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PREFACE

Welcome to the 2023 88th Annual Association for Business Communication International Conference Proceedings. I am this year's editor, Veronica Rice McCray. While the Proceedings may look familiar, the process of putting this document together underwent a bit of a change. As the new editor of the Proceedings, I reached out to Proceedings Editorial Review Board for those interested in helping with the final edits of the document, and I happily received several replies. Without the assistance of many volunteers, the process of editing the Proceedings would have been much more arduous, and the final document would not have been nearly as well prepared. So, this year, I'd like to take this space to express my gratitude for everyone who put their time and efforts into making this year's Proceedings happen.

In addition to the Proceedings Editorial Review Board members listed on the preceding page, I'm especially grateful for the added assistance of general editing of submissions and citations from Raihan Jamil, Frances Griffin, Debra Burleson, Chris Brown, Olga Yashenkova, Lisa Gueldenzoph Snyder, and Sarah Nielsen. I'd like to also acknowledge the extreme gratitude I have for Lisa's help formatting this document and for Chris' added assistance with general editing. I am beyond grateful for their added time and dedication to the Proceedings.

I'd also like to thank two more people without whom I simply would not have been able to accomplish the task of publishing this year's Proceedings: Leigh Ann Whittle, former Proceedings Editor, and Marilyn Buerkens, Office Manager, Association for Business Communication. Leigh Ann helped prepare me to take over this role, sharing her knowledge of the Proceedings editing and publishing process and answering my never-ending questions. Marilyn, who is an encyclopedia of all things ABC related, supported my takeover of the editor role and graciously continues to contend with my on-going questions, providing unending assistance navigating the operations system that keeps ABC functioning in the background. Thank you, both.

Thank you to all who waited patiently for the 2023 Proceedings. We are looking forward to your Proceedings submissions for the 89th Annual International Conference.

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A Case Project Reimagined – A Global and Social Impact Approach to Project-Based Learning

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Program Abstract

This session will outline how Indiana University's Kelley School of Business reimagined team project-based learning to include a social impact and diversity, equity, and inclusion lens by partnering with an international non-profit business, Global Mamas. It will explore how the project integrated several campus resources and cultivated students' skills in teamwork, communication, and research to solve real-world problems for the client.

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to share a successful case project model that includes a social impact and diversity, equity, and inclusion lens. The case model will be shared, along with challenges and opportunities involved with such a project. The presenter will explore the impact of the project on students, faculty, and the case client, Global Mamas. This session reviews the work that the presenter and their home institution were recognized for a co-recipient of the 2022 ABC Award for Distinction in the Practice of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Goals

Participants of this session will:

1. Learn about the ways in which participants can implement similar case models in their curriculum.
2. Identify potential challenges and benefits involved with an international client and virtual case project.
3. Examine opportunities within their own campus to utilize resources in existence to enhance project-based learning.

Extended Abstract

American universities for a long time have sought international experiences that allow their students to build cultural competence and develop into global leaders (Stebleton, Soria & Cherney, 2013). Conventional approaches like study abroad were challenged by the pandemic, forcing academic programs to pursue international connections in new ways. This session reviews how Indiana University (IU) Kelley School of Business faculty for the Business Presentations course have made such connections by building a reimagined virtual model for their traditional team-based case project. By utilizing campus resources and building a relationship with a Ghanaian nonprofit organization, Global Mamas, faculty were able to expand the project goals to include lessons of social impact and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Business Presentations at IU is taken by on average 3,500 students annually, mostly freshmen. This offers the opportunity to develop civic-minded students in a time where they are constructing their beliefs, identities, and social relationships (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Baxter Magolda & King, 2012). IU's Kelley School of Business, the Kelley Institute for Social Impact (KISI), was key to making a connection with an organization that encouraged this growth. KISI partners with nonprofits and corporations to offer programs and internships that encourage students to think broadly about the impact of their work on the local community and the world. Collaborating with KISI for the case connected Business Presentations with a long-standing partner, Global Mamas. Global Mamas is a Ghanaian nonprofit organization whose mission is to "create prosperity for African women and their families" by creating and selling handmade products of the highest quality.

In the case project, student teams work together to develop solutions for authentic real-world problems, cultivating skills in research and application. To ensure that students are well prepared and have the correct resources for such research, the university Business Library was instrumental. Each semester the case team and Global Mamas develop unique prompts that both meet the learning objectives of the class and fulfill needs of their business. Understanding the knowledge and skillset of mostly freshmen students, case prompts have ranged from proposing sustainable packaging for products to capturing the attention of Generation Z. The Business Library is involved in creating project guides that point students in the right direction for where to begin with databases and considerations to make when developing a strategy.

In addition to uncovering business-related research, faculty challenge students to explore topics relevant to the non-profit organization and their mission. In some classes, students deliver informational presentations on topics such as: gender inequality, a cross-cultural comparison of Ghana and the US, and fair-trade practices. As they narrow in on their case solutions, interest is piqued, and students have questions for the client. Utilizing technology resources, a live Q&A session with the client offers students the chance to put faces to the company and better understand their needs. Post-Q&A class discussions and reflections encourage students to analyze what they heard and conduct audience analysis to tailor their solutions specifically to Global Mamas. These scaffolded information-gathering assignments allow for rich discussions in the classroom and develop motivation to put forth strong strategies for Global Mamas.

