisal interviews, many studies have focused on post-hoc recollections, observations based on simulations, or secondhand accounts of interviews, rather than on authentic empirical data. As a result, performance appraisal interviews have been described as a 'black box' (Clifton, 2012), particularly in multilingual contexts (Fletcher, 2001). Our analysis is based on a dataset consisting of 16 authentic video-recorded appraisal interviews, and we aim to focus specifically on the multilingual nature of the company by examining the use and implications of different multilingual strategies during their performance appraisal process. Additionally, we conducted two follow-up interviews with the managers responsible for the performance appraisal process to dive deeper into the company's rationale behind their multilingual approach to language policy and explore how the managers perceive the effects of multilingualism on the company's daily workings.

In our analysis, we focus on three different strategies which are used to bridge the lack of a common L1 between the interlocutors in three different interviews. The first is the use of English as a business lingua franca (BELF; Louhiala-Salminen & Charles 2006), which is often used as a communicative solution to the lack of a shared L1 in an international business context (Gunnarsson, 2014). The second strategy is the use of a lay interpreter when no shared language could be identified between the interlocutors. More specifically, the sales agent's wife functions as the mediator between English on the one hand and Arabic and French on the other hand. Finally, one performance appraisal interview is conducted through receptive multilingualism (Lüdi, 2013), where the managers speak English, and the sales agent speaks German to achieve mutual understanding. In all three interactions, BELF is thus present, but not always used as a standalone strategy.

We adopt a discourse analytical perspective (following Van De Mierop & Vrolix, 2014; Van De Mierop & Schnurr, 2017; Holmes et al., 2011) through which we analyze the occurrence of miscommunication in these three interactions. More specifically, we set up an analytical framework on the basis of previous research on miscommunication in multilingual spoken interactions to identify preemptive strategies to prevent miscommunication, signaling strategies to indicate miscommunication, and repair strategies to solve miscommunication (Mauranen, 2006; Vasseur et al., 1996; Linell, 1995; Schegloff et al., 1977). In doing so, we present the opportunities and pitfalls of each strategy in light of the multilingual repertoires of each interlocutor with a focus on how meaning and information exchange are negotiated, mitigated and achieved. This analysis is enriched by insights from the follow-up interviews with the managers, which allow us to explore their attitudes towards these different multilingual strategies and their respective successfulness to mediate the flow and exchange of information, as well as the general multilingual workings of the company.

Similar to findings from previous research on BELF, we observe a preference from the managers to use English as a common corporate language (Fredriksson et al., 2006), as well as relatively few communicative problems in the interviews conducted in English (Cogo, 2009). However, we do find that there is room for improvement in pre-emptively confirming whether the other interlocutors have understood crucial information, as we argue that preventing rather than repairing potential communicative problems can be especially relevant during sensitive interactions such as performance appraisal interviews, in particular during or after lengthy explanations made by the managers. Secondly, we find that the use of receptive multilingualism is a highly cooperative strategy, as we observe that the interlocutors make a high communicative effort to prevent, signal and repair miscommunication, successfully resulting in few instances of miscommunication. Finally, we consider the use of a lay interpreter the most problematic strategy, as we observe a high number of instances of signaling and repairing miscommunication, yet we also find that this communicative effort cannot prevent miscommunication from occurring, sometimes even during crucial moments such as when feedback is being provided to the agent. During the follow-up interviews, it was revealed that the managers were not aware of these communicative problems, thereby highlighting the need for an alternative solution to the lack of a shared first language in these interactions.

In sum, this presentation provides deeper insight into the lived linguistic reality of a small-sized yet globalized and multilingual company from a discourse analytical perspective, and more specifically details the (perceived) strengths and weaknesses of the different multilingual strategies they use in the sensitive and high-stakes context of a performance appraisal interview. As such, this research can provide new insights for both researchers examining multilingualism in the workplace, as well as practitioners who want to learn more about the possibilities and implications of different multilingual strategies at work.

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Storytelling in the Time of War: How President Zelenskyy Captured the Hearts and Minds of the West

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Communication-based research has studied leadership by looking at language and approaching the phenomenon as an act of social constructionism (Alversson & Karreman, 2000; Fairhurst, 2008). From this perspective, leadership is viewed in the context of what leaders do and is thus discursive in nature. According to Robinson (2001, p. 93), “leadership is exercised when ideas expressed in talk or actions are recognized by others as capable of progressing tasks or problems which are important to them.” According to Fairhurst (2008), this definition enables us to understand leadership as a process of influence and meaning management that advances a talk or goal, an attribution made by followers or observers, and a process, one in which influence may shift and distribute itself among several organizational members.

Storytelling has emerged as a key leadership skill that strategically sequences facts and emotions. Strategically sequencing facts and emotions allows the leader to recognize what audiences will find persuasive and change people’s minds (Denning, 2021). Storytelling is a powerful way of connecting other to the vision leaders wish to share (Armstrong, 2021) and plays a key role in our understanding of leadership.

The presentation uses communication-based approach to analyze communication messages by the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during the first three weeks of Ukraine’s war with Russia. The analysis focuses on Zelenskyy’s messages on social media and asks the question how he managed to capture the hearts and minds of so many people that propelled him to the status of a world leader and media outlets labelled him a Superman for the Western values.

The presentation uses social media posts from the start of the Russian invasion in Ukraine on February 24, 2022, until March 16, 2022, when President Zelenskyy addressed the U.S. Congress to analyze stakeholder appeals, physical appearance, and non-verbal behaviors during the first three weeks of President Zelenskyy’s speeches. The presentation will use discursive approach and apply the principles of storytelling to analyze transcripts of President Zelenskyy’s speeches during the first three weeks to understand how leadership was constructed to appeal to different audiences, build character, lead authentically, and motivate people. Springboard storytelling framework (Denning, 2007) will be applied to analyze speeches based on the following communication principles 1) using narrative to ignite action; (2) communicating who you are; (3) creating the Ukrainian brand image; (4) transmitting relatable values; (5) using narrative to get things done collectively; (6) sharing knowledge; (7) using narrative to neutralize and mitigate false information; (8) using narrative to lead people into the future (Denning, 2011).

The analysis will show that President Zelenskyy demonstrated narrative intelligence by satisfying key enablers of leadership and putting steps through the language of leadership to transform his country's narrative and gain broad support for the Ukraine's fight for freedom.

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Cyber Hybridism in Business Communication? A Discussion of Cross-Cultural Issues on the Web

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It would be of interest to discuss whether Cyber space serves as the locus where cultures converge rather than diverge, as evidenced by the fact that Web sites around the globe have exhibited features of design crosscutting cultural boundaries. I would use the term “Cyber hybrids” to describe designs that are culturally indistinctive, as seen, for example, on many of Chinese and other non-Western Web sites.

However, Cyber hybridism may be more than a testament to cultural convergence: It could signal, using Fredric Jameson’s words, “the disappearance of certain relationships to history and the past,” meaning that culture, or cultural tradition, is playing a lesser role in informing and shaping design decisions involving digital media. That is to say, Cyber space will bring the Eastern and Western closer to each other, especially in the sense that designers, whether of Eastern or Western culture, are likely to resort to the same digital technique and the same databanks of icons to deliver messages. Indeed, the ubiquitous Window’s operating system has already blurred the line between the East and West.

Jameson predicted a text of postmodernism characterized by “the production of discontinuous sentences without any larger unifying forces,” which has yet to be proven true in traditional print space, but in Cyber space we are already witnessing the proliferation of texts or designs that appear discontinuous and, to a large extent, culturally incohesive, as seen in the aforementioned “Cyber hybrids.”

The disappearance of “larger unifying forces” that govern conventional discourse production does not necessarily point to the emergence of “one-world culture,” as some scholars have suggested, but it is important to know that Cyber space can transcend cultural boundaries just as communication and information technologies in general can transcend cultural constraints and be utilized globally. Some critics point out that Cyber space is “impregnated with possibilities for cultural change,” but I tend to think that such space may also represent a disconnect with the dictates of culture because of the unique mode of digital discourse production.

The point I am trying to make in the end is that in the long run, it probably does not do much justice to create, analyze, or critique online documents by following, narrowly, the “this-culture-versus-that-culture” model, as seen abundantly in conventional arguments on cross-cultural issues. Perhaps we should prepare to see the emerging of what I would call “collective ethos” when attempting to address the question of how to design online texts for global audiences.

In the proposed presentation/paper, I will be discussing some of the cross-cultural issues in Web design in relation to Cyber-space collective ethos, such as cultural dominance, authorship as cultural practice, and the dilemma designers may have to face when weighing tradition against experiment, or vice versa. In particular, a case study of a Sino-US trading company' Website specialized in home improvement, featuring some inside knowledge, will be presented as an example to inductively picture the virtual emergence of business communication hybridism across cultures.

Business Discourse in the Irish Technology Sector: Focusing on the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) Skills of Irish English Speakers in International Virtual Teams

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This study investigates the Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) skills of Irish technology sector professionals. This sector was chosen due to its significance as a major employer in Ireland with 16 of the top 20 global technology firms and 9 of the top 10 US Information and Communications Technology (ICT) companies locating strategic operations in Ireland (Technology Skills 2022 report). The study focuses on virtual teams which are already established as the norm in the technology sector with remote, rather than face-to-face, interactions having further increased substantially with the travel restrictions due to the recent pandemic. In fact, this study finds that Irish professionals in this sector spend on average 3.5 hours a day in International Virtual Team (IVT) meetings.

The goal of this research is to identify ‘on the job’ based strengths and weaknesses in Irish English verbal intercultural communication and translate these findings to experience-based skills training for higher education (cross-faculty) and professional learners. The Irish technology sector encompasses individual contributors from many educational disciplines including Engineering, Business, and the Arts which in turn, will facilitate the development of a cross-faculty ICC skills program. These ICC principles can also be incorporated into enterprise-based, professional development programs, serving as an alternative solution to employers who don’t necessarily rate the typical, 1-day ICC training packages provided by professional training companies (Lockwood, 2015: 138). While the focus is on Irish English speech, it is envisaged that these ICC principles can be applied to any IVT dynamic which includes both native and non-native speakers.

Much of the existing research today on business conversation focuses in on specific genres such as sales negotiations speak (Firth, 2009) or more formal institutional verbal exchanges (Drew and Heritage, 1992). Virtual team research often targets management levels reviews (Lockwood, 2015; Dekker et al., 2008). This study, therefore, aims to supplement the extant knowledge base around individual contributor business discourse. Furthermore, this research aims to build on traditional, nation-based ICC principles (e.g., Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 2005) to encompass professional social group membership as a pivotal element that frames cultural interaction (Spencer-Oatey and Kádár, 2021: 50). It is hoped to influence change from a “culture-as-given” to “small culture” approach in (engineering) education (Hanford et al, 2019), that is from an essentialist, nation-based approach to awareness of culture being formed through interaction, equipping students and professional learners with the skills need to navigate these interactions.

The initial (Macro) research phase of this study consisted of a communication behaviour survey which was completed by Irish English speakers who worked in any area of the technology sector. This survey was carried out between June and December 2021 with a final set of 113 responses being included for analysis. The LinkedIn

platform was primarily used to connect with participants. Quantitative data was gathered on the profile of the participants (personal/job-related) and the structure of IVT meetings (including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic). The final section of the survey asked participants to detail an instance of where they successfully communicated their spoken message in an IVT setting, furthermore detailing a second scenario where they experienced challenge(s) in verbal IVT communication. Each scenario was then analysed, using NVivo, a qualitative research software tool and parsed into multiple communicative competencies.

The major survey findings were three-fold, and it is noteworthy that these findings are broader than just verbal communication as respondents submitted scenarios that included general business skills (for example meeting coordination) and effectiveness of written supports. Age was the first significant variable. It was notable that the responses of early career participants (aged 18-25) only contributed to a very small number of the successful communicative competencies. Their responses focused on general information sharing as being the key to successful communication. We then clearly see the next age group (26-35) contributing across all communication categories, inferring that they have developed their IVT communication skills as they progress in their technology sector careers. Age dovetails with experience so this finding supports the study's objective to learn from experienced professionals in IVTs. The second finding of note related to language issues. Many Irish professionals do not speak other languages. There is a clear output from this survey that 'others' need to improve their English. It prompts the question and further investigation in a Micro Research phase as to whether we need to coach Irish students and professionals on developing International English (Business English as a Lingua Franca) and intercultural pragmatics skills?

Finally, the third finding was that communication success was very much linked to getting the job done. Participants clearly demonstrated verbal communication skills, carefully choosing their words to successfully deliver their message. However, what was notable in its' absence was mention of more social/informal communications. There was only 1 instance (out of 257 instances captured) which mentioned small talk. One respondent even explicitly recommended to "avoid Parkinson's law, meetings don't need to take up the full time. Once agenda is complete, call can end."

While this concludes the current Macro study, further Micro level research has already commenced with the creation of a transcribed corpus of IVT meetings (named the IVTC). This corpus will consist of approximately 150,000 words of transcribed Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) speech gathered from web-based recordings of IVT meetings which include both Irish and international English speakers. Using the above-detailed survey findings as signposts, Conversation Analysis (CA) techniques will be used to qualitatively analyse the transcribed speech, further supported by a quantitative analysis using corpus linguistics methods. The intercultural communication successes and issues, identified from this analysis, will be compared with the survey results. This comparative analysis will identify any delta between Irish English interlocutors' perception of their intercultural communication behaviour and the reality as evidenced in the language in action spoken corpus analysis. Participant teams in this research phase will receive tailored ICC skills training. This training, in turn, will form the nucleus of the proposed ICC skills program as outlined at the start of this abstract.

Transnational Technical and Business Communication Writers in Making of a Multimodal Career Portfolio

**Shyam Pandey
Sam Houston State University**

It almost goes without saying that the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed communication networks in the STEM workplace. The pandemic has also reinforced the urgency for multimodal communication more than ever before at the local, national, and global levels. As “a multimodal pedagogy insists students learn to communicate through various forms and to connect with various audiences in new, potentially unexplored ways,” transnational writers, who represent distinctive linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical situations, do not necessarily show uniformity in their meaning-making process (Bourelle et al., 2015). As we are transitioning to the post-COVID period, our STEM workplaces have already adopted newer forms of communication strategies, i.e., multimodal forms. Thus, it is highly likely that the post-COVID workplace contexts will evolve quickly. In such situations, technology will gain a more powerful role. Because of the extensive use of new media and technology, diverse language, culture, and rhetorical situations, transnational technical and business communication writers do not necessarily compose in the same way, and, therefore, it is important to know what unique strategies this writing population enacts in their composing process so that they will be better served (Agboka, 2012).

Based on the conversation within technical and professional communication (TPC), this paper investigates transnational technical communicators’ multimodal composing practices and argues to embrace multiple modes of composing in TPC curricula and teaching pedagogies so that technical communicators are better prepared for the post-COVID-19 world. This study conducted an empirical case study on 17 transnational students (7 international, 5 generation 1.5, and 5 domestic American students) who were enrolled in two sections of ENGL 420: Business Writing at a large research university in the Midwest in Fall 2020. These transnational student participants come from a variety of backgrounds, majoring in management, economics, health science, aviation technology, mathematics, computer engineering, accounting, consumer science, biology, and agronomy. To be more specific, the researcher conducted an investigation into a course unit project entitled, Multimodal Career Unit, and pedagogical approaches framed around the idea of multimodal composition in an upper-division business writing class. Using qualitative data, including student artifacts, interviews, student reflections, and pre-and post-project surveys, the study focused on exploring how TPC curricula engage transnational writers to compose multimodally so that they are better prepared for the post-COVID-19 period.

In addition to analyzing the interview and questionnaire data, this project studied six different types of student artifacts, including their resumes, video resumes, cover letters, personal statements, LinkedIn profiles, and digital and remediation projects. For this, the researcher drew and extended activity theory into my theoretical framework. Central to activity theory is the premise that it “provides a cultural-historical, developmental view of networks grounded in the orientation of particular activities toward particular objects. It foregrounds the development of competence and expertise as workers labor...” (Spinuzzi, 2008, p. 16). As theoretical orientation

and purpose play a determining role in choosing a methodology for any study (Creswell, 2013), this study is exploratory in its nature as it attempted to explore transnational writers' multimodal practices, navigation of various modes and available resources, and responses to the multimodal curriculum. This framework allowed me to view how my transnational writers practiced composing when they were networked in a space that not only connected them with other actors but also with other material and technological conditions, such as a campus database, in-class network, instructor guidelines, and so on (Pihlaja, 2019).

The composing processes of this study's research participants may not have the same level of dramatic and public effect as the recent health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic globally, but they indeed tend to have some key features that move across (different) borders. First, when a Chinese multilingual writer worked on a writing project in peer consultation with American classmates and receives feedback from Asian/American instructors, their composed piece was already navigated and negotiated transnationally. Second, when an American student writer worked on a document targeting a job that is located multi-nationally, especially in the U.S. and India, her rhetorical situation changed uniquely as it navigated different transnational contexts. These instances exemplify how our rhetorical situations and strategies are transcending the notion of the nation-state. When every aspect of human life is interdependent, transnational writing practices are achieved by global composing practices too. Thus, this study considers transnational writing in an expansive sense despite the fact that the classroom setting is in the midwestern region of the US.

In this paper, the researcher details findings from research in a U.S. university that required a technical and professional writing class. One of the findings of this study reveals transnational writers remain strategic to utilize various available modes of composition while crafting their multimodal career unit projects which are unique in terms of participants' cultural, linguistic, and transnational identity. Drawing on scholarship in multimodal composition and professional and technical writing literature, this paper engages in an interactive discussion of TPC curricular design, assignment plan, and its implications for career job placement. This project weaves together three important strands in STEM communication research: multimodal composition, transnational writing, and the post-pandemic workplace, specifically in technical and professional communication.

Hundreds of thousands of students and professionals need to prepare job search materials each year, this study on transnational and multimodal document design will have a significant impact on how these materials are shared across mediums. As a result, this paper helps strengthen digital communication practices and teaching to better prepare the technical communicators in this digitally advanced world. By bringing together multimodal composition, transnational rhetoric, and TPC, this paper plans to theorize technical communicators' multimodal composing acts that will establish the technical writers' composition and rhetorical practices. The study will have a significant impact during the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic as most of the technical workplaces and hiring processes may shift to working remotely.

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**Business Communication in the Asia Pacific Region in Turbulent Times:
Research Challenges and Opportunities**

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Today we are living in turbulent times of ongoing pandemic coupled with extreme weather conditions. This is especially the case as floods are still raging through some regions in Australia. Hence interruptions are common (lockdowns, evacuations, etc.) but this challenging time also offers opportunities for business recovery and new and emerging businesses. Likewise, there are also challenges and opportunities for business communication research in these emerging areas beyond the pandemic and crisis.

The aim of this panel is to provide a forum for the exchange of scholarly research on challenges and opportunities relating to communication research in our region. We particularly look at the essential role language, culture, and communication play in a range of business contexts and we contribute by drawing theoretical and practical insights from these turbulent times.

The first speaker, also Chair, reports findings on using cultural and communication tools to build resilience. It is based a team research project about a tourism company and their historically listed cottage was brought down to ashes during the 2019 Black Summer fire in Australia. They started a heroic recovery process led by the senior management team. The team use cultural tools and narratives to develop hope and resilience. The findings suggest that the resilience is collectively built and reinforced through appropriate communication processes on their road to recovery.

The second speaker, the Co-chair, reports Research findings on conflict management. The study aims to bridge the gap and investigate (a) how professionals from collectivist and individualist societies manage conflicts differently and (b) how conflicts are managed and solved between individualist and collectivist managers when handling conflicts at different organizational levels: supervisors, peers, and subordinates. Findings suggest that integrating conflict management style (CMS) is preferred among all four research groups. Obliging came as the second most preferred at different organizational levels. While compromising CMS was the third preferred by Hong Kong managers, collectivist, and individualist expatriate managers, avoidance CMS was the third preferred by Taiwanese managers.

The third speaker will share findings on nurturing entrepreneurs among college students in Malaysia, focusing on factors influencing entrepreneurship development. She will discuss findings from interview sessions with lecturers teaching the entrepreneurship course or being involved in designing the curriculum. The narratives from the interview sessions highlight both the formal and informal ways of imparting the relevant knowledge to the students. The critical skills and the soft skills necessary in developing entrepreneurs will be discussed.

The fourth speaker reports how to develop leadership through on-line classes conducted in 2020 and 2021. Under the current circumstances, leadership has been drawing ever-increasing attention in Japan. Recently, in English or intercultural communication classes, more attention has been paid to develop the 21st Century Skills (Fadal 2008) or Basic Skills for Professionals, the preconditions for good leaders. In the panel, she will summarise the importance of these skills, how her project-based course proceeded, and how the students reflected the concept of leaders and the role of themselves (either as a leader or a follower). Then, she will discuss how we can further combine the theories in business communication with practices in the academic field.

The fifth speaker reports on the current research project focusing on media choices in multilingual and multicultural workplaces, particularly after COVID-19 pandemic. Premised on media synchronicity theory (MST), this study aims to investigate how media capabilities influence employees' media choices in multilingual and multicultural workplaces, and how the interplay between language and cultural barriers and other contextual factors impact media choices for better communication. Using an ethnographic approach, the study collected data from observation, semi-structured interviews, and documents in a focal case company. Analyses showed that individuals are prone to choose asynchronous media when confronted with language barriers in multilingual communication. However, rehearsability for asynchronous media and natural symbol sets for synchronous media may both be preferred for better intercultural communication. In addition, social proximity and communication topics are discerned as prominent contextual factors in different communication scenarios. Implications for mediated business communication will also be discussed.

The sixth speaker's research on language socialization investigates how novices learn to become competent members of a social group by participating in routines of culturally organized activities (Duranti et al., 2011; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986). Undergraduate students are positioned as complete novice in the business world who need to be explicitly socialized into the norms and practices of the business world. Yeonkwon Jung examines language socialization of adult novices learning second language (L2) in simulated professional settings and reveals ways in which novices are transformed into new identities by acquiring critical skills required for their study. He also discusses about pros and cons of the academic use of simulated data.

The final speaker explains research on government media briefings on covid-19 regulations in three countries, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji. The project used speech act theory and crisis communication principles to examine the strategies used by the three government leaders during the first wave of covid-19, which was navigated successfully by these countries. The talk describes how a linguistic analysis can shed light on political strategy in crafting public messages that aim to solicit public cooperation during a pandemic.

English as a Second Language (ESL) and Inclusion in Brazil

**Ana Lucia Magalhaes
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According to 2019 World Bank ranking, Brazil had the 9th GDP in the world, ahead of Canada (10th) and the Netherlands (17th). Brazil is also a very unequal society. According to the 2018 issue of the World Inequality Report, the richest 10% of the population get 55% of the national income while the bottom 50% get 12.3%.

Much has been said and studied about the situation reflected in those numbers. In this article, we examine which role ESL plays in such context and what would the solutions be. In short, we found that any effort has to be general – society must change in certain ways and there is no sharp, specific solution to decisively improve the results of ESL teaching in Brazil.

The problem is made clear by two facts. One, the documented necessity of fluent English for top managerial positions, and the other the much-discussed elimination of fluent English as an entrance requirement for the foreign service. Politicians who made this into law presented as argument the necessity of having the poor represented among Brazilian diplomats.

Qualitative research was carried out among freshmen and seniors of a public university, a higher learning institution with a competitive entrance exam (typically five candidates per place). Since public universities in Brazil do not charge tuition, the students who pass the exam come from diverse social backgrounds. The very fact that they managed to get in indicates that they have the capacity to study and retain knowledge. The population researched comprised a few dozen Business Administration juniors and a similar number of seniors.

The research consisted of a few simple questions for the students to reply. The results indicated that students coming from underprivileged backgrounds had much worse performance than their middle-class counterparts, not only as freshmen but also as seniors.

As expected, performance difference as a function of family background became apparent. After six semesters of English classes, both groups showed some improvement, but the difference re-mains blatant.

The causes for this discrepancy in foreign language skill can be explained by historical, education-al, and (unavoidably) political causes. This paper will not examine the political causes.

The historical causes are inevitably related to slavery and consequential chronic poverty. With the end of slavery (1888), the economy started a major shift towards industrialization and services. Former slaves were ill equipped for that since they were not only illiterate but also their training was suited to an economy that had simply disappeared. Their descendants are the core of poverty, having in general missed the waves of social upward mobility since then, with the notable exception of the most recent one, which started in 1994 with the end of runaway inflation. English, however, remains an obstacle.

The quality of government schools that presently offer primary and secondary education is far below world average. Middle-class children go in general to private primary and secondary schools.

Brazil presently ranks 58th in 65 countries in student performance as measured by PISA (Program for International Student Assessment). The causes are subject to a lot of debate, but some facts can be considered as established.

Money spent is not a factor that can explain the poor performance of Brazilian students – this is made clear with the comparison between Brazil and Poland as far as PISA goes. Brazil applies in education 5.1% of its Gross Domestic Product and Poland spends slightly less, 4.9%, and Poland shows far better PISA results than Brazil.

Parent satisfaction with their children's school is another face of the culture of poverty. A public opinion research was conducted in 2018 by IBOPE, a major independent research institution. The question reply was: "What is your opinion about the quality of basic education provided by government"? Excellent, good, and fair added up to more than 75%. Those parents are happy enough to see their children go to school, regardless of the quality of teaching.

Since reduction of poverty and inequality is a very slow, multigenerational development and basic education is in Brazil highly political, the problem must be mitigated in a shorter term through a change in methodology of teaching English to adults.

Such remedial approach can have the guidelines that follow.

People who are not in good command of a foreign language usually have their own strengths, weaknesses, and prior educational experiences. Regular classrooms with students listening and trying to interact with the teacher cannot be efficient if every student has his own knowledge and needs. Each student has to have his needs assessed by a trained teacher and students shall be given assignments to be discussed with the teacher in some setting different from the traditional classroom.

Teaching of study skills: such skills are useful for any kind of study, but crucially necessary for adults learning a foreign language. Teachers should possess understanding of the proper techniques and be adequately trained.

Emphasis in reading: it is impossible to teach writing without simultaneously teaching reading. Writing, as well as speaking, cannot be isolated from familiarity with the language, and that is acquired through reading. Reading can be done at one's own pace and is obviously less demanding than writing. It has to be encouraged and tests on text interpretation must be done much more frequently than the common practice in teaching children.

Setting of goals: for each student, for each semester.

These programs are to be the basis for teaching of English in colleges, since the students who manage to be admitted to colleges are the ones who will need most some degree of proficiency in English. And English should be mandatory in colleges for students that need such learning.

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Interpersonal Communication

Verbal Communication in the Workplace

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Clive Muir

Washington University in St. Louis

Trey Guinn

University of the Incarnate Word

Lee Galloway, early twentieth-century Professor of Commerce and Industry at New York University, held a broad view of the value of language in business environments. In his much-reprinted text, *Office Management: Its Principles and Practices* (originally published in 1918) he wrote:

“The use of language, written and spoken, on the part of all members of the organization, constitutes a general service activity whose importance is only beginning to be recognized. No trading organization could be operated without the skillful command of language; in every transaction with the public, intelligent exchange of information is an essential element.” (p. 531)

Unlike many Business English texts of the period, Galloway’s *Office Management* offered guidance concerning both spoken language as well as written. For example, Galloway recommended that an effective method for remedying the verbal inadequacies of office employees is to hire a “speech critic or supervisor” for “instructing new employees in the speech rules of the organization.” (p. 552)

When discussing the appropriate verbal language of executives, he advised supervisors to address subordinates “...in language which is vivid and not too involved. It is well to repeat an important fact twice or perhaps three times in different ways. By repeating the thought something will probably be reached which is within the beat of their minds.” However, he admonished, “Explanations to upper officials are made in an entirely different way. Here the essentials are, first, to give the right slant and stress to proper points; second, to present the matter with sufficient tact, using suggestion rather than explicit command.” (p. 560)

Obsolete as Professor Galloway’s recommendations may now seem, he was attempting to wrestle with communication issues that still concern instructors and researchers of business communication:

- What spoken words and messages must be avoided in the workplace?
- How is speech in the workplace influenced by power relationships?
- How are verbal presentations constructed effectively to convey the intended meanings?
- How can speakers craft their messages to address the needs of diverse, equitable, and inclusive working environments?

The Business Practices Committee will sponsor a panel hosted at the 2022 ABC International Annual Conference; its focus will be “Verbal Communication in the Workplace.” The panel will include three presentations that offer original research concerning ways in which verbal communication influences the content, perceived meanings, and consequences (intended or unintended) of corporate and workplace communications.

Zoom and Doom: The Demise of Oral Presentation Delivery **Gina Genova and Craig Cotich**

When Covid-19 shut down businesses and schools across the country, everybody turned to virtual meetings as a “new normal.” The repercussions of that shutdown are going to be felt and measured for a very long time, but this talk will focus on one particular area where Zoom’s mode of verbal communication created significant unintended consequences within the workplace: business presentations. Although virtual presentations have been with us for many years, we moved very quickly to presenting *only* virtually – for two whole years. In that haste and subsequent stasis, it seems we left behind what we knew about constructing and delivering effective presentations, like all the good stuff that makes an audience want to listen to us. Instead, we turned into these Zoom personas, or “Zoom-sonas”:

1. Improvisers: Presenters felt less pressure to practice presentations because they knew they would have the comfort of notes on their screens in front of them.
2. Readers: As a result of less practice and those easily accessible notes, presenters read rather than performed their scripts.
3. Robots: Without practice, reading sounded contrived or robotic. Some lost the authentic feel of a conversation, and others sounded too clean and perfect.
4. Pontificators: Some people wrote scripts that looked great on the page, but once spoken, didn’t feel or sound at all natural.
5. Aristocrats: Writing perfect sentences led some away from how we all really talk, which lost the authenticity of speaking “in the moment” audiences appreciate.
6. Statues: Not looking at the camera prevented some presenters from engaging with their audience through eye contact and body language, thus failing to captivate or motivate.

Now, it’s certainly true that presenters have made these mistakes live, in front of an audience, but they would have received instant feedback from that audience discouraging such ineffectual delivery methods. Perhaps it is this missing component of the communication process that has encouraged not only the rise but also the persistence of “Zoom-sonas” without much apparent pushback. The workplace appears resigned to do the “easy” thing instead of the “hard” thing when it comes to Zoom presentations. And that “hard” thing is to shake off the Covid laziness and demand a return to audience-engagement. This talk will define the six personas born of Zoom’s rise, look at some egregious examples, and argue that oral presentations in the wake of our live-to-virtual shift in the workplace are *not* permanently doomed.

Crafting Executive (Narrative) Conversations

Clive Muir

Some years ago, when I taught a graduate-level managerial communication class, a student asked why she had to take the course when she had done so well in the sophomore-level business communication class. She also excelled in her specialty area of the MBA program. I had observed her laidback and dismissive style in class discussions and assignments. She earned a low grade for the midterm exam and came to discuss it. That's when she voiced her lack of interest in the class. We reiterated the goals and objectives of the course that we had discussed at the start of the semester, but she remained convinced. At the end of the semester, she barely passed my course.

Stories are often shared at ABC meetings about students who question the value of business communication courses and how we can change that attitude. That's why I was pleased to read Lee Galloway's book chapter, "Language of the Executive," about the communication skills managers overlook and need as they rise from the lower level, functional positions. In this presentation, I will use my observations and conversations in industry and the classroom to propose that business communication faculty need to embrace a practice-oriented, narrative approach that emphasizes diverse, formal, and casual conversations as managers face "personal and emotional elements of business relationships" (p. 553) that are crucial in the swirling world of social media and post-pandemic reckoning. As well, I will discuss why we should give business communication courses more focused titles and topics to obviate the perception that every business communication course teaches the same writing and speaking skills.

The ideas presented by Galloway for improving the "art of expression," are still useful a century after his book was published. For example, in my core MBA communication course, renamed Building Business Narratives, I stress the iterative process of business writing and speaking that incorporates personal experiences, opinions, emotions, poetry, and social issues to be crafted into personal narratives and innovation narratives. This effort departed from the usual approach of having students draw content from their functional-logical areas of study where they throw data at audiences with less concern for rhetorical methods and situations. Galloway's notion of "connected talk" addresses a question that I often ask students: What happens when the elevator pitch reaches the lobby? Usually the presenter/manager/pitcher is so invested in their technical presentation that they fail to consider the personal and emotional questions and turns that arise and that may disrupt the flow they anticipated, as often happens on the popular business pitch television show, Shark Tank.

Business students and professionals who learn to build "connected" business conversations and narratives are more likely to respond to such detours and disruptions, even if they know little about the details of a topic or issue. And the 24/7, social media world in which business managers and leaders operate require them to have such rhetorical and narrative advantages.

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Increasing Your Effectiveness with Verbal Communications in the Workplace

Trey Guinn

In some form or another, your job requires you to present. It may not be on a stage. It may not even be in-person. But in some form or another, your workplace interactions have a presentational component. Whether it's fielding client questions on a virtual call, defending a position to your manager and team, delivering a demo or actual presentation, or just speaking to an audience of one during a job interview, you are regularly presenting in the workplace. And for some people, these presentational moments can be terrifying. Some people avoid them at all costs.

Workplace interactions create endless opportunities to present yourself and communicate your ideas. Some people shy from them, others shine in them. Just like the hardest part of any morning jog is choosing to get out of bed and lace your shoes, for some the decision to be a more willing communicator is a monumental first step. To know and effectively apply the communication essentials is life-elevating.

As someone who teaches other people about how to enhance their communication abilities, I have learned that before teaching anyone *how-to* do something, they must first demonstrate a desire and willingness to actually want to do the work to improve. Like a new device or even a gym membership, the tools for effective communication are only beneficial if you actually choose to use them.

I see in my clients that a little willingness can be the spark that lights a fire within. When you see that your willingness is appreciated, allow your positive feedback from others grow your confidence, which can also breed even greater willingness. It's an amplifying loop wherein willingness produces more willingness.

Beyond willingness, the framework I share in this presentation will highlight that the fundamentals of communicating effectively involve five core elements.

Every act of communication begins with a *goal*. Attainment of the goal depends on *audience perception* of the *messenger* and their *message* in a given *medium* (e.g., email, phone-call, face-to-face interaction, live performance, text, video, audio recording, etc.). These are the five points, or elements: the goal, the audience's perception (of the messenger), the message, the messenger, and the medium.

In this presentation, I will outline the process for increasing your effectiveness with verbal communication in the workplace by applying the central tenets outlined in my forthcoming book, with McGraw-Hill Business, "Communication Essentials."

Interpersonal Communication

Courtesy Titles in the Era of Non-Gender Specific Identities

**Virginia Hemby
Middle Tennessee State University**

Over the past decade, we have seen an increase in the number of individuals identifying as transgender or as non-conforming people not wishing to be labeled as their sex assigned at birth. The most recent style guides have included sections on bias-free language that addresses these areas in research and data reporting (APA, 7th ed., pp. 138-141). However, Keyboarding and Document Formatting texts, as well as Business Communication texts, continue to demonstrate the use of courtesy titles for inside addresses on letters and for salutations in both letters and emails adhering to the standards of cisgender men and cisgender women only.

This adherence to an accepted standard has been longstanding, even in the time span where the introduction of first names that are not easily identifiable as representing a man or woman has arisen. If the author of the message knew the person to whom the letter or email was being sent, the correct courtesy title was easily attainable if based on sex assignment at birth; however, in the event the individual was an unknown and could not be located via an Internet search, the courtesy title became a catch-22.

In light of the increasing focus on bias-free language and the need to be mindful of the use of appropriate courtesy titles, a study is needed to determine the next steps for incorporating this change into the curriculum for students at both the secondary and post-secondary levels.

At the 2021 ABC Annual International Conference in October, participants had the opportunity to start discussion topics of their choosing in a virtual discussion forum. Since the publication of the APA Manual (7th edition) in which the issue of gender identity had been mentioned and researchers cautioned about asking for gender in survey research, I had been curious about how to address the salutation issue in professional business letters and emails. As I teach Business Communication, I assign students professional letter-writing and quite often get salutations that consist of the full name of the individual (e.g., Dear Bill Smith:) with no courtesy title at all despite the information in the text explaining the importance of a courtesy title and the need for the use of a correct one. So, in the spirit of wanting to know what others in the Association thought about courtesy titles, I created a discussion on the topic. I got several responses from conference attendees, most of whom stated that they also were interested in what others were doing in their classes.

At the end of the conference, I began to check the library references for any previous research or publications on courtesy titles. Most published research focuses on gender identity. However, when searching for courtesy titles and gender, you find few articles spanning the previous five years regarding courtesy titles and gender diversity. The ones you do locate have a global context and are more likely to derive from Great Britain, New Zealand, and Mexico. A handful of articles, none of which were research based, discussed the use of courtesy titles and in particular, the use of "Mx." as the appropriate one for non-binary gender.

Because of the absence of research on the topic of courtesy titles and gender non-conforming individuals and the increasing focus on bias-free language and the need to be mindful of the use of appropriate courtesy titles, this study is needed to determine the next steps for incorporating this change into the curriculum for students at both the secondary and post-secondary levels in the United States.

Participants for this study were recruited from the members of the Association for Business Communication and the National Business Education Association. Both organizations are comprised of teachers at the secondary and post-secondary levels at national and international locations. These individuals teach courses in which workplace writing, document production and formatting, and cultural and diversity issues are part of the curriculum. Therefore, they were an excellent population source from which to seek participants for this study.

An IRB-approved recruitment invitation was sent to both ABC and NBEA members via internal organizational channels. Those members choosing to participate were invited to click on a URL in the message that sent them to a Qualtrics-created survey containing the IRB-approved Informed Consent. Once the Informed Consent was reviewed and agreed to, participants were permitted to proceed with the completion of the survey.

The purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to determine the status of the teaching of courtesy titles in business classes at both the secondary and post-secondary levels and (2) to ascertain whether the inclusion of a non-gender specific courtesy title was being presented in the instructional activities to encourage students' use of such to ensure nondiscriminatory practices in workplace writing.

The research questions (both multiple-choice and open-ended) were designed to gain insight from the respondents as to their perceptions regarding the use of courtesy titles in their instructional materials. While most of the questions were multiple-choice in design, some had open-ended options. Securing qualitative responses provided a more visible understanding than that obtained by solely closed-ended quantitative research questions. The researcher looked to gain knowledge as to the perceptions of respondents toward the inclusion of a non-gender specific courtesy title in their instruction in specific business courses, whether they would be able to make such a choice as individuals or would require permission from an administrative body before doing so.

The resulting data can help fill a void in existing research by adding secondary and post-secondary business instructors' voices to the conversation about the use of a non-gender-specific courtesy title in their instruction. Being unaware of what secondary and post-secondary business teachers know and do regarding instruction on the topic of courtesy titles as they relate to gender non-conforming individuals prohibits making recommendations for change. Asking questions of these individuals to learn what they currently do in their instruction provides a platform on which to build instructional guidelines for the inclusion of gender non-conforming courtesy titles in their classrooms for those who are not currently doing so.

Interpersonal Communication

Leadership Strategies for Increasing Civility in Business Communications: Exploring Learning Conversations Through Prosocial Systems to Marshal Compatibility for a Kinder World

**Mikelle L. Barberi-Weil
Weber State University**

Currently, there is a crisis in civility in conversation. Nevertheless, every time we show up in a conversation, it is a powerful opportunity to learn and be productive. There are ways forward to overcome this by exploring contemporary frameworks and the practice of high-quality connection deployed by intrinsic motivation, perspective-taking, and reciprocity (Grant & Berry, 2011). Therefore, there is a need for the study on civility in business communications and an opportunity for research. The researcher is curious about how we find understanding and civility in conversations that are based on opposing ideologies or viewpoints. Every time we show up in a conversation, we need to go beyond when judgments hinder presence and cultivate intellectual diversity and intellectual civility (Williams, 2012). How do we make humanity more comfortable with being human? What are the prosocial motivations? The mix of theoretical and practical frameworks could foster ownership of behavior and become more than a heuristic anecdote.

Leadership strategies will be reviewed from the schema found within Adam Grant's Give and Take Model (2013) which will explore to what extent can leadership strategies increase civility in Business Communications. The purpose of this research is to discover and understand how to lead and balance the scales in favor of "giving, taking, and ultimately, matching" in dialogue. How can we better dwell in a conversation based on reciprocity for better civility and organizational evolution?

More pointedly, interactions, inter-personal positivity, civility, understanding, learning, trust, and respect will foster a sense of generosity and kindness in professional environments. An analysis of soft-skill pedagogy, interviews, podcasts, videos, texts, presentations, conferences, and a second study of classroom behavior will help the researcher establish connections of inquiry, and sharpen the argument for fostering the design of reciprocal communication to marshal compatibility for a kinder world.

Main question: What are the leadership strategies for increasing civility in Business Communications?

Sub-question 1: How do we make humanity more comfortable with being human?

Sub-question 2: What if we could challenge ourselves to shift our thinking and re-conceptualize another perspective?

Sub-question 3: What are the prosocial motivations?

The research approach will be qualitative with a narrative research design. The researcher will study and observe the interactions of leaders in professional and political environments to better understand common threads through a chronological and collaborative narrative. A key element of collecting data will be to observe and discover patterns of behavior during interactions of engagement and activities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data discovery will come from viewed observations which will be gathered, coded, and detailed into frequency patterns where emerging themes will be charted on a frequency table. The data will be collected from open and accessible media and interviews that will illuminate values and identifiers. Archived videos of leaders engaged in interaction or public accounts of adversarial, yet respectful and civil interaction will be studied.

With this, applying history to the scan of civil organizational dialogue, the nuance of healthy opposition in the past seemed to be on display more often. One of the most notable examples is the public relationship between Speaker Tip O'Neill and President Ronald Reagan. It was widely known that the two leaders would spar during the day on public policy, but would regularly convene after 6:00 p.m. to share a friendly libation over civil conversation (Matthews, 2013). This instance of celebrated mutual respect, emotional competence and plainly having a good time together with an ideological adversary seems to be a void underscored in the headlines of today. Other examples of observable adversarial relationships: Justices Antonin Scalia and Ruth Bader-Ginsburg, and Senators Orrin Hatch and Ted Kennedy.

According to Laszlo (2012), we live in language. The significance of examining this type of organizational behavior is not necessarily establishing the idea that discord in dialogue is a recent activity. Rather, it is acknowledging that people have increasingly become "paragons of conviction" that refuse to bend and flex in new directions of thought inquiry (Grant, 2021). This conviction has turned personal and emotional and away from civility in opposition. "Scientific thinking favors humility over pride, doubt over certainty, curiosity over closure" (Grant, 2021, p. 28). Moving past our cognitive biases moves us closer to an open loop of curiosity, respect, and kindness. This open loop promotes healthier, more dynamic functions and interactions.

By accessing our ignorance (yield logic and fact), listening, and questioning, our dyadic conversations could move beyond assumptions and find consensus. Igniting ambiguous thinking leads to a positive flow of human interaction (Laszlo, 2012). Prosocial pedagogy should be amplified through observation, interaction, and engagement at the collegiate level. This catalytic and contemporary system's movement complements the Business Communications curriculum. These responsibilities are part of the larger academic community where addressing the evolving global professional and organizational issues are a shared responsibility (Lentz et al, 2020).

Research on best practices for teaching the process of humanness in organizational environments and virtues coupled with guiding students through a reciprocity system may give rise to a new tacit framework and/or a new worldview phenomenon for future everyday dialogue in personal and professional environments. Profound power and a positive force lie in the wake of interconnected kindness when we are committed to understanding and learning from one another.

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How Your Business Communication Centers Can Speak to Gen Z

**Jimmy P. Miller; Katie Gerst
Temple University**

**Pamela Bourjaily
University of Iowa**

**Ryan Sheets
University of Arkansas**

The COVID-19 pandemic severely decreased traffic to business writing and speaking centers, and usage has been slow to recover. This is in part because students seem hesitant to reengage with teaching and learning resources that were de rigueur prior to March 2020. Many faculty have anecdotally reported an increase of student mental health issues and other non-academic concerns seeping into the classroom. And this is no surprise considering the traumas – educational, personal, health, etc. – that many students have lived through over the past two years.

This panel's purpose is to explore ways to reconnect with our target audience of students who are in need of writing and presentation tutoring. But what we've found so far is that we can't simply offer our tutoring services the way we always have – not if we want to see student reengagement in business communication centers (BCCs). The highly traumatized student bodies we serve are, whether they can articulate this or not, searching for educational experiences that “see” them as people who have been through a highly troubled time and who aren't necessarily ready, or even capable (at this point in the ongoing, and not “over,” pandemic) to simply reconvene the educational practices that we as educators see as pre-2020 normal. After all, we've been at this for years, maybe decades. We “know” how a BCC is supposed to work, and we are eager to get back to that working model.

But what if it doesn't work anymore? What if we need to recalibrate how we approach our firmly Generation Z (or Generation C-19, for “COVID-19”)? Our students are different from what they were two years ago; those students have largely graduated. These students – the ones we have now – don't seem ready to just pick up where those students left off in early 2020, even if we (the educators and BCC leaders on the panel) are. “Just getting on with it” the way we always have ignores that these students are fairly highly traumatized people first, students second.

The goals of this panel, which is organized by ABC's SIG on Business Communication Centers, are in part to re-think our model of BCC tutoring. Whereas the tutor has traditionally been seen as a quasi-teacher, we explore first what our Generation Z students are searching for in engaging educational experiences. How can we reach this audience that, unlike millennials, is not well studied in business and professional communication circles? Do these students share workforce traits with Millennials (Omilion-Hodges & Sugg, 2019)?

Ample time is built in for attendees to share their own experiences with writing center traffic and engagement in these late-pandemic times. This panel seeks to be collaborative more than didactic.

The methodology of this panel is to use our centers – The Frank Business Communication Center at the University of Iowa, the Business Communication Lab at the University of Arkansas, and the Business Communication Center at Temple University – as case studies. We establish statistical BCC usage before, during and into these latter stages of the pandemic. Panelists outline methods they are using to try to reignite student interest in and engagement with BCCs.

However, this discussion isn't intended to be an "advice narrative" (Caswell, McKinney, & Jackson, 2016, p. 7-8), but rather a conversation that anyone leading a writing center in 2022 can relate and contribute to. Ample discussion time is built in for attendee collaboration.

Research on this generation in the workforce is still limited, but preliminary indications are that they are the most diverse and communication-hungry generation yet (Pichler, Kohli, & Granitz, 2021). In many ways, reaching these students will continue the dialogue and affirm some of the conclusions reached more than 20 years ago by Ede, L., and Lunsford, A. (2000), who identified that one of the great strengths of the writing center is to be a space of collaboration between students and tutors. This is true more than ever now, when students are looking for a tutor to be a skills guide who is human first.

The ultimate outcome of this panel is to drive more traffic to our BCCs so that we can improve students' communication skills. But that outcome is dependent on our ability to understand this new generation of late-stage pandemic students. We offer ideas and invite participation from attendees on how to:

- Engage more effectively with late-stage pandemic, Gen Z students
- Brand and advertise a BCC to these students
- Borrow the knowledge of these students, specifically undergraduate marketing majors, to market a center
- Increase traffic via direct outreach to these students

In addition to Gen Z specific strategies, panelists share how to:

- Market a center's services via faculty
- Partner with offices/entities that hold case and other competitions
- Track a center's success and use that information to market "up the chain" to administration – which includes understanding what administrators value and want to see in a center (Simpson, 2006; Spec, 2006)

While we don't offer any magic keys to understanding and reaching pandemic-scarred Generation Z students, we acknowledge that our centers won't thrive until we better understand these reluctant-to-engage students and then tailor strategies to engage them where they are.

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Interpersonal Communication

Can It Be Done? Yes! Teaching an Online Interpersonal Business Communication Course

**Marcel M. Robles
Eastern Kentucky University**

This presentation discusses the design and development of an online sophomore-level interpersonal business communication course. The course includes using the publisher's eBook and learning platform assignments; my "homemade" lecture videos created with Zoom; my assignments, discussion board questions, group activities, and final video project of role play and critique from students. Success and challenges will also be presented.

The course description is "a study of advanced knowledge and skills needed to communicate effectively in various settings, including face-to-face, working in teams, and communicating via digital networks. Persuasion, self-awareness, relational development, conflict resolution, listening, and non-verbals are also covered."

Not only did I need to create this course for online delivery, but also it was the first time I taught the course. It was very difficult; but ultimately, I loved it! It turned out great! The students were enthusiastic, participative, and learned a lot about interpersonal communication. While using the eBook and various activities from the publisher, our requirement from eCampus is that more than 50% of the course needs to be our own material. Hence, the challenge.

I will share various assignments that I required throughout the course that includes the following competency goals:

1. Understand oneself, establish personal values and ethical goals, self-manage, and show intrapersonal effectiveness.
2. Appreciate and work well with diverse individuals and groups.
3. Listen to, communicate nonverbally with, and persuade audiences to demonstrate interpersonal effectiveness.
4. Build collaborative teams through negotiation, conflict management, facilitation, decision making, and creative problem solving.
5. Lead individuals and groups through influence, networking, mentoring, feedback, empowerment, and project management.

Additionally, I will discuss the lesson plans and modules that I developed to achieve the following student learning outcomes:

1. Understand intrapersonal effectiveness, including goals, strengths, weaknesses, styles, trust, and biases.
2. Explain the role of communication in intercultural and global settings.

3. Improve self-management skills, such as emotional intelligence, time management, and stress management.
4. Embrace interpersonal effectiveness techniques to understand, interact, and work well with others.
5. Understand team functions and how to work in a team.
6. Manage conflict, negotiation, persuasion, and facilitation necessary to the team process.
7. Conduct oneself professionally in various organizational contexts.
8. Understand the characteristics and skills of effectively leading individuals and groups.
9. Incorporate technology effectively in gathering, organizing, and presenting messages.

Assignments included using Twitter and Facebook to communicate professionally and in a diverse environment, posting effective posts on Facebook to promote the company brand, and self-branding on LinkedIn. Team building exercises including sub-groups of 5-6 students (in a course with 168 students enrolled). Students needed to build a structure using Solo cups, paper plates, heavy paper, masking tape, and a tennis ball. They had to work in a group virtually and video the activity and interaction. While I was worried about the logistics of the assignment, it turned out phenomenally. Students told me they loved it! Their videos were motivating and self-satisfying for me to watch.

In addition to all of the assignments being provided, the rubrics will also be handed out and emailed. I had five facilitators grading activities for me, so my rubrics are very detailed to ensure interrater reliability.

I will also demonstrate my online course during the presentation and show snippets of my recorded lecture videos, ice breakers, self-assessments/inventories, and other multimedia and visual aids that I used, including YouTube, Flipgrid, and Screencast-O-Matic. If you have your laptop, you can join us in this session to create your own Flipgrid video and post it to our session attendees. We will also use Screencast-O-Matic in the session. I learned all of these technologies by trial-and-error, so they are very user friendly—and best of all, free. Student evaluations, test scores, and testimonials will also be provided.

Here are samples of parts of various assignments that will be shared:

Record yourself giving a demonstration. Use software to record a screencasting/screensharing video. Camtasia is available in our computer labs. Other free options available to download: Zoom, CamStudio, Snagit, Jing.

Write a Tweet to promote a particular area of diversity, equity, and inclusion that you personally value. Write from the perspective of a student providing valuable information to other students. Your topic can relate to campus, local, regional, national events or issues and should provide knowledge and resources, show value, and raise awareness to your chosen topics of DEI. Communicate professionally and avoid any content diversity barrier. Include these two hashtags (provided). Students are not required to post this Tweet to their personal account; they may use a Tweet emulator to create a Tweet image to submit their assignment (will be provided).

Organizational Communication

The Corporation School Movement in the United States: Eight Years That Reshaped the Study and Teaching of Business Communication

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This presentation will describe how, from 1913 until 1920, professors of business English in American universities and business managers in large American corporations collaborated to develop new ways to think about the rhetoric of commercial correspondence and to devise novel methods for training and managing business writers. The study also examines how and why this collaboration ended and the possibilities for a future reconnection and reengagement of academics and practitioners.

In 1913, a group of corporate executives and college professors met at New York University to found the National Association of Corporation Schools (NACS), an organization for promoting the establishment of training programs primarily within large corporations. By 1917, NACS members had created trade apprenticeship schools, accounting and office-work schools, advertising, selling, and distribution schools, special training schools for engineers, and unskilled labor training. (Noble, 1977, p. 181). NACS was also concerned with the development of effective methods for teaching the writing of business letters, which had become a primary (and very expensive) means of communicating with customers, vendors, and geographically dispersed employees.

The first Annual Conference of NACS gathered in Dayton, Ohio, and 37 corporations declared themselves “A” members (those paying the highest dues). Eight years later, at the final conference, the A-level population had expanded to 147 (Henderschott, 1920). Many of the largest corporations in the United States participated—including General Motors, Standard Oil, American Telephone & Telegraph, General Electric, and DuPont. They were joined by representatives of numerous academic institutions, including New York University, Pennsylvania State College, University of Michigan, Tufts, and the University of Pittsburgh. The yearly conference Proceedings and monthly bulletins provided accessible forums for business managers and university instructors to share research findings and the results of on-the-job experiences.

A like-minded group concerned specifically with the problem of training business writers, the Better Letters Association (BLA), emerged in 1917 as an outgrowth of the Corporation Schools movement and began to convene its own annual conference. Within the BLA, university instructors sought to reconceptualize the rhetoric of business letters by promoting a “better” kind of business letter that adopts the “You attitude”—a conversational tone addressing the interests and needs of readers (Gardner, 1920). The BLA included among its academic members persons later considered founders of the academic field of business communication, including Alta Gwinn Saunders, at the University of Illinois, and George Burton Hotchkiss of NYU (Hagge, 1989). Business executives within the BLA enthusiastically adopted the rhetorical approach promoted by university professors but were also concerned with the problems of managing hundreds—even thousands—of employees responsible for writing and producing tens of thousands of letters per day (Rasely, 1918).

By 1921, both NACS and BLA had disappeared. NACS eventually merged into the current American Management Association, and the BLA, with its specialized focus upon business writing, was absorbed into the marketing-oriented Direct-Mail Advertising Association (currently the Association of National Advertisers). Many years later, in 1936, Alta Gwinn Saunders and five other professors established the Association of College Teachers of Business Writing—now ABC (Locker, 1995). The disconnection and disengagement between academics and practitioners of business communication had commenced—business managers and corporate trainers gathered under the auspices of management and marketing trade organizations, and university instructors convened separately to share their work and experiences as teachers of business writing.

The most enduring success of the Corporation Schools movement was its legitimizing of employee training as a significant function within the workplace (Noble, 1977). Today, more than 4000 corporate universities worldwide (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012) and countless smaller training departments attest to the continuing vitality of what has now emerged as the employer-provided Learning and Development function (Vinikas, 2021). Communication skills training is also available, often outsourced to vendors such as the American Management Association (AMA, 2022). Many colleges and universities—including Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Columbia, and Georgetown—also offer communication courses to corporate employees. In addition, hundreds of employee-oriented and communication-focused videos are accessible online, provided by Coursera, Uдеми, LinkedIn Learning and other platforms. Even the American Association of Retired Persons offers a business-oriented communication curriculum (AARP, 2022).

This abundance of learning opportunities, directed toward employees seeking to improve their workplace communication skills, may also offer opportunities for involvement by ABC. Our organization and its members represent a concentration of expertise focused upon the contents of communication skills curricula and also effective methods for teaching these skills. This expertise could be of value to the providers of employer-sponsored training and to trade organizations. For example, the intended audience for ABC's proposed certification in the teaching of business communication may be expanded to include persons who produce training materials. In addition, ABC may offer consulting resources to organizations engaged in the production of communication skills training. Further, the plethora of current training videos and online courses may provide a rich resource for ABC researchers seeking to identify business trends or analyze content and pedagogical methods.

Thirty-five years after the Better Letters Association ceased to exist, John S. Fielden of Purdue University composed a brief eulogy for the BLA. Writing to the members of the American Business Writing Association—now ABC—Fielden noted that the BLA had failed to sustain a link between its academic and corporate members. But, he insisted, that link can be reestablished. (Fielden, 1955). Could expanded ABC involvement with the skills training industry offer a possible future reconnection and reengagement of academic and business communication practitioners, similar to the collaboration represented one hundred years ago by the members of NACS and BLA?

Primary sources for this study include the NACS Proceedings (published annually, 1913-1920), the monthly NACS Bulletin (1913-1920), and the annual BLA Proceedings (1917-1919). Secondary sources concerning the broader social, economic, and educational contexts relevant to NACS and BLA are also consulted.

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A Systematic Quantitative Literature Review Examining Contemporary Communication Training and Development Methods

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Communication is an essential skill for employees and organizational leaders. More emphasis is now being placed on employees' non-technical skills in recent years, particularly communication (Sreehari, 2021). Researchers recognize that poor communication significantly impacts the workplace in multiple ways and may cost organizations millions of dollars every year (Buhler & Worden, 2013). The benefits of strong communication skills in the workplace include more successful collaboration and group problem-solving, increased trust between coworkers, stronger rapport between employees and managers, and more substantial employee commitment (e.g., Cheruvelil et al., 2014). Furthermore, communication training for employees improves specific behavioral skills and the confidence in employing those skills in organizations. The benefits of improving communication skills are vast for both employees and the company as a whole (e.g., Cheruvelil et al., 2014), and reports indicate that employees desire more training in the workplace (Marousis, 2021). Despite the major impact of communication training on organizations, few companies take the time, effort, and/or resources to examine the best methods and content for developing their employees' communication skills (e.g., Darling & Dannels, 2003).

One way to improve individual communication skills is through formal training and development programs. Communication-specific training has been linked to increased client satisfaction and multiple health outcomes for employees (Egnew et al., 2004). Yet, communication training is often dismissed due to lack of funding, acknowledgment of benefits, and insufficient time for employees (Ahmad et al., 2014). Therefore, it is important to examine the most effective training characteristics in the workplace.

A systematic quantitative literature review was conducted to evaluate communication training programs and their effectiveness on different communication outcomes. This review aimed to examine the relationship between research design and the effects of communication skills training, specifically the impact of communication training programs on skill development and behavioral change. Following inclusion/exclusion criteria, 11 studies remained with 673 participants ($M = 61.18$, $SD = 42.86$) either in the professional sector ($n = 7$) or student samples ($n = 4$). The included studies primarily took place in the United States ($n = 5$), Australia ($n = 2$), and Japan ($n = 2$) in the medical and health fields ($n = 11$). The studies used either a survey design ($n = 6$) or randomized controlled trials ($n = 5$), with all studies employing pre/post-training methodologies. Moderators of interest include multiple participant demographics, the length of communication training programs, and the inclusion of post-training assessment follow-ups. No differences emerged regarding participants' age or sex. Training program length varied, but most training sessions were one-time occurrences ranging from a couple of hours to full-day sessions. Only three studies conducted follow-ups with mixed results.

The results of this systematic quantitative literature review found that communication training positively impacts communication-related outcomes in the workplace, specifically communication competence and proficiency, empathy, communication self-efficacy and confidence, assertiveness, and resilience. For example, multiple studies found that participants' feelings of communication self-efficacy increased post-training when interacting with patients as well as in facilitating their own communication workshops (n = 3). Results also suggested that the delivery method for conducting communication training research may not impact the training program's success as one might think. All studies (i.e., both experimental and survey designs) found success in the pre-/post-training structure. However, little support was given for specific behavioral changes long-term. Thus, more research is needed, particularly in post-training follow-ups, to examine the long-term transfer of communication knowledge. These findings reveal important information for future researchers and training facilitators by recognizing the success of pre/post-training data and the opportunities for experimental research in training.

Based on these findings, researchers and educators should examine communication skills training to promote longer-term skills transfer (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). The transfer of communication skills involves the ability to disseminate learned skills to alternate contexts and relies upon factors such as learner characteristics (e.g., ability and motivation), program design and delivery (e.g., learning goals and content relevance), and workplace influences (e.g., peer support and climate). Specifically, one researcher found that less than half of trainees sustain knowledge transfer immediately following a training program and approximately half of those individuals maintain long-term behavioral change more than a year after training occurs (Saks, 2002). Thus, organization executives and training facilitators must consider the impacts of skill transfer and incorporate additional elements into training research that aims at more long-term approaches such as assessing skill transfer directly, examining distinctions between practice and research, as well as incorporating various levels of transfer for employees (Burke & Hutchins, 2007).

Finally, from a training design perspective, facilitators must consider specific employee training desires by including additional variables in the training programs. Employees desire better recognition of their achievements, more precise guidance, better communication between supervisors and subordinates, and more (and more effective) constructive feedback (Solomon, 2015). Such variables offer insight into the type of content that should be included in programs. Furthermore, researchers and training facilitators would benefit from incorporating more theoretical foundations into communication training to understand more in-depth concepts about employees. For example, the theory of motivated information management may provide a valuable framework for exploring employee information management (Tian et al., 2016), which allows for more understanding of training-related uncertainty. Examining such concepts as information-seeking strategies may ultimately inform organizations and training facilitators about the desired and effective ways to promote, execute, and follow up with communication-training events.

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Rebranding as Crisis Response Strategy: A Stakeholder Relationship Management Perspective

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Stakeholders perceive a corporate brand differently based on the brand's reputational status (Maden, Arikan, Telci & Kantur, 2012). These stakeholders endow humanlike qualities to the brand such as motives, intentions, values, and promises. Any threat to the brand, its identity, image, and reputation constitute a reputational risk and potential crisis requiring crisis communication and corporate reputation management. Crises were considered low probability, high-impact events in the 1990s, but since the 2000s, a growing and diverse number of crises have emerged in an information-rich world (Diers-Lawson, 2020). This means that crises can range from circumstances out of an organisation's control (Verçiç, Verçiç & Coombs, 2019) or the careless mistakes of individuals within an organization, including systematic breakdowns or inefficiencies, exasperated by the Covid-19 pandemic (Jiménez-Sánchez, Margalina & Vayas-Ruiz, 2020).

A crisis response encapsulates an organisation's communication, actions, and tactics to avert or respond to a crisis. Ideally, the crisis response should inspire and restore stakeholders' faith and support in the organization (Verçiç, Verçiç & Coombs, 2019). Organisations could make use of rebranding as a crisis response. Corporate rebranding refers to the disconnection or change between an originally formulated corporate brand and a new formulation that necessitates a mind shift in organizational stakeholders (Merrilees & Miller, 2008). Crisis response requires a primary strategy, which is a mandatory strategy when a crisis has occurred (which could either be defensive or accommodative) followed by a secondary strategy to diminish negative attitudes and to distract the public's attention (which could include accepting responsibility and improvement) (Do & Nham, 2021).

Stakeholders make judgements about the organization and their connection to issues they care about based on: the degree of control stakeholders believe the organization has over an issue/crisis (blame/responsibility attribution); whether stakeholders believe that the organization can resolve issues/crises (competence) and is authentically interested in an issue (positive intention, concern and commitment); if stakeholders believe there is a connection between an issue and an organisation's core business/mission (clear association) (Diers-Lawson, 2020).

Stakeholder factors are regarded as "the most challenging and under-studied factors influencing crises; yet in practice, they are probably the most important" (Diers-Lawson, 2020:21). To address this gap and extend research on organizations' crisis responses, this study proposes corporate rebranding as a crisis response strategy from a stakeholder relationship management perspective. Rebranding is positioned as a secondary

strategy based on an accommodative primary crisis response strategy, where the organization accepts responsibility or identifies an improvement. A rebranding crisis response strategy entails the acceptance of stakeholders as partners in creating meaning and building the brand narrative, creating situated meanings, having multiple audiences with opposing voices and competing narratives and emphasis on sense-giving and sense-making activities (Verwey & Benecke, 2021).

The study is approached from an interpretivist paradigm and an exploratory and qualitative research design is adopted. Elements of crisis- and issues management, the social mediated crisis communication (SMCC) model, crisis typologies and corporate rebranding literature were used as benchmark criteria for a rebranding strategy from a stakeholder relationship management perspective. These criteria were used to explore Facebook's rebranding to Meta in response to the crisis around privacy concerns, misinformation and concern for people's health and safety. The motivation for Facebook's rebranding to Meta was portrayed as an alignment with the "metaverse." However, one could argue that this decision was made to mitigate Facebook whistleblower Frances Haugen's claims that the platform has chosen profit over the safety of its users. A Google search was done using the key phrases 'Facebook rebrand' and 'Facebook crisis'. These resulted in 10 700 000 and 2 240 000 000 hits, respectively. From there, the articles that appeared on the first three result pages were downloaded resulting in 42 usable units of analysis (Articles from CNN, BBC, Skynews, The Guardian, Harvard Business Review and The New York Times were included, among others. Articles that appeared between May 2021 and January 2022 were included until data saturation was achieved). Data analysis was concluded on 31 January 2022 and thus no articles that appeared after this date were included.

Data was analysed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative content analysis, with emphasis placed on the content or context of text as a form of communication. During content analysis, explicit as well as implicit meanings of texts are considered. Based on the concepts identified from the literature review (Table 1), a structured approach to content analysis of the data was used (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) using AtlasTi, version 9.1.7.0. It was decided to use a directed approach to consider rebranding as a crisis response strategy by extending existing literature on crisis response from a stakeholder relationship perspective.

Guba's (1981) Four-Dimensions Criteria (FDC) was applied to ensure trustworthiness. Credible and reliable sources of data were selected to maintain credibility. An audit trail was created using AtlasTi software, which records the data analysis process, to ensure dependability. Using a purposive sample of articles over the period when Facebook rebranded to Meta and when the most coverage of the rebrand was evident supported the transferability of the research. To confirm the validity of the codes and themes extracted from the data, analysis was done until data saturation was reached.

The findings included the identification of various Facebook crises that were linked with each other. These comprised various forms of misinformation and disinformation (related to US elections, Covid-19, Cambridge Analytica scandal, hate speech, anti-vaccination campaigns and influence on democracies), accusations of profit over the health and safety of users, privacy concerns and security exchange disclosures. These resulted in advertiser boycotts, bad publicity, reputation damage and a Federal Trade Commission fine with questions raised about the sustainability of the business model used. Facebook's rebranding to Meta did not align with a rebranding crisis response strategy from a stakeholder perspective. Meta's primary strategy was not accommodative, and it was clear that their secondary strategy is to distract public attention. Meta's response was criticized widely illustrating a lack of concern and commitment, being inauthentic, evasive, and misleading, lacking transparency with some users referring to their dismissive responses as corporate gaslighting.

Stakeholders attributed responsibility of these crises to the organization and regarded Meta to be competent to address these with a clear connection between the crises and the core business/mission. Meta is seen as having a lack of positive intention, concern and commitment to address the crises, despite its efforts to do so.

The findings of this case study highlighted the need for a crisis response strategy that prioritizes stakeholders and puts the corporate brand in a better position to act according to the communication needs of its stakeholders. This will require an organization to act socially responsible and be appreciative of multiple voices, inputs and opposing narratives to establish rebrand co-creation. This case study also serves as a heuristic for the second phase of this study which will further explore the pragmatic relevance of the proposed rebranding crisis response strategy against the lived experiences of account executives at various local and international public relations agencies.

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Organizational Communication

Examining the Role of Leader Motivating Language in CSR Communication Through Organizational Culture: Insights From U.S. and China

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Employees are important CSR stakeholders because they represent a “coherent, unified group that demands CSR among other stakeholders” (Onkila, 2015, p. 224). In both the U.S. and China, the two largest business markets in the world, employees are one of the largest stakeholder groups and beneficiaries of CSR (O’Connor & Shumate, 2010; Tang, 2012). More importantly, leader communication of CSR will have an impact on employees’ engagement with employers (Jiang & Luo, 2020) and employees’ CSR involvement (Asfar et al., 2018). Therefore, the effects and effectiveness of leader CSR communication to employees is a critical and timely concern for business managers.

To manifest CSR communication, this study employs the motivating language theory (MLT) to examine the effect of multi-dimensions of leaders’ oral communication strategies on employee-related outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction and CSR engagement on social media). In addition, we propose two mediators (i.e., organizational caring culture and organizational positive emotional culture) through which the relationships between leader motivating language (LML) in CSR communication and employee-related outcomes are strengthened.

Data were collected between July 1 and July 23, 2021, via a survey service provider, Dynata. Finally, a sample size of 461 in China and a sample size of 402 in the U.S., totaling 863 were ready for analysis. The average age of participants was 43.27 (SD = 12.82). Among the participants, 55.16% were males (n = 476), 44.73% were females (n = 386), and 0.11% (n = 1) was unidentified. The majority of the sample identified their organizational size was 101-500 (n = 330, 38.24%). Regarding the level of position, middle-level management participants accounted for 36.50% (n = 315) of the sample. The majority of participants claimed that they were with current employers over 5 years (n = 628, 72.77%). All measures were adopted from previous research.

Our results supported H1 ($\beta = .76$, $p < .001$) and suggested that LML in CSR demonstrated a strong positive effect on employees’ perceived organizational caring culture.

LML in CSR was also significantly associated with organizational positive emotional culture ($\beta = .73$, $p < .001$), supporting H2.

No significant relationship was found between LML in CSR and employees’ job satisfaction, failing to support H3 ($\beta = -0.07$, $p = 0.08$).

Results showed the positive impact of LML in CSR on employees’ CSR social media engagement ($\beta = .52$, $p < .001$), supporting H4.

Regarding H5, our results suggested that organizational caring culture is a mediator through which LML in CSR could influence employees' job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.26$, $p < .01$; [95% CI: .23 to .88]) and employees' CSR social media engagement ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < .05$; [95% CI: .05 to .33]).

For H6, results reveal that organizational positive emotional culture was an effective mediator between LML in CSR and employees' job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < .001$; [95% CI: .65 to 1.24]), but not for employees' CSR social media engagement ($\beta = 0.06$, $p = .16$; [95% CI: -.03 to .23]).

Results suggest that the positive effects of LML in CSR on caring culture were significantly different between China ($b = .91$, $p < .001$) and the U.S. ($b = .61$, $p < .001$). Similarly, the positive associations between LML in CSR and organizational positive emotional culture were significantly different between China ($b = .95$, $p < .001$) and the U.S. ($b = .63$, $p < .001$).

However, the direct link between LML in CSR and employees' CSR social media engagement was not significantly different in the Chinese ($b = 2.28$, $p < .01$) and the U.S. ($b = 2.28$, $p < .01$) samples. No significant relationships between LML in CSR and employees' job satisfaction in China ($b = .06$, $p = 0.8$) and in the U.S. ($b = .15$, $p = 0.3$).

Regarding indirect effects, organizational caring culture can mediate the relationship between LML in CSR and employees' CSR social media engagement in China ($b = 3.53$, $p < .01$) and the U.S. ($b = 0.8$, $p < .05$). However, our results did not support organizational caring culture as a significant mediator between LML in CSR and employees' job satisfaction in China ($b = 1.36$, $p = 0.05$) and the U.S. ($b = 0.28$, $p = 0.30$). Organizational positive emotional culture only mediates the relationship between LML in CSR and employees' job satisfaction in the U.S. ($b = 1.11$, $p < .05$), not in China ($b = 1.21$, $p = 0.1$). Our results did not find the indirect effects of LML in CSR on employees' CSR social media engagement via organizational positive emotional culture in China ($b = -.23$, $p = 0.86$) and the U.S. ($b = 0.27$, $p = 0.34$).

The use of motivating language by leaders when communicating CSR will result in employees having more positive perceptions of the organization's caring culture and positive emotional culture. This finding, along with other emerging research on internal CSR communication (Zhang et al., 2021), suggests that CSR-related ML is a useful strategy to engage with employees by creating positive internal environments. This is particularly important during the COVID time when employees show increasing fatigue, burnout, and depression. Leaders should consider incorporating more CSR information into employee communication and using ML to improve the quality of message delivery in order to boost employees' perceived caring and positive emotions of the organization.

This study has examined the effects of LML in the context of CSR communication on employees' job satisfaction and CSR engagement on social media. In addition, the study tested two mechanisms, perceived organizational caring culture and positive emotional culture, through which the effects of LML occur. Furthermore, the study compared the effects of LML in CSR communication between the China and U.S. contexts to reveal the contextual differences in internal CSR communication. Ultimately, this study contributes to existing internal communication and CSR communication literature by adding empirical and international evidence to justify the importance of LML. Our findings also provide useful insights to companies in both countries to consider the usage and impact of CSR-related LML during a crisis time.

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Organizational Communication

Research Roundtable

**Sky Marsen
Flinders University**

**Erika Darics
University of Groningen**

**Elise Lael Kieffer
Murray State University**

**Junhua Wang
University of Minnesota Duluth**

This roundtable invites participants to describe a text, event, or case in business communication that they have researched, and to explain and discuss the approach and method they used. Participants describe their project in five minutes and then break into groups for discussion with audience members and experts. The aim of the roundtable is to exchange ideas on different research methods and approaches to business communication from qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, and interpretative perspectives. In addition to cross-fertilization of ideas, the roundtable's continuing goal is to form the basis of a Special Issue of IJBC on research approaches to business communication.

Participants describe a text, event, or case in business communication from their research and discuss their approach and method for exchange of ideas and feedback.

The Utility of Metadiscourse Analysis Erika Darics

This project demonstrates the utility of metadiscourse analysis. Metadiscourse describes the language that writers use to help readers interpret the intended function of the message, either by guiding the reader's attention through the text (interactive), or by involving the audience in the text (interactional).

Photo-Elicitation in Business Communication
Elise Kieffer

Photo-elicitation is a useful tool for qualitative researchers working in business communication. Photo-elicitation allows both participants and researcher to use the power of images to communicate meanings and themes. Photographs provide doorways to deeper understanding of perceptions and experiences of participants.

Etsy Shop Story: A Genre Analysis of “About” Sections in Etsy Shop’s Online Storefront
Junhua Wang

Recent genre studies analyze generic constructs with attention to the online contexts in which such genres are produced, interpreted, and used in business contexts in response to the new communicative demands. This research focuses on the “About” genre on Etsy and aims at exploring the common genre construct and rhetorical moves adopted by Etsy shop owners.

Organizational Communication

Encouraging Value Alignment Between Organizations and Communities to Accomplish Common Goals: A Corps of Engineers Example

**Kristin Pickering
Tennessee Technological University**

Introduction

Many organizations interface with the public to accomplish social action crucial to organizational missions and public goals. For example, law enforcement, such as police departments and wildlife resource agencies, routinely interact with the public to ensure that community members are abiding by established laws and regulations, most of the time resulting in public benefits. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is another such organization that frequently interacts with the public in order to preserve water resources and the land surrounding them, not only to conserve those resources environmentally, but also to ensure these resources are protected for future generations of safe, public use. During these organizational interactions with the public, contradictions often arise that highlight the need for value alignment between these government organizations and community members (Hargrave & Van de Ven, 2017; Lehtimäki et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2020).

This individual presentation addresses the research question, “During a conflict, what communication strategies can organizational representatives implement to encourage value alignment between the organization and community members?” This value alignment is an essential prerequisite to accomplishing common, social action that benefits both the organization and involved community members.

Data and Methodology

To explore this research question, I draw upon data gathered during an ethnographic, observational case study I conducted that focused in part on a Corps of Engineers Resource Manager as he addressed a rural community about possibly closing a recreational lake area that had suffered environmental degradation, crime, and unauthorized use. The data include ethnographic fieldwork notes of town hall meetings highlighting discussions about the possibility of closure, documents connected to these meetings, such as a map the Corps Resource Manager used to present information on the territories he managed, and interview transcripts focusing on the Resource Manager’s role in attempting to manage this conflict. Because of the community’s unpleasant history with the Corps and land takeovers during the 1930s and 1940s, community members responded with strong hostility to the idea of closure, and the resistance prompted the Resource Manager to move from rhetorical appeals of credibility and experience to appeals focusing on sincerity and affinity in order to increase community members’ receptivity to understanding more about Corps values motivating these protective actions. The presentation’s research methodology focuses on a rhetorical analytical framework used to explore the appeals the Corps Resource Manager used, as well as grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Kwortnik & Ross, 2007) and interpretive approaches (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Kuhn, 2006) applied to analyzing the interview transcripts.

Results

In addition to exploring the Resource Manager's rhetorical strategies for introducing Corps's values to the community, I also present community values that aligned with Corps's values eventually, as well, through a negotiation process of community involvement in protecting this recreational lake area. As scholars have indicated (Carlson & Caretta, 2021; Eichberger, 2019), sometimes, disadvantaged populations, such as rural communities, are left out of important, decision-making processes that impact them. Organizations, such as the Corps, maintain authoritative power and control to accomplish their purposes, regardless of community members' participation, ultimately. However, this case study indicates the positive, negotiation process that can occur when a Resource Manager such as this one takes the time through interpersonal communication efforts to find ways to learn about and connect with community values so that the resulting environmental protection and safety efforts benefit community members in ways that motivate them to participate. When facing such contradictions, organizations' and community members' values may not really be that different, but organizational communicators must identify and encourage those connections to promote community engagement in resolving these issues.

Applications

Attendees of this presentation will gain knowledge not only of conflict negotiation strategies that relate to value alignment through ethos negotiation, as observed through the Resource Manager's adaptive strategies in presenting persuasive, rhetorical appeals; they will also understand ways such negotiation processes can transfer to classroom instruction, since, ultimately, we want to facilitate our organizational/business communication students' skills in resolving conflicts that may arise between organizational communicators and the public. This type of research has far-reaching implications, especially as we continue to witness more polarizing stances between government organizations, for example, and the public, some due to communication conflicts and difficulties resulting from the pandemic. In addition, due to the pandemic, we saw fewer opportunities for engaging, face-to-face communication, which also heightened contradictions that arose from more limited communication opportunities. This presentation demonstrates the continued need for communicators to take the time to engage with involved community members through face-to-face interactions, especially those participants from disadvantaged communities, in order to develop meaningful relationships vital for accomplishing common social action so needed between organizations and communities today. Despite the communicative, technological tools the pandemic afforded us, those may not always be able to effectively take the place of face-to-face efforts to communicate with local communities, especially those rural communities that may not possess facility with or access to these types of technology.

Making sincere efforts to create a relationship with community members, as this Corps of Engineers Resource Manager did, creates possibilities for lasting change that can benefit both organizational representatives and community members alike.

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Organizational Communication

Where Do You Search for Business Communication Research? Exploring Results for Common Databases

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As a former journal editor and a current editorial board member for several business, professional and technical communication (BPTC) journals, I have found wide variation in the quality of literature reviews. This is true even for manuscripts that focus exclusively on reviewing research in specific topics, usually labeled integrative or systematic literature reviews. The ABC Research Committee has been working to enhance the quality of integrative or systematic literature reviews and to encourage researchers to submit them to ABC journals for potential publication.

In business research, several articles promote guidelines for higher quality integrative reviews (Torraco, 2016; Snyder, 2019). In some fields like medicine, there is a standard methodology for conducting such reviews (Page et al., 2021). Interestingly, this methodology was reported in a recent article in International Journal of Business Communication (Taylor et al., n.d.). Regardless of the source of the guidance, the first step in any literature review is to identify the literature relevant to the topics under investigation. The focus of the current pilot project is to explore the consequences of search choices for BPTC research. The pilot study is designed to refine methodology for a more generalizable analysis. The goal is ultimately to provide literature review guidance that will increase the quality of research in BPTC.

Methods

In the first phase of the pilot study, I located research databases recommended for identifying BPTC research. A Google search for “literature search in business professional technical communication” produced a list of ten university library guides (i.e., LibGuides) for BPTC research. LibGuides are derived from a common content management system used by library faculty to curate resources for specific research areas (Springshare, n.d.). Thus, they represent a librarian’s recommendations for searching research literature.

Each of the ten LibGuides provided a list of research databases for searches specifically related to BPTC. In all, 32 different databases were identified. Fifteen were mentioned by more than one LibGuide (Table 1).

Table 1

Databases identified for searching the research literature in business, professional, and technical communication.

BPTC Research Database	Rank in Popularity	Number of Mentions (out of 10)
Communication Source	1	10
ABI/INFORM Complete	2	7
Business Source Complete	2	7
MLA International	4	5
IEEE Xplore	5	4
JSTOR	5	4
Academic Search Complete	7	3
Emerald Insight Journals	7	3
ScienceDirect	7	3
Scopus	7	3
Web of Science	7	3
APA PsycINFO	12	2
Compendex	12	2
EconLit	12	2
SAGE Journals	12	2

In the second phase of the pilot, I selected keywords from the first article published in each of the three regular issues of International Journal of Business Communication during 2021. This resulted in 12 keywords. Keywords from published articles are used as a proxy for the actual keywords authors use when searching the literature.

In the third stage of the pilot, I use the selected keywords to conduct searches in the most common BPTC research databases (Table 1). For each database, I use advanced search settings to limit hits (i.e., articles returned as a result of a search) with all of the following criteria:

- Keyword(s) in abstract
- Peer-reviewed
- Journal or periodical article
- Academic or scholarship journal
- English
- 2010-2019 publication date

The number of hits for the five keywords (e.g., “followership”) in the first article of issue 1 is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Number of journal articles returned for a search of five keywords from one article in the four most common databases for BPTC research.

BPTC Research Database	Keyword				
	followership	leadership	conversation analysis	interaction	interactional risk
Communication Source	5	904	593	9	101
ABI/INFORM Complete	157	19,680	59	22,404	0
Business Source Complete	132	17,932	67	41,873	1
MLA International	0	192	53	1,183	0

As the table shows, the number of hits for the same keyword varied greatly among the four databases. To better understand the amount of overlap in these searches, I further analyzed the hits for a sole keyword and found that none of the five articles returned in Communication Source for “followership” appeared among the 157 hits in ABI/INFORM or the 132 hits in Business Source Complete for that keyword.

These preliminary results clearly demonstrate the importance of database selection in conducting literature searches. Perhaps as important, they suggest that reporting database selection in any literature review, but especially an integrative or systematic one, represents critical information for reviewers, editors, and readers of journal articles. Before the ABC presentation, the pilot project will be used to refine the methods for an insightful search and analysis of keywords, hits, and overlap in BPTC research databases.

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Organizational Communication

The Role Mission Statements Can Have in Performance Chain Analysis in the Hotel Industry

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This presentation makes the case for improved communication tools to be used throughout the hospitality industry. For an industry that has good communication at its foundation in terms of customer service and more, business tools are necessary to incorporate. For example, is a mission statement truly viewed as an effective management and communication tool, or has it simply become a symbol of the organization that people glance over in paperwork without a second thought to its meaning or origin? Every organization exists for a purpose and to fulfill that purpose, strategic planning takes place to establish organizational goals, usually starting with a company mission statement. While there is no magic formula for a company's success, mission statements have been identified over the years to tie the achievement of company goals with a high level of success. They are essential for formulating, implementing, evaluating, and communicating business strategies (David, 2001).

Literature Review

A mission statement answers the questions for an organization of (1) Who are we? (2) What do we do? (3) How do we do it? and (4) For whom do we do it (Falsey, 1989; Finnie, 1994; Shriver, 1988)? A mission statement is an enduring statement of purpose for an organization that is broadly defined, yet identifies the scope of its operations in product and market terms, and reflects its values and priorities (Abrahams, 1995; Graham & Havlick, 1994). They have been a part of human history for hundreds of years from Genesis to Shakespeare to Star Trek stating "Our five-year mission----to boldly go where no man has been before..." and even the Preamble of the United States can be considered a mission statement for the reasoning behind creating the historical document (Abrahams, 1995). The study of mission statements, however, began in the early 1970s when Peter Drucker (1971) referred to their relationship with objectives. He stated "a business is not defined by its name, statutes, or articles of incorporation. It is defined by the business mission. Only a clear definition of the mission and purpose of the organization makes possible clear and realistic business objectives." Since that time, research has ranged from the impact and effect of mission statements (Sufi & Lyons, 2003; Mazza, 1999; Amato & Amato, 2002), to the structure of mission statements (Hooley, Cox, & Adams, 1992; Lewis, 2000; Shriver, 1988; Reich, 2000), and to their role in establishing effective business strategies (Finnie, 1994; Kemp & Dwyer, 2003; Bart & Baetz, 1998).

The primary purpose of this research was to study mission statements, specifically, within the hotel industry and how can they serve as effective communication tools inside and outside the organization for the company's overall strategy. A review of the top 50 hotel companies, as identified by the American Hotel and Lodging Association (2005), found that 90% of the hotel companies had some type of mission or goal statement located on the company website. Mission statements, therefore, do exist in the hotel industry, but how effective the statements are is yet to be fully researched. Shriver (1988) wrote a book specifically for managing quality

services within the hotel industry and devotes sections to the importance of creating effective mission statements. There has been minimal attention given to the role of mission statements in the strategic communication of tourism and hospitality organizations (Kemp & Dwyer, 2002).

Mission Statements: The Missing Link in the Performance Chain for Hotels?

A critical point to be addressed is how mission statements can affect the performance chain for hotels, which means linking corporate strategy to operational execution. This linkage is the hardest thing to do for any business to be truly effective and successful. Many organizations fail to achieve strategic objectives because they do not effectively connect operations with goals (Becher, 2005). The gap between strategy and execution must be eliminated for an organization to achieve its mission. Can mission statements be the missing link in the performance chain for hotels? Once the employees of an operational unit understand the relevance of the hotel company mission statement, they can create a departmental mission statement, which is more relevant to the employees at their level. The key, however, is that the hotel company mission statement and the departmental mission statement should link together to produce alignment and, in turn, enhance the overall organization performance.

How does management “cascade” the company mission statement to other operational units within the hotel? Cascading the hotel mission statement to operational units throughout the hotel can add a great deal of value to the organization by enhancing communication and overall performance. Departmental (operational unit) mission statements for a hotel can be the building blocks to achieving the company mission statement and create a loyalty unmatched in the hotel industry.

Conclusion

A mixed-methods research design was presented to how hotels can enhance business performance management by using performance chain analysis. By creating performance agreements between the management team and employees based upon the company and unit mission statements, operations, and communication in support of the mission can be enhanced. Negative and positive implications will be presented. In conclusion, although mission statements are basically strategic planning elements, they can play an important role in the operations, communication and execution of the daily activities that drive strategy. Using the development of a unit mission statement as a participating process for employees can have the effect of ultimate achievement of the overall hotel mission and role.

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Organizational Communication

Communication Breakdowns: Campus Messaging vs. Students Understanding of Dating Violence

**Jessie Lynn Richards
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Purpose

In the years between 2018 and 2022, five women affiliated with the University of Utah were murdered by former dating partners, spouses, or acquaintances. Each of these tragedies presented unique issues for the campus community to understand intimate partner violence (IPV) and dating and sexual violence (DSV), yet most campus initiatives after the murders of these women focused on “campus safety,” which frequently implied more attention to blue lights, pepper spray, and general “stranger danger” tips. No amount of lighting, pepper spray, or other “tips” could have saved these women - the murder of people at the hands of intimate or dating partners happens because the perpetrator chooses to perpetrate violence, not because the victim did not do something to stop it from happening.

This presentation describes findings from a multi-year, interdisciplinary research project at the University of Utah exploring campus messaging about IPV/DSV and how students understand and describe those experiences. Our findings indicate a communication failure between university messaging and students’ understanding of their own experiences. We argue that this disconnect of terminology and understanding has far-reaching implications for IPV/DSV prevention measures and organizational communication on issues of dating violence. Furthermore, because the 1990 Clery Act requires all universities to report “timely warnings” and annual rates of crime, thereby dictating how these crimes are communicated, our findings have larger implications for all US universities and colleges (Clery Center).

Outcomes

Good faith attempts to educate students and make them aware of resources are encouraging; however, when educators and students employ a different language to talk about a shared problem, the problem will persist (as in the case of IPV/DSV among college students). Ultimately, understanding how students perceive, talk about, experience, and counsel one another around issues of IPV/DSV will inform more effective efforts to make college campuses (and our larger community) safer.

IPV/DSV happens at alarming rates among college students, and impacts minoritized communities (e.g., people of color, queer and trans people, and people with disabilities) at even higher rates than their dominant group peers. For example, in the most recent AAU campus climate study at the University of Utah, perpetrators of violence targeted bisexual women at exceedingly high rates for sexual assault: 31% of bisexual women compared with 19% of heterosexual women reported experiencing sexual assault. Further, perpetrators target people managing disabilities at very high rates as well: 33% of women and 25.5% of transgender people with

chronic mental health concerns reported experiencing sexual assault. Of students in partnered relationships, 14.1% of women, 10.1% of men, and 21.5% of transgender people reported experiencing controlling behaviors from partners (Cantor et al., 2019).

Although we know that IPV/DSV impacts college students at alarming rates, we also know it is frequently mis/unidentified by the victim, perpetrator, and members of people's support systems (Halvaka, 2015; Sabina & Ho, 2014; Sylaska & Edwards, 2015; Sylaska & Edwards, 2014). Perceptions of IPV/DSV vary widely, as sociocultural issues shape individuals' definitions of IPV/DSV and the labeling of certain behaviors as "abusive" or "violent" (Nordin, 2019, p. 2). Students in minoritized communities (e.g., queer and trans students, students of color, students with disabilities) may also have different conceptualizations than students in dominant communities (deHeer & Jones, 2017).

Further, students' beliefs about dating or relationship violence may result in minimizing their own or their peers' experiences with harm. For instance, as previous studies have noted, the term domestic violence does not accurately represent student experiences since most college couples do not live together (Lederman & Stewart, 2003). Similarly, many behaviors that professionals might consider harmful or abusive, students may consider a normal part of dating. For example, sharing social media passwords and tracking partners' locations are viewed as "dating norms" among many students (Cusano et al., 2020, p. 10). Further sexual scripts, or socialized gendered behaviors in relationships, contribute to students' minimization of harmful behaviors as routine dating and relationship patterns (Hlvaka, 2014).

Goals

Although dating and sexual violence or intimate partner violence are issues that affect people everywhere, understanding college students' experiences with IPV/DSV warrants specific attention. Traditionally aged college students (ages 18-24) are in a distinct developmental period in their lives, exploring independence and their engagement in relationships (Arnett, 2000).

One crucial mode of violence prevention colleges have at their disposal is institutional messaging and communication around issues of IPV/DSV. But if the organization's communication is not in sync with the on-the-ground, interpersonal communication of its inhabitants, then the larger goal of keeping students safe will remain unrealized. This presentation will demonstrate what the current communication discrepancy looks like and provide recommendations for changing terminology and language to better meet students' needs.

Methodology

We employed a case study methodology (Stake, 1995) engaging in three distinct data collection strategies to explore our research questions: an inventory and review of educational programs and resources, analysis of policy related to sexual misconduct, and focus groups with students to better understand how they conceptualize dating violence.

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Supporting Pension Participants in Making Better Pension Decisions

**Jelle Strikwerda
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According to the Dutch Authority for the Financial Markets (2020), participants sometimes make pension decisions based on the wrong trade-offs, because the trade-offs are complex. This may lead to “financial problems, disappointment, dissatisfaction and loss of trust in the pension sector” (Autoriteit Financiële Markten, 2020, p. 5). Presumably, this will become even worse with the implementation of the new pension system in the Netherlands. In this system, Dutch participants have to make increasingly complex decisions regarding their pension. As a results, the risks are shifting towards the participants as they themselves are increasingly responsible for a good old-age provision. Because of this, participants should be supported in the most optimal way when making pension decisions.

Getting to the Core of Pension Decisions

A theory that describes how people can be supported in making such complex decisions is the Fuzzy-Trace Theory (Reyna, 2008). According to this theory, people make (objectively and subjectively) better decisions when they rely on the gist of the decision, on what matters to them with regard to the decision, and which enables them to apply their values and preferences to the decision alternatives. Compared to decisions based on only facts and figures, the decision alternatives are more meaningful to people and more often people base these decisions on the right trade-offs. So, the first question we discuss in this paper is focused on how participants make pension decisions and what considerations they have in doing so: What is the gist of three common pension decision and which values and preferences may be relevant?

Communicating About Pensions: Source and Channel Preferences

If we know what information participants need in order to make better decisions, it also becomes relevant by whom and how they want to receive this information. Pension decisions are complex for many participants and therefore it is important that they can rely on the supporting information about those decisions. The assessment to what extent one can trust the information provided is known as epistemic vigilance (Mercier & Sperber, 2017). This is, among others, determined by a cognitive mechanism that focuses on the source of information, addressing the question: Whom to believe? Relevant criteria are the source’s reputation for honesty and competence, but also an assessment of whether the source has its own or its audience’s best interests at heart.

Besides these criteria driving trust, also characteristics of the media chosen to communicate with participants might affect trust in pension providers. Communication media vary in their degree of richness, according to media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986). A traditional hierarchy categorizes face-to-face communication as

the richest medium, followed by telephone, then by addressed documents (e.g., e-mail), and with unaddressed documents (e.g., announcements) as the leanest medium. Richer media allow responsive feedback, and this interactivity may lead to increased trust.

With the transition to the new pension system, it will be more important to gain more insight into the answer to questions as 'Who do participants listen to and why?', 'What sources and channels do participants trust and why?' and 'How do participants inform themselves and what do they think could be improved?', in order to be able to support participants in the most optimal way. That is why the second question we discuss in this paper is focused on the source and channel preferences of participants: By whom and in what way do participants want to be informed?

How to Optimally Support Participants in Making Pension Decisions

To answer our research questions, we conducted 46 semi-structured in-depth interviews with pension consultants, advisers, and participants. The interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and analysed using thematic analysis. The in-depth interviews show that various considerations are involved in the choice for a decision alternative when making the decision 1) to exchange the old-age pension and the partner's pension, 2) how to allocate the old-age pension over time (high/low construction) and 3) when to retire (sooner, later or at the retirement age). These considerations can roughly be brought down to three fundamental factors:

- Life expectancy: How long do I (or my partner) expect to live?
- Sufficient resources: Do I (and does my partner) have enough for the desired standard of living with option A, B or C?
- Wellbeing: How much do I enjoy my work versus (leisure) activities?

The different decision alternatives become more meaningful by including these fundamental factors – which in turn are coloured by the underlying values and preferences of participants – when making a decision. By making participants aware of these factors, the alternatives become more meaningful, and it becomes easier to make a decision that is congruent with their values and preferences, and is therefore based on the right considerations. So, participants may probably be better supported when making pension decisions by focusing communication about those decisions on the fundamental factors and the values and preferences that are relevant for the participants.

A factor that must be taken into account, however, is epistemic vigilance: who do participants believe? The in-depth interviews show that trust in pension funds varies, while trust in insurers and government is low. This is (largely) in line with the results from a survey conducted in the Netherlands, which shows that trust in pension funds is stable and, moreover, relatively high, compared to (in decreasing order) the government, banks, insurers, and financial intermediaries (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2021). According to the interviewees, this is mainly due to inconsistency and unreliability, a lack of (perceived) benevolence and a lack of (clear) explanation (e.g., about the costs or the establishment of pension amounts). This can be taken into account in the communication about pension decisions, both in the source (e.g., fund or insurer, financial adviser, the government, family, friends, and colleagues, or the employer) and the channel used (e.g., face-to-face, by telephone, digitally, or by post). For example, we noticed a strong preference for personal, face-to-face communication, which is

understandable from the perspective of the media richness theory. In addition, our interviews show that the employer should play a greater role in the communication about pension decisions, in order to increase trust. During the presentation, we discuss in more detail what consequences our results have for pension communication, in order to support participants in the most optimal way when making pension decisions.

Euphemisms No More: A Study of Indian Layoff Announcements

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“With continuous growth and strategic review, we look at staffing the right size in various divisions to improve productivity.” This is a company telling a part of its workforce to leave. The linguistic tool of choice to announce this decision is a euphemism. Euphemistic expressions have often helped corporate communicators to convey difficult decisions to their multiple stakeholders. However, their use by corporations has also come under a lot of scrutiny by linguistic scholars. While euphemisms are known to reduce the discomfort associated with certain communications (Allan & Burridge, 1991; Liszka, 1990; Partridge, 1947); they are often accused of indicating corporate hypocrisy (Rittenberg, 2015; Taylor, 1987) and doublespeak (Gladney & Rittenburg, 2005; Lutz, 1989; Gruner & Tighe, 1995), leading to a lack of transparency (Rittenberg, 2015).

While there is a considerable scholastic discussion on the use of euphemisms by corporate communicators and the concerns associated with their use, analysis, and discussion of naturally occurring data based on the Indian context is limited. In this paper, I discuss the pragmatics of the layoff discourse in the Indian context to understand what communicative purpose is met with the use of euphemisms; are there any novel euphemistic expressions used by Indian communicators?

In stage one of the analysis, I use a discourse analytic approach to understand how Indian corporations articulate themselves while they announce their decision to lay off certain employees to their direct as well as the indirect audience. Our analysis is not based on isolated words, but on the context within which the layoff discourse takes place.

I refer to Searle’s (1975) idiomaticity maxim as discussed by McGlone (2006) to compare the Indian communicators’ use of conventional versus novel euphemistic expressions to make public their decision to dismiss employees. I prepared a list of euphemistic words and phrases used by 30 corporations in the United States and the United Kingdom. This served as a master list of commonly used euphemisms in the layoff context. Although the list of non-Indian euphemisms is not exhaustive, it served as a reference point to compare the list of euphemisms in Indian layoff texts. In step two of our analysis, I analysed the texts to ascertain for what purpose communicators mainly use euphemisms in their dismissal messages- to save the face of the addressees or the face of the organization. In the analysis of the Indian layoff announcements I primarily attempted to understand for what purpose are corporations mainly using euphemisms. As Burridge (2012, p. 73) argues, ambiguity is a crucial feature of euphemism especially when its main motivation is to save face.

When I compared this list of conventional euphemisms used to announce employee dismissal with the Indian texts I did not find a single euphemistic expression that was unique. Words and phrases like -restructuring, transition, reducing layers, managing costs, and saying goodbye- were common in both set of texts. Thus, by using expressions familiar in a layoff scenario, Indian communicators draw from expressions conventionally associated with the layoff situation. According to Searle’s (1975) idiomaticity maxim, familiar and conventional

expressions require lesser cognitive effort on the part of the addressee and the attentional focus they elicit decreases substantially (Bowdle & Gentner, 2005; Gernsbacher, 1990) Its familiarity enables readers to comprehend it in a mindless fashion requiring low cognitive effort (Burgoon & Langer, 1995). By using conventional euphemisms, Indian communicators do not invite attention or speculation on the euphemistic expression.

Secondly, most of the euphemistic expressions in our texts referred to the business strategy of the corporation and lesser euphemisms referred directly to the layoff announcement. This could imply two things mainly- corporations are very sensitive about their public image and would not like their action of firing people from their team to be seen as a mercenary act. Hence, they use a lot of communication energy to justify their action and the intent behind the action.

Thirdly, by using more communicative space in their announcements in justifying their decision, they deflect the attention from the employees losing their jobs. By doing so, they intentionally protect the employee from the negative implications of being fired from a job. The employee gets an opportunity to save her face amongst colleagues and family as her losing a job is not the outcome of her unsatisfactory performance.

I contend that when organizations attribute the decision to lay off to their business strategy and not the employee's performance, they in fact take the brunt of the negative reactions that might follow they take public sentiment and protect the employee from feeling incompetent or a failure.

Thus, to conclude, business euphemisms used in Indian layoff texts do not lead to a lack of transparency or doublespeak on the part of the organizations. Most communicators draw from conventional euphemisms - those are the only linguistic choice available to them. With the passage of time, the euphemistic phrases become part of the normal language and lose their displacement capacity (cliched euphemisms). Moreover, according to the principle of idiomaticity, such euphemisms require less cognitive effort both on the part of the sender and the receiver. For example, 'layoff' is the most commonly used term for the mass firing of employees. The media uses this term all the time to report employee dismissal. The meaning is widely understood and there is no camouflage in the use of this term.

Lastly, as most euphemisms in layoff communication refer to the organization, the attention displacement happens here as the audience's attention is shifted from the impacted employee thus protecting her from any negative correlations that the dismissal may entail.

Organizational Communication

Office Communications on the Process of Post-Merger Integration

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Theoretical Framework

The author intends to analyze office communication issues between an acquirer and an acquiree in the case of mergers and acquisitions (M&As) between companies from a perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis.

Purpose and Objectives

Post-Merger Integration (PMI) is a process of integration of an organization and a business unit, and so on, after an M&A deal is completed. Thus, PMI is often the key factor to determine the ultimate success or failure of a merger. However, PMI is often a complex process and consumes a lot of time for completion. This is because part of the PMI process is thinking about and acting towards how to enable and ensure smooth office communications between an acquirer and an acquiree after an M&A deal is closed. In Japan, M&A deals are increasing, despite COVID-19, reaching 4,280 deals in number and JPY16.5 trillion in amount in the year of 2021, according to the article of Nikkei Newspaper of December 31, 2021. Considering this recent situation, in this research, the author will study a certain M&A case, especially the one where a traditional domestic company in Japan is taken over by a foreign company through the M&A method. The author will also analyze office communication issues in the process of PMI by using the Critical Discourse Analysis approach.

Research Methodology

The author will research office communication issues by way of a questionnaire survey performed by the author through an internet research company. They will analyze the results of the said research from a perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis, focusing on office communication issues in the process of PMI. The survey design and methodology are as follows. First, the author elects about 20-30 respondents by way of screening the panels who are residents in Japan. Then, the author researches the issues related to office communications through questioning the elected respondents to find out if they are faced with any problems.

(Preliminary) Results

The said communication issues seem to be related to cultural gaps and language problems (in case of an M&A by a foreign company). The author intends to suggest that it is important for the acquirer to understand that there are differences in the cultural background and office communication environment as well as in the business knowledge and method, and so on, with the acquiree.

The Impact of Hotel Responses to Negative Customer Reviews on Tripadvisor During the Decision-Making Process: An Experimental Study

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Travel websites, such as Tripadvisor, enable travelers to share their experiences about hotels and restaurants with other users in the form of online reviews. These positive and negative reviews – or electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) – partly determine users' final choice when they make a purchase decision before and during their trip to avoid uncertainty and risk (Lee & Youn, 2009). Especially negative eWOM could have a significant negative effect on organizations' reputation and performance (Levy et al., 2013). This presents a tough challenge for organizations because they often do not know how to deal with this negative feedback (Roozen & Raedts, 2018).

Recent studies have examined the effect of different response strategies for hotels and restaurants. Sparks et al. (2016) show that using a human voice and replying in a timely manner positively affects potential customers' organizational trust. Roozen and Raedts (2018) found that personalized replies (compared to generic responses) lead to a more positive attitude towards the hotel and to higher booking intentions. However, the experiments emphasize the importance of the visually lower part of a Tripadvisor page (i.e., reviews and managerial responses can only be read when a Tripadvisor user scrolls down on the page). In other words, respondents who would not normally use reviews and/or managerial responses to make a decision are forced to take these comments into consideration. In addition, these studies often present only one review and managerial response in the experimental design. This is not a realistic portrayal of Tripadvisor reviews because hotels often have plenty of them (e.g., Tripadvisor currently hosts over one billion reviews on its site with the Luxor Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, US, being the most-reviewed hotel with over 42,800 reviews, Thornhill, 2022), while the number of managerial responses is rather low. In addition, potential customers read on average six to twelve reviews before making a decision (Tripadvisor, 2015).

Against this background, this paper reports on the effect of hotel responses to negative customer reviews on Tripadvisor during the decision-making process. In March 2022, we conducted three between-subjects experiments with a 2x2 design, based on realistic review scenarios (in the context of master theses). This study aims to address the identified methodological gaps by showing a full Tripadvisor page (including photos, location, booking information, and information about the hotel rooms) and multiple positive and negative reviews (instead of one review). We also added a control condition without a managerial response (resulting in five conditions).

We examined the combined effect of (a) Personalization (personal vs. generic; e.g., "Dear Noa" vs. "Dear Guest") and apology (present vs. absent) in a hotel reply (N = 538), (b) Personalization (personal vs. generic; e.g., "Dear Steve" vs. "Dear Customer") and a defensive strategy (accepting blame vs. shifting blame to the customer) in a

hotel reply (N = 467), (c) Expressing employee empathy (present vs. absent) and compensation (explicit vs. implicit; e.g., “We would like to rectify the situation by offering a dessert” as an example of the explicit situation) in a restaurant reply (N = 507).

The main dependent variables were perceived empathy (AUTHORS, 2021), perceived conversational human voice (Decock et al., 2021), distributive justice (Maxham & Netemeyer, 2002), attitude towards the organization (Roozen & Raedts, 2018), and booking intention (Netemeyer et al., 2005). The main hypotheses are the following:

(H1) Hotel responses to reviews that contain interpersonal strategies, such as employee empathy, message personalization, and apology increase the potential customer’s perceived empathy, perceived conversational human voice, attitude towards the hotel, and booking intention.

(H2) The impact of these interpersonal strategies depends on the combination with each of the other independent variables (i.e., either another interpersonal strategy or compensation).

For example, we hypothesize that the impact of personalization will be reinforced when it is combined with another interpersonal strategy, such as employee empathy or apology (i.e., the synergy effect). In contrast, we hypothesize that the impact of personalization will be weakened when the employee blames the customer directly (vs. takes explicit responsibility for the service failure). This may be explained by the sham or backfire effect, which refers to triggering consumer skepticism and coming across as insincere (Gelbrich & Roschk, 2011; AUTHORS, 2021). The main and interaction effects in each experiment were analyzed using a two-way ANOVA in IBM SPSS. Preliminary results show that the scores for the dependent variables attitude towards the organization and perceived conversational human voice are significantly higher in the conditions with interpersonal strategies. However, we did not find any effects on booking intent, except when the managerial response conditions were compared to the control conditions (i.e., without a response). In other words, potential customers were more inclined to make a reservation when the hotel or restaurant wrote a response to the review. Follow-up analyses of qualitative open-ended questions and eye-tracking studies will be conducted in the following weeks, which will provide additional insights into the statistical findings.

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Organizational Communication

"I Did My Own Research (on Google)": Physician Communication with COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitant Patients

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In March of 2020, the World Health Organization officially characterized the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic (WHO, 2020). As of March 29, 2022, there have been over 6 million deaths due to COVID-19 worldwide (WHO, 2022). In the United States, three main vaccines have been approved under at least emergency use authorization (EUA), by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In August 2021, the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine (Comirnaty) was approved by the FDA for use in individuals over age 12, and in January 2022, the Moderna vaccine (Spikevax) was approved by the FDA for adults 18 and older. The Janssen (Johnson and Johnson) vaccine is available under the FDA's EUA (FDA, 2021). Currently, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is also available under the FDA's EUA for children 5-11 years old (FDA, 2021) and Moderna has reported a plan to submit a request to the FDA to approve the vaccine for children under 6 years old (Moderna, 2022).

Around the world, there is hesitancy surrounding the COVID-19 vaccine (Aminu, 2020; Bratu, 2021; Kanabar & Bhatt, 2021; Malova, 2021; Thaker, 2021). While this hesitancy is due in part to rampant misinformation being spread on social media platforms (Machingaidze & Wiysonge, 2021; Malova, 2021), such as the idea that the vaccine contains a "tracking device", concern is also related to the perception that approval was granted too quickly, that the vaccine is not effective or will lead to severe side-effects, or even that the vaccine changes DNA (e.g. Bratu, 2021; Garcia & Cerda, 2020; Schoolov, 2021). As such, it is important that experts are able to share accurate information in order to combat rampant misinformation, and in turn, increase the rate of vaccination. Specifically, this represents a unique organizational communication challenge for physicians, who must remain professional while countering (sometimes egregious) misinformation. The unique role of physicians as communicators for public health messaging is particularly important to explore.

This qualitative pilot study explores the communication strategies used by physicians in the United States when discussing the COVID-19 vaccine with their patients, an important component of both Organizational Communication and Health Communication. The study is guided by two research questions:

RQ1: What questions and concerns do physicians report hearing from patients in regard to the COVID-19 vaccine?

RQ2: What strategies do physicians report using when talking to vaccine-hesitant patients about the COVID-19 vaccine?

Method

Participants

The online, open-ended questionnaire was completed by 36 currently practicing physicians (MD or DO). Respondents included 16 men and 20 women ranging in age from 28-66 ($M = 40.03$, $SD = 9.23$). Respondents reported working in various medical fields and had been practicing medicine for a range of 1-35 years ($M = 10.78$, $SD = 9.49$). Employing the constant comparison method, thematic analysis (Nowell et al., 2017) was used in order to identify and analyze the themes found within the data. Themes were identified for each research question and refined until categories reached saturation.

Results

Research question one concerned the questions and concerns physicians reported hearing from patients in regard to the COVID-19 vaccine. The first and most common theme was Safety. These responses included hesitancy about the long-term effects or safety of the vaccine. For example, one physician said that for her patients “the biggest concern is long term side effects” while many simply said the most common question was “is it safe?”

A second theme has been labeled Rushed Development and has to do with the perceived lack of research or hurried creation of the vaccine. One physician noted that his patients asked questions such as “Weren't they made suspiciously quickly?” while another said a patient claimed “it's not properly researched.”

The third theme, Effectiveness, included concerns about the effectiveness or efficacy of the vaccine in preventing COVID-19. A physician explained that her patients will argue that “vaccinated people get Covid anyway.”

The fourth theme is Hoaxes and includes concerns about the vaccine changing DNA, containing a tracking device, or otherwise being a part of a larger governmental hoax. One physician noted a patient asking “Isn't it a big hoax?”, while another patient reportedly claimed “I don't trust Dr. Fauci, so why should I believe anything he or the CDC says?”

The final theme, Not Necessary, concerns the perception that the vaccine simply was not needed. Physicians noted patients explaining that they felt it was unnecessary because they were “young, healthy adults.” One physician said that her patients “don't think the risk of COVID substantiates their need to get vaccine.”

Research question two explored the strategies physicians use when talking vaccine-hesitant patients. The first has been labeled Sharing Expert Information. All respondents reported that they give their patients accurate, research-based statistics on the safety and efficacy of the vaccines. For example, one respondent noted he “Calmly address[es] the concern with the actual data and facts.”

The second theme, Correcting Misinformation, refers to strategies that address and challenge the rampant misinformation being shared on social media. For example, one physician explained “Patients often will claim to do 'research' on the vaccine when they really have no idea what real research is.”

Finally, the third theme has been labeled Sharing Personal Stories. In this theme, respondents explained that they tell patients that they themselves have been vaccinated and that they suggest it to their loved ones. For example, one noted “[I] pull in my own experience and my loved one’s experiences with the vaccine.”

Next Steps

The next stages of this project include a large-scale study including in-depth interviews and focus-groups. As the initial analysis presented here has shown consistent and informative results, future data collection will hopefully further expand the knowledge on this important topic. This information could be used to further inform campaigns to help individuals become more educated about the COVID-19 vaccine in order to make an informed decision for themselves.

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Organizational Communication

Mentor Programs in Flux: Exploring the Design, Technologies, and Values of Sustainable Mentor Programs

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Theme

The value of mentorship, which I define as an intentional relationship formed to allow one person to learn from the wisdom and experience of another, is almost universally recognized. As such, mentorship and mentor programs, which I define as organizations that provide institutional support to facilitate mentorship, proliferate across cultures and almost every part of society. Although mentorship is not a panacea, it is often viewed as an essential component for addressing societal problems such as recidivism (Sells, et al., 2020), gender equality in education (Carlson, et al., 2016), resistance to marginalization (Baldwin & Johnson, 2017), academic persistence (Brooms & Davis, 2017), and even succeeding as a business communication researcher (Rosselot-Merritt & Bloch, 2020). Despite the widespread practice of mentorship, the abundant literature asserting the benefits of it, and the seemingly simple premise of sharing knowledge and experience with those who seek it, creating, coordinating and sustaining a mentor program is a complex and difficult endeavor. A combination of technological, financial, social, and structural conditions lead to many programs getting discontinued each year, and many more never even launching in the places where they are needed the most. This presentation explores the factors that contribute to developing accessible and sustainable mentor programs that may contribute to advancing institutional goals related to recruiting, retention, performance, and diversity.

Purpose and Goal

The goal of this presentation is to empower business communication educators and practitioners to improve the mentor programs they are involved with or to provide insight that can help them develop accessible and sustainable mentor programs at their institutions. With a focus on the conference's theme of reconnecting and reengaging, this presentation highlights how mentor programs can be a powerful tool for engaging stakeholders and strengthening institutions. However, special attention is given to explaining how institutional goals often conflict with the goals of individual program participants. For example, a conflict of goals will occur if a corporation creates a mentor program to improve retention, but employees join that mentor program in hopes of developing the skills needed to get a job at another company. The research data indicates that understanding and anticipating points of diverging goals among mentor program stakeholders is important for developing sustainable mentor programs.

Methods

To learn about the problems mentor program coordinators encounter while working to create and sustain mentor programs I interviewed mentor program stakeholders from a wide array of institutions including 12-step recovery groups, county governments, non-profits, universities, corporations, and startup incubators (n=18). This research project was conducted in partnership with a university sponsored effort to develop a new mentor program management software. So the interviews were conducted as customer development interviews, where participants were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions about the challenges they face while coordinating mentor programs (Constable, 2014). After transcribing the interviews I conducted a content analysis as a means for understanding the key issues related to solving the complex problem of coordinating a mentor program (Albers, 2003).

Key Takeaways

Community values, design, and technology were three of the main themes that came up as the mentor program coordinators discussed how they approach the complex task of managing a mentor program. At the presentation I will share anecdotes related to these key themes. Here is a brief description of how these factors influence the sustainability of mentor programs.

Community Values

Self-sustaining mentor programs established a shared sense of values among all stakeholders. Regardless of whether it was a 12-step recovery group or a prestigious startup incubator, if all program participants shared the same vision about why the mentor program exists and why they chose to be part of the program, the program was self-sustaining. Programs that had lower levels of shared identity and shared values among stakeholders had more difficulty keeping their programs running.

Design

Mentor program coordinators modified the design of their program to meet the unique needs of their community. In self-sustaining mentor programs, the program coordinators had the autonomy to prioritize the needs of the program participants over the institutional needs. For example, a coordinator of a university mentor program was technically employed as an alumni relations officer, but had the freedom to design a mentor program based on the needs of the students and alumni participants without pressure to track how the program correlated with alumni donations.

Technology

Mentor program management technology became less important when a strong sense of community and shared values already existed, and it became more important when the program participants had less shared identity. The mentor program coordinators of programs that existed within populations that already had a shared sense of identity spent less time talking about the technologies they used to facilitate and track participant behavior.

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Transdisciplinarity in Communication: Connecting and Engaging in Collaborations That Benefit Researchers and Practitioners

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Transdisciplinarity as the systematic collaboration of experts from practice and academia enables stakeholders to conceptualize real-life problems, e.g., issues in communication, from new angles and thereby gain insights for practice and theory (Kramsch & Perrin, 2018). It thus broadens stakeholders' minds and repertoires by revealing novel ways and approaches that would not have been imaginable in solitary reflection within one's own discipline or field.

This presentation focuses on communication issues between financial analysts and retail investors. Investors, and especially retail investors, often do not understand the reasoning of financial analysts' investment recommendations (Guiso & Viviano, 2014). In other words, the explanations of financial analysts who recommend to sell, buy, or hold securities are often not comprehensible.

Against this background, platforms that offer seemingly easily understandable financial information have become very popular, for example, the investment platform Robinhood that claims to provide "truly digestible financial news" in colloquial language (Robinhood, 2021). At a first glance, this appears to be a generous offer to retail investors, and it is even for free – in the true sense of Robin Hood from the Sherwood forest. The downside of this platform, however, is that its management takes advantage of its clients' low financial literacy and strongly steers the investment behaviour of its clients in order to make profit. So, Robinhood cannot be relied on here: instead of helping retail investors, it is taking advantage of their ignorance in financial matters (Popper & Phillips, 2021).

Approaching the problem with transdisciplinary collaboration is a far more promising approach as this also proved to overcome the often discussed incommensurability that is inherent in the financial world (Boatright, 2010). The incommensurable being, on the one hand, financial ethics that aim at reaching an ideal state of transparency, such as the "Ethics in the Investment Industry by the Chartered Financial Analyst Institute" (CFA-Institute, 2022), and on the other hand, banking being a business that aims, like other businesses as well, at maximising profit by further developing its workplaces, products, and processes.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4.6.1 Proficiency in Functional Numeracy (United-Nations, 2022) is another indication that this issue needs more attention, as the improvement of the communicative potential of financial analysts' texts can foster trust building and facilitate society at large to take informed decisions in financial matters and to participate in the financial markets – despite low financial literacy.

As a review of the state-of-the-art research reveals, there are no contextual studies, informed by both theoretical and practical knowledge, that provide in-depth analyses of language mediation between the financial community and society-at-large as the addressee of financial text products. This is the gap that my research on communication issues in the financial sector aims to close.

The presentation discusses a carried out research project in transdisciplinary collaboration from the very first to the very last step (from 2010 to 2021):

Part 1 outlines the situation of communication issues in finance and their consequences on the financial community and on society at large. Then, the research framework of transdisciplinary, i.e., the thorough collaboration with practitioners from the financial community is described, and the working definitions for the key terms related to this transdisciplinary framework are provided. Part 1 is summarized by a sketch of the overarching architecture of the transdisciplinary collaboration.

Part 2 analyses the problem from three complementary perspectives with the corresponding set of data: a) from the context perspective, with ethnographic data, collected over 25 years in the field; b) from the product perspective, based on a corpus of roughly 2100 financial analysts' text products in English, German, and Japanese; and c) from the process perspective, drawing on text production process data, collected in writing coaching between 2014 and 2021. The data sets call for a mixed method approach, combined of 1) ethnographic context analysis, 2) Grounded Theory, 3) half-standardized interviews, and questionnaires, 4) pragmatic text analysis.

Part 3 defines the starting point for research-based measures, and describes the selection and the implementation of good practices and working techniques. It then discusses the interventions carried out in the form of coaching for individual writers, training for groups of writers, and organisational development for writing organisations. On this basis, the added value of the interventions is evaluated for financial analysts, their organisations, the financial community, society at large, as well as for research and theory.

The results of this project show that transdisciplinary collaborations foster connections and engagements that benefit researchers and practitioners. Especially in times when the environment is in flux and change is the only constant value, we should transgress the boundaries of our own disciplines to discover novel approaches in communication.

Job Ads After the Great Resignation: A Discourse and Framing Analysis

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The COVID-19 pandemic has brought continuing disruption to the labor market and ushered in an era of employment change and uncertainty that has come to be known as the Great Resignation (Cook, 2021). In November 2021 alone, more than 4.5 million people left their jobs voluntarily according to U.S. Labor Department data (Casselman, 2022; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). In the second year of the pandemic, workers sought new opportunities in ever-greater numbers, driven not only by increased workload and burnout in their current positions but by the prospect of better pay and benefits elsewhere (Goldberg, 2022). The new employment landscape shaped by the pandemic is one where many workers have been reluctant to return to their office workspaces and instead contemplate workplace changes out of a desire to continue working remotely or flexibly. When compounded by ‘turnover contagion’—the domino effect or chain reaction set off by a single resignation that leads to mass departures—2021 job leaving on a scale not seen for two decades created fierce demand and competition for mid-level knowledge-based workers. The New York Times pronounced this trend a crisis in employee retention and hiring. Mid-level, mid-career employees were cited as driving this trend as much as hourly workers and those in lower-salaried positions (Cook, 2021; Dominus, 2022).

The purpose of this study is to better understand the impact of the Great Resignation on recruitment practices by means of a content, framing and discourse analysis of job ads for management positions in the tech industry in the period June - November 2021. Discourse analysis allows a researcher to make visible the “opaque aspects” of organizational language (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Among organizational genres, jobs ads are used during the initial applicant attraction phase of the recruitment process (Barber, 1998) to alert job seekers to the existence of employers and jobs (Acarlar and Belgic, 2013); to generate active interest among those potential applicants; and to encourage them to submit an application (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001). Although the primary function of these short texts is to announce a job vacancy and its requirements, the communicating text may also make some aspects of the position or candidacy more salient through semantic framing, thereby promoting particular interpretations or ideas of employer-candidate needs, opportunities and obligations and projecting the image or identity of an ideal candidate (Askehave, 2010; see Entman, 1993, p. 52). Discourse analysis can therefore also expose experiential meanings in job ads and the construction of an ideal job-holder (Askehave, 2010; Darics & Koller, 2018), with consequences for who can or cannot identify with that construction and be either encouraged to or discouraged from responding in the desired way (Askehave, 2010). A final purpose of the job ad is to present the organization as a social entity and to market the idea of working for a company that can be viewed positively by the public (Askehave, 2010). This construction of the employer brand and management of potential candidates’ impressions can enhance job and organizational attractiveness and encourage potential candidates to see a more optimal person-organization fit, though this framing may also disguise the less-palatable realities of a work life that falls far short of the dream (Darics & Koller, 2018). Factors in job choice such as remuneration, opportunity for promotion, location, benefits, autonomy, flexibility and type of work emerge consistently in the literature as important attributes (Aiman-Smith et al., 2001; Cable & Judge, 1994) but which attributes did pandemic-era employers prioritize in their recruitment communication? The dual

challenge of higher unemployment and worker shortage in the U.S. in 2021 made for a labor market that “defie[d] previously established business patterns” (Sanandaji et al., 2021, para 2) and in turn made strategies in the search for talent less certain. As employers scrambled to fill vacancies, “very little empirical research exist[ed] to guide practitioners in how to optimally structure hiring practices during times of candidate scarcity” (Gibson et al., 2021, p. 105).

With the aim of understanding how job ads are discursively constructed in the labor-scarce marketplace, this study addresses the following questions: (1) How are job ads discursively constructed in the labour-scarce marketplace of the mid-pandemic? (2) What kinds of lexico-grammatical devices and frames are employed—and what is it that gets framed? (3) What are the most frequently-occurring concepts (words, phrases) in the texts? (4) What types of pandemic-crisis employment reality are constructed?

The study relied on a combination of quantitative corpus-linguistic tools and methods and qualitative discourse-analytical techniques to investigate the language of pandemic-era recruitment in a dataset comprised of 150 randomly-sampled mid-level tech industry job vacancy ads posted to an online U.S. job aggregator site between June 2021 and November 2021. Manual coding and automated content analysis (using Voyant Tools, an open-source, web-based application for performing text analysis) were conducted to inductively identify the most frequently-occurring words and collocations. Frequencies can point to general trends in word use; from these trends what can be inferred are insights into the attention given to specific phenomenon (Pollach, 2016).

Early results revealed an emphasis on symbolic attributes that are generally conceptualized as intrinsic work values (De Cooman & Dries, 2012; Terjesen et al., 2007) and provide psychological benefits for self-image or value expression, such as work-life/work-family balance, telecommuting and job security (Lievens, 2007). More broadly, the findings may be of use in understanding the issues COVID-19 has created for work and organizations seeking new talent, issues which may shape and, according to which employers may envision, the future of work and organizations in uncertain times.

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Public Relations Activities of Social Enterprises: Dialogic Content in Social Media

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There is an increasing number of businesses that categorize themselves as social enterprises. These unique organizations leverage the marketplace for goods and services to sustain a positive social change (Yaved & Yasir, 2019). This business model is a natural extension of stakeholder theory (Kim, 2019), and represents an organizational mission and vision that appears to align with Heath's (2013) theory of public relations as a part of a fully functioning society.

One of the premises of fully functioning society theory is that the public relations activities of the organization should focus on *communitas*, which is the importance of the community as opposed to exclusively the *corporatas*, described as the structures and organizations that operate within the community (Heath, 2006). Heath (2006) describes this *communitas* approach to public relations by describing the variables of openness, trustworthiness, cooperation, alignment, compatibility of views, and commitment. In the context of openness, the public relations communication between the organization and the community should foster a two-way dynamic, whereby the organization not only sends information to the community but also receives information from the community.

This type of two-way engagement could best be described as dialogic in nature and represents how the organization may include stakeholders in the public relations activities of the company, thereby helping to create a more fully functioning society (Taylor & Kent, 2014). Dialogic communication aligns with the goal of fully functioning theory which is for the public relations activities of an organization to see the community and stakeholders as having agency in the organization (Heath, Waymer & Palenchar, 2013), and this agency gives the community and stakeholders a voice in the organization, helping to guide and impact the operations of the company. This dialogic communication between organizations and the societies in which they operate allows for the co-creation of shared meaning and purpose.

This intersection between business, mission, and public relations strategy should be a hallmark of the social enterprise, as there is an explicit and stated desire for these organizations to make a positive impact in the societies in which they operate (Granados & Rosli, 2019). Additionally, with the rise in technological advances, specifically social media, there exists an even greater opportunity for organizations to engage in dialogic communication with their stakeholders (Place, 2019). Social media provides a rich environment for engagement with stakeholders, and studies show that social media technology allows for the cultivation of relationships between organizations and the public (Agozzino, 2015; Song & Wen, 2020). The ability for social media to move

beyond the typical static website and to provide opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous interaction with stakeholders provides social enterprises with a unique opportunity to engage with those who would serve as the consumers of the goods and services as well as those who might be the beneficiaries of their corporate goals.

The means and methods by which social enterprises might be able to integrate the premises of fully functioning society have received scant attention in the literature. Initial assessments show that nonprofits typically utilize their social media platforms in a manner that is more consistent with a traditional view of public relations (Svensson, Mahoney & Hambrick, 2015). This use of social media by nonprofits represents a gap between the potential for dialogic communication between social enterprises and stakeholders and the reality of whether or not that communication is taking place. This presentation seeks to discuss and analyze how social enterprises currently use social media to engage in dialogic communication as well as provide concepts and opportunities that could be used to further dialogic communication on the social media platforms of social enterprises.

By bringing light to the potential missed opportunity of social enterprises, this presentation hopes to not only draw attention to the issue but to discuss potential ways that these unique organizations may work toward greater dialogic communication with their stakeholders, thereby increasing the likelihood of meeting their organizational goals and to create greater alignment between their mission and the public relations activities of the organization. The social change agendas of social enterprises represent an opportunity for these types of organizations to lead the way in engaging in effective public relations strategies that help move towards a more fully functioning society through dialogic communication with stakeholders using the unique capabilities of social media platforms.

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De-Trivializing the Rhetoric About the Social Dynamics Surrounding the Face Covering Issue During the Covid-19 Pandemic by Mainstream Media

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Abstract

Due to socio-cultural, political, and medical factors, the wearing of face coverings becomes a controversial and conflictive topic in the U.S during the Covid-19 pandemic (Capraro & Barcelo, 2021). However, previous studies of mainstream media rhetoric around the face-covering issue are limited. This research explores how the social dynamics surrounding the controversy and conflicts of the face-covering issue had been manifested by the U.S. mainstream media rhetoric in the early period of the Covid-19 pandemic. Drawing upon the “Critical Contextualized Methodology” (Ding, 2007), I selected 60 news articles from the official websites of the mainstream media in the U.S. Accordingly, I analyzed the rhetoric of social dynamics surrounding the controversy and conflicts of face-covering in the news articles. This research not only highlights the role and significance of mainstream media rhetoric in public health risk communication, but also provides pedagogical contributions to instructors and education practitioners in public health communication classroom settings.

Keywords: face coverings; Covid-19; mainstream media; rhetoric; public health risk communication

Overview

Due to socio-cultural, political, medical factors, and so forth, the face-covering issue becomes a controversial topic in the world, especially in the United States during the Covid-19 pandemic (Capraro & Barcelo, 2021). Accordingly, the rhetoric around the face-covering issue has garnered scholarly attention since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. While flourishing research insights focus on the rhetoric of social media (Ding, 2014; Gesualdi, 2019; Ngai et al., 2020), there is a paucity of literature discussing the rhetoric of mainstream media, which is one of the important forms of media and offers most of the information about risk to the public (Aelst & Walgrave, 2016).

Therefore, this study seeks to address the gap by exploring how mainstream media rhetoric manifested the social dynamics of the face-covering issue. Specifically, I ask:

“How did the U.S. mainstream media adopt rhetorical tactics to manifest the social dynamics surrounding the face-covering issue?”

To answer the research question in my essay, I will draw upon the “Critical Contextualized Methodology” to analyze the news articles collected from the mainstream media in the U.S. and center on how the mainstream media adopted rhetorical tactics to manifest the social dynamics surrounding the face-covering issue in the U.S. during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This research makes the following contributions: firstly, my research might highlight the role and significance of mainstream media rhetoric in public health risk communication; second, my study has theoretical implications by adding to the extant knowledge of media rhetoric and public health risk communication. Finally, my research could provide pedagogical contributions to instructors and education practitioners in public health risk communication classroom settings. I hope to bring mainstream media rhetoric into teaching public health risk communication to foster students’ understanding of this course.

Literature Review

In this research, I will turn to the literature review for such an inquiry into the rhetoric of the social dynamics surrounding the face-covering issue in the U.S. manifested by the mainstream media in the U.S. Therefore, I will review the prior research on public health risk communication and media rhetoric.

Public Health Risk Communication

Risk communication has already been defined by technical communicators as “informing individuals about the existence, nature, form, severity or acceptability of risks” (Welhausen, 2015, p. 245).

Scholars have offered fresh insights into the rhetoric of media in public health risk communication, and Ding is the scholar who likes to discuss alternative media rhetoric in public health risk communication. For instance, Ding and Zhang (2010) investigate the function of social media in the H1N1 pandemic risk communication in a transcultural context. Specifically, they discussed different approaches to using social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, blog, etc. in the U.S. and China to manage two-way communication in public health risk communication. Furthermore, by collecting the news reports about SARS from the news media in the U.S., China, and Hongkong region, Ding (2009) highlights the importance of alternative or guerilla media, such as that of proclamation and personal narratives in extra-institutional public health risk communication. Ding’s research on alternative or guerilla media provides referential use to professional communication classrooms by offering a platform to discuss the issues such as extra-institutional public health risk communication, technologies, ethical decision making, and so forth.

The previous studies of public health risk communication build a connection between public health risk communication and media rhetoric in my study. Below I will showcase the prior research on media rhetoric.

Media Rhetoric

There is a growing body of research on media rhetoric (Frandsen & Johansen, 2010; Frandsen & Johansen, 2016; Huang & DiStaso, 2020; Raupp, 2019), in which most research is grounded in Kent and Taylor’s (2002) dialogic rhetoric. Specifically, taking the World Wide Web (WWW) as an example, Kent and Taylor examine the function of the web and media in boosting dialogue and communication. They propose five rhetorical principles for communication between organizations and the public through the internet, namely, “mutuality, propinquity, empathy, risk, and commitment” (p. 10) conceptualized as the pillars of true dialogic rhetoric.

Scholars have further offered interesting insights on media rhetoric in public health risk communication. For example, Huang and DiStaso (2020) examine the impact of kairotic response to risk and information appeal to the purpose of social media and recognition. They find that risk information about a hospital published on Facebook one day after the risk happened would be more credible to the public when compared to the information published in one week. Meanwhile, the influence of timing is mediated by the credibility of responses to risk. In addition, Ding (2014a) argues the issue of social media in public health risk communication in her book *Rhetoric of a global epidemic*. Specifically, in Chapter Three Ding mainly discusses the rhetoric of alternative media, especially guerilla media, in extra-institutional public health risk communication. She focuses on the rhetoric of proclamation and the rhetoric of personal narratives recorded in alternative media and their functions in boosting public participation (p. 109). Meanwhile, she proposes that it is particularly significant to study the rhetoric of alternative media in countries where mass media are under “constant surveillance” (p. 106). To study the rhetoric of alternative media in risk communication reinforces our understanding of “extra-institutional risk communication, mobile communication technologies, and ethical decision making” (p. 131). Additionally, it is valuable to explore the alternative media rhetoric because it provides convenient ways for professionals to “send out risk messages” (p. 131) to the public even if official channels are being controlled.

Although the flourishing of research insights greatly enhances my knowledge of media rhetoric and its relationship with public health risk communication, most of the studies focus on the rhetoric of social media in public health risk communication. Previous studies discussing mainstream media rhetoric in public health risk communication are limited. However, scholars mention that mainstream media plays a critical role as an “evaluator of information on other media” (Ferree et al., 2002; Raupp, 2019). Consequently, in this research, I address the gap and investigate the mainstream media rhetoric in public health risk communication.

Methodology

Method Design

I approached my research question by drawing upon the “Critical Contextualized Methodology” (Ding, 2007) because this methodology is critical for rhetorical analysis around public health risk communication, and it plays an important role in providing a useful methodology to explore media rhetoric. The “Critical Contextualized Methodology” is suitable to examine the “complexity and intricacy of communication of global events and unravel the impacts of such events” (p. 21).

I selected three dimensions, namely, “key players, time-space axes, and tipping points” of the “Critical Contextualized Methodology” (Ding, 2007) for my research. Based on the three dimensions, I selected news articles from the official websites of the U.S. mainstream media and analyzed the rhetorical tactics of these news articles to explore how mainstream media rhetoric manifested the social dynamics surrounding face-covering in the U.S.

Data Collection and Analysis

By searching the keywords “Coronavirus,” “Covid-19,” “face mask,” “face covering,” “United States,” and “America,” I collected 60 news articles published from 01/15/2020 through 05/31/2020 on the official websites of the U.S. mainstream media.

Then I downloaded the links to the news articles which are clickable. Accordingly, in the data analysis, I have dived into the rhetorical analysis of the social dynamics surrounding face-covering in the news articles.

Findings

In this part I conduct a rhetorical analysis of the social dynamics surrounding face-covering in the U.S. in the selected news articles under two themes: 1) The public's controversial arguments around face-covering during the pandemic risk communication; 2) Governmental official's attitudes and arguments about face-covering in the pandemic risk communication.

The public's controversial arguments around face-covering during the pandemic risk communication. Some news articles focused on the public's controversial attitudes towards face-covering in the U.S. The rhetoric of the mainstream media manifested the continuously and widespread uncertain, doubtful, and even unacceptable attitudes of the public towards face-covering from January to May 2020 in the U.S. despite that few people and organizations showed a positive attitude towards face-covering. Specifically, the mainstream media rhetoric manifested uncertainty and doubtfulness. For example, a news article on AP highlighted the controversy of the attitudes of the public: someone accepted to wear face-covering, donated face masks to medical professionals, cooperated with companies to make face masks, and even accept face-covering as a fashion. However, someone tended to refuse it due to sociocultural or partisan reasons.

Below I analyze the mainstream media rhetoric in the news article "True Freedom-Lovers Wear Face Mask" to explore the public's controversial arguments around face-covering:



(Picture: The ultimate patriotic accessory)

"Face masks are at risk of becoming a victim of America's culture wars, with a few conservative activists and commentators linking their use to cowardice, civil-rights violations and that worst of scourges, "the safetyism ideology that has jumped from the university to the public sphere." I do not wish to exaggerate the strength of this anti-mask movement, which seems to consist mainly of a few cranks in search of clicks (as well as a few unbalanced people with guns), but there does seem to be broader incidence of mask-apathy and mask-embarrassment that such rhetoric risks hardening into outright opposition.

The rise of face masks as a response to the pandemic has been a largely grass-roots phenomenon, conceived in opposition to the recommendations of health authorities such as the U.S. surgeon general and the World Health Organization — which still advises against their widespread use. Yes, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention came around to endorsing masks in April, and some states have recently begun requiring them in stores and other public indoor spaces. I get that such decrees rub some people the wrong way, and that mask-nannying by the news media does, too.

The prevailing belief is that masks are more effective at keeping infected wearers from spreading their germs than at protecting non-infected wearers (which kind of negates the argument that mask wearing is cowardly), but their most important role is as barriers placed in the path of the virus that likely reduce its reproduction number and thus its spread” (True Freedom-Lovers Wear Face Mask”, Bloomberg, 05/14/2020).

Analysis. In this news article, the first sentence “face masks [...] at risk of becoming a victim of America’s culture wars” involves a metaphor in it. The metaphor “structure how we think” and it has always been applied to “a particular situation” (Angeli, 2012, p. 207). The media compared face masks to “a victim,” which is a metaphor for evoking the audience’s sympathy for the scapegoating nature of face-covering during the Covid-19 pandemic, echoing the prior research on the use of “victim” as a metaphor for other public health issues such as Swine flu (Angeli, 2012). Meanwhile, “at risk of becoming” characterizes the urgency and timing of face-covering, and “America” directly informs the audience about the place where face-covering became a controversial issue, indicating the “time-space axes” dimension (Ding, 2007). In addition, some derogatory words such as “conservative,” “cowardice, civil-rights violations, and that worst of scourge” are pathos-driven, which evoke the audience’s feeling about blame and unacceptableness to face-covering.

In the second paragraph, the socio-cultural and political context around the controversy of wearing face-covering had been unraveled through the media rhetoric. Accordingly, a “tipping point” (Ding, 2007) had been indicated, that is, health authorities in the U.S. still had an ambiguous attitude towards face-covering from April 2020 through May 2020. Specifically, “in opposition to,” “still”, “against”, and the sentence “such decrees rub some people the wrong way” had been used to manifest the influence of health organizations and authorities’ ambiguous and even negative attitudes towards face masks on civic engagement in the event of face-covering, which reflects the logos of the news article.

The pathos-driven and logos-driven words and sentences in the first two paragraphs illuminate that the socio-cultural and political context influences the public’s risk perception and assessment, risk is socially constructed based on different risk assessments (Grabill & Simmons, 1998). For example, individualism and freedom values in the West might influence civic engagement in face-covering during the pandemic (Lu et al., 2021). In addition, the media mentioned that the conflicts between the large-scale phenomenon of using face-covering and the ambiguous policies of the U.S. health authorities led to the public’s confusion about wearing face-covering, echoing the fragile communication between the authorities and the public. To cope with this situation, Khripunov (2006) proposes that the authorities should keep “the public adequately informed” (p. 285) to mitigate their psychological uncertainties towards the crisis.

Interestingly, positive phrases such as “more effective” and “most important role” had been used to describe face-covering in the third paragraph. These adjectives invoked the audience’s emotion that face-covering is important and plays a critical role in coping with the pandemic, which was a pathos-driven comment on the

function of face-covering through the media's tone. Meanwhile, some credible information had been provided in the third paragraph to demonstrate the efficiency of face-covering, which reflected the ethos of this news article.

In addition to using written rhetoric, Bloomberg media adopted visual rhetoric to manifest people's controversial attitudes towards face-covering. By quoting a picture of face-covering, which was named "the ultimate patriotic accessory," Bloomberg media used rhetorical tactics such as metaphor and hyperbole in this picture and the title of the picture to invoke the audience's patriotism and persuade the audience to accept face-covering. The rhetorical tactics imbued in the picture and its title unraveled the relations between civic engagement and the rhetoric of mainstream media that the rhetoric of mainstream media can influence the public's decision-making process.

Governmental official's attitudes and arguments about face-covering in the pandemic risk communication. In addition to manifesting the controversial arguments of the public, some other news articles showcased the governmental officials' attitudes and arguments about face-covering in the U.S. For example,

"The death toll from the coronavirus pandemic in the United States approached 31,000 on Wednesday as governors began cautiously preparing Americans for a post-virus life that would likely include public face coverings as the "new normal."

The governors of Connecticut, Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania each issued orders or recommendations that residents wear face masks as they emerge from isolation in the coming weeks.

"If you are going to be in public and you cannot maintain social distancing, then have a mask, and put that mask on," said New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat.

"We are going to be getting back to normal; it will be a new normal," Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont said, echoing a phrase used by at least two of his fellow governors in recent days.

In Michigan, hundreds of cars flooded the streets around the state Capitol in Lansing on Wednesday to protest Democratic Governor Gretchen Whitmer's stay-at-home orders, some of the strictest in the country.

Some protesters, in the demonstration organized by conservative and pro-President Donald Trump groups, left their cars to gather on the lawn in front of the Capitol building, many of them not wearing masks or practicing social distancing." ("Face masks may be 'new normal' in post-virus life as U.S. prepares gradual reopening", Reuters, 04/15/2020).

Analysis. In the title of the news article, Reuters media used the phrase "new normal" to represent the wearing of face-covering, and this phrase has been stressed in the content of the article again, which was a pathos-driven metaphor invoking the audience's feeling towards acceptance of face-covering. It reflected the function of media rhetoric for boosting public participation, echoing Gelb's (2006) argument that mass media plays an important role in influencing and reconstructing the public's opinions.

From the second to the fourth paragraphs, the names of the U.S. states popped out gradually, for example, Connecticut, Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania, providing credible information to the audience that this news article discussed the local governments' policies towards face-covering. Through analyzing the rhetoric in the news articles, the local government's supportive attitude towards face-covering had been manifested by the

mainstream media, for example, the governors of Connecticut and Maryland “issued orders or recommendations that residents wear face masks”, “have a mask, and put that mask on” mentioned by New York Governor. However, some people kept a negative attitude towards the face-covering order issued by the governments, for example, some protestors in Michigan did not wear masks when they gathered. The different attitudes towards face-covering reflected the connection between politics and rhetorical responses towards risks, illuminating that the socio-cultural and political factors may “attenuate or amplify” (p. 17) risk information (Maule, 2004), influencing the public’s perception towards risks.

Conclusions

This research showcases how mainstream media rhetoric manifested the controversial arguments of the public and governmental officials around the face-covering issue during the Covid-19 pandemic. Ethos, logos, pathos, and rhetorical devices, such as metaphor and hyperbole, had been adopted by the mainstream media, to present the social dynamics of face-covering in the U.S. to the audience and evoke the audience’s feelings and emotions towards face-covering. Therefore, the findings demonstrate that mainstream media rhetoric could influence the public’s decision-making process during the public health risk communication.

This study adds to the existing studies of rhetoric and risk communication by highlighting the role and function of mainstream media rhetoric in public health risk communication. Mainstream media rhetoric not only works as an “indicator of the public perception of risk” (Ding, 2007, p. 112) to manifest the social dynamics surrounding face-covering but also influences public participation in public health risk communication.

This research provides pedagogical contributions to instructors and education practitioners in public health risk communication classroom settings. I hope to bring mainstream media rhetoric into teaching public health risk communication to foster students’ understanding of this course and inspire their critical thinking on the role of mainstream media rhetoric in public health risk communication.

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Kairos in Industry

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Abstract

This paper introduces a new theoretical model for how the rhetorical principle of kairos (right time and right measure) works in business settings. Drawing from survey data from business owners and archival industry research, the author proposes that kairos exists on a dimension ranging from proactive to reactive, with distinct strategic purposes for both.

Kairos is a Greek rhetorical construct linked primarily to right time and right measure; as such, it deals with time in its qualitative sense, as opposed to the more familiar construct of chronological time (Gallagher, 2020). Kairos, when sensed or read into the rhetorical situation, can inspire exigence and lead to identification of opportunities. Previous research suggests it can be usefully applied in business settings by recognizing the possibilities inherent in the moment (Bartunek & Necochea, 2000). Due to its qualitative aspects, kairos can also become a tool for evaluating rhetorical situations and determining appropriate responses (Getchell, 2019).

The ability to discern the right moment to act and move forward with a business concept or to pivot from a prior path often proves necessary to ensure the survival of business organizations. Entrepreneurship advice books frequently refer to the necessity of pivots or timely shifts in business functions and overall approaches. Ries's (2011) best-selling approach to entrepreneurship as depicted in the *Lean Startup* relied heavily on a scientific method to building businesses. While he described the approach as one of "continuous innovation," his proposal involved ongoing hypothesis testing throughout the process of business creation. Hypotheses focused on identifying what consumers already know they want. On the basis of these tests, founders using his method then employ timely, strategic pivots as they seek to create a sustainable, scalable business model. While Ries never referenced kairos, the concept permeates his entire approach, as practitioners test, assess, and then shift according to the needs of the moment. Arteaga and Hyland (2014), in *Pivot: How Top Entrepreneurs Adapt and Change Course to Find Ultimate Success*, based their entire startup methodology on the concept of the well-timed pivot. They argued for a structured, methodical, uncertainty-reducing approach to startup building that incorporated frequent testing and pivoting on the basis of findings. By reducing uncertainty through careful analysis, founders can more readily engage in the kairotic moment with reduced concern over consequences.

The stories of several world-famous technology business founders who pivoted to find their businesses' ideal forms demonstrated kairos in action. Facebook launched in 2003 as Facemash, a site for students to rate each other's attractiveness. Due to its violation of university policy, the original site faced a swift demise. Founder Mark Zuckerberg recognized the opportunity in the temporary moment of failure though and successfully re-launched as Facebook in February 2004, reaching one million active users by the end of the year (Hall, 2021). Twitter also arose due to a developer taking advantage of a kairotic moment. Evan Williams, cofounder (with Biz

Stone) of a podcast called Odeo, began investigating short messaging as a side project for Odeo; the platform took off quickly after its launch in 2007 (Britannica, 2021). For Williams, investigation of this opportunity pointed toward a new genre with potential broad consumer appeal. While Facebook users were composing longer statuses, Williams recognized the possibility of moment-by-moment bursts. These examples from prominent companies are only a few of the many companies that have found their success through recognizing the kairotic opportunities before others did so.

This paper introduces a theoretical model of the role of kairos in business settings, developed on the basis of a mixed method research study. To those ends, I will first briefly discuss survey data collected from business founders about the timing of starting their businesses, and then address archival data from an industry. The paper then closes with the model that draws together the various data points.

Deciding to Start a Business: The Voices of Founders

After gaining IRB approval, I asked 21 business founders about how they started their businesses. To recruit participants, I visited small businesses in West Virginia and handed out cards with the survey link, and asked the business owner to consider participating. I distributed approximately 50 cards. Additionally, using a snowball recruiting method, I asked business owners to consider passing the link to other small business owners that they knew. While the survey contained several closed and open-ended questions, the survey question about starting their business was open-ended. Using grounded theory (Strauss, 1987), I coded participant responses for conditions, strategies and tactics, and consequences. The coding and theory-building process led to the identification of three core categories linked to the decision to start a business: life stage/family, market timing, and seeking freedom from a prior restraint.

Coding for condition yielded a category called Life Stage/Family. Overall, responses in this category dealt with both family situations that incentivized individuals to start a business, as well as personal life stage considerations, such as retirement from a previous job. A majority of the respondents in this group emphasized a change in life stage or family. However, one respondent simply explained that for him, “there is no better time than the present.” Other examples from this category include a respondent in the service industry who explained he “was laid off and driven to create a better future for myself and one day my family!” Another founder had received a distribution from a family business and needed to deploy the cash in a new direction.

A second category based on coding for Strategy coalesced around the theme of Market Timing. Founders’ responses in this grouping dealt with opportunities and shifts in the market that triggered them to start a business. A boutique owner’s response differed from several others, in that she sought a quiet moment in the market to start her business as a soft launch strategy. She launched her clothing boutique near a land-grant state university and she commented that she chose to do so, “After holidays and before the students got back into town.” While this might seem counterintuitive to launch when few customers were available, she explained further “January is a slow month for retail, but it helped me get the hang of things.” Other respondents focused on a market need they identified, such as increased demand for a product or service they knew they could offer. For example, firearms sales have increased significantly in the United States most years since 1998 when the FBI began tracking data (McIntyre, 2021). However, sales jumped dramatically from 2019-2020, rising 40% (McIntyre). One of the surveyed founders had noted this increasing demand, and that spurred him to create his own firearms business.

The third timing-related category was Seeking Freedom from a Prior Restraint. Freedom served as an in-vivo code, as several participants directly mentioned types of freedom they sought. In effect, the responses in this grouping all dealt with an element of dissatisfaction that the founder decided could best be addressed at that moment by opening a new business. Responses ranged from simple statements such as “Unsatisfied with previous jobs” and “needed a change from being an employee” to several who commented on wanting various “freedoms,” including financial, scheduling, and creative. In the subgrouping related to financial freedom,

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one founder explained that his decision to open a business helped him avoid a trap of a part-time minimum wage job. Instead, his small food industry delivery business allowed him to set his own schedule and produce money more efficiently when he needed it.

For this group of founders, the decision to launch at that particular moment was driven by both chronological and kairotic concerns (Gallagher, 2020). They confronted changing personal and family circumstances that led them to evaluate opportunities in new ways. They also chose to exploit a variety of market opportunities that appeared in the moment. Finally, they chose to start new businesses as a means of creating a greater sense of freedom in their own lives. While other founders may tell different stories about their timing to launch their businesses, the materials briefly sketched here capture kairos in action in a varied set of business owners’ lives.

Archival Research: Kairos in the Ice Cream Industry

The second segment of the mixed methods research was based on archival research on the ice cream industry collected from trade journals, patents, and industry histories. The ice cream industry has a significant economic impact of \$13.1 billion annually within the United States, and \$70.9 billion globally (International Dairy Foundation Association, 2021). With this research, I sought to unpack how kairos impacted an industry over the long term.

In 1776, New York City became the first site to boast an ice cream parlor in America. In its earliest days, desire for the sweet treat was seeded and proactively created by advertisements and confectioners. Ice cream was first advertised by Phillip Lenzi on May 12, 1777, in the New York Gazette (International Dairy Foundation Association, 2021). Lenzi continued advertising several times throughout 1777-1778. The founding of the ice cream parlor and the beginning of advertising marked significant kairos-driven starting points in the industry: they seeded consumer desires as confectioners began to reach out to customers proactively. The advent of pleasure gardens in the 1790s, where ice cream was available for purchase, also contributed greatly to public awareness of the dessert, and even began to open opportunities for its consumption to those who were not of the elite class. Pleasure gardens were a source of “cheap entertainment for the masses” and were one of the first sites to allow intermingling of the sexes and activities suitable for entire families in public (Funderburg, 1995, p. 9). Nonetheless, for this moment at least, ice cream remained most readily and frequently available to the upper echelon of society, and particularly to individuals living in urban areas.

While the commercialization of ice cream was slowly gaining steam, production at home was also developing. In the early 1800s, ice harvesting had sufficiently developed as an industry to allow many city dwellers to obtain and keep ice with relative ease compared to the prior century. By the late 1820s, iceboxes were commonly available, allowing more consumers to keep ice long enough to try creating ice cream at home. The process of producing ice cream remained laborious, as this 1850s recipe demonstrated, with most cooks heavily reliant on the pot freezer method:

Mix equal quantities of coarse salt and ice chopped small; set the freezer containing the cream into a firkin, and put in the ice and salt; let it come up well around the freezer. Turn and shake the freezer steadily at first, and nearly all the time until the cream is entirely frozen. Scrape the cream down often from the sides with a knife. When the ice and salt melt, do not pour off any of it, unless there is danger of its getting into the freezer' it takes half an hour to freeze a quart of cream; and sometimes longer. A tin pail which will hold twice the measure of the cream, answers a good purpose if you do not own a freezer. In winter, use snow instead of ice. (Williams, 2006, p. 89)

Recipes such as the one above demonstrate consumers' desire for access to ice cream. However, because of the difficulties of preparing ice cream at home, the appeal of purchasing it from others was readily evident.

The development of several key technologies (such as the hand-cranked ice cream freezer) opened the opportunity for a kairos-driven revolution in the nascent industry. These cranking machines then created the opportunity for a major innovation: the development of the first large-scale commercial ice cream plant by Jacob Fussell in 1851 in Seven Valleys, Pennsylvania. The story of his business is ripe with kairos. Fussell originally ran a dairy delivery business. Pennsylvania Heritage Magazine (2012) reported another dairyman who was selling a variety of ice cream defaulted on a debt, and the lender hired Fussell to take over the business. Supply and demand issues created a difficult situation for Fussell, and he would often end his dairy route with excess cream (Funderburg, 1995). His solution, then, for the moment's troubles, was developing capacity for ice cream production. He hired a contractor to build an icehouse and a factory to take advantage of the situation. With his increased production capacity, Fussell was able to undercut the confectioners' pricing of 60 cents per quart and started selling at 25 cents per quart (Funderburg) and soon began raking in significant profits. In 1854, Fussell again identified an opportunity made possible by the development of new technology: he began shipping some of his ice creams by railway to Baltimore (Pelta-Pauls, 2017). Over the next forty years, Fussell relocated and expanded his business several times, taking advantage of a variety of economic opportunities, and also trained many others on how to succeed in the industry. Due to his commercial innovations, Fussell "earned the title of the Father of the Wholesale Ice Cream Industry" (Pennsylvania Heritage Magazine, 2012). Ice cream business people's navigation of the challenges of purity and food poisoning led to another significant industry shift in the 1920s.

At that point, industry regulations began to come into play and equipment sterilization and pasteurization became much more commonly available, making ice cream a safer treat for all to enjoy. Additional kairotic moments occurred during the development of varied ice cream novelties and with the advent of several other brands.

Overall, kairos permeates the history of the ice cream industry in America. While originally a treat for the elite, business people who worked as confectioners, street vendors, wholesalers, and scoop shop founders have made ice cream a treat enjoyed by the masses. Founders capitalized on kairotic opportunities they identified, and they also responded reactively to market trends and shifts in technology.

A Model of Kairos in Business Settings

Taken together, the contemporary survey data from business founders and the longitudinal look at the ice cream industry allow for development of a model for how kairos tends to work in business settings. The model situates kairos on a continuum of reactive to proactive, with stasis in the middle. Both reactive and proactive kairos are appropriate strategic moves at various points in the business life cycle. Proactive kairos, which

operates as an offensive move, provides businesspeople with tools to move ahead of the market and foresee trends, thus positioning the business for future success.

Stasis exists in the middle point of this dimension, and in this particular context consists of not acting. A lack of action can stem from various reasons. A functional stasis could correspond to a period of stability where the best path is to continue. A more potentially destructive non-action could occur due to a lack of awareness of the problem. Within the data set from contemporary business owners, an example of a business in stasis came from the owner of an electrical company. He had been in this particular business for a little less than five years. The work and the running of his business were stable and had not faced significant needs for change. This founder explained that his focus had remained on creating “a company built on doing things the right way.” In his case, the situation appeared to be a functional period of stability.

At the other end of the dimension, reactive kairos can serve other business needs. Reactive kairotic approaches involve analyzing the given moment and determining how to pivot to make the most of the situation. The use of reactive kairos is primarily defensive in response to factors influencing the business; whereas proactive kairos is offensive as it involves setting the stage for the business’s future performance.

In sum, considerations about right time and right measure permeate industry. Knowing how to identify kairotic moments and leverage them can improve opportunities for businesses to succeed. This paper offers a more robust awareness of how kairos can be applied as an analytical tool, as well as a planning tool in business settings. Bringing these rhetorical strategies to the business communication classroom can better prepare our students for their roles in the workplace and can help them identify opportunities and proper timing for entrepreneurial innovation.

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The Utility of Speech-Act Analysis: Historical Business Communications and Their Role in Racial Segregation.

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Abstract

The contribution seeks to apply the principles of J. L. Austin's speech-act theories to the study of local business segregation in the Jim Crow South. In particular, it borrows the notions of illocutionary and perlocutionary force when examining the seemingly bland and prosaic statements often used to normalize segregation within the business of commercial entertainment. For purposes of expanding the complexity of typical Manichaean (i.e., Black vs. White) ethnic studies, this analysis was developed within the context of tri-racial segregation as applied to rural moviegoing within Robeson County, North Carolina during the first half of the twentieth century. Notably, the development of Robeson's historical cinema-exhibition spaces eventually resulted in a highly unusual venue—i.e., the three-entrance theater—whose physical architecture reflected tensions between local ethnic demographics and desired social hierarchies. Yet even in the face of these unusual physical constructs, this study contends that seemingly everyday, objective/descriptive, and non-demonizing language remained an essential component in enforcing segregation.

Introduction

Whatever else it might be, and no matter what specific movies might mean to those who view them, the motion-picture industry in the United States has fundamentally depended upon a tripartite business structure of film production, distribution, and exhibition. In the early years of film-studies scholarship, cinema historians tended to focus their efforts documenting and analyzing the first two of those phases: first upon production, which included overt examinations of films, actors and directors as objects of investigation, and eventually to studies of distribution methods, foregrounding the industry's integrated relationship with distributors (which resulted in anti-trust decisions forcing the separation of studios from distribution chains) and to the development of alternative distribution methods for film, particularly television. In time, however, film studies practitioners turned their collective eye upon cinema exhibition. Indeed, in his broad overview of notable developments in cinema studies since roughly the 1970s, Charles Musser (2004) lauded the multiple modes and source types tied to the archival spadework that film historians often grounded their work in, all before concluding that "time and again, in-depth interrogation of the full sequence of events relevant to a film's production, distribution, and reception has provided opportunities for new interpretive insights" within cinema studies (p. 104).

Yet as any number of film exhibition-oriented historians—including Robert C. Allen, Kathy Fuller-Seeley, Douglas Gomery, Richard Maltby, Melvyn Stokes, Greg Waller, and many others—have discovered, trying to recreate the conditions of a film’s historical exhibition remains extraordinarily challenging, if not impossible. The film object featured in a given exhibition, of course, often longer exists. Even if it did, a film remains to some extent a secondary object of investigation in exhibition studies, since all film exhibitions were inherently impacted by business conditions shaped by a host of local, social, political, and cultural forces. The study of historical moviegoing, in turn, often involves attempts to articulate and comprehend the forces that shaped the conditions under which film objects were received or viewed. Such a focal shift generally accepts the absence of first-hand testimonies from either moviegoers or local film exhibitors historically; consequently, moviegoing scholars often turn to the ephemera surrounding films and film exhibitions—say, to exhibition log books, distribution contracts, accounting records, fire insurance maps, deeds, local newspaper accounts, advertisements, and even the physical remnants of movie houses themselves—in order to tease out some of the local forces shaping moviegoing. However, this reorientation by some film historians in the evidentiary base has served to an extent (albeit unintentionally) to sideline the linguists and other scholars whose work on, for example, film texts and narrative theory had provided some of the best analytical work performed within cinema studies. In light of this turn towards historical-exhibition studies, is there a way to reconnect linguistics with moviegoing studies such that, for example, an analysis of the uses of language within exhibition ephemera could, when examined within a specific language context, assist scholars in imagining what it may have felt like or meant historically to go to a film within such an historical context?

After considering some of the unusual circumstances relevant to a specific moviegoing location in the US South during the age of segregation, the answer is yes, and the connective tissue at the intersection of the fields of business history, cinema history, exhibition studies, segregation studies, and linguistics is speech-act theory. Indeed, a combined awareness of the general and the specific conditions of segregation in both the American South and in Robeson County, North Carolina is essential to understanding how the language of everyday life supported and perpetuated the conditions of segregation—even as and when that language was tied to recreational activities like moviegoing, and even as and when that language did not overtly appear to demonize the intended subjects of segregation.

Robesonian Segregation in the Jim Crow Era

One of the seminal texts outlining the development of institutional segregation in the United States, C. Vann Woodward’s *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, represents an existentialistic treatise confirming the specific choices made by people in all walks of life—choices that led over time to the development of a host of political, social, and economic structures unquestionably grounded in the ideologies of racial prejudice (Woodward & McFeeley, 2002). One of the notable characteristics of Woodward’s Jim Crow masterwork is that it focused not only on landmark legal decisions such as the *Plessy v. Ferguson*—the 1896 Supreme Court ruling that effectively legitimized the “separate but equal” treatment underpinning the clearly unequal opportunities facing non-Whites in America, particularly in the South, until the legal infrastructures supporting Jim Crow segregation were effectively overturned by the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Rather, Woodward also documented the host of seemingly prosaic choices made every day by Americans (and not just those in the South) that helped to institutionalize racial discrimination.

Surely, some of their choices supported political disenfranchisement through voting-rights restrictions like literacy tests that often sidelined Black and Indian voters in Robeson County—restrictions typical of similar measures across the South, even though these generally targeting African Americans. But by the 1930s, Robeson

County featured three sizable ethnic groups; moreover, the combined population of its Native and African Americans represented roughly 55% of the county's residents. Thus, local Whites implemented both legal and extra-legal restrictions to address the perceived threat of Native American voters combining forces with African Americans as a joint challenge to local white dominance. In Robeson specifically, the local Lumbee Indians received some White support relative to the funding and control of local schools catering primarily to members of the Indian community, including what would eventually become the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. In return, however, Indians were fully expected "to cease political cooperation with blacks or risk toppling their precarious place in the power balance"—a balance that also prevented Indians from being able to vote directly for the mayor and town commissioners in Pembroke, the Robeson market town located at the center of the most densely populated collection of Indian hamlets located east of the Mississippi River (Lowery, pp. 27-9 and 52).

What remains fully characteristic of Woodward's work on segregation is the extent to which the language of daily life codified the racial structures imposed by the typically dominant local White populations. Much of the time, the prose undergirding everyday acts of segregation were expressed in seemingly naturalistic or otherwise apparently unobjectionable language that reiterated how life was to be lived and how social interactions were to be structured in the South particularly. However, when uttered within earshot of a series of highly unusual physical structures developed over roughly a fifty-year period in Robeson County, North Carolina, these seemingly mild expressions effected a form of tri-segregation that proscribed equal access to public entertainments (particularly to motion picture exhibitions, as outlined in McKenna, 2007). And while many social institutions in Robeson had been subjects of segregation for decades, the development of physical spaces attempting to cater to all three ethnic groups simultaneously remained rare. Motion-picture exhibition spaces were just such an exception, as their scale typically prevented smaller communities in rural North Carolina from supporting more than a single exhibition site.

Consequently, when these unusual tripartite facilities were developed, local audiences at times received specific instruction on how to access these sites through common, everyday language that may have seemed, on the surface, perfectly unobjectionable. In hindsight, however, an application of the speech-act theories initially developed by J. L. Austin relative to the language used to describe how and where to access segregated theaters in Robeson County (up to and including the "three-entrance" venues¹ that may have been unique to Robeson) demonstrates the extent to which everyday language formed a kind of invisible mortar that reinforced the operational design of sites intended to enforce local ethnic hierarchies. In turn, these interactions ultimately required non-White patrons publicly to claim an undesired, second-class racial identity. As such, an Austinian deconstruction of the component forces embedded within the speech acts surrounding tri-segregated theaters that might otherwise appear as "descriptive-only" language—namely, teasing out the illocutionary and perlocutionary forces contained within speech acts—remains particularly relevant when evaluating some of the apparently prosaic descriptions of the patronage actions expected within Robeson's movie houses.

1 Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent references to the development of these theaters, to all of the exhibition sites in Robeson County, to the county's demographics, and to its racial attitudes and hierarchies were previously documented in McKenna (2013). Note that by 1950, all of the 10 standing (i.e., non-drive-in) theatres across the six principal towns in Robeson County (Lumberton, Fairmont, St. Paul's, Red Springs, Rowland, and Pembroke) possessed segregated balconies. Though all 10 sites likely experimented with forms of balcony tri-segregation, only 4 of them (i.e., Lumberton's Carolina and Riverside Theatres, plus the Rowland and the Red Springs Theatres) can be confirmed as having attempted to implement simultaneously tri-segregated balconies—based upon news accounts within the only continuously operating paper in the region, Lumberton's *Robesonian*.

Review of Austinian Speech-Act Theory

Initially developed in a series of *William James Lectures* delivered at Harvard University in the 1950s, J. L. Austin's speech-act theories can assist in demonstrating how seemingly innocent yet extraordinarily context-laden forms of linguistic expressions—whether instantiated in print (via local news stories or advertisements) or in the everyday speech of theater operators and ticket-takers—supported the institution of tri-segregation in Robeson County.

To begin with, Austin's lectures decisively took aim at the proposition that language largely involves *statements*, constructions typically considered to represent descriptive utterances principally evaluated as either true or false. In *How to do Things with Words*, however, Austin (1962) proposed that many such utterances were forms of action—events constituted by and through the fact of their own utterance. In Austin's view, these performative utterances remained inherently contextual and resulted in context-laden outcomes. In such utterances, "the *circumstances* in which the words are uttered should be in some way, or ways, *appropriate* [to the context], and it is very commonly necessary that either the speaker himself or other persons should *also* perform certain *other* actions, whether 'physical' or 'mental' actions or even acts of uttering further words" in response to these initial utterances. Though in his lectures Austin toyed with developing a finite list of verb forms that could be considered performative utterances, all the while holding out the teasing premise that performative utterances were fundamentally distinct from "constative" utterances that a linguist might otherwise view as descriptive and/or truth statements, Austin ultimately claimed that insisting upon a distinction between descriptive/constative and performative utterances was itself largely a fiction. Utterances attempting to state or to describe situations universally and/or definitively all occurred for Austin within a given local context. As such, all tended to involve some form of speaker's intention specific to that context. As a result, Austin debunked as a form of the "descriptive fallacy" the notion that descriptions somehow exist free from their specific contexts and intentions—and effectively few if any such utterances could be considered universally true or false (Austin, 1962).

In deconstructing performative utterances as context-bound forms of action, moreover, Austin distinguished between the three forces which speech acts brought to bear during the relationship between speaker and listener:

- the conventional referential meaning of the speaker's utterance (which Austin deemed as the *locutionary act*)
- the intention behind the utterance (deemed the *illocutionary act*), and
- the intended effect(s) desired from a listener in response to the utterance (deemed the expression's *perlocutionary act(s)*).

Many of the performative utterances initially described by Austin amounted in subsequent analyses to a set of proscriptions, orders, or warnings cloaked in seemingly informative and informal language. For Austin, these utterances carried significantly more than a conventional emphasis or force within a specific locutionary (or intention-laden) context. Rather, the conventions of the local circumstances lent these utterances significant illocutionary force—and not just in situations overtly seeking to persuade, warn, or convince. In fact, performative utterances made within seemingly conventional statements for Austin were often designed to result in unconventional outcomes: namely, in perlocutionary acts, which Austin characterized as outcomes that a recipient would not normally engage in...but did so as the direct result of the utterance.

Certainly, some of the verb forms that Austin grouped with performative speech acts include utterances that directed or ordered a receiver to take an action or to adopt some belief, just as in an overt act of persuasion. But while many of Austin's initial lists of performative-utterance verbs focus on first-person utterances and their command-form variations, such as "I order you to go there" or simply "go there," Austin insisted that performative utterances did not require a command-like form. For a given speech-act, as long as "the particular persons and circumstances in a given case [are] appropriate for the particular procedure invoked," then what might otherwise appear to be a descriptive or generic third-person utterance—like "passengers are directed to act in a such and such a fashion"—could equally represent a performative speech act (Austin, 1962). In time, Austin deemed such utterances Exercitives, though Austin's successor, John Searle, would subsequently characterize them as Directives (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976).

Finally, it is worth recognizing that even as Austin tended to focus on many of his lectures on examining sentences rather than single words, his analysis of illocutionary force focused upon the verbs that these sentences boiled down to for instance, to language acts like "to name," "to pronounce," or "to wager." However, Austin understood that depending upon the context of its utterance, a performative utterance consisting even of a single word could also carry illocutionary and perlocutionary force (Austin, 1961a).

Applying Speech-Act Theory to Early Moviegoing Artifacts in Robeson County

Austin's recognition that one can view seemingly objective statements rather as utterances made within a very specific set of contextual conditions in turn enables an analysis of the textual evidence surrounding motion-picture exhibitions and exhibition sites in Robeson County during the Jim Crow period. And that analysis implies not only the extent to which tri-segregated thinking was embedded in the daily lives of Robesonians, but also how commonly (in the absence of overt policing facilities in most social situations) everyday language helped to maintain a clear separation between the county's dominant (White) and two subordinated (Indian and Black) social groups. In fact, ever since the advent in the late-1900s of semi-regular cinema exhibitions in Robeson, local exhibitors deployed physical modifications to their facilities as well as text-based instructions in newspaper accounts to specify how audiences were to use these facilities. Such accounts represent what Michael Randall Barnes (2016) characterizes as "a *subordinating* act...that marks its targets as inferior and deprives them of important rights and opportunities" (p. 240).

For instance, consider the following 1908 account from *The Robesonian*, the local Lumberton newspaper, entitled "Improvements at the Opera House." It detailed modifications to a relatively modest two-story building whose second floor featured a local performance space and a modest stage. "Improvements are being made at the opera house which will add greatly to the comfort and safety of its patrons. A stairway will be built to the room on the left of the entrance and from this room an entrance for colored people will be cut to Elm Street. Another stairway will be built to the gallery, making four stairways in the front of the house, which will provide better means of entrance and exit and will also provide for complete separation of the races" (18-Sep-1908).

Note that the article's conclusion that "complete separation of the races" represented a newsworthy "improvement" is couched largely as a simple descriptive statement, one proffered by a white-owned and operated newspaper in the Jim Crow South. In evaluating such a statement, Austin would counter that such descriptions typically do not represent or encapsulate forms of objective fact; rather, they remain assertions—assertions which (in a sense) often masquerade as fact. For Austin, the appropriateness of most of what might be characterized as "fact" in a descriptive utterance is almost entirely dependent upon its situational context, and therefore these utterances cannot be assumed to universally pertinent, valid, or even appropriate when

uttered in distinctly different contexts (1961b). Therefore, instructions like those embedded in the 1908 notice regarding how a patron should approach and use the segregated facilities in Robeson's theaters (virtually all of which came to possess segregated balconies by the 1930s) simply do not represent *de facto* statements of objective or universal fact; instead, they amount to hierarchically imposed segregationist assertions tied to specific physical structures that were designed or redesigned to reinforce the belief systems of dominant White residents.

Moreover, given that performative utterances also carry illocutionary and perlocutionary force, Austin would caution his audience to remain especially aware of the local belief systems in which such utterances are made (1961c). To a keen listener like Austin, once one strips aside the basic locutionary/referential meaning of statements that nominally appear to be objectively descriptive, one typically uncovers a speech act tied to a particular beliefs and intentions, while the perlocutionary force of the act seeks to bring about unconventional responses from its audience. In that sense, regardless of whether or not the newspaper editors who published ads for tri-segregated theaters that incorporated distinct segregated pricing structures for White/Indian/Black patrons (as in Figure 4 below), or regardless of whether the ticket-sellers and ushers gesturing non-Whites towards race-specific staircases and balconies personally believed in the underlying prejudices that led to the development of these same artifacts, their passive participation in such outcomes dovetail with what Pierre Bourdieu would have classified as a direct engagement in a specific social *habitus*—one which, in the view of Michiel Leezenberg, semi-consciously prompted speakers “to unwittingly reproduce existing patterns of dominion and inequality” (as discussed in Leezenberg, 2013, p. 298).

Of course, the Lyceum Bureau that sponsored these physical changes to the Opera House, the principal entertainment venue located in the Robeson County seat, clearly desired both White and non-White patrons. Of the latter, they initially targeted African Americans (as relatively few Indians lived close to Lumberton) in the hope of generating more revenue than their previous Whites-only crowds could supply. Yet the local ethnic hierarchies established (largely) by White residents demanded as much of a physical separation as possible between ethnic groups from the sidewalk to the seats, and what the *Robesonian's* seemingly descriptive-only news account failed to mention is the fact that the infrastructural changes represented choices being made by White owners resulting in an outcome that non-White groups generally despised: namely, their publicly accepting a form of second-class social status.

Their subject positioning was simultaneously affected by performance-venue managers and staffers. While the bulk of the employees at the Opera House were ordinary local citizens serving as ticket sellers and ushers (not to mention musicians and projectionists), their status as members of the socially dominant ethnic group lent them what Barnes (2016) refers to as an “informal situational positional authority.” Moreover, their directives to non-White groups regarding where to sit and how to enter/exit the building effectively carried the force of speech acts, as their verbal policing of the space essentially promoted illocutionary intentions that boiled down to performative utterances like “I identify you as non-White,” “I relegate you to a specific segregated space,” and “I prohibit you from accessing this entertainment venue on an equal footing with Whites.” When combined together, the site's specific spatial configuration plus the staff members' verbal or textual interactions with non-White patrons signified clearly and unambiguously that certain spaces were not for everyone's use and that some patrons had been deemed socially *less than* the venue's more privileged patrons. In Austinian terms, the acquiescence of non-White patrons to accept their relegation by text, voice, and/or gesture to second-rate

facilities (which represented the perlocutionary/undesired outcome designed for the intended audience) required Indians and African Americans publicly to perform a binary (i.e., a non-White) ethnic identity, even though the family trees of many Robesonians—both then and now—could be traced back through a complex mixture of White, Indian, and/or Black ancestors.

Even so, whenever they were faced with facilitating (or not) the patronage of the region's two subject minority groups, local exhibitors struggled to develop a facility that seemed to allow all three ethnic groups to coexist. Before the changes in 1908 at the Opera House, for instance, the site's initial seating policy was almost certainly a simple one: White patrons only. And after Robeson's first recorded motion-picture exhibition occurred in 1897, no extant evidence during the early 1900s suggests that non-Whites were welcome at any of the county's infrequent travelling exhibitions. Despite the 1908 changes to the Opera House, the venue only periodically featured motion pictures in its modified space, and by 1910 local movie exhibitions were essentially relocated to Lumberton's new Pastime Theatre, a modified storefront that almost certainly served White patrons only when it opened (as it lacked a balcony until years later). Attempts to open other local exhibition spaces willing to serve non-Whites during the 1910s represented extremely short-lived affairs, and the Opera House itself ceased operating (as a colored venue) in 1919. Nonetheless, the lure of non-White patronage tantalized exhibitors continually scuffling to make ends meet, and over the next two decades, the county's operators embarked upon a series of interim spatial reconfigurations that transformed—via the incorporation of added balconies and staircases—White-only movie houses into multi-racial sites requiring all non-White patrons to share a single segregated balcony.

Initial Tri-Racial Accommodations

The results, however, were decidedly mixed, particularly since they collided with the resolve of the county's Indians to protect their intermediate position in the area's cultural hierarchy. Publicly, the local Lumbee community protested against segregationist treatment in these sites more commonly than did local African Americans. In fact, the former's resistance to binary White/Non-White venues led to tri-racial accommodations effected by the mid-to-late 1930s through multiply-divided balconies in towns like Red Springs and Rowland (even though these sites could allow patrons of all races to intermingle at ticket booths or in stairwells). Attempts to experiment with shifting balcony configurations also remained highly uneven. Indeed, when a renovated Pastime Theatre sporting a balcony of roughly 140 seats was reopened as a second-run venue in 1934, local newspaper advertisements noted that it contained a "balcony of 100 seats exclusively for Indians" (Figure 1). However, a few weeks later the site's ads suggested a change in balcony orientation, given the theater's "entire balcony for colored" patrons (Figure 2). This realignment led to a remarkable Letter to the Editor in which a local Indian moviegoer named Hansel Holmes dually criticized this development and warned exhibitors that as Indians, "we don't have to club up with Negroes and we don't have to go to the show at all. We won't go in there any more as long as the negroes are allowed to go" (*The Robesonian*, 1-Oct-1934).

Figure 1

Lumberton's Pastime Theatre Ad First Announcing Indian Balcony (The Robesonian, 16-Aug-1934)

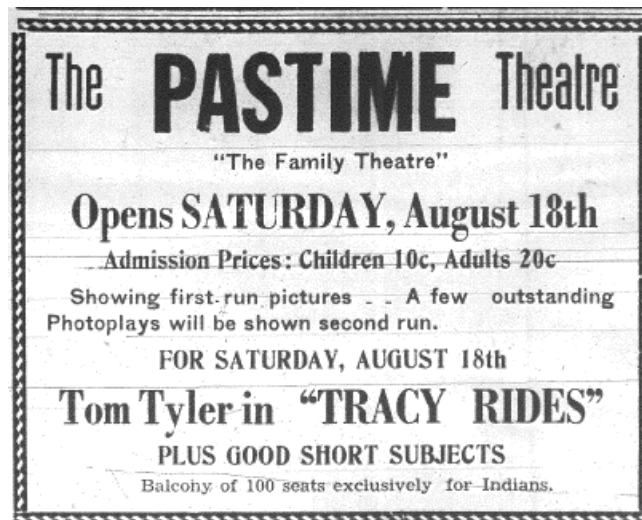
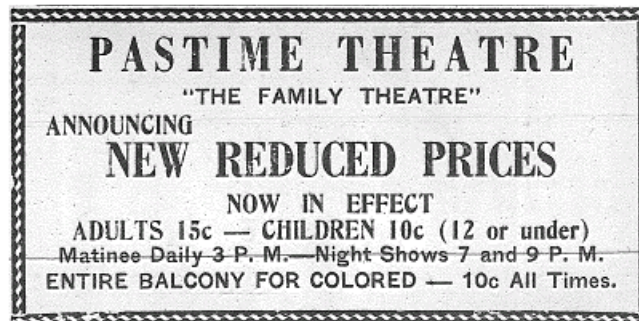


Figure 2

Lumberton's Pastime Theatre Ad First Announcing Colored Balcony (The Robesonian, 13-Sep-1934)



Artifacts like the Holmes letter as well as the images in Figures 1 and 2 highlight the extent to which Robesonian tri-racialism remained thorny to implement. Yet a linguistic analysis of the role played by the language used to describe and maintain local segregationist patterns appears to be long overdue. Oddly, as Leezenberg has noted, "in linguistics, surprisingly little sustained or systematic attention has been devoted to questions concerning the articulation, reproduction and/or contestation of power relations in actual speech behavior." The speech-act analyses within this paper veer towards what Leezenberg might qualify as a Foucaultian (as opposed to a Marxist) delineation of power relations, given that Foucault viewed power relations as being most often expressed through what Leezenberg suggests are "informal practices of everyday power and resistance," including ones that "structure the possible field of action of others" (Leezenberg, 2013). It is precisely in this vein that the words and gestures of the personnel staffing Robeson's segregated venues formed a kind of invisible mortar that controlled the navigation of raced bodies inside a set of theater buildings that quite literally represented a concrete-and-brick implementation of the dominant social hierarchy that existed in Robeson County during the Jim Crow era. Furthermore, in the view of Marina Sbisà and Ken Turner, whose scholarship

links speech-act theory to a pragmatics-oriented form of linguistics, speech-act theorists such as John Searle have (following Austin) extended the notion of a *speech act* to a “movement or gesture, both bodily and mental, which is to ‘count as’ the intended type of speech act” which the gesture replaces (Sbisà & Turner, 2013). Therefore, even the glances or hand movements of staff members designating the segregated environs to which non-White groups were relegated can be viewed and analyzed as speech acts containing both illocutionary and perlocutionary force.

Three-Entrance Theaters

Certainly, the words and gestures of theater staffers reiterated cues in the advertisements that sometimes featured hints regarding how patrons were expected to approach Robesonian theaters—including one of the most unusual one of all. Opened in 1939, Lumberton’s new Riverside Theatre, a venue built from the ground up instead of a modification to an existing structure, represented the fullest example of a wholly Robesonian solution to shared public space: namely, the “three-entrance” theater. As a fully tri-segregated theater, the Riverside sub-divided all of the site’s main physical elements within a facility designed to accommodate Blacks, Indians, and Whites simultaneously (save for its rest rooms and concession stands, which for years remained reserved for White patrons only). The Riverside’s triplicate set of ticket booths, stairwells, and balconies constituted the most fully formed embodiment of American moviegoing tri-apartheid, one that—in theory—avoided some of the tensions caused by the colocation of Blacks and Indians within a single balcony space. Despite the Riverside’s standing as the county’s largest venue, with approximately one-thousand seats, it still remained a subordinating space for non-Whites, as the following set of instructions initially embedded within ads for the new venue indicated:

Figure 3

Directions Intended for Riverside Theatre Patrons (The Robesonian, 11-Sep-1939)

“The Main Auditorium Is For The Exclusive Use Of Our White Patrons At All Times...
The Indian Entrance Is To The Right Of The Theatre, And The Colored Entrance Is To The Left”

As this language suggests, the venue’s core belonged to its most privileged patrons, and though they now had individual spaces that did not require Black and Indian colocation, non-White patrons were shunted to the wings—and exclusively shunted to balcony seats.

Despite the seemingly objective nature of these descriptive sentences, of course, nothing theoretically required the use of a given staircase or balcony space by a specific ethnic group...other than a clearly-defined set of space management decisions that informed the site’s preferred usage. In the wake of Austin’s lectures, linguists can view the utterances in Figure 3 as simply race-inflected assertions, ones intended to maintain the predominant set of social and ethnic hierarchies in Robeson County. These assertions remained no more objectively true (neither then nor now) than the notion that incorporating physical facilities “to provide for complete separation of the races” in the original Opera House was either a necessary or a good thing. Relatively quickly, of course, the instructions embedded in Figure 3 became common knowledge throughout Robeson, and they soon disappeared from the ads in local newspapers, even though these ads otherwise highlighted the facility’s tri-segregated nature. As seen in Figure 4, these ads again implied the divided manner in which raced bodies were expected (ultimately, required) to utilize the facility. Given a venue possessing a trio of race-specific box offices

and balconies, it seems clear that despite whatever ushers or ticket-takers might personally believe about racial hierarchies, their instructions to patrons unaware of, or perhaps feigning ignorance of, the site’s raced-body management protocols represented illocutionary acts reducible to simple linguistic forms: *I designate you as X, I restrict/consign you to Y*, and thus, *I segregate you within* a space dictated by your perceived ethnic identity.

Figure 4

Tri-Racial Advertisement for Riverside Theatre (The Robesonian, 3-Apr-1939, p. 3)

POOR TOPPER!
He's in trouble again... with the same ludicrous ghost who wrapped herself in ectoplasm and put him in a fog in "Topper". Go along with them on another joyous journey of zany hilarity... with every roaring laugh as broad as the Atlantic!

HAL ROACH
TOPPER TAKES A TRIP
with **CONSTANCE BENNETT - ROLAND YOUNG**
and **BILLIE BURKE**
VERNE WEDGIE - JERRY W. WELLS
ALEXANDER D'AMICO - BOB ALLEN

ADMISSION PRICES

Matinee: Adults	20 Cents
Children	10 Cents
Nights: Adults	25 Cents
Children	10 Cents
Indians: Adults	15 Cents
Children	10 Cents
Colored: Adults	15 Cents
Children	10 Cents

The Mortar Between the Bricks

Regardless of their seeming innocuous nature, these and similar segregationist utterances informed by the prejudices of Robesonian Jim Crowism perpetuated the continuing delegation of non-White patrons to less privileged (and more specifically, to non-auditorium) spaces which forced non-Whites to accept the imposition of abhorred ethnic hierarchies simply in order to enjoy motion-picture entertainment. As such, these directives would have been viewed as subordinating speech acts by scholars like Sbisà and Turner (2013), who note that even though speech acts typically do not require “any particular physical strength or presence of expensive artifacts”—for instance, an artifact like a fully tri-segregated building—they nevertheless “succeed in creating situations in which people feel obliged and really are obliged, if not compelled, to do something: in other words, they produce social agreement and social organization (including both coordination and subordination)” within their targeted audiences. Indeed, that coordination and subordination extended beyond local private enterprise in Robeson to entertainment events sponsored by state agencies. In the late teens and early 1920’s, in fact, a collection of North Carolina state organizations founded a program seeking to bring a combination of inexpensive entertainment and educational fare targeting rural communities. In Robeson County, however, this Community Service Picture campaign was required to do something unique across the dozens of counties served by the Program: namely, to divide its portable film equipment and event personnel to offer separate sessions for the region’s three distinct demographic groups [as in Figure 5].

Figure 5

A Tri-Segregated Community Service Picture Advertisement (The Robesonian, 21-Oct-1920, p.4)

U. S. GOVERNMENT'S
 Marvelous Educational
SOCIAL HYGIENE EXHIBITION

Auspices U. S. Public Health Service, American Social Hygiene Association, North Carolina State Board of Health.

WONDER PRODUCING MOVING PICTURES!

Never Before Seen in Robeson County

Free Books! For Men, for Boys, for Girls, for Women, for Parents, for All. Get one.

SEPARATE MEETINGS FOR WHITE, INDIAN AND COLORED

TWICE DAILY! Afternoons, 3:30 p. m. Women Only
 Evenings, 8:00 p. m. Men Only

LOOK FOR THE BANNER!
See the Social Hygiene Field Car!

Once again, the speech acts encoded in ads like this represent samples of the otherwise prosaic and bland directives (such as “Whites Only”) that underpinned historical segregation. Yet in contrast to those in most Jim Crow venues, these subordinating acts in Robeson were situated within a highly unconventional physical structure, the three-entrance theater, which represented one of the two principal Lumberton structures, along with the county courthouse featuring a triplicate set of bathrooms and water fountains, designed to tri-segregate the population within singular public spaces. When combined, the site’s layout, its advertisements, and the language used by staffers to enforce the theater’s raced-body policies both enabled and prompted the unconventional perlocutionary outcome of non-Whites implicitly accepting (if even for a short while) their designation as second-class citizens, all while occupying the worst seats in a house that ironically served up the fantasy fare of Hollywood.

Of course, this tri-segregationist standard is not to suggest that behavioral exceptions to the usual social hierarchies did not occur. Years of cross-group interrelationships and social intermingling meant that even though some forms of racial intermarriage were prohibited by law in North Carolina until the early 1970s, attempts even by local residents in Robeson to pinpoint an individual’s ethnic identity strictly based upon his or her physical appearance remained a highly fraught enterprise. More particularly, since Robeson’s Indians historically tended to live much further than Blacks from towns hosting theaters, they tended to represent less frequent movie patrons. As such, they were more likely to be unfamiliar to a site’s ticket takers and ushers. Therefore, as a sign of the theater’s extensive efforts to maintain its racial attendance standards, the Riverside Theatre’s staff found it so difficult at times to distinguish the ethnic identities of patrons whose physical phenotypes resisted categorization that the managers eventually hired a local Indian boy to point out seating violations to management. [One can only imagine the combined social pressures that beset such a figure.]

Such a hire typified the efforts made by the Riverside's managers to pursue their goal of maximizing patronage within the constraints required by the dominant White population. Still, Lumbees in particular were willing to rebel publicly against their second-class designation in White theaters. Over time, the personal acquiescence required to accept a second-class status while attending a White theater dismayed Robeson's Indians enough for them periodically to boycott sites like the Red Springs Theatre, a site that Indians felt had treated them particularly poorly. In Robeson, too, perceived ethnic slights could and did linger for decades. For instance, Bruce Barton, the longtime Lumbee leader and community advocate who served for many years the editor of the *Carolina Indian Voice*, so vividly recalled the "undisguised anger" he felt at "the age-old racism and discrimination" practiced in segregated theaters in Robeson that "even today, I almost feel like killing someone when I think about it" (McKenna, 2013). Moreover, Barton the activist journalist must have been exceptionally vexed when his local newspaper, the *Pembroke Progress* (whose coverage area most closely overlapped Robeson's Indian villages) partially funded its operations with ads for Lumberton's fully tri-segregated Riverside Theatre [Figure 6].

Figure 6

Tri-Segregated Riverside Theatre Ad (Pembroke Progress, 1-Jun-1950, p. 6)



Local Resistance

So even as the lines between “White” and “Colored” hardened in North Carolina in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries into a division that attempted to push Native Americans into a single catchall category encompassing all non-Whites, Robeson’s Indians resolved if possible to maintain a distinctive group identity both within their own communities and while occupying public spaces. But the negotiations with and against local social codes remained a tenuous enterprise. According to Lumbee scholar Malinda Maynor Lowery, Indians were at times willing to participate in the institutionalization of racial identities in order to ensure two primary objectives: that Whites would recognize their “Indianness,” and that Indians could retain control of their own local institutions, particularly their schools and churches. While this stance to an extent represented a compromise with a system of white supremacy that most rigorously targeted African Americans, Indians held no illusions regarding how aggressively that same system might seek to disempower them (Lowery, 2018). Consequently, for generations the county’s Indians “recognized the game of race and addressed it by consistently trying to move it to an arena where they had power” (Lowery, 2018).

Therefore, when it came time to screen motion pictures in a Robeson County community in which the local demographic conditions permitted a potential inversion of prevailing social hierarchies, the resulting set of segregation effects looked distinctly different, particularly in the case of the Pembroke Theatre, the first dedicated movie theater operating in Pembroke. Lying roughly ten miles west of Lumberton, Pembroke stood at the crossroads of the most densely populated set of Indian communities located anywhere east of the Mississippi. Though Pembroke had started out as a largely white town, by the 1940s roughly eighty percent of Pembroke township’s residents were Native American. As a result, the Pembroke Theatre could not have survived financially without significant Indian patronage. Initially owned and operated by white managers, the Pembroke intentionally shunted its Black patrons into a cramped balcony while dividing the main auditorium floor between Whites and Indians. However, attempts by the site’s original manager to keep Whites and Indians segregated on the auditorium floor led to local Indian protest, as Indians felt that in this venue at least, they should be free to sit anywhere.

Once the white manager left town not long after, the site was leased and operated by a well-regarded local Indian businessman who permitted Whites and Indians to mingle in an auditorium that now amounted effectively to a “non-Black,” as opposed to a typical Robesonian “Whites only,” space. According to the manager’s son, Jesse Oxendine, who as a youth operated the site’s projectors, when management changed hands, it was “just understood” that Black patrons would continue to be shunted to the balcony (McKenna, 2013). As such, the Pembroke’s ticket sellers and ushers would have been called upon to maintain this (for Robeson) unusual segregated outcome via speech acts somewhat resembling those employed in, say, Lumberton theaters. While the egalitarian potential of the Pembroke’s independent seating policies was diminished by the relegation of Black patrons to a segregated balcony, the Pembroke may indeed represent the first venue in American cinema-exhibition history where Native Americans decided precisely who could sit where in a commercial movie house. But just as was true across Robeson’s segregated moviegoing sites, the speech acts operating in Pembroke theaters also directed their less-privileged patrons to adopt, even if for just a few hours, an ethnic identity limiting personal freedoms in order to participate in the site’s recreational entertainments.

Ultimately, documenting these artifacts and accounts from Jim Crow cinema-exhibition venues serves to demonstrate how seemingly prosaic language structures simultaneously informed and perpetuated public segregation—and did so in ways reminiscent of the efforts of contemporary linguistic anthropologists like Jane

Hill (1998), whose work often examines how language usage can structure and/or restrict social identities within multi-lingual spaces. Moreover, this paper's analyses fall in line with Elizabeth Keating and Alessandro Duranti's contention that studies of language usage within multi-cultural settings can foreground struggles undergirding the very foundations of human culture, since within such dialogues "language users...work out who they are [and] what they are up against" (2011). Robeson's segregated exhibition venues offer potentially fertile ground, too, for the kind of scholarship performed by any number of the semiotic and/or sociolinguistic researchers featured within Woldemariam, Lanza, and Blackwood's *Negotiating and Contesting Identities in Linguistic Landscapes*, a collection of essays supporting a program of "examining the notion of identity, or what may be referred to as a sense of belonging as constructed in a place" (2016). Finally, these sites offer up not only physical but also language-based evidence representative of precisely the sort of painful cultural-memory artifacts referred to within the work of oral historians like Kenneth Bindas, as they collectively they reveal clear differences in the lived historical experience of Whites and non-Whites. Surely, Robeson's commercial theaters complicate America's history of racial prejudice within cinema exhibition by introducing a second, non-White ethnic group into the segregationist equation, while an additional collection of oral histories (perhaps performed by local Robesonians) tied to these sites could surely support additional analyses of historical speech acts and their role in the segregation of commercial enterprise. Potentially, these and similar efforts would help generate a broader understanding of the "gap between what the dominant (white) culture identifies as collective memory" and the "collective countermemory concerning the daily subjugation and secondary citizen status" (Bindas, 2010) of non-whites historically within the United States.

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The Rhetoric of Gandhi and Ambedkar

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Introduction

The morality of an individual and legal framework for the society to change the state of the Dalits in India was a prime objective of Gandhi and Ambedkar. They have left a long-lasting impression on the Indian mind with agreements and disagreements, likes and hatred, and Mahatma vs steward of the Indian Constitution (Karuppusamy, 2020). The world has witnessed how these two leaders employed rhetoric to claim to represent Dalits (Singh, 2014; Palshikar, 2015; Ranganathan, 2018; Roy, 2019; OP India, 2021). The contest between these two leaders was between emotion-based politics versus logic and reasoning-based politics. These leaders complemented each other and Indian politics (India Today Web Desk, 2020). While there are studies on Ambedkar from multidisciplinary perspectives such as politics, sociology, and religion (Zene, 2013; Skaria, 2015; Stroud, 2017; Kumar, 2020),

Aiming to change the lives of Dalits in India, Gandhi and Ambedkar's writings and speeches created a public discourse in Indian society. While one advocated the annihilation of the caste system in India, the other started a strong belief in the Vedic Brahminical dharma. Both these leaders employed rhetorical strategies to persuade the Indian society, and at the same time, they did little to persuade each other. Instead, there are ample examples of how they created public animosity towards each other. Both these leaders, through their writing, attempted to persuade their readers. Their writing sample is the basis of this preliminary study.

Caste as a form of social, religious, and economic stratification has been the subject of many scholars in India and the world. While Gandhi and Ambedkar, through their writings, persuade Indians to choose their sides, the fact that Gandhi's idea of individual spiritual transformation has not been achieved and Ambedkar's idea of the annihilation of caste appears far from the reality of Indian society today. Instead, the idea of caste has been ever more powerful than before in Indian society.

Through their writings, Gandhi and Ambedkar shared their ideas to gather support to help them achieve their desired results. Writings after writing appeared in many magazines and newspapers in the form of articles, messages in autobiographies, and their public speeches. Their attempt reflected their extensive use of rhetorical strategies, i.e., logic, credibility, and emotional appeals. Their writings demonstrate the extensive use of these appeals. However, their vision was thwarted at the turn of the 21st century.

Gandhi and Ambedkar's work holds relevance in contemporary Indian society with its broader and stronger demands for inclusivity and diversity. It is worth noting that they employed the best rhetorical strategies they knew as these leaders have been hailed as great 'communicators' (Koyye, 2014; Stroud, 2020). Despite their efforts to lure the readers towards them, some areas remain to be examined, especially when analyzing their written language.

Research Questions

This presentation examines whether a) Gandhi and Ambedkar employed similar rhetorical strategies for their readers and b) Gandhi and Ambedkar did not use similar rhetorical strategies for their readers. With many choices open to investigate rhetorical strategies, this presentation employs verbal content analysis modelled in R. P. Hart, who advocated the importance of words to suggest attitudes that the leaders want his audience to share. This method works at two levels: the whole volume of words and individual words with evenly distributed attention. This method can assist in assessing the rhetorical character of writing. This tool is well-established in verbal content analysis in fields such as politics, management, and cultural studies. Although Hart modelled this research in American and American English and designed this tool for English-speaking populations, Gandhi and Ambedkar had demonstrated substantial command over the language. This presentation also attempts to understand the applicability of this tool to a system where social, religious, and educational stratifications are inherently injected into the political system. This presentation addresses this question towards the end of the presentation.

Methods

For this study, I began examining Gandhi's autobiography 'My Experiments with the Truth' and Ambedkar's autobiography *Waiting for Visa* edited by Frances W. Pritchett, Columbia University for the classroom usage; however, it gradually expanded to Ambedkar's *Writing and Speeches* edited by Vasant Moon and published by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India using Hart's Diction 7.2.1. Using Diction 7.2.1, I calculated the five variables of activity, optimism, certainty, realism, and commonality. These variables are defined in the manual provided (Hart, 2013).

The presentation finally discusses the implications of this study in terms of the English language used by Gandhi and Ambedkar with their social and personal experiences and the implications for managerial written communication. Rhetorically a reader would find Gandhi more optimistic than Ambedkar. Both the leaders demonstrated the language of a statesman as they increasingly employed the language of commonality. Gandhi's rhetoric is not adequate compared to Ambedkar in using the language suggestive of indeed. It is interesting to note that Gandhi suggested a higher level of activity than Ambedkar, whereas Ambedkar employed language that was more tangible, immediate, and impacting people's lives.

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Disruption-Focused vs Stability-Focused Value Propositions: How Startup and Small Business Entrepreneurs Create Different Arguments About a New Venture's Value

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Research has long shown that strong value propositions are a key component of successful new business ventures. But this research has tended to focus exclusively on the value propositions that high-tech, high-growth startup entrepreneurs craft in an attempt to secure investment funding (e.g., Spinuzzi, 2017; Spinuzzi et al., 2014, 2015, 2018; van Werven et al., 2019) and has largely overlooked the kinds of value arguments that traditional small business entrepreneurs make when they seek funding from banks.

This oversight likely masks important differences in the kind of value-related arguments that startup and small business entrepreneurs make. After all, startups and small businesses differ in notable ways. For instance, startups typically seek rapid, expansive growth that culminates in lucrative acquisition or initial public offer, while traditional small business ventures usually aim for steady, long-term growth on a much smaller scale (Atchison, 2020; Kriss, 2020). Moreover, it seems likely that value propositions aimed at investors (who are generally risk-tolerant) would need to differ from those crafted for bank lenders (who are notoriously risk-averse) in order to succeed (Mason & Stark, 2004). And given that less than 10% entrepreneurs seek investment funding, while more than 60% seek bank funding (Pulse Survey Financing, 2016), it seems likely that many entrepreneurs would benefit from understanding how to craft value propositions that accommodated bankers' cautious, risk-averse approach to funding.

In an effort to address this need for more research into rhetorical variation in value propositions, I conducted a mixed-methods research study that analyzed the value propositions of 22 real small business plans. Using qualitative coding methods and targeted interviews with investors, small business lenders, and entrepreneurs, I identified several major rhetorical differences in the value-related arguments that startup and small business entrepreneurs use to secure funding.

To begin, my findings suggest that startup entrepreneurs' value propositions clearly define a market problem and then position their venture as a solution. This problem-defining is often necessary because a startup's innovative product or service may address a need that consumers do not even know they have yet. Of course, this process of defining problems and introducing innovative new solutions is inherently disruptive, in that it highlights a previously unknown area of need and thus disrupts the typical, familiar industry and market processes that have allowed that need to go unmet. In fact, this kind of innovative disruption is a hallmark of high-stakes startup entrepreneurship (Christensen, 2012). Therefore, startup value propositions are best understood as disruption-focused value propositions. When they succeed, disruption-focused value propositions

can upend established markets, drive competitors out of business, and create lucrative new markets (and even industries). Indeed, this is the outcome investors generally want: While disruptive, innovative startup ventures are risky (in fact, many fail), they stand a chance of becoming hugely profitable.

But the story is different for small business entrepreneurs who seek bank financing: My analysis suggests that these entrepreneurs favor stability-focused value propositions. Stability-focused value propositions situate a new business within a familiar, stable industry and show how the venture is capitalizing on that industry's strength by bringing consumers products, services, and benefits they already know they want. In this way, as one of my interviewees noted, far from being cutting-edge and disruptive, most small businesses are "fast follower" ventures that leverage established industry trends. This interviewee noted, for instance, that "in a small business pitch, an entrepreneur might say, 'Gourmet burger restaurants are really popular on the coasts. We should start a gourmet burger restaurant here, in [this city].'" In this kind of stability-focused value proposition, the emphasis is on creating value not by disrupting an existing industry but rather by leveraging its stability—a value that resonates with risk-averse bank lenders who want guaranteed loan repayment by fixed dates.

When it comes to creating stability-focused valued propositions, my textual analysis suggests that entrepreneurs use three rhetorical moves to craft these kinds of arguments:

- **Industry Strength:** Small business entrepreneurs begin their value propositions by arguing that a new venture's broader industry is established, growing, and profitable, often invoking statistical evidence to prove their point.
- **Market Opportunity:** After beginning their stability-focused value propositions with the industry strength move, entrepreneurs follow with a move I call market opportunity, in which they argue that their venture is justified because the local target market's size and features, combined with the wider industry's strength, make for a ripe market opportunity. My analysis suggests that the market opportunity and industry strength strategies work together to show that, given the strength, size, stability, and profitability of a proposed venture's industry and market, the venture is low-risk and very likely to succeed.
- **Market Gap:** Sometimes, small business entrepreneurs follow the market opportunity move with a move I call market gap, in which they point out that in spite of the industry's strength and the corresponding local market opportunity, few other ventures are capitalizing on either. But notably, while startup value propositions always make a problematizing "gap" argument to show how their venture addresses an unmet need, only half of the small business plans that I analyzed use this move. The rest use the industry strength and market opportunity moves to make an enthymematic argument that the target industry is so profitable, and the local target market so big, that they can easily accommodate the proposed small business venture. My interview data suggests that small business entrepreneurs may prefer an enthymematic argument over a more explicit market gap move because the market gap highlights a new venture's novelty in ways that might inadvertently make it seem risky.

These findings have implications for the kind of instruction we offer students enrolled in many universities' growing entrepreneurship education (EE) programs (Katz et al., 2013; Kurkato, 2005; Neck & Corbett, 2018; Winkler et al., 2021; Yi & Douval-Couetli, 2021). Given that students enrolled in these programs are typically interested in starting their own businesses, they would likely benefit from learning how to craft their ventures' value propositions in ways that align with their target funders' values and goals.

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Corporate Abolitionism v. Philosophical Pragmatism: The Burkean Definition of Man [sic] And Dramatistic Pentad in the Role of Agent in the History of Corporate Personhood

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Introduction

The *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* 5-4 Supreme Court (558 U.S. 310 2010) ruling resulted in corporations having unlimited political campaign contribution power and the majority decision was based on the perspective that the Campaign Reform Act 2002 violated free speech of corporations' and unions' rights to donate to political campaigns. As instructors, trainers and consultants who value effective business communication, trust, and analysis, we should examine Burke's (1966) "definition of man [sic]," and how his dramatistic pentad applies to the ideologies offered by corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists to discover the motives behind how both perspectives construct post *Citizens United v. FEC* concepts of: "corporate personhood," "corporate person(s)," and "corporate responsibility." This paper examines the narratives communicated by corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists resulting from the Supreme Court ruling from the *Citizens United v. FEC* (558 U.S. 310 2010) by applying Burke's (1966) definition of man [sic] and dramatistic pentad (specifically agent-act and scene-agent ratios) to discover if the act of granting organizations "personhood" rights shapes their motivation to argue for equal rights as a human being has under the U.S. Constitution.

Post *Citizens United v. FEC* Ruling and the Origins of Corporate Abolitionism

In 2011, at the Iowa State Fair, U.S. presidential candidate Mitt Romney "gave a pitch for why fairgoers should support him in the upcoming caucuses" (Parker, 2011). During Romney's speech to the audience around him, he promised to be responsible to enforce promises in Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. He stated we could "raise taxes on people" and before he could respond with another idea, a heckler who had his own idea about who should "pay down the nation's financial obligations said "Corporations" (CNN). Romney flashed a smile and said: "Corporations are people, my friend," he said. Another audience member said: "No, they're not" (CNN). Romney persisted and said: "Of course they are" and added "everything corporations earn ultimately goes to people. Where do you think it goes?" of which the first heckler responded: "It goes into their pockets" (CNN). Bowie (2019) contends that "Romney didn't mean that corporations are literally people" (Bowie, 2019). The interaction went viral on YouTube and the debate ensued surrounding whether the corporation was a "person," and what rights the corporation has, and what the corporation's true commitment is in communication and upholding their responsibility for involvement in political donations to candidates after the *Citizens United v. FEC* ruling. Terms like "corporate personhood," "corporate citizen," and "corporate person(s)" were used by the Supreme court to describe the corporation.

According to Bowie (2019), “Romney was arguing that corporations are groups of people and that to tax corporations was the same thing as taxing individuals ‘whose pockets’ funded them” (Bowie, 2019; Parker, 2011). Orts (2014) argues that corporations are “persons” but that doesn’t mean that they are people given all the rights as a human being is granted (“Corporations Are People Too – or Are They?”). According to Bowie (2019), “Americans have also rejected the idea that women, people of color, and other groups that contribute to the country’s welfare should be denied the right to vote-yet few corporations allow workers, consumers, or even shareholders to vote on which political causes their corporation will support”. Bowie (2019) adds that “corporations cannot have opinions,” and that ... “opinions purportedly expressed on behalf of a corporations tend to be the personal opinions of its management” (Bowie, 2019; 966 (quoting for the Appellee at 13-14, *First Nat’l Bank of Bos v. Belotti*, 435 U.S. 765 (1978) No. 76-1172.).

Central Narratives of Corporate Abolitionism v. Philosophical Pragmatism

To understand the debate, according to Gindis and Singer, (2022), “corporate abolitionism is motivated by three concerns: a concern for democratic equality; a concern for social/legal coherence; and a concern for the priority of humans in our schemes of normative justification” (para. 8). Gindis and Singer state that “abolitionists argue that corporate personhood offends one or more of these values and, consequently, that some aspect of the social justice or morality requires that we abandon this legal institution” (para. 8).

Gindis and Singer, (2022) argue that “Philosophical pragmatism “is uniquely suited to the task of addressing the question of corporate personhood. Its core tenet of fallibilism [the principle that propositions concerning empirical knowledge can be accepted even though they cannot be proved with certainty], its commitment to generating knowledge through institutional experimentation, its focus on the consequences of different sorts of social action, and its emphasis on democratic equality as a basis for criticizing social and economic institutions” (para. 14).

Methodology

Burkean Definition of Man [sic]/Human

This paper examines the narratives of the corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists from Kenneth Burke’s “**definition of a man [sic]**” to shed insight on the motives of both sides. In his book *Language as Symbolic Action*, Kenneth Burke (1966) defines a “man [sic]” as “a symbol-using (symbol making, symbol misusing) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from his [sic] natural condition by instruments of his [sic] own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection.” To summarize, humans are language learning and generating bodies that use and misuse use symbols, they invent the negative, and this separates humans from their natural condition. Humans create order by constructing hierarchies and they strive to expand and make a situation better through their pursuits. Burke states that “the whole overall “picture” is but a construct of our symbol systems.” (p. 5).

Burke (1966) notes that “man [sic] is typically the symbol-using animal [agent], he [sic] clings to a kind of naïve verbal realism that refuses to realize the full extent of the role played by symbolicity in his [sic] notions of reality” (p. 6). We use symbols and ideology embodies us to create our reality. Burke states we “hear of ‘brainwashing,’ of schemes whereby ‘ideology’ is imposed upon people” (p. 6). Burke states to look at both sides motives and ideologies and deepens this approach by stating “an ‘ideology’ is like God coming down to earth, where it will inhabit a place pervaded by its presence” (p. 6). He states that an “ideology is like a spirit taking up

its abode in a body: it makes that body hop around in certain ways; and that same body would have hopped around in different ways had a different ideology happened to inhabit it" (p. 6).

Burkean Definition of Dramatism

To understand human actions and motives, Burke (1966) puts forth "Dramatism" as a "technique of analysis of language and thought as basically modes of action rather than a means of conveying information" (p. 54). Burke's five aspects of a human and the Burkean (1945), dramatistic pentad (e.g., **act**: what is being done; **agency**: means by which an action is taken; **agent**: person doing an act; **scene**: background/setting for action; **purpose**, reason, or rationale behind the decision) are applied to both perspectives in the debate between corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists. Burke contends that a character's stress on a particular rhetorical element over another suggests their world view or "principles of determination" (Burke, 1945, p. 15). Therefore, the dramatistic pentad elements are applied to the *Citizens United v Federal Election Commission* (2010) Ruling (where the Supreme Court struck down in a 5-4 decision that ruled that the federal Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act 2002; also known as McCain-Feingold which violated First Amendment free speech rights of corporations and unions to make unlimited political campaign donations) and subsequent debate to shed light on how corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists define a corporation, corporate legal persons and corporate responsibility.

Act-Agent Ratio

Specifically, the study's focus is on the **act-agent ratio** to examine how both groups use the definition of **corporate personhood, corporate person(s), and corporate responsibility** in accordance with their nature" (Burke, 1945). The **act-agent** ratio captures the relationship that "the act is the result of the agent's motivation" (Burke, 1945). Burke (1945) contends that the agent's acts can "make the [agent] or "remake" the [agent] in accordance with their nature" (p. 16). Burke emphasizes that the "sheer nature of an office, or position, is said to produce important modifications in the [agent's] character (p. 16). The naming of the corporation as "person(s)," and the "corporation as legal person/persons" after the *Citizens United v FEC* (2010) ruling opened the doors to having the corporation having the same free speech rights as a natural person under the U.S. Constitution.

Analysis

Scene-Agent Ratio: Definition of Terms Relating to the Evolution "Corporate Scene": Selling the Personification of the Corporation as a "Legal Person(s)"

The **scene-agent ratio** is defined as "a relationship between the agent (person) and the scene (place or setting)" (Burke, 1945). According to Burke, "from a motivational point of view, there is implicit in the quality of a scene the quality of the action that is to take place within it" (pp. 6-7). Burke contends that within "the scene-agent ratio, [is] where the synecdochic relation is between the person and place" (p. 7). According to McCarthy (2022), "personification is assigning human traits to inanimate objects, ideas, or phenomena. Inanimate means non-living things—breathless and pulseless (McCarthy). Terms like corporate personhood, "corporate citizen," and seeing the corporation as a person have been laid down since the post-Civil War (1886) to *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010) contexts to sell the "corporation as a legal person". Personification applies in the sense that the Supreme Court has attached human aspects as it has defined the corporation as a having the same rights of protections of life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness (Southern Pacific Railroad Company, 118 U.S. 394 (1886), is a corporate law

case of the United States Supreme Court concerning taxation of railroad properties. The case is most notable for a headnote stating that the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment grants constitutional protections to corporations. 14th) and to free speech as a “natural person” granted to corporations and unions (e.g., *Citizens United v FEC*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010), argument that the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 violated the 1st amendment freedom of speech rights for corporations and unions). Terms like “corporate personhood,” “corporate citizen,” “corporate person(s),” used by the Supreme Court and other pro-corporate groups which see corporations as a person has been laid down since post-Civil War (1886) to *Citizen's United v FEC* (2010) contexts.

Definition of a Corporation

To define the scene in the debate between corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists, several definitions are required. Burke (1966) states a “definition, so sums things up that all the properties attributed to the thing defined can be as thought “derived” from the definition” (p. 4). According to Joe Badaracco, Professor of Business Ethics of the Harvard Business School defines a corporation as “one form of Business ownership; It’s a group of individuals working together to serve a variety of objectives; the principle one of which is earning large growing sustained legal returns for the people who own the business” (Achbar et al., 2005, *The Corporation*, 6:04-6:31).

Clements (2014), co-founder and Chair of the Board of Directors of *Free Speech for People*, a nationwide nonpartisan effort to overturn *Citizens United v FEC*, states that “corporations are legal tools created by the state law; corporate shares are property” (p. 62). This is to say that “even ‘associations of people,’ however, cannot form or operate a corporation unless the state enacts a law authorizing the formation of a corporation and providing rules for operations as a corporation (p. 65).

Corporate Rights Theory: The Corporation as “Speaker” Creating “Speech”

The use of the “speaker” and “speech” metaphor in *Citizens United v. FEC* dates back to the corporate rights pioneer, Justice Lewis Powel. In 1978, “Powel wrote the First National Bank of Boston” decision where he “created the new corporate rights theory to strike down a Massachusetts law banning corporate spending in citizen referenda” (Clements, 2014, p. 62). In the 1980 corporate rights case, Justice Powell described the Consolidated Edison Corporation as “a single speaker.” The 1986 decision using the “corporate speech theory to strike down regulations of utility corporations, Justice Powell identified the corporation as a “speaker,” with an “identity” seeking to make “speech”.

Enter the Limited Liability Corporation: The Corporation as Legal Person with Statehood Rights: Enter the State of Delaware as the “Corporate Megalopolis”

Clements (2014) notes that “most transnational corporations are incorporated under the law of Delaware. Clements notes that “three hundred of the mega-corporations listed on the Fortune 500 list are incorporated under Delaware law, as are more than half of all publicly traded companies in the United States” (p. 66). Unique to Delaware law is the inclusion of “limited liability of corporate shareholders” called the “Delaware Corporations Code” which states that: “[t]he stockholders of a corporation shall not be personally liable for the payment of the corporation’s debts except as they may be liable by reason for their own conduct or acts” (p. 67). Another important thing to note is that Delaware law declares that “corporations can exist for a defined period of years or may have “perpetual existence” (p. 70). Clements insightfully adds that “if a majority of

Delaware legislature wanted to delete the last part of the law and simply declare that corporations may exist for a period of twenty years, they could do so" (p. 70). In contrast, Clements notes that "neither Delaware nor any other state or federal legislature in America can decide that people shall have a limited period of existence" (pp. 70-71). Last, Clements emphasizes that "no matter how good the policy justification for such a law that law obviously would violate the Constitution's due process clause protecting the life of all persons" (p. 71). Clements concludes then that "corporations are policy tools; they are not people or holders of constitutional rights" (p. 71).

Analysis of Corporate Abolitionists' Response to *Citizens United v FEC*, 558 U.S. 310 (2010) Supreme Court Ruling

In the *Citizens United* ruling, the Supreme Court "described the timid corporate spending rule it struck down as a "ban on speech," government "silencing" of some "voices," some "speakers," and some "disadvantaged classes of persons" (Clements, 2014, p. 62). The Supreme Court's use of "ban on speech" and "silencing" of some "voices" again shows how the corporation is given natural human characteristics and is related to as a person.

On the other hand, corporate abolitionists argue that corporations are not people and should not be given the same constitutional rights as natural persons. Noam Chomsky (2005) states that "corporations were given the rights of immortal persons, but their special kinds of "persons" that have no moral conscience—these are special kind of persons which are designed by law to be concerned only for their stockholders and not say their stakeholders like the community or the workforce" (12:49-13:13). Baron Thorowlaw said: Corporations "have no soul to save" and they "have no body to incarcerate" (Robert Monks, Corporate governance advisor, Cited in Achbar et al., 2005, *The Corporation*, 13:17-13:25). According to Achbar et al., (2005), "all publicly traded corporations have been structured under a series of legal decisions to have a peculiar and disturbing characteristic- they are required by law to place a financial interest of their owners above competing interests" (15:20-16:09).

Achbar et al., (2005) also state "in fact, the corporation is legally bound to put its bottom line ahead of everything else-- even the public good" (15:28-16:09). Dr. Vandana Shiva, physicist, ecologist, and seed activist, points to a vivid example when she states: "The Corporation is not a person, it doesn't think, people in it think, and for them, it is legitimate to create a 'terminator technology' so that farmers are not able to save their seeds, seeds that will destroy themselves through a 'suicide gene' [referring to Monsanto], seeds that are designed to only produce a crop for one season; you really need to have a brutal mind, it's a 'war' against evolution to even think in those terms; but quite clearly profits are so much higher in their minds" (47:09-47:51).

Blame it on an Externality

This sort of thinking from the corporation led the corporation to use "externalities" for the negative impact the corporation has on society at large. Milton Friedman, award winning economist, states "when corporations wish to have someone else pay the bill for the impact the corporation has on society, they blame it on an "externality" [i.e., it is an effect of a transaction between two people and a third party who has not consented to or played any role in the carrying out of that transaction] (16:48-17:06). In the current context, the corporation uses social responsibility as a way to cover the negative impacts that have resulted from bottom line thinking by corporations over the years. This will be addressed a little later in the paper after the ways both corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists use personification for the corporation to counter the Supreme Court's *Citizens United v FEC* references to the corporation as a person(s) and corporate citizen.

Corporate Abolitionists: Utilizing Personification to Compare the Corporation to the A “Psychopath”

In the documentaries, “The Corporation” (2005) and “The New Corporation: The Unfortunately Necessary Sequel” (by March Achbar, Jennifer Abbott, and Joel Bakan) compare the corporation to a psychopath possessing the following characteristics:

- callous unconcern for the feelings of others
- incapacity to maintain enduring relationships
- reckless disregard for the safety of others
- deceitfulness; repeated lying and conning others for profit
- incapacity to experience guilt
- failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors and
- use of seduction, charm, glibness, or ingratiation to achieve one’s ends (Bakan & Abbot, 2020, 2:35-3:01 and 13:29)

Corporate Interests Reply to Corporate Abolitionists

When John Conye, Vice President of Unilever was asked to respond to his response to having to consume the thought of a “Corporation as a Psychopath,” he stated: “that was uhm... that was interesting- to use a very soft word—alright, it was outrageous” (Bakan & Abbot, 2020, 4:11-4:14). He goes on to share that the proposed conception of the corporation as “psychopath,” has “influenced it yes, are we on the road to recovery? I hope we are” (4:14-4:25). This usage personification by the corporate abolitionists saw the argument of corporate interest groups, PACs and the Supreme court who saw the corporation as a “person” and a “corporate citizen” and argued that if the corporation was any type of person, then it would have the characteristics of a “psychopath.”

Post-Citizens United v. FEC Debate

The scene today post *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010), the debate centers around 1) whether or not free speech rights held by natural persons should be applied to corporate/created entities, 2) how should corporate/created entities be held to account by stakeholders and the citizens of the world not just shareholders, 3) the role U.S. Congress and State legislature should play in the right and responsibility by “the people” to regulate political contributions and expenditures to promote and establish fair and just elections”, 4) decisions made in a representative government must emanate from “the peoples’ will” 5) “court decisions *Citizens United v. FEC* (558 U.S. 310 2010) that have greatly expanded the role of money in elections, that have given favor and privilege to corporations, unions, the very wealthy and special interests must be overturned” and 6) to addressing the issue “to give voice to the people and end overrepresentation of the “large donor-class” a small-donor system should be put in place and the “law of ‘the people will rule” Representative Democracy will prevail over plutocracy and tyranny of money” (“Reclaim Our American Democracy – ROAD flyer).

A Burkean Analysis of the Debate Between Corporate Abolitionists and Philosophical Pragmatists: Definition of a Man [sic]

What happened after the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010) Supreme Court ruling in favor of the corporation’s unlimited campaign contribution power was that corporate abolitionists made the argument that the corporation was being given the same rights as granted by the U.S. Constitution as a natural person and

thus was somehow separate from the people who made up the organization and that corporations should not be granted the same rights as natural persons because a “corporation is not a person”.

What philosophical pragmatists argue is apparently true is that this case was not about arguing that the corporation was a “person” in the sense of the rights granted to a natural person. The stasis of the debate which was key was that corporations and unions under *Citizens United* have the right to make unlimited campaign donations that the shareholders and people working for the company don’t get to vote on philosophical pragmatists argue that this is un-democratic.

Therefore, what can be said from the 2010 Supreme Court ruling is that “groups of people” who make up a corporation are “symbol-using (symbol making, symbol misusing) [animals], inventors of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from [their] natural condition by instruments of [their] own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection” (Burke, 1966).

Corporate Abolitionists: Rights of a Natural Person Don’t Apply to the Corporation

Occupy-style (September, 2011) argument is that “corporations are unaccountable and operated for the benefit of the rich and powerful” (Bowie, 2019). Senator Bernie Sanders even proposed the “first constitutional amendment of his career, one that promised to ‘reverse the narrow 5-to-4 ruling in *Citizens United*’” (Press Release, Senator Bernie Sanders, 2011). According to Bowie (2019) it would declare that “rights protected by the Constitution of the United States are the rights of natural persons and do not extend to *for-profit* corporations, limited liability companies, or other private entities established for business purposes or to promote business interests”.

Corporate Victimage: 1% of Business Elite are Setting the Political Agenda

Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass) (2014) proposed an amendment to overturn *Citizens United v. FEC* and stated in this “new *Citizens United* era, the Supreme Court has unleashed a flood of secret corporate money into our political system and embolden a powerful group of millionaires and billionaires who can toss out checks for millions of dollars to influence election outcomes” (2:23-2:45). She goes on to state that “when 32 people can outspend 3.7 million citizens, our democracy is real danger” (3:57-4:06). Warren adds “the Supreme Court is helping them buy elections” (4:27-4:32). She concludes that “this is the time to amend the constitution (5:46-5:48). She states that “we were not sent here to run this country for a hand-full of wealthy individuals and powerful corporations” (5:53-6:01).

Neutering Congressional Ability to Limit Corporate Money in Politics

In *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission* (April 2, 2014), the Supreme Court in a 5-4 ruling, “ruled that the biennial aggregate limits are unconstitutional under the First Amendment” (*McCutcheon et al. v. FEC*). This case “challenges the aggregate limit on campaign contributions that an individual donor can make in a single election.” Before the ruling, a donor “may only give \$123,300 in total, made up of sub-limits of \$48,600 to candidates and \$74,600 to party committees and PACs” (*McCutcheon et al., v. FEC*). Warren (2013) argued “if the court continues in the direction of *Citizens United*, we may move another step closer to neutering Congress’ ability to limit the influence of money in politics and another step closer to unlimited corporate contributions given directly to candidates and political committees” (“Elizabeth Warren”, 2014).

Corporations Are Unaccountable

According to Noam Chomsky (2014), the corporation is given the same rights as states. He discusses the history of rights of “persons” and he discusses the evolution of this shift when he states: “the major institutions are under totalitarian control” (.01-16). After all, Chomsky contends “what’s a corporation”? He notes that “a corporation is just a tyrannical system” (.16-.22). According to Chomsky, the corporation is “one of the most tyrannical systems humans have ever devised (.16-.22).” He adds that “[t]hey’ve been given extraordinary rights by the courts, not by legislation early in this century (.16-.22)” Chomsky further notes that “[t]hey are like the multilateral agreement, we give them the rights of states, they are basically unaccountable to the public” (.22-.26) As a result of these granted rights, Chomsky states that they “have the right to propagandize, so like they’ve been given the right to free speech—which is insane” (.26-.38). He notes that corporations “collectivist institutions” emphasizing that “[t]hey’ve been given the right to advertise, in fact at your expense, but tax free” (.38-.51)” Chomsky boldly states, “you pay for the privilege of having your minds destroyed--They own the information system” (.38-.51).

Therefore, according to the corporate abolitionists, the corporation is not a “person” or natural citizen and “Ronald McDonald and the Pillsbury Doughboy never marched on Washington or protested down Main Street with signs demanding equal rights for corporations” (Winkler, 2018, pp. xvii-xviii). Filmmaker, author, Michael Moore, states that “I think the mistake a lot of people make when they think of a corporation is that think they are like us; they think they have feelings, politics, belief systems; they really only have one thing—the bottom line – how to make as much money as they can in any given quarter (Archbar et al., 2003, 13:27-30; 14:04-14:12). According to Bowie (2019), voters in Missoula Montana and other cities passed resolutions declaring that “corporations are not human beings”.

Bowie (2019) contends that “supporters of corporate personhood ... are “populists” who want to restrain corporate power by treating corporations as legal persons that pay their own taxes and have their own limited rights (see more in Winkler, 2018, pp. 101-02). Over the course of the book *We the Corporations*, Winkler 2018 “explains how the lawyers for the Bank, the university, and similar corporations convinced the courts to award their clients legal protections from interference by the governments that created them” (Bowie).

To summarize, the corporate abolitionists believe the corporation is being given the same rights as a natural person and thus was somehow separate from the people who made up the organization. Given that Burke (1966) stated that a human being is “a symbol-using (symbol making, symbol misusing) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from his [sic] natural condition by instruments of his [sic] own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection”; the question to ask is how does Burke’s definition of “man” [sic] apply to the corporation made up of people and whether corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists would use this definition when defining a corporation?

Roots in Philosophical Pragmatism

During the Lawrence strike, President William Howard Taft delivered a message in February 1912 to the U.S. Congress calling for the creation of a commission to conduct a “reexamination of our laws bearing upon the relations of employer and employee.” Louis D. Brandeis was perhaps the first corporate pragmatist that had petitioned President Taft to cast a “light along a more crucial boundary line – the borderline between industry and democracy” (“Petition to the President,”). Two years after the Lawrence strike, Brandeis in his popular 1914

book, *Other People's Money and How the Bankers Use It*” cast his experience fight the New Haven Railroad (J.P. Morgan’s merger of the Massachusetts last remaining independent railroad with Morgan’s New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad) as a fight against a ‘financial oligarchy’ in which ordinary people – even shareholders – had no ability to ‘participate in the management” (Brandeis School of Law, Louis D. Brandeis “*Other People’s Money and How the Bankers Use It*”, 1914, 207-08). Brandeis’s proposed solution “was not to give workers in these companies a role to play in the corporate decision making, however, but to redirect the companies’ profits toward improving workers’ standard of life” (Bowie, 2019). He argued that “industrial democracy – true cooperation – should be substituted for industrial absolutism” (Brandeis School of Law, Louis D. Brandeis “*Other People’s Money and How the Bankers Use It*,” 1914, 208). Philosophical pragmatists take up the viewpoint that the corporation should follow democratic structures like that of a state where shareholders and employees have equal rights to vote on corporate decisions and where financial political contributions go?

Institutional Experimentation and Democratic Equality as a Basis for Critique of Social and Economic Institutions

According to Bowie (2019), rather than “respond to cases like *Citizens United v. FEC* by learning to stop worrying and love the corporate person, perhaps opponents of corporate power should fight to apply the same norms to corporate governments that we expect of other democratic governments”. Bowie contends that the reason Senator Bernie Sanders excluded non-profit organizations from his declaration was that “it might be better to make all corporations more like the NAACP”. That is to state “if business corporations expressed their First Amendment rights or made Fourteenth Amendment arguments only after consulting with a broad range of constituents and democratically ensuring that they were on board, then corporate power could be normatively indistinguishable from municipal power or political power” (Bowie).

Bowie (2019), in summarizing Winkler’s (2018) book “*We the Corporations*” contends rather, “corporate rights were won in courts of law, by judicial rulings extending fundamental protections to business, even in the absence of any national consensus in favor of corporate rights (p. xviii). This is not the whole story, Bowie asserts “while the Supreme Court has on occasion said that corporations are people, the justices have more often relied upon a very different conception of the corporation, **one that views it as an association capable of asserting the rights of its members [emphasis added]**” (p. xx). Bowie states that Winkler (2018) persuasively and colorfully argues that corporate lawyers have “won rights for their clients by embracing ‘*corporate statehood*’: calling their clients democratic institutions, like the Massachusetts Bay Company, in which elected executives represent shareholding, rights-bearing constituents. A corporation is a citizen of which ever state its headquarters are in (9 U.S. (5 Cranch) 61 (1809); *McCulloch v. Maryland*, 17 U.S. (4 Wheat.) 316, 436 (1819).

A Dramatistic Pentadic Analysis of the Debate Between Corporate Abolitionists and Philosophical Pragmatists:

The dramatistic pentad elements are applied to the *Citizens United v. FEC* (558 U.S. 310 2010) ruling and other texts to shed insight on how corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists define “corporate personhood”, “corporate legal persons” “corporate statehood” and corporate responsibility. The majority view in the 2010 supreme court ruling *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* was that there are all these cases where corporations have rights that a person has and therefore corporations should have rights to political speech (“Corporations Are People Too – or Are They?”, 2014, 3:50). The dissent in this ruling said if the companies get too involved in politics, then corporations will be able to have unlimited contribution to whatever political candidate they wish and it could also lead to a corruption problem (4:16).

The Focus on the Act-Agent Ratio and Supreme Court's Transfer of Power from the Natural Person to "Corporate Person(s): Corporation as Unlimited Agent

The Burkean (1945), dramatistic pentad is composed of the **act** (e.g., **act**: what is being done), **agency** (e.g., means by which an action is taken), **agent** (e.g., person doing an act), **scene** (e.g., background/setting for action) and **purpose** (e.g., reason or rationale behind the decision). As was stated earlier in dramatic and rhetorical situation, the "motivation is a matter of the relationships (the ratios) between terms" (Burke's Pentad, n.d.).

According to Lund and Strine (2022), "before *Citizens United*," the law reflected a general societal consensus that keeping corporate money out of elections was a good thing". The act of the supreme court ruling in "*Citizens United*" shifted the agency from individuals making private donations and restricted contributions from corporations and it "gave corporate managers the freedom to spend unlimited sums of shareholder money to influence political activity" to benefit political candidates, political nonprofits, Senate Leadership Fund, and the Congressional Leadership Fund (Lund & Strine, 2022). The Supreme Court's **act** ("*Citizens United*" 2010 ruling) gave the corporation, yes made up of "corporate persons" the power to be an unlimited agent to "now donate to help elect candidates they hope will do their industry's bidding or support a specific cause, even as they publicly advocate for the opposite stance" (Lund & Strine, 2022). Lund and Strine summarize and state that "even when it comes to traditional business decisions, academic research has focused for years on the reality that management does not always use its control of a company's money to benefit the company and its shareholders whether out of myopia or self-interest". Lund and Strine concur that the emphasis in the current debate is "referred to as an agency problem."

Bakan and Abbot (2020) also put forth the premise that "The New Corporation" presents itself as a "friend and ally" (e.g., corporate social responsibility), "turns people against adversaries (e.g., government), don't pay their fair share (e.g., tax cuts and tax havens), take all they can (e.g., create a crisis, deny resources and privatize everything and charge people for them), manipulate people's world views (e.g., that the corporation is there to help), and exploit the unequal advantages and control those who might control, and break laws that get in your way, and win at all costs as the corporate playbook for the new corporate responsibility storyline". Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (2019) (50:17) asked some poignant questions to the House Oversight Committee: "If I want to run a campaign that is entirely run by corporate action committees, is there anything that legally prevents me from doing that?" and Mrs. Hoberg [House Oversight Committee, Chair] responds "no".

Corporate Abolitionists: Corporate Manager as PAC Representative to "527 Organizations"?

The question is where is the motivation of the corporation located? (Burke's Pentad). Corporate abolitionists believe the Supreme Court's action in *Citizens United v. FEC* (2010) gave "corporate managers" and CEOs unfair advantages to control political outcomes through unlimited campaign contributions and the corporate abolitionists argue that the corporation, corporate managers and CEOs should not be granted such freedoms. Lund and Strine (2022) note that corporate managers "are more likely to identify as Republican than are members of the general public, which is closely divided among Democrats, Republicans, and independents". In addition, "CEOs are also much wealthier than most other citizens, and wealthy people are more likely to vote Republican" (Lund & Strine, 2022). Overall, if "executives direct political contributions according to their personal preferences, they will donate to candidates and committees with views contrary to those of many of their shareholders, employees, and customers" (Lund & Strine, 2022).

The act of granting unlimited political contribution rights under the guise of “personhood” rights “reveals large increases in corporate spending on elections since 2010, primarily via contributions to PACs [Political Action Committees] according to Public Citizen, a nonprofit consumer advocacy group” (Lund & Strine, 2022). According to Public Citizen, “spending on midterm elections rose in particular, more than doubling from 2010 to 2014, and then doubled again from 2014 to 2018” (Lund & Strine, 2022). In addition to these large increases, what is also noteworthy is that corporations “are the predominant contributors to the huge growth in so called 527 organizations since 2010”. The 527 organizations are “tax exempt organization, named for the section of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code that allowed their creation, pool money from various sources and use it to advance broad political agendas under less scrutiny than PACs receive” (Lund & Strine, 2022). Lund and Strine state that “it seems likely that corporate dark-money contributions now subject to disclosure are even more out of balance. The Supreme Court act of giving the corporations unlimited reign over political contributions has allowed for corporations to set the political agenda and changed the nature of the political scene thus showing how the act-agent ratio captures the relationship that the “act is the result of the agent’s (Supreme Court’s) motivation” (Burke, 1945).

Corporate Agent’s Acts Can Make the Agent and Remake Them

Burke (1945) contends that the agent’s acts can “make the [agent] or “remake” the [agent] in accordance with their nature” (p. 16). In 2019, “researchers at Harvard Law School and Tel Aviv University ran the names of all individuals who had been CEOs of companies in the S&P 1500 from 2000-2017 through federal campaign-finance databases, which record contributions to party committees as well as to congressional and presidential candidates” (Lund & Strine, 2022). According to Lund and Strine, they found that nearly “60% of CEOs donated to Republicans”. The same Public Citizen study “found that from 2010, when the Citizens United decision was issued, to 2020, corporations gave \$282 million to Republican candidates, versus \$38 million to Democratic candidates”. According to Lund and Strine, this is “far out of balance with the American public, which, if anything tilts slightly Democratic and is composed of more independent than Republicans or Democrats, according to Gallup.”

Burke emphasizes that the “sheer nature of an office, or position, is said to produce important modifications in the [agent’s] character (p. 16). A CEO may argue that he or she supports only politicians and legislation that hew to the company’s preferred regulatory line, and that is it just so happens that those politicians are more likely to be Republican” (Lund & Strine, 2022). Lund and Strine note that “often politicians whose views align with a particular corporate interest also take positions that are antithetical to a company’s stated EESG (energy, environmental, social, and governance issues) values, which underpin its plan for long-term value creation.”

The “New” Corporation- The “Charm” Offensive: Corporate Social Responsibility- Employee, Environmental, Social, and Governance Issues (EESG) and The Corporations as a Friend that “Saves the Day”:

Corporate Abolitionists Expose Corporations “Double Speak”

According to Winkler (2018) corporate lawyers won rights for their clients embracing “corporate statehood: calling their clients democratic institutions, like the Massachusetts Bay Company, in which elected executives represent shareholders rights-bearing constituents” (p. xx). According to Bowie (2019), the result is that the Supreme Court currently assumes that all corporations are the Massachusetts Bay Company even though most business corporations are, in fact, antidemocratic”. Sir Mark Moody Stuart, Royal Dutch Shell, states as a pro-corporate voice that corporations are not only concerned with the bottom line, but they care about the

environment, but we need to be seen as “constructive members of society” (14:25-14:42). He counters the point that corporations are only concerned with the money, “there is no organization on this planet that can neglect its economic foundation—... the economic leg has to be addressed – by everyone—it's not just a business issue” (15:03-15:15).

According to political scientist from the University of British Columbia, Peter Dauvergne (2020) argues that “in 2005, we started to see many of the world’s biggest branded companies suddenly making very sweeping promises, promises such as 100% carbon neutrality, zero waste-to-landfill [e.g., Honda], zero deforestation [Unilever], 100% recycling [Coca-Cola], a real and significant shift” (4:29-4:52). According to Bakan and Abbot (2020), argue that since that shift, “corporations have mounted a major ‘charm’ offensive rebranding themselves [*Re-Imagining Capitalism* by Barton, Horvath and Kipping] and the entire capitalistic system as having changed [e.g., *Green Capitalism: Business and The Environment in The Twentieth Century* by Berghoff and Rome and *Natural Capitalism: The Next Industrial Revolution* by Hawkin, Lovins and Lovins, *Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business: Conscious Capitalism*, by Mackey and Sisodia] having evolved into something new and improved [*Creative Capitalism: A Conversation with Bill Gates and Warren Buffett and Other Economic Leaders* by Kinsley, *Philanthropic-Capitalism: How The Rich Can Save the World and Why You Should Let Them* by Bishop and Green] (4:52-5:04). John Conye, Vice President of Unilever states that “there is genuinely a different dialogue that’s taking place about corporations and the role that they play [see BP’s “Committed to the Gulf; Committed to America” and Walmart’s campaign “Together Happens” and Ford’s campaign “Go Further”] that cult shareholder value has seen its day, as the narrow construct for how a companies operate in society” (5:05-5:24). According to Bakan and Abbot, (2020), “this idea that the shareholder value is no longer the corporation’s only goal was newly articulated at the World Economic Forum (WEF) which convenes annually in Davos, Switzerland [This new corporate storyline was created by Klaus Schwab- Founder and Executive Chairman of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland; A gathering of the global business super elites, where J.P. Morgan, PepsiCo, Microsoft, Google, Nestle’, Walmart, Pfizer, Facebook, Hyperlook TT meet]. The New Corporation is rebranding the story to claim that it is no longer greedy and wishes to make the world a better place.

It is important to note that the WEF has come under scrutiny because its entire venture is guided by EESG guidelines that its board develops outside any laws or policies of any country and companies requesting money from the WEF have to adhere to the WEF’s EESG policies or get no money. Navidi (2020) claims that “these financial elites have great power and in some instances this power actually exceeds the power those of democratically elected people or institutions” (7:24). At the conference, according to Valerie Keller, Beacon Institute EY, the motion was debated at the WEF: “is the business of business still just business and interestingly “more than 80% said ‘no’ in today’s transformative age, the business has a wider accountability and opportunity (11:24-11:42). There are company CEOs committed to doing good in the world, but the “capitalistic system as a whole is not committed to that” (Paul Mason, author, journalist, in Baken & Abbot, 2020; 12:26-12:33).

The manager may be well intended, but the bottom line is priority over the what’s best for safety (e.g., John Brown – BP, Texas City Refinery Explosion, BP Oil Spill in Alaska due to process safety checks not being performed for corrosion; echoes in cost cutting led later after he left in 2006 to the 2010 BP Oil Rig Deepwater Horizon Explosion; JP Morgan Chase September 2008, costing the American economy 20 trillion dollars). JP Morgan admitted to selling securities knowing that many of the loans backing those certificates were toxic and pays \$13 Billion paid to the U.S. government-- Jamie Dimon, CEO of Chase then steps in to save Detroit in 2008 when it filed for bankruptcy- pretending now to be the “good guys”). Giridharadas in *Winners Take All* argues that corporate elites “cloke” profit making in “virtues (Bakan & Abbot, 2020, 21:11).

Post January 6th Attack on the U.S. Capital

Norden and Weiner (2021) noted in “the wake of the attack on the [U.S.] Capitol, some of the nation’s biggest corporations, including Marriott, Walmart, and AT&T, announced they will pause or end corporate political action committee, or PAC, contributions to lawmakers who voted against the certification of the 2020 presidential election. According to Norden and Weiner “both the Senate Leadership Fund and the Congressional Leadership Fund raised **hundreds of millions** of dollars directly from the corporations in the 2018 and 2020 elections cycles, plus an unknown amount indirectly in the form of donations from certain political nonprofits that do not disclose their donors (known as “dark money” groups). The authors note that “therein lies the rub: because it is so easy for third party groups to hide their donors, it can be difficult or impossible to tell who is truly behind the contributions allowing them to carry out their work.” They summarize that “corporate donations that wind up in super PAC coffers could be used to fund campaign ads in support of the very same lawmakers from whom corporations are now proclaiming they will withhold corporate PAC donations – and the companies’ employees, shareholders, and customers wouldn’t have a clue.”

Philosophical Pragmatists’ Solutions

Lund and Strine (2022) report that there is “growing dissatisfaction with the post *Citizens United v FEC* status quo, investors are submitting and supporting proposals demanding greater disclosure of political spending”. In 2019, shareholders initiated “33 such proposals, a dramatic increase from the previous year, and those proposals secured support averaging 36% of the vote”. In 2020, “support for such proposals was even greater”. Overall, according to Lund and Strine, “managers may rationally fear that by failing to give when all other companies are giving, they will lose ability to influence regulation” and “companies now donate to help elect candidates they hope will do their industry’s bidding or support a specific cause, even as they publicly advocate for the opposite side.”

More Corporate “Double Speak” Examples

On April 14, 2021, in response to a restrictive Republican voting law in Georgia, the CEO of Google joined 200 other corporate CEOs in publishing an open letter in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* stating opposition to “any discriminatory legislation” that would make it more difficult for Americans to vote (Lund & Strine, 2022). According to Lund and Strine, there was a catch, “Google had quietly funded a ‘policy working group’ on ‘election integrity’ with the Republican State Leadership Committee, an organization that supported the Georgia legislation and similar legislation in other states”. They note that “the RSLC working group meeting that Google’s state policy manager attended, slides were shown calling ‘election reform’ “the only line of defense of the Republican Party”. According to Lund and Strine, “Google had also donated “\$35,000 to the RSLC from its corporate treasury”. Bebachuk, a professor at Harvard Law School argues that “shareholders should be able to amend the corporate charter (which determines the company’s most important governance provisions) and have greater influence over other corporate decisions” (Lund & Strine, 2022).

Philosophical Pragmatists 28th Amendment: “For the People Act” H.R. 1/S.1

Philosophical pragmatists like Clements (2014) outline the proposal for a Twenty-Eighth Amendment and states “whatever corporate entities the state or federal governments create do not have constitutional rights” (p. 201). Clements states “their rights and obligations are set out in state or federal corporate laws and other laws” (p. 201). To add, philosophical pragmatists are for corporate reforms that would require more from corporations

than pledges to withdraw donations to PACs, but solutions which would result in “more accountability to the American public” and argue that Congress “must pass the kind of reforms found in the **“For the People Act** (H.R. 1/S.1).” The bill expands voting rights and ends partisan gerrymandering. According to Norden and Weiner (2021), it also requires transparency of political spending: organizations like super PACs must disclose donors, including corporations, who give more than \$10,000, directly or indirectly”. They note that “it tightens the rules to end loopholes that allow supposedly independent groups to actually work hand-in-glove with candidates” (Norden & Weiner, 2021). The bill if passed, “gives candidates the option to finance their campaigns through a voluntary of public financing program and matches small donations, helping lawmakers raise sufficient funds to mount viable campaigns without having to take into account the interests of megadonors.”

Conclusions

The naming of the corporation as “corporate citizen,” and “corporation as legal person/persons” after the *Citizens United v FEC* (2010) ruling opened the doors to the corporation having the same free speech rights as a natural person. Terms like “corporate personhood,” “corporate citizen,” “corporate person(s),” used by the Supreme Court and other pro-corporate groups which see the corporations as a person had been laid down since post-Civil War (1886) to *Citizen's United v FEC* (2010) and the usage of personification used as a device by the Supreme Court claimed that the corporation is a legal person.

Corporate Abolitionists: Personification Used to Define the Corporation as a “Psychopath”

What happened post the *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* (2010) Supreme Court ruling in favor of the corporation’s unlimited campaign contribution power was that corporate abolitionists made the argument that the Supreme Court was granting the same rights as a natural person under the U.S. constitution and the corporate abolitionists argue from the viewpoint that the “corporation is not a natural person” and should not be given constitutional rights as protected by the U.S. Constitution.

What philosophical pragmatists argue is that the *Citizens United v. FEC* case was not about arguing that the corporation was a “person” in the sense of the rights granted to a natural person. The stasis of the debate which was key was that corporations and unions under *Citizens United v FEC* have the right to make unlimited campaign donations that the shareholders and people working for the company don’t get to vote on philosophical pragmatists argue that this is un-democratic.

Corporate Abolitionists

Corporate Abolitionists’ main arguments and symbolism is that rights of a natural person don’t apply to the corporation. They argue that from victimhood that stating that with the *Citizens United v. FEC* ruling that now 1% of Business elite are setting the political agenda. This according to corporate abolitionists who use the animal metaphor that such supreme court rulings such as *Citizens United v FEC* is “neutering” congressional ability to limit corporate money in politics. Corporate abolitionists are against corporations having the same rights as states and that if the corporation is any kind of person its actions are most like that of a “psychopath.”

Philosophical Pragmatists

Brandeis argued that “industrial democracy – true cooperation should be substituted for industrial absolutism” (Brandeis School of Law, Louis D. Brandeis “Other People’s Money and How the Bankers Use It”, 1914, 208). Bowie (2019), states that rather than “respond to cases like *Citizens United v. FEC* by learning to stop worrying and love the corporate person, perhaps opponents of corporate power should fight to apply the same norms to corporate governments that we expect of other democratic governments”.

That is to state “if business corporations expressed their First Amendment rights or made Fourteenth Amendment arguments only after consulting with a broad range of constituents and democratically ensuring that they were on board, then corporate power could be normatively indistinguishable from municipal power or political power” (Bowie).

A dramatic pentadic analysis of the debate between corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists showed that the majority view from in the 2010 supreme court ruling *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* was that a corporation has all the rights that a natural person has and therefore corporations should have rights to political speech as well (“Corporations Are People Too – or Are They?”, 2014, 3:50). The dissent in this ruling said if the companies get too involved in politics, then corporations will be able to have unlimited contribution to whatever political candidate they wish and it could also lead to a corruption problem (4:16).

Given that Burke (1966) stated that a human being is “a symbol-using (symbol making, symbol misusing) animal, inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative), separated from his [sic] natural condition by instruments of his [sic] own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order), and rotten with perfection”; the question to ask is how does this definition apply to the organization made up of people?

The corporate abolitionists would say that the corporation is not a person and therefore, even definitions of a “man” [sic] that Burke put forth would not apply because the corporation should not be given rights of a “natural human being.” The corporate abolitionists argue that if the corporation is any kind of person in the sense that that Supreme Court, Pro-Corporate Voices and PACs define it, then it would be a “psychopath.”

However, philosophical pragmatists would say that the people within the organization have the right to vote on corporate decisions and that the definition of a “man” [sic] would apply to each individual in the organization. Moreover, philosophical pragmatists have argued that the question is whether the corporation is giving its shareholders and employees, the right to vote on such political contributions. As it has been stated in this paper, many shareholders may only care about the bottom line versus mixing politics and business. Some have even stated that rather than asking a person what state are you from? it may be in the future that you would ask what company represents your political view? More research needs to be conducted in the area of corporate political structure to see what exists in every corporation to grant each shareholder and each employee rights to vote on corporate political contributions on political candidates and issues.

It is suggested that corporate abolitionists argue for the complete rejection of any personifications of the corporation as a human being and should not be granted the same rights as natural human beings under the U.S. constitution. This rhetorical attitude dancing out in the political context allows for the philosophical

pragmatists to put forth the primary argument that the corporation needs to offer democratic structures for both its shareholders, employees, and U.S. citizens to vote on corporate financial contributions to political candidates.

Overall, this paper suggests that the Supreme Court decision in the *Citizen's United v. FEC* act of giving the corporation unlimited campaign funding power forever changed the **agent** of free speech rights from a natural human being to a corporation thus allowing for a cascading of rhetoric from corporate abolitionists and philosophical pragmatists.

This paper suggests that the “new” corporation is now moving into a “charm offensive” (Bakan & Abbot, 2020) stage where the corporation denies that it’s true intention is the bottom line to one of “corporate friend” through such emphasis on corporate social responsibility” and “employee, environmental, social, and governance issues (EESG). This shift in the post Citizens v FEC context is summarized by Bakan and Abbot (2020) stating that “The New Corporation” presents itself as a friend and ally (e.g., corporate social responsibility), turns people against adversaries (e.g., government), don’t pay their fair share (e.g., tax cuts and tax havens), take all they can (e.g., create a crisis, deny resources and privatize everything and charge people for them), manipulate people’s world views (e.g., that the corporation is there to help), and exploit the unequal advantages and control those who might control, and break laws that get in your way, and win at all costs as the corporate playbook for the new corporate responsibility storyline.

What now needs to be addressed by business researchers, teachers and practitioners is whether the corporate abolitionists were correct in their usage of personification of framing of the corporation as “psychopath” only concerned about the corporate bottom line or whether the philosophical pragmatists’ central emphasis that the corporation structure their future voting structure so that shareholders and employees truly have a voice in how the corporation spends money on political contributions. The question that has been raised in the research before is whether corporate shareholders, managers, and employees of a corporation care about what decisions the corporations make to political candidates or if the thinking to keep politics separate from corporations still persists as the central attitude dancing out in corporate rhetoric.

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Good Things Happen to Boss Babes Who Hustle: A Rhetorical Analysis of the LuLaRich Docuseries

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Purpose and Goal

This panel is sponsored by the Rhetoric SIG. The 2021 LuLaRich docuseries (Amazon Prime) investigates the allegations and lawsuits against LuLaRoe, a multilevel marketing (MLM) company, and its founders/owners DeAnne and Mark Stidham. This panel offers a case study of the rhetorical strategies that DeAnne and Mark Stidham use to defend their business model and business practices as ethical. The analysis offers insights to the MLM business model and raises awareness of important questions regarding the language used to frame legitimate business practices.

Background and Literature Review

The multilevel marketing (MLM) business model traces its roots to the mid-1930s as a variation on the direct-selling model in which companies sell products directly through a sales staff rather than via a retailer (Keep & Vander Nat, 2014). An MLM is one in which a company employs “distributors” (also referred to as “representatives,” “partners,” and “associates,” and “independent business owners”). Each new distributor essentially becomes an entrepreneur, as they recruit new distributors who work for them, and those new distributors recruit their own distributors as well—a “‘downline’ of all direct and indirect recruits” (Keep & Vander Nat, 2014, p. 195). As a result, each distributor makes money not just from what they sell but also from what their staff of direct and indirect downline recruits sells. According to Keep and Vander Nat (2014), the payment plan is one where “upline rewards are paid for downline sales” (p. 195). Companies like Avon and Tupperware began as MLMs.

Today, MLM businesses represent a \$35.2 billion industry in the United States. With a reach expanded by the Internet, MLMs fit into the “gig economy” by offering a way to supplement one’s income by selling products to networks of friends. During the COVID pandemic, they offered many the hope for sustainable income during the uncertainty of employment (Vesoulis & Dockterman, 2020).

However, throughout their history, MLMs’ (e.g., Amway, Beachbody, Epicure, Herbalife, LuLaRoe, Mary Kay, Primerica) reputation has inspired suspicion and distrust, primarily because of their association with pyramid schemes. Not all MLMs are pyramid schemes and not all pyramid schemes are MLMs, but the organizational structure of the MLM lends itself to unscrupulous business practices in the hands of unethical leaders.

The MLM model (legal) becomes a pyramid scheme (illegal) when the primary way distributors can earn money or recoup their investment is not by selling product but by growing their network of recruits. Because it is unlikely that distributors can earn money via a continuous recruitment process, most people, especially the newest recruits at the bottom of the network, are doomed to fail (Keep & Vander Nat, 2014). But even when operating legally as an MLM, the financial success and independence for MLM distributors remains elusive, with one study reporting that 74% of those involved with MLMs lost money or made no money, and of the remaining 26%, over half made less than \$5300 (AARP, 2017).

Enter LuLaRoe. The docuseries *LuLaRich* traces the company’s success, from its founding by DeAnne and Mark Stidham in 2012 to its rapid success of \$1.5 billion in sales in 2016 to the lawsuit filed by the state of Washington in 2019 alleging that LuLaRoe is a pyramid scheme. The lawsuit was settled out of court for \$4.75 million, with the Stidhams agreeing to changes in their business practices (Ferguson, 2021). Throughout the docuseries, the Stidhams frame their intent and practices through the lens of their Mormon faith and the value it places on families—that LuLaRoe offers mothers the opportunity to contribute to the family income (become “boss babes”) while maintaining a household. In fact, this promise of entrepreneurial agency is a rhetorically powerful recruiting tool in direct selling (Martin & Rawlins, 2018).

While many women found some success as LuLaRoe distributors, many others found financial ruin. Even among those who were successful, many found the stress of recruiting and selling so great that it destroyed their families. Former employees and distributors allege abusive management practices, defective products, and numerous violations of agreements with distributors. To defend themselves, the Stidhams employ various ethical frameworks as rhetorical strategies to justify their actions. For example, when questioned about their motives to strengthen families by giving stay-at-home mothers earning power, they maintain they didn’t prey on vulnerable housewives; rather, they maintain they were being good people who had found success themselves and want to help others (Aristotle’s virtue ethics). Likewise, when LuLaRoe distributors file lawsuits alleging defective products and various other issues, the Stidhams appear astounded that they were sued. Had they known people wanted their money back, they would have given it to them because it’s just the right thing to do (Kant’s Categorical Imperative).

In fact, Mark Stidham appears to recognize the power of rhetorical strategy when he states that LuLaRoe’s issues have never been about their business model, practices, or quality of the product but rather that they have a “social media problem.” According to Stidham, the problem has been the online narrative woven by people who had not worked hard enough or smartly enough, who had unrealistic expectations, or who had simply decided to take their complaints to the masses rather than talk to the Stidhams directly (a suggestion of moral and ethical failure on others’ part). Throughout the docuseries, he provides an alternative narrative in which the Stidhams are benevolent, socially aware, and ethical. He is not without supporters, as demonstrated by a call in

the LuLaRoe distributors' Facebook page to flood Amazon with one-star reviews for the docuseries (Authur, 2021). Whatever side the viewer lands on, though, the use of rhetorical frameworks as rhetorical strategies is apparent.

Method

Rhetoric SIG members use the lenses of Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kantian freedom, and contemporary religious rhetoric to analyze the Stidhams' defense of LuLaRoe's business practices.

From Aristotle's Poetics to Pixar's Prompt: Uncovering the Storytelling Framework for Effectively Constructed Stories in Business and Professional Settings

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The topic of storytelling has become an important one in business communication today; it is – after all – a tool that offers many benefits. Stories shape and nurture organizational culture, helping organizations communicate who they are and what they stand for. Stories cut through clutter as communicators barter for people's attention. Stories add value, as is evidenced not only by the "Significant Objects Project" but also by the 2017 sale of Da Vinci's *Salvatore Mundi*, both of which were heavily influenced by narrative. People remember stories long after they forget data because of brain region activation and a phenomenon called 'neural coupling.' In fact, storytelling is a communication strategy that has become so relevant in business today that corporations and municipalities employ "Chief Storytellers."

To uncover the power of storytelling, scholars have long tried to crack the storytelling code. To be sure, stories have discernible patterns, and storytellers from Aristotle to Pixar have captured diagrammatic representations that attempt to reveal these patterns. More specifically, in 330 BCE, Aristotle plotted his narrative shape for tragedy in *Poetics*; in 1864, Gustav Freytag plotted his story pyramid; in the 1947, Kurt Vonnegut plotted story shapes that included "man in hole" and "boy meets girl;" in 2006, Christopher Booker published his massive tome analyzing the seven story plots; and in 2011, the computer animation film studio, Pixar, disclosed its version of the story pattern in its list of story rules as the "Pixar prompt. While these story frameworks reflect a narrative structure that is grounded in a long history of literary and popular culture, these story shapes can only be effective in business and professional contexts when several strategic rhetorical adjustments are made.

With these insights, the goal of this presentation is to share several key insights for creating stories that can be deployed within business and professional settings. To explore these strategic rhetorical adjustments, the presenter will share a five-part storytelling framework for stories communicated within business and professional settings. While this framework has been influenced by some of the traditional frameworks in popular and literary culture, it moves beyond traditional frameworks and incorporates several key strategic adjustments that the author has uncovered based on analyses of more than 500 stories deployed within professional contexts.

To facilitate understanding of the storytelling framework in professional and business contexts, participants will complete one group activity. This activity is designed to reinforce one part of the storytelling framework. Next, the presenter will share two key rhetorical adjustments needed for the storytelling framework to be effective within business and professional contexts. They are the 'bookend' adjustment and the 'linguistic' adjustment. To reinforce these two concepts, participants will complete a second group activity. Next, the presenter will show participants how these concepts – the framework and its related rhetorical adjustments – manifest themselves

in actual stories. Using the five-part framework, the bookend adjustments, and the linguistic adjustments, the presenter will analyze stories from several business and professional contexts, including business meetings (this example comes from a key investment firm), quarterly earnings calls (these examples come from Air BnB and Kroger), professional email messages (these examples come from a school system and a university), confirmation hearings (this example comes from Janet Yellen's confirmation hearing for Secretary of the U.S. Treasury), research discussions (this example comes from a fascinating story about how people interpret pain), and business presentations. Next, to reinforce the concepts, the presenter will give participants the opportunity to analyze and debrief a sample story.

Finally, to reveal how storytelling has manifested itself within a classroom setting, the presenter will share several student stories as well as a link to a student story podcast, "Stories from the Hill," (<https://open.spotify.com/show/5lvH6WdWMkQDqYAI759ZYk>).

In short, this presentation will move from storytelling theory to an understanding of the storytelling framework for business and professional contexts, and it will end with lessons for how to teach storytelling in the classroom.

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Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Challenges to Teaching Business Communications: Aligning Our Teaching With the Post-Pandemic Learning Gap

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Theme

Evolution of student expectations for in-class learning post-Covid; curriculum adaptation for in-class

Purpose

“With significant academic disruption for graduating and rising high school seniors, the need for academic supports to succeed in credit-bearing college coursework is likely to grow dramatically” (Reyna, 2020).

The incoming and rising students of the 2022 academic year have faced enormous educational challenges because of the global pandemic. Research and anecdotal evidence show that students are comfortable with in-person learning, yet they want continued flexibility of instruction. This session will discuss primary and secondary research results on student classroom expectations as well as a two-tier business writing program proposed for Suffolk University Sawyer Business School.

Research will compare primary research survey results from 2021 to 2022, identifying trends and continued gaps in preparedness. These results help to reexamine and adapt your Business Writing curriculum to address the unprecedented variation in levels of preparedness.

In response, the Suffolk business program proposed a two-tiered business writing program. This presentation will: a) present the pilot curriculum design, and b) identify if students have any perceived shifts in expectations or attitudes to business communications concepts.

Ongoing strategies to help address these issues will be discussed.

In 2017, Suffolk University’s Business Writing instructor team revamped the curriculum to meet the needs of a diverse student population in terms of ability and preparedness. Improvements to this core business course were made that drastically improved the consistency of instruction and student outcomes across the business school. These upgrades have built in flexibility to adapt to every level of learner in the classroom. The team has continued to research, examine, and improve the evolving needs of students in business writing. The 2022/2023 academic year is no different. The approach established clear standards with the curriculum and has designed assignments/projects that scaffold student learning with a focus on outcomes. Support systems have been designed and implemented that help students at every level succeed without slowing down instruction in the classroom.

Methodology

The session will begin with an overview of primary research (survey) and current higher ed trends to accommodate this post-virtual student body. The survey will identify trends with rising sophomores in college returning to campus post pandemic with the ongoing issues that students express as they continue in the evolving post-pandemic semesters. Trends and issues raised by students will be presented and discussed as useful insight as we all work to evolve our classroom approaches for best chance for student success. The panel will then discuss the proposed course adjustments that have been incorporated in the B-Comm curriculum to strengthen the writing program. Most specifically, the panel will review the design of a future business writing pilot program. Outside classroom support will also be analyzed as an essential element to overall student success in business communication. Flexible Q&A will be accommodated.

Outcomes

Participants will: a) gain an understanding of why it is important to be flexible with existing curriculum and this cohort of pandemic students, b) receive an overview of classroom strategies that can be modified to adjust to diverse student learning styles and skill sets as well as potential deficits specific to the past year of virtual instruction, and c) receive an overview of the primary research results. This approach will also help instructors to more fully engage students while supporting their growth and confidence.

We, as an extended community of instructors, have made many sacrifices and offered countless ways to help our students succeed. It's time to share what has worked and to help each other to develop stronger and more numerous ways for us to successfully teach and promote the important professional communication skills learned in our extensive B-Comm curriculum.

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Mental Health as a Topic in Business and Professional Writing

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This presentation explores the rise of students exploring the need for mental health supports in business and professional writing from a student-centered usability perspective. As students explore proposals and reports, students increasingly turn to the subject of making mental health supports more accessible. This student-centered perspective found in much business and professional writing can offer important considerations for higher education institutions who are seeking to bolster mental health support campus wide. We look at this pattern in a variety of student proposals and reports.

This presentation explores the ethos of students as drivers of usability that might be explored in business and professional writing proposals and reports. While mental health help-seeking behavior is on the rise on college campuses, it is well-known that although higher education institutions offer mental health supports, students may not access the university- or college- sponsored mental health supports for a variety of reasons as is clear from my recent research:

University interventions are often the first mental health supports many students encounter as young adults, but while psychology scholarship acknowledges that university students experience high rates of mental health distress, it is also recognized that university students often do not seek mental health support (Hartrey, Denieffe & Wells, 2017). Barriers to mental health help-seeking behavior happens because of student perceptions of mental health, mental health supports and how these supports are communicated. These barriers can include a lack of understanding about services and how to access them, stigma, failure to identify a personal need for mental health support, and time, as well as institutional constraints such as limited resources to provide counseling. As such, there has been a push for understanding alternative platforms to offer support: such as virtual or online services (Farrer, Gulliver, Chan., Bennett, & Griffiths, 2015, pp. 1-2). (qtd. in George & Blasiman, 2022)

By understanding how students access and read about, and understand mental health supports, universities can offer more ways to enable mental health seeking behaviors. Some interventions do show some promise, such as offering a variety of interfaces for counseling and introduction to mental health tools by trusted instructors. My own student-based research with a colleague has found the following:

Based on the feedback we received, we make the following conclusions and recommendations: 1) Students responded to human guidance through the university mental health resources: both instructor-led and counselor-led interventions are helpful to students, 2) Mental health resources need to be frequently advertised using multiple formats and in multiple contexts 3) Narratives should be relatable to students and should consider students themselves as creating their own mental health narrative through “I” statements, and 4) Links to counselors should be visible and emphasize the face-to-face format and confidentiality of sessions.

Our suggestions are in line with other works in this collection that examine how university interventions, such as an investigation of the university's role in constructing more effective measures to attend to exacerbating mental health issues at the university (Angelsey & Hubrig, 2021) and training for university instructors helps to contest stigmas and allow instructors to come from a place of rhetorical empathy in responding to mental health struggles students may have (Reid, 2021).

The purpose of this presentation is to explore how students in business and professional writing classes are increasingly turning to the subject of mental health seeking interventions at the university as part of their subject matter for proposals and reports. Because students have a particular ethos (they are users of these mental health supports), their insights offer a unique student- and user- centered view of how mental health supports are often presented to students in higher education, and how these supports could be improved to offer wider considerations of accessibility.

This presentation explores how proposal and report assignments can include the subject matter of mental health supports as part of student inquiry. I share parts of student proposals and reports that reveal this emerging subject matter. Students, in proposals and reports, point out the feasibility of enacting emerging digital supports and networks, community groups, student-centered ways to access in-person counseling, and ways to change language on sites so language is more inclusive –and, most importantly, to alleviate stigma. By looking at student-centered definitions of “problems” and “solutions” pertaining to mental health at selected universities, we can understand, from a students’ point of view, practical strategies to improve mental health supports in higher education.

This presentation also discusses mental health research ethics and recent research surrounding mental health access and scholarship.

The outcomes of this presentation include sharing ways by which instructors can more clearly begin to implement mental health as a subject matter for proposals and reports in business and professional writing. Part of the session will include a discussion with attendees about this subject in their courses. The goals of this presentation are to explore a popular topic among students and to help instructors to consider the best ways to help students to navigate this interest.

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Teaching for Transfer (TFT): The 21st Century Challenge for Business Communication

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Even before the first widely adopted purpose-specific business communication textbook appeared in 1916, the basic pedagogical approach for our discipline had already emerged. This approach was in large part based on Empiricist rhetoric, which dominated writing instruction in English departments from the late 19th century until the late 20th century in many institutions (Berlin, 1984; Kitzhaber, 1990). Empiricist rhetoric, which evolved into what is termed Current Traditional Rhetoric (CTR), relied on individual cognitive capabilities and emphasized grammatical correctness, elaborate stylistic prescriptions, and intuitive factual assemblage (Brooks, 1991; Carbone, 1991). In practice, the CTR focused on formulaic attributes like the '7 Cs' (Carbone, 1994; Crowley, 1985). Eventually the CTR stream of pedagogy coalesced with the widely publicized sales psychology approach to business communication, which positioned the sales message at the apex of assigned writing tasks in the classroom instruction of the day; this coalescence added aspects of business communication still prevalent today, such as the "you" attitude and the AIDA template (Brooks, 1991). This hybrid pedagogical approach is readily evident, then, in Hotchkiss and Drew's *Business English: Its Principles and Practice* (1916), and to a surprising degree, Hotchkiss and Drew's textbook still influences our discipline.

In the last decades of the 20th century, the concept of transfer increasingly drew the attention of writing and composition instructors and scholars. Rollins (2018) compiled an annotated bibliography of significant articles and books on writing transfer that comprises nearly one hundred entries. The transfer project is a truly multidisciplinary undertaking and counts cognitive/educational psychologists, curriculum specialists, ESL researchers, rhetoricians, and learning theorists along with the aforementioned composition researchers and leading classroom teachers. Clearly, teaching for transfer (TFT) has become a major movement in the academy. However, there is almost no involvement by researchers and teaching experts from the field of business communication, and our presentation is intended to take a small step toward our aim of adding TFT to the agenda of our profession.

What is transfer (and hence TFT)? Transfer is one of those concepts that are at once simple and complex. Writing transfer is the act—conscious or unconscious—of applying prior procedural knowledge to the creation of new texts (Nowacek, 2011). This seemingly simple concept has generated a wide array of scholarship in which this concept is redefined and oriented to the task of writing from numerous perspectives. Haskell (2001) contends that the focus of writing transfer studies should focus on how past knowledge influences how learners approach new tasks. In this view, transfer is not about rule-bound techniques and instruction; it is a way of thinking about writing itself (Haskell, 2001). Perkins and Salomon (1988) provide the far transfer concept for describing the application of prior knowledge to new contexts involving dissimilar tasks (Perkins & Salomon, 1988). Because our presentation emphasizes learning contexts and writing applications in new, dissimilar contexts (discourse communities) and specialized tasks (genres), we have selected adaptive transfer, which

consists of “applying or reshaping learned writing knowledge in new and potentially unfamiliar situations” which recognizes “both the reuse and reshaping of prior writing knowledge to fit new contexts” (DePalma & Ringer, 2001, p. 134).

What makes TFT different from traditional instructional methods and approaches? In TFT the student writer is not tasked with memorizing/internalizing rules for writing narrowly conceived texts; in TFT, the student writer is tasked with creating an individualized, routinized noetic framework that functions effectively in a variety of discourse communities/disciplines and with an array of related genres (Driscoll, 2020). In addition to extensive knowledge of genre(s), TFT must also provide the student writer with threshold concepts that support her efforts to construct a viable framework for navigating the writing tasks necessary for general education and elective requirements and especially for completing a college major (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2016). TFT instruction should intentionally integrate these threshold concepts in well-thought-out assignments to assist student writers in developing their own robust framework/knowledge base: writing mediates physical and cognitive activities; writing informs disciplines; writing makes connections that actualize meaning and knowledge; writing involves a constellation of rhetorical choices; writing improves and grows best through reflection (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2016).

The concluding section of our presentation will offer some TFT writing assignments specially designed for business communication classes. The case analysis is the most prominent writing assignment that undergraduate students complete in their major classes (Zhu, 2004). In a case analysis, students must assume the role of learner, applying their academic knowledge, and the role of a professional, such as a manager, solving a business-related problem. A case analysis requires students to do critical thinking and problem solving (Fred Meijer Center for Writing, n.d.). Like a case analysis assignment, a business report assignment also requires critical thinking and problem-solving as if they were completing a real-world marketing task (Zhu, 2004). In information systems classes, students are often asked to evaluate or to solve problems for a system or database, again requiring them to problem-solve and to use their academic knowledge in proposing recommendations (Zhu, 2004). Finally, in an entrepreneurship class, students might create business plans to combine their qualitative and quantitative research with persuasive writing to motivate investors to provide funds for their startups.

All these assignments share some common components that are critical to TFT. To succeed, students must have a deeper understanding of rhetorical invention than what would be required of them through formulaic conventions. Instead, students should learn to write and to make choices in persuasively addressing a particular audience. Beyond their professor, students’ writing should target some type of real-world business professional audience. For this audience, students must apply their knowledge and research to solve problems and to make decisions, which are designated high-level thinking skills in Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives (Armstrong, 2010).

Also, these assignments require a wide range of rhetorical knowledge. The final part of this presentation will include the specific rhetorical skills instructors should cultivate to enable their students to transfer their writing knowledge from one discipline to another.

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Navigating the Loop: Business Majors' Perceptions of Skills Acquisition During College

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For business schools, AACSB accreditation is the gold standard for academic and educational integrity (Thompson & Koys, 2010; Romero, 2008), and passing this exacting accreditation process can position colleges of business among the best worldwide. In addition, the demands of the AACSB certification process enable schools to improve their ability to compete with assurances of quality instruction, programs, and scholarship (Thompson & Koys, 2010). In particular, the AACSB identifies writing and communication skills as a core competency for all business graduates (2016), and professional competencies are closely allied with communication skills (Russ, 2009).

This presentation describes the efforts of a College of Business Administration at a regional university in the southwestern United States to ascertain the degree of skills-based learning that graduates gained during their college careers. Based on a study by Routon, Marinan, and Bontrager in 2021 that examined 436,370 students from 619 institutions, this study focuses on approximately 140 graduating business students in a single College of Business.

In the spring of 2022, the presenters administered a Qualtrics survey loosely based on Routon, Marinan, and Bontrager's study (2021) to students across the business disciplines in five sections of a capstone course in business policy. The goal of the study is to examine the self-rated skills of these students to determine how those skills may have changed. Because previous research by Sigmar and Hynes (2012) indicated that cross-disciplinary skills differ, the researchers were also interested in determining if findings varied by discipline and by how much.

The findings will indicate disciplines in which writing and communication skills may need additional emphasis in "closing the loop" for accreditation. The researchers also wanted to know how the students' self-efficacy in rating these skills influenced their ability to improve them. Social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1989) and, to an extent, cognitive bias (i.e., Dunning Kruger effect) were examined as possibly influencing student responses and outcomes.

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How to Train Your Dragon, As Well As Your Slacker, Lump, Butterfly, and Doormat: Work Style vs. Personality Type in Teamwork

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For over a decade, the presenter has included a personality test as the first assignment for the mandatory team research project in the Professional Communication class. Utilizing the well-known 16 Personalities platform, students fill out the assessment and then share the results with their teammates. They then complete a Team Personality Profile wherein team strengths, areas for improvement, areas for potential conflict, and solutions to those conflicts are fully discussed. Further, since 2017, the teams read the first section of *Committed Teams: Three Steps to Inspiring Passion and Performance* to learn how to navigate team dynamics (Mousa, et al., 2016).

However, as the half-semester-long project progresses, the strategies from the Team Personality Profile typically are forgotten amid the other class content, due dates, and the general pressures of being college students. While any student can recite their personality Type and Role complete with the expected characteristics, there seems to be a disconnect between what the students learn about themselves via the personality test and how to apply this knowledge for a successful team experience. Instead of relying on their strengths and working through the conflicts, tempers flare and progress stalls. Some teams even abandon their charter and/or task lists and spiral into the just-turn-something-in mentality. Predictably, such behavior does not produce the best project deliverables.

Several years ago, in an effort to facilitate team synergy, as well as to reinforce that the recognition of different personality types is an essential part of not only the Team Research Project set-up but also working in teams generally, the presenter came up with a new lexicon of team personality types, which are perhaps better understood as work style behaviors that stem from personality types. Most type labels from personality tests apply concrete concepts (e.g., Defender, Entrepreneur, Diplomat) to abstract traits (e.g., dedicated, ideological, practical) (NERIS Analytics Limited, 2022). The presenter's lexicon repackages the concept of personality types into broader and accessible behavioral types that translate to a work style, such as Slacker, Lump, Butterfly, Doormat, and Dragon.

Although each work style label has negative associations, the positive aspects are explained by highlighting the strengths of each work type both as an individual worker and when working as part of a team. It seems that the students more easily relate to these work styles, understand what they depict, and, more importantly, are able to apply strategies to improve team performance when viewing challenges as conflicts over work styles (i.e., behavior) instead of conflicts of personality.

The work style lexicon is introduced to the students a few weeks into the team project after the teams have had sufficient opportunity to interact, including the submission of several team-produced documents and independent team meetings. So far, the student reception of the work styles and their explication is always the

same: with good humor. By pointing out both the advantages and disadvantages of each work style, the students accept the challenge to rise above what could be considered a negative label. The discussion also includes strategies for how to cope with the negative aspects of each work style. By privileging behavior over personality, the students view interpersonal communication issues as something that can be altered and improved upon. This lexicon facilitates a team progressing through Tuckman's stages of Storming and Norming and onto Performing (Tuckman, 1965).

The goal of this presentation is threefold. First, the audience will learn a new way of identifying categories of team members beyond personality types, including an explanation of the different work styles. Second, this presentation will elucidate the importance of this identification method to the individual team members and to the team as a whole as a way of averting conflict and/or productively ameliorating conflict should it happen. Finally, the audience will learn how to utilize the new work styles lexicon to the benefit of team projects in their classes.

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How Early Introductory Management Texts Codified and Disseminated Communication

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Introduction

Stambaugh and Trank (2010), citing Kuhn (1970), argued that introductory textbooks play an essential role in “science and academic disciplines” and, because they play a crucial role in defining “a discipline’s pedagogy warrants,” we should pay “increased attention to the production of textbooks and their effects” (p. 663).

However, at least for some scholars, textbooks present “a limited monocultural and linear view of how [their field of] management emerged” (Cummings & Bridgman, 2016, p. 250). Equally important, Foster and Mills (2014) argue, “Textbooks are not passive, objective accounts of the prevailing ‘knowledge’ of a subject” (p. 444). Nor are they “simply collected accounts of discrete ‘findings’” (Stambaugh & Trank, 2010, p. 664).

Yet, given the institutional and disciplinary interconnections of management and business communication and the importance of textbooks, they remain a “central, yet under-researched, aspect of business education” (Stambaugh & Trank, p. 673). Few scholars in our field have examined management texts to understand how communication is represented and taught in the introduction to management courses, which are often where students first gain insight into business communication.

Methodology and Focus of the Study

The study relies on historical methodology and a systematic sample to answer the following question: How have introductory management textbooks framed the value and role of business communication for students?

Previous historical studies of introductory management textbooks (Aronoff, 1975; Foster & Mills, 2014; Foster, Mills, & Weatherbee, 2014) guided the selection from the first 50 years of the discipline: 1911 to the 1960s.

This work is an initial step in a much larger project of unpacking the implicit and explicit linkages between the fields of management and communication, specifically business communication. The goal is to learn more about the historical and current perspectives on how the presentation of communication in introductory management textbooks impacts how we teach or approach teaching business communication in a management framework.

Communication in Management Textbooks: Early 1910s to 1930

- Hugo Diemer's *Factory Organization and Administration* was first published in 1910
- Dexter S. Kimball's text, *Principles of Industrial Organization*, was first published in 1913 by McGraw-Hill
- C. Anderson's *Industrial Engineering and Factory Management* was first published in 1928 and remained published until 1947.

Hugo Diemer was a professor of Industrial Engineering at Penn State College, a position he took with the recommendation of F. W. Taylor, the author of one of the discipline's cornerstone texts: *The Principles of Scientific Management* (1911). Kimball was a Machine Design and Construction professor at Cornell University and an engineer. His textbook went through six editions, with the final one being published in 1951, a year before he passed away. Anderson was a Business Organization and Operation professor at the University of Illinois.

Communication in Management Textbooks: 1930 to 1945

The Great Depression saw a dramatic rise in students earning degrees in business, from approximately 6200 in 1927 to an average of 10,000 by 1935 (U.S. Historical Abstracts, 1959, cited in Khurana, p. 138). This rise may be related to a shift toward a "people-minded" perspective (Riesman et al., 1950). Business schools began to focus on the causes of the Great Depression and "impart to students a greater awareness of social responsibility and obligations" (Khurana, p. 190).

Two textbooks help illuminate this period:

1. C.C. Balderston, *Management of an Enterprise* (1935)
2. Ralph Davis, *Industrial Organization and Management* (1940)

Balderston had risen to the rank of professor at the University of Pennsylvania when he contributed to this textbook. He soon would serve as dean of the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce (1941–54). Written during the Great Depression, this text focuses on managers' social responsibility and the need for financial success: "In fact, industrial management performs a dual mission: one of profound social significance; the other of making business profitable" (p. 1).

Davis's 1940 textbook was a significant revision from earlier texts (1928 and 1937) and went into 20 editions. He began as an engineer and labor commissioner before taking a position at the Ohio State University in 1923. His thinking shifts from the early tradition of Taylor (learning on the job) to a perspective known as the "functions approach" (Wren, 1972).

Communication in Management Textbooks: 1945 to 1962

Management changed in the late 1940s and 1950s when academics began publishing textbooks based on "a Fayolian management process or functions approach" (Wren, 1972). Schools of business began adopting a "scientism" approach (Augier & March, 2011), and new ideas and methods began to show a need for a

“situational approach to leadership” (Wren, 1972, p. 335). The research focused on “essential notions of human behavior” (Wren, 1972, p. 336). The impact of work by Whyte, Bakke, Parsons, and Simon contributed to the effect of “organizational theory and a view of the organization as a sociotechnical system” (Wren, 1972, p. 340).

The three textbooks:

1. Ralph Terry, *Principles of Management* (1953)
2. Koontz & O'Donnell, *Principles of Management* (1955)
3. Henry H. Albers, *Principles of Organization and Management* (1962)

Many management scholars refer to Albers, educated at Yale as a labor economist, as “one of the true modern pioneers of management thought” (Luthans, 1996, p. 161). According to Luthans, Albers’ ideas around “the functions of decision making, communication, human performance, and feedback control” (p. 161) were the foundations for his courses. Most important, especially compared with textbooks from the discipline’s first four decades, is their emphasis on planning, communication, and motivation within an organized, managerial structure (p. vii).

Conclusion

This work is part of a more comprehensive study that will offer a historical overview and a synthesis of the first 50 years of how communication has been framed in introductory management textbooks. This work provides a lens into the past, which sheds some light on the present and the influences management texts may have had or are having on current business communication thinking.

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Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Out With the Old, In With the New: A Critical Look at the Teaching Strategies to Pitch and Those We Should Ditch as We Re-Engage in Our Classrooms

**Jenna Haugen; Tiesha Douglas; Melissa Hull Geil; Allison Schlobohm
University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill**

Panelists will address a variety of topics including reimagining business using extended realities, creating a more culturally sensitive space to learn, shifting our use of labeling to be more inclusive, managing impressions based on personal branding, and leading with data visualization.

Ditch: Traditional tools for teaching business communication

Pitch: (Re)imagine business communication using Extended Realities

Augmented, virtual, and mixed realities can alter how we see ourselves and the world around us. A number of industries have adopted Extended Realities. For example, since the COVID-19 pandemic, the healthcare industry has embraced telehealth, or telecommunication, as an alternative point of access to manage patient care (Asadzadeh et al., 2021). Dr. X at one location, can communicate and potentially diagnose Patient Y, at another location, without either individual meeting face to face. In business marketing, organizations create campaigns that use virtual and augmented reality to increase customer engagement (Abbasi & Ali, 2020). Specifically, Virtual Reality Marketing and Augmented Reality Marketing “allow businesses to connect with their audiences, build more sustainable B2C relationships, increase customer loyalty, improve their brand image, and boost brand awareness” (Abbasi & Ali, p. 2, 2020).

How then might we imagine Extended Realities and their influence on the work we do in business communication? Might we (re)imagine the traditional tools we use to help our students write and deliver information in a business context using these applications? For example, using holographic reality to teach students how to stand, use their hands, improve eye contact, and even project their voice during presentations. This technology can teach students how to conduct virtual meetings. We must expand our thinking as instructors to help students understand how mixed realities can influence, even improve their business communication skills.

Ditch: The deficit model of student achievement

Pitch: Culturally relevant pedagogy by being culturally competent

Intercultural Communication is the foundation for understanding one another as unique individuals as communication between people from different cultures is a symbolic, interpretive, transactional, contextual process with shared meanings. The ability to understand the differences that make each person unique – and celebrating those differences – informs and expands our awareness of difference and informs and expands

awareness of ourselves. As an educator, it is critical to be mindful of the intersections of identities and cultures that we and our students bring to our professional and personal spaces; and encourage our audience to have the courage to build inclusive communities and make a positive impact in the world.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a student-centered approach to teaching in which the students' unique cultural strengths are identified and nurtured to promote student achievement and a sense of well-being about the student's cultural place in the world. Gloria Ladson-Billings proposed three main components of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: (a) a focus on student learning and academic success; (b) developing students' cultural competence to assist students in developing positive ethnic and social identities; and (c) supporting students' critical consciousness or their ability to recognize and critique societal inequalities. All three components are needed to create an inclusive classroom where students feel psychologically safe.

Ditch: The term "Executive Presence"

Pitch: More inclusive terminology

Executive Presence as a term manifests as a cipher. It's defined as "the ability to constantly and clearly articulate your position while influencing and connecting with others." While John Beeson's influential article states "although executive presence is highly intuitive and difficult to pin down, it ultimately boils down to your ability to project mature self-confidence, a sense that you can take control of difficult, unpredictable situations; make tough decisions in a timely way and hold your own with other talented and strong-willed members of the executive team." "Shrouded in mystique, whispered as if it's something magical," executive presence as described by Gerry Valentine, "is about your ability to inspire confidence...that you're the leader they want to follow." As indicated by the terms "hard to pin down" and "shrouded in mystery, executive presence eludes definition, but the writers of these articles claim that we know it when we see it.

Currently, I am chasing down the origins of the use of the term executive presence in business communication, but it doesn't take a historian to figure out that "executive presence" most easily can be "seen" in able-bodied, neurotypical, white, cis-gendered men. And, if you are not one who fits into this category, authors like Valentine let you know that executive presence is "something that you can cultivate and build."

Recently, my friend Magnus posted a commentary on a LinkedIn Learning class called "Executive Presence on Video Conference Calls." They describe the course as "Learn how to look and sound confident, collected, and smart on your next conference call or video presentation."

As an #ActuallyAutistic person, this sounds an awful lot like what we refer to as "masking". It's a very theatrical sort of behavior meant to hide our authentic selves in order to put the people around us at ease. The thing is, we also know that masking is harmful to us psychologically. I wonder if the same is true of managers, errr, "leaders" who engage in this sort of masking behavior.

I'm not going to lie and suggest that I never do this. But I do try to make room for it to be safe to be authentic. I try to make it safe to say, "I don't know." We are in a new world, with a new normal emerging for what workplaces look like. Why don't we use this opportunity to expect more authenticity from our managers... errr... "leaders"?

When I read Magnus's post, I realized that so much of what is expected, and indeed of what we've been taught (and, in my case teach in business communications courses), approximates our best version of the ever-shifting concept of "Executive Presence," which often favors white, able-bodied, neurotypical, masculinity. I think that it's time to change the model of what constitutes a "professional" at work, and, moreover, what counts as leadership and presence. It's also time we ditch the term executive altogether.

Ditch: Ballroom-style formal presentations

Pitch: Impression management

I propose that professors of the core undergraduate course teach communication skills related to impression management and professional relationship building instead of formal, ballroom-style presentations. Employers need - and cannot find - employees who are skilled at communicating (Burner et al, 2019). Specifically, employers seek out employees who can write correctly, translate information from one party to another, communicate appropriately in a variety of contexts, listen well, express emotion strategically, and manage relationships professionally (among others, Coffelt et al, 2016, 2019, 2020; Knight, 2020). However, employers rarely list appealing slide design or formal presentations as keys to success.

Professors in the core undergraduate business communication classroom can motivate students to learn these skills - and achieve related career success - by incorporating lessons and assessments related to impression management and relationship building. Impression management and relationship skill-building require students to set personal goals, determine their ideal reputation, identify individuals to connect with, craft multimedia communication strategies, engage in interpersonal communication, listen, regulate emotional expression, and analyze communication impact (among others, Harts, 2020; Burnett & Evans, 2016). Learning impression- and relationship-related skills will help students impress employers, and students will be internally motivated to do the work given their common college goal: financial success (Selingo, 2018). Furthermore, students will leave our core undergraduate business communication classes with the skills in a corporate world where "your network is your net worth."

Ditch: Archaic modes of delivery (hint, hint--the memo)

Pitch: Data-centric modes of delivery

A staple in many business communication classrooms is the memo assignment. We ask students to craft a memo because that is what we learned and what our faculty learned before us. Without fail, I hear moans from my students as they are asked to craft a message in a format that first became prominent in the mid-15th century. Instead of focusing on the format of the memo, we should instead focus on the skill sets we want our students to learn from crafting a memo: how to write a message for a specific audience and how to craft messages our audiences want to read.

To do this, we must understand that audiences are more engaged by visual appeal. Following similar principles to Duarte's recommendation for slide design, we must show our students how to design written documents that rely more heavily on strategic visual representation of data such as infographics. As Nussbaum Knaflic notes, "Good data visualization--infographic or otherwise--is not simply a collection of facts on a given topic; good data visualization tells a story" (p. 61). We should ask our students to deliver powerful visuals in more creative ways, such as through multimedia projects that require them to survey potential audiences to determine best modes

of communication. To accomplish these tasks, I recommend we pitch holistic projects that ask our students to critically think of communication from its infancy in meeting goals to its finale of crafting messages that engage specific audiences.

As a group of business communication professors, we are committed to creating a dialogue of best practices, even if it requires us to toss dated lesson plans and stretch our own comfort zones in learning new tricks—out with the old and in with the new.

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Virtual Teams: Conducting a Big Five Personality Assessment for Effective Team Assignments

**Debra Burleson
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Instructors develop activities and projects to guide student learning and to have measurable outcomes. These activities and projects take time to develop and, when effective, can motivate student learning and be memorable for the students. Typically, instructors spend a significant amount of time developing these projects and evaluating and grading the deliverables. However, while instructors focus on developing and implementing the project, what often gets lost are the details that need to happen before the project begins. In addition, often projects do not impact future projects as time constraints and the demands of covering important topics overwhelm instructors who must press on. There are, however, ways that instructors can augment projects in such a way that the learning that occurs in one project can be applied to the next.

My presentation offers best practices that can be applied to a virtual team project and incorporated in future assignments in the same term. The initial project is team-based and used when assigning three or more students in teams to work on projects. These teams may be virtual or face-to-face. Instructors may typically assign teams based on students' observed behavior in the classroom, alphabetical order, academic major, or by student self-selection. While these strategies offer ways to place students in teams, my presentation will give examples of ways that I have used the Big Five Personality assessment to not only assign students in teams but also encourage students to discover unique traits in their team members and appreciate each other. This method has a unifying effect, and it will prepare students to work in diverse professional settings.

The Big Five Personality assessment is a free 60-question survey (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Gilson et al., 2013; Soto & John, 2017). In addition to the 60-question survey, there is a Short Form (BFI-2-S) of 30 questions and an Extra Short Form (BFI-2-XS) of 15 questions. The Colby Personality Lab offers shorter surveys of the Big Five Personality assessment on their website. Chris Soto directs the Colby Personality Lab and provides many resources with links to translations in 11 languages. The assessment focuses on five personality traits: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, negative emotionality, open-mindedness (Soto, n.d.).

The assessment should be given at least a week before the project launches so that the instructor has time to share the results of the survey with each student. Each of the five could be ranked according to the results with conversation groups forming for the category that received the most points, then second, and so on. Forming these groups allows students to focus on each of the personality traits. If the class meets virtually, students may meet via a platform such as Zoom, or student may interview via discussion forums.

To begin, students take the 60-question survey. After the survey, the five personality traits are discussed in more detail. It is important that students understand that this is one of many ways to help them get to know themselves and is the primary mechanism that the instructor is using to assign teams. The instructor wants to set a positive tone. After the surveys are completed, the instructor shares the results with each student. Students may want to share their results or discuss what was surprising to them.

A surprising and inspiring outcome of this exercise has been student awareness and self-discovery as they learn about themselves and about their teammates. As students discuss their strengths and weaknesses, they begin to share experiences. These shared experiences foster a collaborative mindset, establish trust, and energize the students. Collaborative takes on new importance as students become more aware of their strengths and the strength of their teammates. This self-discovery and awareness prepare the team for challenges that they may face. As teams encounter those moments that are stressful, these experiences can bond the team to help them overcome and complete the project.

In addition to using the Big Five Personality assessment to assign students in teams, studies have also found that this assessment can be used when instructors want to focus on shared leadership. Leadership is an important area in business and professional communications, and effective leadership is tied closely to successful outcomes (Wakefield, et al, 2007; Huang, et al., 2010; Dulebohn & Hoch, 2017). For example, a predictor of emerging and shared leadership can be found by assessing personality traits (Hoch & Dulebohn, 2017). In addition to leadership, the corporate sector has also used this survey to assess potential job performance (Donovan, 2000).

Takeaways from this assessment could extend beyond teams as student prepare their résumés, practice job talks, or mock interviews. Their awareness of themselves and also of others enables them to confidently present themselves, whether in writing or in person, as they draw from their experiences in teams to share successes and memorable moments.

Using Artificial Intelligence Software to Improve Students' Public Speaking Skills

**Emily A. C. Goenner
St. Cloud State University**

Extended abstract: This poster presents preliminary findings from a scholarship of teaching and learning-based project focused on using artificial intelligence software to help improve students' public speaking skills.

In face-to-face courses, students frequently experience multiple public speaking opportunities, both formally and informally. In online asynchronous courses, students often have fewer public speaking opportunities and receive less feedback on their public speaking skills. To fill this gap, the study used the artificial intelligence software PitchVantage to help improve students' public speaking skills.

PitchVantage is a subscription service through which students record videos. For each video, the student receives feedback from artificial intelligence software. The feedback includes scores on pitch, pacing, volume, pauses, and eye contact. Students may record and practice as many times as they want before submitting the final video for scoring by the instructor and feedback from a peer group, if desired.

Preliminary use suggests students' public speaking scores improve over the course of the semester and students reported positive experiences with PitchVantage.

Are You “Dialed In” for Collaboration? Emotional Intelligence as a Core Teamwork Competency Assessed in a Project-Based Group Communication Course

**Brenda Jones
Franklin University**

The pandemic has made it clear that for thousands of workers, work-from-home and virtual teams will be standard practice today and in the future (Davidson, 2021). How can we reconnect and reengage an overwhelmed workforce, creating healthy group climates and workplace cultures? One way business communications practitioners, educators, and consultants can help is coaching students in applying emotional intelligence (EI) to team communications.

The need for emotional intelligence (EI) development is acute among Gen Z and millennials given both the challenges and opportunities the digital world presents. In a meta-regression analysis of 70 studies conducted with college students between 2002 and 2018, Khan et al. (2021) found decreases in well-being, self-control, and emotionality. The results of this meta-analysis are especially troubling given these data do not reflect the impact of the pandemic over 2020-2022 that has directly impacted our students.

“Dialed in” can be used in many ways including athletic performance (DiMeglio, 2021), and when it is applied to teamwork in a positive sense, it implies focus and good performance. Employers see the connection between focused and effective team communication and the application of EI, and consider one’s style of interacting with others and conducting meetings to be key communications skills (Coffelt et al., 2019). Although EI has been noted as an important competency required for the workplace (Fall et al., 2013; World Economic Forum, 2020) and needed for persuasive professional communication such as sales (Kidwell et al., 2021), it is not typically integrated in online small group communication courses.

In the Spring of 2020, our university launched a new curriculum mapping project that enabled Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) to be integrated with academic program assessment maps, an effort that made clear the relationships and assessment efforts across cascading learning outcomes. During the updating process, the Communications Program Chair mapped ILOs to the course and assignment level. While all Program Outcomes were assessed, we determined that the ILO assessment for Communication focused on written communication competencies. No current ILO currently aligns with the skills of working effectively in teams, although one Communications program level outcome does include this valuable skill. Based on a review of the literature and current assessments of teamwork skills and communication skills (AACU Value Rubric), a gap was identified in terms of competencies associated with Daniel Goleman’s (2006) model of Emotional Intelligence (EI). The core EI components of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management align with what employers mean by “the ability to work well in teams” (AACU, 2018; Williams, 2019).

This presentation describes the resulting update to team communication competencies addressed in a groups and teams communication course. This junior-level undergraduate course operationalizes EI (Schutte et al., 1998; Goleman, 2006) as a team communication competency, integrating this framework in a project-based learning approach with students collaborating with nonprofits in an accelerated online course. The goals of this instructional approach were; 1) to increase student self-efficacy in professional communication, including managing their own emotions, and 2) to assess student development in the collaboration skills in an authentic project context. The population of students is primarily adult learners working fulltime in online bachelor degree programs in a variety of majors including psychology, human resources, public administration, and communication.

Student teams select a nonprofit and engage in primary research to complete a needs assessment. This provides an authentic project for initial proposal development, with embedded learning for client-interaction as well as team coordination skills. The primary measure of trait EI is the Self-report Emotional Intelligence Test (SREIT) (Schutte et al., 1998). This instrument covers the four EI components – appraisal of emotions (Self-Awareness), optimism/mood regulation (Self-Management), social skills (Social Awareness), and utilization of emotions (Relationship Management).

A positive organizational scholarship (POS) approach is applied as students work in virtual project teams, proposing a business solution for a nonprofit. Student integrate course concepts in their own narratives on the application of EI as well as group formation stages, leadership, and roles through peer evaluation and a team analysis paper. A trait-based EI assessment (Schutte et al., 1998) and individual reflection paper provide students with opportunities to consider how they can improve team results in the class and in their work lives by growing their EI skills and leveraging individual strengths.

The preliminary data on student EI development will be shared, along with insights on how students describe their EI strengths, and what we can do to improve the student learning experience based on student feedback. For our university, we continue to refine our approach to assessing team communication skills with the goal of contributing to an institutional outcome rubric.

As businesses and higher education institutions recover and reconnect after two years of pandemic-related social distancing, integration of EI as one component of team communication is needed. In Higher Education, self-aware and situationally appropriate professional communication skills can be assessed as an institutional-level outcome, an academic program outcome, and a course-level outcome. The pace and stress of today's work environments require increased application of EI in communications to maintain performance (Kidwell et al., 2021).

Given the wide-spread use of virtual teams, incorporating EI in project-based learning for teams may be beneficial for all majors. Business communication educators, practitioners, and consultants can coach students and employees in the application of EI with self-paced immersive learning or service-learning modules and guided reflection on team interactions and project results.

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Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

The Intersection of Research and Teaching in Business Communication

**Paula Lentz
University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire**

This session is a networking opportunity for teachers and anyone else interested in scholarly work on the teaching of business communication. Whether you are a seasoned researcher or just starting in the field, this session offers opportunities to connect with like-minded people about topics, methods, and publishing outlets related to pedagogy-based scholarship.

Where Do We Begin? Business Communication and the Humanities

**Clark Barwick; Joseph Howard Morgan; Emily Esola; Savannah Hall
Indiana University**

For at least the past four decades (and likely much longer), scholars have attempted to determine the relationship between business communication and the humanities (Kelly, 1985). According to a recent survey, 1 in 6 ABC members hold a PhD in English or a closely related field, and 1 in 5 ABC members have a PhD, MA or “other” degree (e.g. an MFA) in English or something similar (ABC, 2022). Many business, technical, and professional communication classes are housed within humanities departments, and business school-based business communication programs and curricula are often theoretically rooted in humanities scholarship. In the classroom, business communication and humanities instruction often looks similar—for instance, a business writing class may employ the same methods and approaches as an English department writing class— even when the academic and professional objectives of the schools and students may differ.

This panel discussion will feature seven faculty members with doctoral training in the humanities who now teach (or have recently taught) business communication in a business school. These presenters will examine:

- How their humanities training has positively impacted (and continues to impact) their business communication teaching and mentoring;
- How these faculty members incorporate humanities-inflected learning into their business communication courses, especially those focusing on writing and public speaking;
- How doctoral-level humanities training offers preparation for teaching business students about ethics, empathy, and DEIJ-related issues;
- How teaching in a business school has expanded their pedagogical range as teachers and scholars;
- How their business students are often very interested in the humanities and humanities-inflected learning, and how these faculty members create unique learning opportunities (i.e. special topics courses, workshops, reading groups);
- How business schools and humanities programs can continue to collaborate and imagine interdisciplinary partnerships.

The goal of this discussion is to facilitate a conversation about the relationship between business communication and the humanities that is deeply relevant to a large portion of ABC’s membership and will provide those in attendance with ideas for collaboration and exploration that they can take back to their respective universities, schools, and departments.

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A Business Writing Internship in Fine Arts Organizations

**William Carney
Cameron University**

The research seems clear that undergraduate internships aid undergraduates in finding employment and in staying employed at least in the short term (up to four years). DiMeglio, et al. (2022) found that, although no effect was found on wages, an undergraduate internship tended to facilitate a successful search for a job and increased the likelihood that university graduates would stay employed for at least those initial four years. This is especially important for universities that have seen a decrease in enrollment over the past three years, either due to the pandemic or to the wider availability of paying jobs. Souza (2022) suggests that, not only do universities themselves suffer but, the trend of fewer university graduates has serious implications for the economy at large. As more and more jobs require some higher education, a skills gap looms. With prospective students often opting to take lower wage jobs instead of a college education, colleges and universities at every level are scrambling to find ways to make higher education more attractive for these prospective students. Being able to document student success in employment searches becomes a necessary and desirable marketing tool for university administrations.

Humanities departments at a number of universities have seen the biggest drops in student enrollment. While STEM departments have tended to remain somewhat constant in enrollment since 2015 (Donnelly 2015), humanities departments have seen steep declines. At our university, a regional campus in the University of Oklahoma system, our combined Communication and English department has seen a drastic decline in the number of our majors. As the university attempts to use internship opportunities as a marketing strategy across all departments, our majors seem uninterested in our usual internship offerings in “technical” writing at local hospitals and companies in the private sector, preferring instead to concentrate on our more “artistic” senior-level course offerings.

This presentation details our university’s efforts to craft a regular internship course that features work with our local Arts and Humanities councils. Our Arts Council is the local affiliate of the Oklahoma Arts Council, a state agency that offers matching grants to organizations (including its local affiliates) to fund arts programs. Similarly, the Oklahoma Humanities Council offers matching grants to nonprofit organizations and funds local programs. Because our Humanities majors were likely to have attended one or more local programs through these agencies, a proposal was made to offer two internships per semester to junior and senior students to work with these agencies. The challenges in creating these unpaid internships stemmed from a number of factors. First, our Arts and Humanities councils had shown little interest in the past in collaborating with the university. Second, those faculty members who had previously arranged internships for our department had initially believed that creating relationships between students and the private sector organizations that engaged in much local hiring was the path they should follow. Initially, this seemed to be a reasonable path to follow but we noticed a shift in the type of majors we attracted. Notably, the majors we attracted over the past 5-6 years seemed not to be motivated by traditional employment prospects and somewhat ignorant of what one could “do” with an English or Communication degree. These new majors seemed more focused on quality of life issues

in the county. As a result, however, these majors were slow to find gainful employment after graduation and a number of them continued to work in retail and food service jobs they had as undergraduates. We will discuss the decision to shift the focus of our department's internships away from practicing business writing genres to the end goal of supporting the arts and offering community programs. Next, we will discuss the process of soliciting input from students about the types of internships that might interest them. We will discuss the process of creating relationships with the directors of our city's Arts and Humanities Councils including an offer to work with them on proposals and presentations to our City Council, an area they saw as a weakness for them. We will discuss the ways we offered to make our internship courses dovetail with their agencies' plans for growth. Students were "pitched" the idea of working with the agencies in grant writing and advertising and our faculty members provided detailed information about how grant funding translates into artistic events and tangible benefits for the community. Although we are in the early stages of the plan, we provide some encouraging results and we will discuss ways that small universities can do similar things in other communities. We also show how the writing performed by student interns in these settings can transfer to other types of organizations.

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Effectively Engaged: Examining Online Text-Based and Role-Playing Activities in Business Communication Classrooms

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Purpose

For this presentation, we explore business communication students' use of activities in a digital space. In a research study, students were assigned an online, text-based case study and a digital role-playing activity with the goal of measuring learning effectiveness. After completing the activity, a survey was conducted to determine students' overall motivation, engagement, and preferences for these online activities. In this session, the authors provide insights into the findings and recommendations for using online activities in business communication classrooms.

Goals

Based on student evaluations and instructor experiences, many business students do not see the value of communication courses required for their business degrees. Despite this, employers consistently report that communication is vital to success in the business world. This is evident from employer research conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE). While NACE (2021) has identified communication, teamwork, critical thinking, technology, leadership, career and self-development, professionalism, and equity and inclusion as key competencies for students as they transition into the workplace (para. 4), business students don't always grasp these competencies as relevant in the business communication classroom.

In an attempt to help students understand these competencies, instructors use various methods to teach communication concepts and keep students engaged. Some of these methods include using case studies and problem-based learning to simulate business communication in real life, hoping that an academic exercise will provide students experience that will increase their knowledge and communication effectiveness. Recreating real-life experiences in the classroom to increase learning effectiveness is challenging but essential. In his foundational book on experiential learning, Kolb (1984) defined learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). This is the basis for Experiential Learning Theory that explains the cycle of learning as "experiencing, reflecting, thinking, and acting" and helps learners increase their knowledge through action (Kolb & Kolb, 2009, p. 297).

Higher education instructors use a variety of experiential learning activities in the classroom. Crookall & Thorngate (2009) noted simulation/gaming, problem-based learning, projects, and action learning as elements that connect both knowledge and action (p. 17). Other studies found that gamification in academia has the potential to be motivating and enjoyable, but that its efficacy depends on "features such as feedback options and the way in which the level of difficulty adapts to a player's skill" (Welbers, et al., 2019, p. 95). Feinstein,

Mann, and Corsun (2002) explained role-playing is a version of simulation/gaming and "allows participants to immerse themselves in a learning environment by acting out the role of a character or part in a particular situation" (p. 735). Because most of these activities require interpersonal interaction, the authors stated role-playing games are appropriate for activities requiring a learning objective related to this type of interaction.

In comparison, text-based case studies are often used in education to present a hypothetical situation for students to respond to. Zimmermann (2019) posited that using the case method helps increase student engagement and build skills in communication, teamwork, critical thinking, decision-making and problem solving (p. 137). But studies have also shown traditional case studies can also be "static, one-dimensional simulations of real-world problems" (West, 2011). While there are clear benefits to text-based case studies in certain educational contexts, the availability of more interactive activities with gamification features provides instructors of business communication with a greater variety of choices.

Proposed Methodology

This study used an experimental method where students were placed in one of two experimental groups. The first group received an online text-based case study, and the second group received an online digital role-playing activity for a specific chapter in a business communication textbook. After completing the activity, students took a quiz on the material to measure cognitive learning of the concepts covered in the chapter and activity. Students also completed a survey measuring affective learning by looking at overall motivation for the material and engagement in the activity. Differences between the two groups help researchers and instructors better understand student preferences in learning and the potential differences in cognitive and affective learning.

Outcomes

While there are many choices for instructors using online activities in class, this research will help others better understand the learning outcomes of a few of those choices. It also answers questions such as: How effectively do students learn when using either role-playing or case methods in the business communication classroom, especially in an online environment? Do students learn concepts more effectively and feel more engaged in the online space with interactive activities? What are students' perceptions and preferences for online interactive activities compared to more traditional online text-based activities? This presentation provides a review of research findings and offers suggestions for implementing these activities in business communication courses.

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Reporting Verbs in Academic Communication: A Corpus-Based Dictionary, What it Tells Us, and Why it is Needed

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Purpose

As students and professionals, business communicators must perform significant rhetorical and linguistic tasks whose conventions vary based on subject matter and audience expectations. To engage in a way that is meaningful and beneficial, writers must establish an authorial voice that is viable in multiple contexts and can be easily adapted to several different subjects (Ma & Quin, 2017). Without instruction and substantial exposure, communicators can be left unaware of writing conventions that differ across professions and disciplines (North, 2005). Writers may also develop inappropriate usage patterns or struggle to learn those patterns quickly (Davis, 2013; Ma, 2015). An integral part of a writer's voice in academic writing is that of stance as indicated with reporting verbs.

Reporting verbs are verbs used when a writer cites information from other sources (i.e., "researchers state that...") (Jun, 2020). Stance refers to the writer's opinion or evaluation of the cited information—whether they believe it is true, credible, or accurate, for example. Understanding how reporting verbs and stance vary across academic disciplines can be helpful for students and professionals as they work to master discipline-specific conventions or communicate in academic contexts. Likewise, such an understanding is important for teachers who guide students and novice professionals to do so.

Methods

In order to better understand authentic usage of reporting verbs, we conducted an interdisciplinary study that includes principles from rhetoric and corpus linguistics to systematically investigate authorial stance variation in reporting verbs across disciplines. We tagged all reporting verbs included in the Academic Journal Registers Corpus (AJRC) compiled by Bethany Gray (Gray, 2011). This corpus consists of 270 published scientific articles across six disciplines: philosophy, history, political science, applied linguistics, biology, and physics. The corpus was carefully compiled by Gray to include articles from leading academic journals and includes article types that represent those common to each field for a total of 292,547 words.

Using a discourse-analytic approach, we manually tagged 23,471 reporting verbs by type in the background sections of all articles in the AJRC. This was done manually as opposed to automatically in order to capture reporting verbs that would not be accurately identified through computer software. The reporting verb types were categorized as one of three stance categories identified by Hyland (1999): research acts, cognition acts, or discourse acts. Research acts occur in statements of findings (e.g., observe, discover, notice, show) or

procedures (e.g., analyze, calculate, assay, explore). Cognition acts are related to mental processes (e.g., believe, conceptualize, suspect, view). Finally, discourse acts involve verbal expression (e.g., ascribe, discuss, hypothesize, state) (Hyland, 1999).

Goals

In this panel, we present several pieces of research and outcomes of our study that will be of interest to researchers, teachers, students, and business communicators. Specifically, we will present the following:

- A description and theoretical background of reporting verbs in academic writing
- An explanation of rhetorical stance features encoded by reporting verbs
- An exploration of how reporting verbs and their rhetorical force changes across scientific disciplines
- Teaching guides and suggestions for exposing students and new professionals to the nuances of stance in disciplinary reporting verbs
- A new corpus-based dictionary resource for reference and understanding reporting verbs

Each page of the dictionary provides details on a single reporting verb found in the AJRC and detailed information such as verb frequency and common stance acts for each discipline (bar graphs indicate which disciplines commonly use the reporting verb); each page also compares concordance lines—excerpts of a given word used in context—from the AJRC and the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies, 2008) and includes sample sentences from the academic texts in Gray's corpus.

Outcomes

The by-discipline approach for organizing our dictionary will allow writing teachers and students to expand their command of academic language beyond the knowledge of the setting in which they learned it. For example, if a student's primary exposure to academic writing was political science or history articles, they may tend to use the verb *advocate*, but if they pursue a STEM field like physical science, verbs like *advocate* and the other verbs they're accustomed to may not match that of professionals in the field, hindering their ability to integrate as an insider.

When writers understand the authorial contexts in which each verb is used, they can make more informed decisions about how to approach disciplinary writing. Although the AJRC does not contain writing from business journals, the findings from this corpus are expected to benefit business communicators generally because our findings can guide them to efficient interdisciplinary communication with professionals in fields beyond business.

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Assignments for Teaching Ethics, Values, and Character

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Western University**

In a 2009 Journal of Business Communication article, ABC past president Daphne Jameson questioned business communication faculty's role in graduating students who may have contributed to the Great Recession. She asked, "Did we fail them or did they fail us?" (Jameson, 2009, p. 499). Today, most business communication faculty do cover the topic, perhaps partly inspired by AACSB accreditation standards, which include teaching ethics. According to a recent study of business communication courses, instructors report the following coverage of ethics: not at all, 7%; some coverage: 53.6%; a lot of coverage: 28.9%; and comprehensive coverage, 10.3% (Moshiri and Cardon, 2020).

However, faculty express concerns about including ethics in their courses. Some believe they cannot influence students' thinking or decisions, while others don't believe they have the expertise or the course time to cover the topic well (Dean & Beggs, 2006). Our goal in offering this workshop is to give faculty a toolkit of assignments they can immediately use in their courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and to give them the confidence to teach this challenging topic.

We extend the idea of teaching ethics to include character and values. Although these concepts are closely related, values and character are essential underpinnings of ethical decision-making. Both focus more on the person—who students are as individuals and what drives them in how they navigate their lives and how they interact with others. Developing students' character and supporting them as they refine their values puts them on firmer ground for consistently practicing ethical communication when they join the workforce.

Society needs more ethical leaders, and business communication faculty need assignments that challenge students to practice making better decisions. Research on ethics instruction provides lessons in what works, and what doesn't, in teaching ethics. Authors of a meta-analysis study found that, overall, results from teaching ethics are disappointing: getting students to change their behavior and decision making is difficult. However, they emphasize strategies to improve effectiveness that we will also emphasize in the workshop: focusing on application, providing students with several activities, and encouraging critical thinking in given contexts (Waples et al., 2009).

Their conclusions are consistent with a popular approach to teaching ethics, Giving Voice to Values (GVV). Described in her seminal book supported by a trove of resources available through the University of Virginia Darden School of Business, Mary Gentile argues for a fresh approach for student development. Typical approaches, she argues, include a “philosophical debate” of what students might do in given situations. Such debates lead to rationalizations and may further entrench students’ current thinking (Arce & Gentile, 2015, p. 538). Instead, GVV emphasizes action plans and scripts, presuming that ethical decisions have already been made. Rather than discuss whether action should be taken, students practice taking action, making it easier for them to choose the best path in future situations (Gentile, 2010).

Faculty will leave the workshop with several ethics-, values-, and character-related assignments they can use in their classes. Assignments we will offer include a values assessment, a strategy for using live cases, a team assessment, a personal leadership vision, a vision and values voice thread, two employment cases, a courage/risk assessment tool, an ethics “think paper,” “Tale of Two Stories” activity (GVV), an authenticity tool, and behavioral interview questions. In addition to sharing our own assignments, our plan for the workshop is create a highly interactive environment in which faculty can share their own assignments, create new ones, and receive feedback from their colleagues. Following are learning outcomes for the proposed three-hour session:

- Describe principles of effective assignments for teaching ethics, values, and character
- Apply principles as you give and receive feedback on assignments from colleagues
- Choose new assignments to use in class with confidence
- Identify criteria for assessing and commenting on student work

Following is a draft outline with approximate timing:

- Optional pre-work: respond to survey questions and upload your assignments
- Introductions: describe our interest in teaching ethics, values, and character (5 mins.)
- Background: provide principles, definitions, practices (15 mins.)
- Teamwork 1: discuss successes and challenges and debrief (30 mins.)
- Assignments: share ideas (15 mins.)
- Teamwork 2: choose and assess assignments and debrief (30 mins.)
- Break (15 mins.)
- Teamwork 3: create new assignments and debrief (30 mins.)
- Assessment: discuss strategies for grading student work (20 mins.)
- Closing: summarize takeaways and plan follow-up with lessons learned (20 mins.)

With appropriate assignments, students build “moral muscle memory” (Arce & Gentile, 2015, p. 537), a reflex developed over time that gives them confidence to choose ethical actions despite pressure to follow bad actors. With sample assignments and guidance from their colleagues, business communication faculty also build “moral muscle memory” to include ethics as a core part of their classes despite the challenges.

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Social Responsibility

Communicating Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Via Social Media: A Case Study of Tencent CSR Communication During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused adverse health, economic, and social consequences across the globe since its outbreak in December 2019. When analyzing the roles that various social and economic entities are playing in containing COVID-19 by China, scholars have shifted their attention from central government control (Li, 2020) to community-based experiences and lessons (Cheng et al., 2020). Following this vein, this project takes a case study approach and examines how the Chinese leading digital platform company Tencent Holdings is employing social media to respond to the pandemic as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities. This project has its significance in understanding not only the increased demand for corporate social responsibilities amid the pandemic but also the bigger role digital platform companies are playing in the digitalized and networked world by leveraging social media. Specifically, this project aims to answer the following two research questions:

1. What CSR activities did Tencent engage in as its response to the pandemic on Sina Weibo?
2. How did Tencent communicate these activities to the Chinese public on Sina Weibo?

Given the urgency that the pandemic has imposed on corporations in China, this study adopts the lens of the theory of common good to investigate the rhetoric in CSR activities by Tencent and offers empirical evidence to show what common good-related activities Tencent has been involved in and how they are communicated to the public. The theory of common good considers stakeholders “not as only self-interested ‘individuals’ but persons capable of cooperating with a spirit of service, altruism, and reciprocity, thus they have intrinsic and transcendent motivations to develop, for the common good of the community (hence for themselves), collaborative relationships” (Di Carlo, 2020, p. 12). The theory of common good stresses not only the rights of the stakeholders but also their duties to contribute to the continuity of the corporations and to the common good of society (Di Carlo, 2020).

As this study situates in the public sphere of CSR communication, it focuses on social media, specifically Sina Weibo, as its primary research venue. Launched by Sina Corporation in 2009, Sina Weibo works as a Chinese microblogging platform (Sina, 2019). Weibo features ubiquitous, contagious, and scalable communication thanks to its ability to communicate real-time information in a dialogic, interactive, and fast way (Yin et al., 2015). This real-time network and the multimodal ways of interaction and engagement make Weibo a powerful platform to disseminate and share information publicly and privately.

To answer the research questions, I used “pandemic” as the keywords to search and collect the relevant posts on Tencent’s official Weibo account from January 2020 to August 2021. I collected 45 posts in total but reduced them to 39 as I deleted those that have no relevant content with CSR. Using NVivo as the data coding and

analysis software, I created a codebook by categorizing the CSR activities into “Service” and “Funding” based on the reading of Tencent's official responses to the pandemic (Tencent, 2021 a), and then added another category of “Time” to trace the timeline of these posts. I followed the open coding and the grounded theory approach when naming and creating the child codes under the general codes of “Service”, “Funding”, and “Time” in accordance with the specific content I read. In addition, I coded both texts and images to reflect the multimodality features of Weibo communication.

The findings of the project showed that Tencent starts to engage in CSR-related activities from the outbreak of the pandemic in January 2020. Broadly categorized into "Service" and "Funding", these CSR activities are firstly highly associated with the digital technologies Tencent has employed or created, and secondly targeted at resolving the urgent and emergent issues in fighting the pandemic. In addition, some of them are collaborative outcomes through the partnership between Tencent, the Chinese government, and other social and scientific sectors. In addition, Tencent has actively used Weibo as one of its public communication channels to inform the public of its CSR activities. Such communication features swiftness, multimodality, and civic engagement with goodwill.

To conclude, this study shows that Tencent, the leading Chinese digital platform company, has exploited its existing technologies and platform to develop and create CSR services to help fight the pandemic. Adapting to the local sociopolitical environment, Tencent also came into close collaboration with Chinese central and local government and other economic and social sectors in its civic engagement and humanistic CSR activities. Tapping the great influence and the multimodality features of Weibo, Tencent has timely and innovatively communicated its CSR activities to the Chinese public, enjoying the advantages of dialogic, interactive, and real-time communication. The CSR communication shows Tencent's priority given to the common good, civic and community services, as well as prudence and virtuous considerations in public communication during the crisis time.

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Technology, Digital Media, and Web 2.0

Graduate Studies Sponsored Panel

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Chenxing Xie
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Joelle Loew
University of Basel

Sumiya Chowdhury
Baruch College – CUNY

The Graduate Studies Committee of the Association for Business Communication (ABC) invites graduate students to submit proposals for the Graduate Studies Sponsored Panel at our upcoming conference, the 87th Annual International Conference which will take place October 3-8 in Tampa, FL and Virtually. Graduate students will find a welcoming group of researchers, teachers, professionals, and fellow graduate students at the conference.

ABC is dedicated to graduate student development and provides numerous benefits to graduate student members. These benefits include waivers of all the base conference registration fees for those who register early (workshops and excursions are optional extras). Membership is encouraged, but not required for the Marty Baker Graham Research Grant to help graduate students complete a dissertation, an annual Outstanding Dissertation award, and connections for the job search process.

The theme of the panel is “Emerging Trends in Business and Professional Communication.” Graduate students are often engaged in boundary-pushing and field-expanding work. This panel hopes to highlight those contributions of graduate students to business and professional communication scholarship. Within the context of business and professional communication, possible topics could relate to the following:

- * innovative pedagogy
- * digital communication
- * social media
- * visual communication
- * interpersonal communication
- * team communication
- * crisis communication

- * globalization
- * ethics
- * other topics of related interest

We are especially interested in proposals that focus on digital issues. These topics can be approached via a wide variety of theoretical lenses and methodological approaches.

Graduate students are often engaged in boundary-pushing and field-expanding work. This panel highlights contributions of graduate students to business and professional communication scholarship. ABC graduate students will present on their research and teaching surrounding emerging issues.

How To Write an Effective LinkedIn Profile for Algorithmic Audiences **Chenxing Xie and Huiling Ding**

As LinkedIn embedded AI algorithms into the recruitment system to enhance the efficiency of the recruiting process, the audience of the LinkedIn profiles shifted from human to the algorithm as well. By observing and experimenting with both the recruiter and job seeker systems on the LinkedIn platform, the presenter proposes strategies for job seekers to write highly ranked LinkedIn profiles.

Acknowledgement: This project is funded by NSF grant #1937037.

This Is the Agile Way: A Linguistic Perspective on Professional Communication in Agile Software Development Teams **Joelle Loew**

This presentation is part of a larger PhD study on communication and gender in agile IT teams. It draws on recordings of authentic workplace interactions and interviews with IT professionals to investigate the discursive processes through which participants creatively construct their professional identities as agile practitioners, as well as their collective agile team identities.

Mental Health in the Corporate World **Sumiya Chowdhury**

Mental health and work-related stress are increasing in today's adult population. Employees are more vocal about their challenges about depression, PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), and anxiety. Yet, there is stigma around this issue. Employees do not have enough resources in the corporate world to feel safe talking about mental health at work. In this presentation, the researcher has explored mental health challenges that employees face and how the pandemic has made an increasingly negative impact. Ultimately, the aim provides ideas for the corporate world how to recognize emerging issues and build openness to communication around mental health in the organization.

Persuading Customers on Instagram: A Case Study of Companies' Communication Strategies

Marie-Louise Brunner; Stefan Diemer

Trier University of Applied Sciences, Institute for International and Digital Communication

This presentation examines branding and advertising strategies on Instagram in selected companies with an international customer base. Our aim is to document existing best practices and to show how companies use various communication strategies to persuade customers of their products and services.

The presentation uses a two-step approach as described in Brunner and Diemer (2022), combining multimodal discourse analysis (O'Halloran, 2011) with content analysis to identify persuasive strategies that attract customers' attention, create brand awareness, produce interaction and engagement, and generally convince customers of the brand and product/service value. We also incorporate the multimodal nature of the social medium into our analysis and investigate how different modes (text, images, videos, emojis, hashtags) mesh and enhance the persuasive power of posts and stories on Instagram.

Instagram has, as yet, not been researched extensively, though some studies have investigated it from various perspectives, including research from business communication, linguistics, and marketing. Within a business communication context, the manifold possibilities of customer-specific communication (Hassan, 2014) and management of brand attitudes (De Veirman et al., 2017) are of particular relevance. There are also studies on business communication in specific sectors, such as restaurants (e.g., Salleh et al., 2015) and politics (e.g., Muños & Towner, 2017). From a linguistic viewpoint, aspects such as storytelling (e.g., Dayter & Mühleisen, 2016), self-branding (e.g., Liu & Suh, 2017; Mapes 2018), and expressions of emotion (Lee & Chau, 2018), as well as meaning negotiation and customer engagement (Brunner & Diemer, 2019) have been under investigation. Marketing studies on social media initially focused on the complex nature of the medium, describing how the new environment changes the marketing mix (Bughin 2009; Mangold & Faulds, 2009) and how social media strategies can increase business value (e.g., Culnan et al., 2010). Current approaches emphasize the need for adaptation, continuous auditing, and creation of a social media identity (e.g., Kelly, 2016) as well as on establishing trust and customer retention (e.g., Li et al., 2022; Rose et al., 2021). All conclude that Instagram is an ideal medium for marketing, in particular self-branding and storytelling, where companies can reach and persuade specific customer segments and even individual customers.

Instagram is one of the most popular social media worldwide, only topped by Facebook and YouTube (Statista, 2022). Unlike Facebook which now seems to be stagnating, it is still a fast growing (Statista, 2022) and relatively young medium with most users between the ages of 18-34 (Statista, 2022). Instagram can be used by both private and corporate users. It allows participants to post, comment and interact, but it is more visual than Facebook, for example, and includes novel features such as Instastories and interactive elements such as polls. Users can use Instagram to share photos and videos, which other users can then comment on. There are

numerous additional features such as providing locations, effects, filters, stickers, animations, polls, and questions. Users can tag and mention other users, and posts can be edited, deleted and shared to other social networks (Instagram, 2019). A very successful tool available to users are Instagram Stories, or Instastories, introduced in 2016. They have become one of the main marketing methods in this social medium. The feature allows the posting of short stories that disappear after 24 hours unless saved, as well as the integration of special features such as 'boomerangs' and 'superzooms', and various interactive elements such as polls or buttons, encouraging customer engagement and creating rapport. Due to their ephemeral nature, they create a feeling of urgency and a 'fear to miss out', further increasing engagement. Recently, reels, i.e. shorter and more authentic videos, have also become a major tool to increase customer engagement on Instagram.

This study makes use of a collection of publicly accessible Instagram posts and Instastories of more than 50 internationally active companies (e.g. MyMuesli, Innocent, L'Occitane, Yves Rocher, Bitburger, dm) and self-marketing influencers (e.g. Kylie Cosmetics, Jamie Oliver) which has been compiled between 2017 and 2022. Selection criteria for including the respective accounts into the dataset are a good follower base and interaction frequency, account activity, salience (high interaction, feedback, likes, prominence ranking, reach), as well as international customer interactions. The collected data comprises the initial images and anchor posts, as well as the respective Instastories and the company bios and timelines. For the present study, Instagram posts (including reels) as well as Instastories were analyzed in order to document the underlying persuasive communication strategies that companies employ.

Results show that posts and Instastories in our corpus are specifically used to engage and persuade customers through storytelling and interaction, providing a way for companies to create a convincing and consistent brand image, but also to create interest and increase rapport. Companies frequently link directly to their sales platforms through posts and stories, performing classical acts of persuasion, but they also feature influencers, valued customers, or related brands, and provide entertainment value. Humor plays a key role, both verbally in the form of puns, 'fun facts' and short speech bubbles, and visually, through the integration of comic elements, links and scales for emoji feedback, interactive questions with short video sequences as 'rewards', or image enhancers such as 'boomerangs'. In Instastories, in particular, the wide range of interactive elements can create an almost interactive gaming experience, but also provide a channel for performing customer surveys. Companies use a wide range of media, from short single-image posts to long, cinematic sequences. Formats also vary considerably, ranging from 'classic' posts, to interview clips to story-boarded comic formats.

In sum, we present Instagram as a highly persuasive medium that companies use to increase customer retention and engagement as well as construct a consistent brand. Companies use multimodal and interactive means of persuasion, engaging and enticing customers. The results of the analysis of multimodal persuasive strategies in this study can serve as best practice for companies who wish to improve their or create an Instagram Business Account.

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“Sorry to Hear You're Going Through a Difficult Time”: Investigating Online Discussions of Consumer Debt

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Issues surrounding the impact of consumer debt on families, businesses and individuals have seen increased media and scholarly interest in recent years, particularly in the aftermath of the 2008 economic recession and the recent COVID-19 pandemic. The ready availability of (predatory) lending and payday loans, the current cost of living crisis, and the increasing prevalence of bank fraud and money scams means that individuals face more and more threats to their financial well-being. While formal support mechanisms exist, online community forums have come to serve as an important resource for those dealing with financial precarity.

As a consequence, previous research has already started studying these online forums, focusing on a range of political and social issues. For example, Stanley et al. (2016) draws on qualitative thematic analyses to examine discussions on three online forums, revealing that people are turning to anecdotal information online to understand debt-related issues. In a similar vein, Montgomerie et al. (2015) explore how groups use digital platforms to highlight, educate, inform, and coordinate action related to indebtedness.

Lehti et al. (2020), on the other hand, discuss the discursive patterns of the word *köyhä* (‘poor’) on the Finnish Suomi24 discussion forum, taking a corpus-assisted discourse analysis approach. They note that “the most discussed areas of life in relation to poverty are, first, politics, then money, income and spending, and finally unequal access to goods” (Lehti et al., 2020, p. 36). While some attempts have thus been made at studying the discourse of debt in digital media, there is more to be explored. To gain further understanding of the discursive nature of online forums on the topic of debt, in this paper we study the linguistic dimensions of how specific themes emerge in these forums and show to what extent language is used to build and maintain a sense of community.

We carry out a corpus linguistic analysis of forum data from moneysavingexpert.com, one of the world’s largest online money and debt advice services. The site, which has been in operation since 2003, offers community members help, guidance, and support on a range of money and debt-related topics, including credit card debt, payday loans, bankruptcy, savings, and budgeting. The corpus linguistic approach provides computer-assisted methods for studying large digital collections of text. A previous study using this approach to explore the financial domain is Kehoe and Gee (2009) which analysed changes in the use of the phrases credit crunch and credit squeeze in UK newspapers from 1984-2008. Through a contextual analysis, this study concluded that the word credit has changed in meaning since the 1980s and is now associated primarily with “debt worthiness”, as reflected in its increasingly strong association with words such as reference, ratings, histories and limit.

In particular, our analysis is based on a corpus of posts published in the “debt-free wannabe” and “mortgage-free wannabe” forums between 2005 and 2019, comprising 207 threads and 40 million words of text, and investigates language use in the threads with the most posts. Through measures of word frequency and word association, we draw out the main topics of interest to the community, such as debt management and overpayments.

In addition, we note that considerable attention is paid to the concept of time, which stands out as a key theme of the forums, as several of the most frequent words are expressions of time, such as now, today, month, still or last. These words also co-occur with each other in the two forums and function as frequently used clusters, such as at the end of the month. Community members thus discuss past events in their lives, describe their current situation to others and express concerns about the long duration and wasted time involved in managing their finances.

A comparison of the two forums studied reveals that they differ not only in their topic focus, with one forum discussing debt- and the other one mortgage-related issues, as reflected in their top keywords, but also in their linguistic orientation. The debt-free wannabe forum includes several interactive features, such as the cluster I don’t know what (e.g. to do), which has the illocutionary force of an indirect request and is used in particular when asking other forum members for help, as well as the clusters don’t be afraid to ask and thing to be aware of, which show that users offer help and give each other advice.

In the mortgage-free wannabe forum, users are mainly concerned with goal setting and building a community. This is reflected in clusters with a future reference such as it’s going to be and I’ll be able to, as well as in constructions that express empathy and encouragement such as sorry to hear about the and keep up the good work. A corpus-pragmatic analysis reveals a community of mutual support where members use friendly greetings when posting (e.g. “hi lovely NSD [no spend day] gang”), thank each other for helping, congratulate each other and express commiseration to others’ stories of woe. Our findings thus contribute new insights into the vital role online forums play in supporting vulnerable debtors.

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Effect of Multi-Modal Inputs in Business English Learning: Exploring the Boundary Condition of the Redundancy Principle

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In recent years, there have been several learning systems that use multimedia. With the development and growing popularity of MOOCs, TEDx, as well as YouTube, programs can now be watched with the display of subtitles in various languages. Subtitles are also available in video conference systems such as Zoom. It is tempting to use subtitles to enhance multi-media learning. However, the redundancy principle suggests that redundant inputs such as written text and simultaneous spoken narration interfere with learning; however, learning in a foreign language is one area where the redundancy principle may be reversed (Schnotz, 2022; Fiorella & Mayer, 2022; Aryres & Sweller, 2022). Considering the increased accessibility of multi-modal inputs, it is important to investigate the boundary conditions of the redundancy principle.

Schnotz (2022) suggests that the Integrative Model of Text and Picture Comprehension (ITPC) model predicts that individuals do not learn well when pictures are accompanied by written texts and spoken words simultaneously; they learn better when the picture is accompanied with either written text OR with spoken words, but not both together. This is because of the following reasons: 1) visual attention is split between the picture and written text and 2) there is interference between external listening and reading (Schnotz, 2022). Various studies, such as Fiorella and Mayer (2022) and Ayres and Sweller (2022), suggest that there are various studies that have supported the position that verbal redundancy across modalities (written and spoken) result in poor performance (i.e., redundancy effect).

Fiorella and Mayer (2022) have also outlined the conditions in which the redundancy effect is reversed; when students have greater resources such as prior knowledge, time, or ability to take notes, or when students learn English as a second language, fully redundant text can support learning (Fiorella & Mayer, 2022). While exploring the learning of English as a second or foreign language, Lee and Mayer (2018), as cited by Fiorella and Mayer (2022), found redundant English subtitles to lead to a significantly greater comprehension of a video lesson of Antarctica than that without subtitles. Kalyuga and Sweller (2022) also suggest that the redundancy effect may not always be applicable to the students learning in a second or foreign language (Lee & Mayer, 2015; Ali, Segaran, & Hoe, 2015; as cited by Kalyuga & Sweller, 2022), and that the levels of expertise are critical, i.e., visual inputs may be more important for learners with less expertise.

Pattemore and Muñoz (2020) have also concluded, through a series of experiments, that AVC inputs benefit EFL learners in improving their English proficiency. The results obtained therein support the arguments of Fiorella and Mayer (2022) mentioned above; the EFL learners at certain levels improve their grammatical proficiency more with AVC information than with non-captioned information.

This study, therefore, investigates the effects of multi-modal inputs on learning business English communication as a foreign language. In the experiment, three types of business communication video content are presented under three conditions: audio information only (auditory condition, A), visual information only (auditory-visual without captions condition, AV), and audio information and visual information (auditory-visual with caption conditions, AVC). Further, a pre-test and post-test (comprehension test and subjective evaluation) should be conducted. Hypothetically, it is expected that the comprehension test scores are high in the order of AVC, AV, and A. It is also expected that the AVC condition is the most favored condition. The theoretical and practical implications for business communication education should be discussed.

Hypothesis: Intermediate second language learners will be able to learn the most under the AVC condition, followed by the AV condition and A condition.

The audio teaching material used in this study is adapted from a business communication textbook published in English, meeting the speed of 160 words per minute, the recommended speech speed standard in the field of education (Williams, 1998, cited by Nagahama & Morita, 2016). Most of the vocabulary is at the CEFR B2 to C1 level.

In the experiment, the presentation times of the three videos is cut to 270 seconds right from the beginning (video teaching material 1, video teaching material 2, and video teaching material 3). The comprehension tests corresponding to the three videos are created as dependent variables in this study. Each comprehension test consists of 6 questions (4 true-or-false questions and 2 multiple choice questions). The existing items from the previous studies were adopted as the additional dependent variables of this study, and 5-point Likert-type scales were used for all the items, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Subjective evaluation of the learning conditions is measured using 10 items provided by Nagahama and Morita (2016): 2 items for understanding, 2 for ease of learning, 2 for concentration, 2 for difficulty, and 2 for interests and preferences.

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Privacy in Business Education: Big Data and Big Exposure

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The ever-growing commodification of data has created tension between what consumers wish to keep secret and what companies want to use to analyze. We are, in essence, becoming the data that companies use to analyze purchasing trends, understand consumer demand, and segregate to better attempt to predict the moves we make before we actually make them. Beyond this, the very nature of what employees see as invasive practices of employers has broadened in the age of the Covid-19 pandemic (Chory et al, 2016). To be a private individual is to be cut off from the various allowances of a modern society where almost every aspect of life is tracked as social media, geolocation from phones, credit card purchases, and more are tracked daily. Business education is not immune from the pitfalls of privacy as, often, the focus is on how to capture knowledge of clients and consumers in order to better track and align values with them

Even the most ubiquitous networking site, LinkedIn, is no stranger to the problems of privacy even as business colleges across the world ask students to create profiles. Yet, we rarely ask students to consider the business models of LinkedIn and other technology websites. What do these companies do with the information provided? How do these companies engage in the process of tracking and selling information to third parties? How does this make us complicit in the globalized marketing of data? Often, these considerations are rarely noticed by both pedagogues and users, especially students.

The advantages of platforms and technologies such as LinkedIn have been documented in academic literature (Boulanger, 2018) and covered extensively by journalists; however, few discussions have taken place about their efficacy and intrusive practices in the business writing classroom. When we have discussed platforms in *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, the general consensus has been positive (Knight, 2019; Raparta & Cantoni, 2017), critical on the issue of gender (Moore, 2019), focusing on internal surveillance within companies (Jennings et al., 2014), or concerning their use as pedagogical practice (Doan, 2021; Towner et al., 2016).

As we continue to push for more technology in our classroom and search for tools that will advance our students' careers, it is important that we also look at how the data they provide is used by companies. Business writing instructors must ask critical questions about whether we are allowing students to sacrifice their information in exchange for exposure (Barth et al., 2019). At a time when so many of us willfully place private data online, it is imperative that we rethink how we ask students to do the same.

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Storytelling in the 21st Century: Data Visualization for Business Communication

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Storytelling with data for business communication professionals is an essential skill in the twenty-first century. Therefore, the fundamental skills of utilizing business intelligence software to craft informative visualizations from complex data to effectively communicate findings to a target audience is key to success in any sized organization today. For example, business intelligence software, such as Tableau, used to visualize and communicate sentiment analysis, is beneficial for managers, marketers, and entrepreneurs.

Here, we will explore the use of Tableau to conduct a sentiment analysis of two marketing campaigns to gain insights into the reception of the social media messaging. Additionally, we will observe the rate of spread of the messaging, the duration of the messaging, and general sentiment over time. For marketers, this information is critical in crafting multi-layered social campaigns and gauging the effectiveness of their communications. The ability to actively track the reception and duration of a business communication informs the marketer when to launch the next phase of a campaign or if the messaging needs to be adjusted for better reception.

With the use of business intelligence software such as Tableau, live dashboards can be published within an organization to communicate to leadership teams information in real-time effectively. In addition, the use of live dashboards that meet the standards of compelling visual communications reduces the need for meetings to review data. This utilization, in turn, enables dynamic managerial decision-making. As a result, in many organizations, skills in business intelligence platforms are becoming required, just as the use of spreadsheet and word processing applications were in the late twentieth century.

Teaching Networked Writing in the Creator Economy With Medium.com

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With the rise of the creator economy, content writing for blogs has emerged as a key business writing skill for both entrepreneurs and corporate strategists (Cunningham & Craig, 2021; Schram, 2020). Blogs have also become an important way for businesses to manage, share, and co-create information with their stakeholders (Tredinnick, 2006). The use of blogs in the writing classroom is nothing new (Lundin, 2009; Tryon, 2006), but the focus is more about moving beyond an unhealthy focus on grammatical errors by conceptualizing a specific audience, not actually interacting with audiences (Boch, 2007; Jones, 2007). Because blogs are a part of our everyday lives, they are a rich resource for writing and content analysis in business writing classes.

Blogs can help students develop a networked view of writing, where content emerges from interaction and phatic communication (McKee & Porter, 2019). Often writers feel like they are blogging into a dark void. Just because something is online, doesn't mean anyone reads it. When published publicly, there is no guarantee of a real audience. This presentation will explore how Medium.com, a long-form social network, can help students conceptualize more specific, public audiences by entering into dialogue with other writers on the site.

Medium.com is a free, open platform for writers and publishers to publish content and interact with readers. Medium.com allows users to post their own writing and publish content on the site without editor intervention. Though readers can read some articles for free, Medium's \$5 a month pay wall supports writers by paying anyone taking part a share of that fee for the amount time readers spend on their posts. Using Medium is not going to make anyone in the classroom money, but the algorithms that drive Medium guarantee that most posts will get some readers. Students can learn to leverage this technology to develop their own following for long form content.

The presenter will begin by reviewing ways blogging has been used in the creator economy and business world. Attendees will learn how Medium.com is different from other blogging sites. Specifically, Medium.com is developed to be a social networking site that connects writers with readers — often described as the Twitter of blogging. The presenter will go over recent changes in the platform that encourage networking and connection. Secondly, the presenter will provide examples of diverse voices on Medium.com and how they help students understand the importance of audience when developing composition skills, like citing sources, organization, concise language, formatting, and narrative. This will include a resource that teachers can use to introduce their own students to Medium.com. The presenter will end by sharing a Medium collection used to distribute the best student writing from classes. Later in the presentation, presenter will share an analysis of a student's writing on Medium.com, and how the student used it to develop his or her business writing skills. By sharing their work on Medium.com, the students demonstrated a networked view of writing, where content emerges from interaction and phatic communication.

The rise of spaces like Medium.com shows the re-emergence of writing in content creation online. Many content creators and entrepreneurs now supplement content like YouTube or podcasts with long-form writing, either in emails or spaces like Medium.com. Using Medium.com in the classroom helps students understand the networked nature of writing. Attendees will walk away with a deeper understanding of how blogs function in today's mediascape, as well as some useful resources they can use to leverage Medium.com in their own classrooms.

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Visual Communication

Creating Effective Slide Decks

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Undergraduate business students, MBAs, and practicing professionals commonly rely on PowerPoint and/or Excel to create visuals to complement business presentations. When done well, graphical aid(s) can increase retention and persuasiveness; however, most users of PowerPoint and Excel fall into two common PPT traps: 1) an over-reliance on bulleted lists (Garner et al, 2009) and 2) a reliance on many of the standard design defaults in PPT and Excel.

This two-hour workshop “Creating Effective Slide Decks” will take an applied approach and provide participants with practical skills to increase the effectiveness of PowerPoint to complement business briefings. First, the workshop will review guidance for seeking alternatives to bulleted word lists. This section of the workshop will distill the work of Zelazny (2001), Tufte (2001), Knafllic (2015), and Duarte (2010) to provide attendees with theoretical and practical reasons to seek alternatives to word lists. Collectively these authors provide solid and consistent guidance for the effective selection of the most appropriate graphic for both quantitative and qualitative forms of proof. Second, the workshop will explore many of the standard defaults in both Excel and PowerPoint and reveal simple alternative settings that will increase legibility and overall effectiveness. Finally, the workshop will provide attendees with a four-point strategy to ensure effective slide design and delivery.

In addition to instruction, the workshop will involve hands on activities designed to put into practice the knowledge and skills discussed in this workshop. By the end of the workshop, participants will have a better understanding of the graphical representation of information, the role of slides in business presentations, and an improved ability to design effective PPT slides. Attendees should bring a laptop to fully participate in this interactive workshop.

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Visual Communication

Effective Methods for Teaching Visual Rhetoric and Design

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What comes to mind when you think about assembling a piece of IKEA furniture? Even if you have never assembled IKEA furniture yourself, you have likely heard about the visual instructions included in the packaging. IKEA’s visual instructions are created by a team of “informative communicators,” employees trained in design and illustration⁴. These informative communicators work under IKEA’s guiding principles for the instruction booklets: clarity and continuity¹. While business communication instructors may not be experts in design and illustration, our guiding principles closely map on to those of IKEA’s informative communicators—we aim to teach our students how to reach their audience via a range of tools, with visual components being critical to effective communication.

According to the Purdue Online Writing Lab, visual rhetoric “has been used to mean anything from the use of images as argument, to the arrangement of elements on a page for rhetorical effect, to the use of typography (fonts), and more”². Adapting the format of information to align with a given situation is key to ensuring messages are clearly received. We determine format based on a range of indicators, including delivery modality (synchronous or asynchronous), presentation accessibility (recorded or unrecorded; digital/printed documents available for reference), and audience familiarity with the topic (experts or novices). Key indicators dictate major and minor design components, for example, use of a slide deck vs. a slidedoc or detailed graphs vs. infographics.

While most people are familiar with slide decks and traditional documents, the term slidedoc was coined by Nancy Duarte, Founder and CEO of Duarte, Inc., and global leader behind some of the most influential visual messages in business and culture. Duarte chose to use slidedoc in response to the negative connotation associated with Garr Reynolds’ term, slideument. In contrast to the slideument, which is a slide deck packed full of text yet used as a slide deck for presentations, the slidedoc is used to supplement or take the place of a presentation, and is read independently of an oral presentation.

A wide range of visual design practices are used in the workplace, with varying effectiveness. In an analysis of publicly traded companies listed on the Russell 3000 Index, 2021 ABC presenters Andrew Quagliata and Vikki Vaswani wondered how and if modern business practice reflects what business communication faculty teach about slide deck design³. To their point, faculty work to equip students with the skills and techniques necessary for success in the workplace, but often workplace practices are established more from traditional convention

rather than intentional analysis of how to best reach an audience. As they reviewed decks, they found the businesses in their analysis varied widely in both form and function of decks used on earnings calls with corporate investors.

Our students should be prepared to meet the challenges they will face in the workplace. To help them prepare for this task, they need to understand the rationale for using specific design elements to effectively communicate with their audience. In other words, we need to teach our students to begin with the document or presentation purpose, helping them analyze the situation in order to determine which design tools are the best fit for the task. Once purpose is determined, students should be aware of and skilled with available resources in visual design. Helping students to master current tools is only the beginning; they need to be equipped to determine the effectiveness of existing resources, understanding how to find or develop new ones to meet ever evolving communication challenges.

This interactive two-hour workshop is designed to illuminate a path to teaching visual rhetoric and design by offering attendees a conceptual framework along with practical application. The presenters will discuss best practices in both document and slide deck design, with an emphasis on addressing common misconceptions. We will walk participants through a business scenario from start to finish, illustrating how to take raw material and transform it into stand-alone documents such as a report or slidedoc, as well as creating a slide deck for use in a boardroom-style presentation.

Attendees will explore web-based programs to assist with effective visual communication and enhance teaching approaches through assignment revisions and lesson plan updates. Therefore, participants should be ready to join in the discussion and contribute their own example materials from their courses.

Participants will leave with practical ideas and tools for enhancing their teaching of visual design and rhetoric in the classroom, along with increased clarity of core best practices that span the diverse form and function of visual communication. We will touch on specific tools such as Venngage, Slidego, Canva, and Visme, giving participants the opportunity to test out these tools and discuss their own experiences with them.

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