Project-based learning leads to improved creative-thinking, communication, and collaboration skills and has a more positive impact on students' academic achievement than direct instruction (Guo, P., et al., 2020). The reimagined project has had a profound effect on students. According to a few students, "I learned a great deal through this project. I learned that small businesses must be nimble and always be thinking of new ideas to grow. I learned that businesses are not only driven to be profitable but also to create positive social change," and "I learned that we can make an impact on the world."

The benefits have not been limited to the students. Each semester, Global Mamas receives tailored "quick pitch" videos summarizing solutions for problems or opportunities they are encountering. They select four to five teams to have Zoom consultation meetings with to learn more and get step-by-step implementation instructions. Several entrepreneurial ideas have been executed into the Global Mamas business. For example, a student team helped the organization switch to environmentally sustainable packaging for their skincare line. The students proposed coconut packaging and even paired Global Mamas with another company in Ghana to partner with for the coconuts. This is now how Global Mamas packages their skincare.

In this session, participants will be given clear steps in developing such a project at their own institutions. In addition, the presenter will outline lessons learned from the process including challenges to avoid and opportunities for growth. The presenter will also share perspectives from Global Mamas executives, current students, and faculty.

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A Study of the Websites of Popular European Businesses Analyzing Diversity and Inclusion Notes in European Business Communication – Linguistic and Didactic Implications

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Abstract

Established companies are fully aware of their position in the market, their role in society, and what attributes to succeed as a business. However, in the current market, success has become, more often than not, a challenge. As diversity becomes one of the major aspects of company culture and communication, the question arises as to how it is employed further. Of late, there has been a sharp increase in images of different ethnicity, racial and gender identities, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status groups in the advertising of a multitude of companies in Europe and throughout the world. Is this to attract customers from different markets? Or is this to present the company as inclusive and diverse? This study (preliminary research) will investigate the genre of diversity notes on the websites of European companies using a random selection of examples from *Eire*, *the UK*, *Germany*, *France* and *Spain*. Taking these advertisements as texts, this study will focus on the visual, linguistic and multimodal elements used by the companies to identify them as diverse and inclusive. The researchers will analyze advertisements, social media posts and videos and overall determine how diverse and inclusive these companies are in their advertising. As previous studies have pointed out, communicating diversity is used as a tool, but it also can present a challenge once the company culture does refrain from executing it fully. For companies, diversity notes need to reflect a vivid company culture to avoid double standards, and it is presented in this paper that diversity and inclusion are integral tools in business communication. Customers want to be represented and included, and doing so leads to the credibility and sustainability of the company. This paper will also address a didactic dimension. Hence, awareness among students of business communication needs to be increased to avoid different types of "washing." An analysis of such advertisements would prepare students for their studies to create these texts themselves in their future work. AI such as *ChatGPT* would make it easy for students to generate such advertisements with the simple click of a mouse, and *ChatGPT* has now positioned itself as a central solution to the difficult genre of business advertising. However, such AI-aided advertisements may lose the natural flow of business communication and poses the question of whether students actually learn anything from not manually writing their own advertisement.

Keywords: diversity, company communication, company culture, business genres, AI—aided text production

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Achieving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Professional Communication Faculty Hiring

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the best practices for creating a diverse applicant pool when hiring scientific/technical communication faculty.

Introduction

Having a diversity plan is one of the most important actions we can take to ensure that diversity and inclusion are integral to the way a program functions, both internally and externally. An inclusive environment is one in which different perspectives are encouraged and valued; it is one in which people recognize that others think differently and have different styles of working and communicating and see that as beneficial to an academic institution.

Texas A&M University System's Commitment to Diversity

System-wide, part of Texas A&M's mission is to welcome and seek to serve persons of all racial, ethnic, and geographic groups as it addresses the needs of an increasingly diverse population and global economy (Texas A&M University System, n.d.).

Justification for Texas A&M University-Kingsville's Diversity Plan

A Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) is defined as an institution of higher education that has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students. With over two-thirds of its undergraduate student population being Hispanic, Texas A&M University-Kingsville far surpasses this benchmark classifying it as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, yet a diversified workforce is not fully realized in the race/ethnicity of TAMUK faculty.

Ways to Promote Programmatic Diversity

Some of the ways that Texas A&M University-Kingsville has tried to rectify this through its hiring practices:

- Inclusive job descriptions – A program should emphasize diversity by defining and documenting its current culture, institutional values, and long-term mission.

Anti-Truancy and Accommodation: Rethinking Attendance Policies in the Era of Infection

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Conference Program Abstract

Instructors who teach in a workshop model require student attendance, but strict absence policies and the tradition of "sick notes" from doctors violate the best practices of anti-ableism, COVID-19 care, and universities' Health Services. I will showcase how using ubiquitous classroom recording technology helps instructors step away from the "sick note" and from the role of truant officer.

Extended Abstract

The realities of COVID-19 and an increased student and faculty awareness of infectious disease necessitate reevaluating classroom attendance policies and a recognition of contradictory policies and values. Like many colleges and universities, the University of Massachusetts's Isenberg School of Management (my home institution) structures its business communication classes in a workshop format, with "interactive, activity-based [class meetings] that focus on the process of writing rather than lectures" (Business Communication Program, 2020), a model that necessarily requires student attendance. The University's Academic Regulations affirm the instructor's right to require attendance, stating explicitly, "Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes at the University for which they are registered. In cases of illness, students are to explain their absences directly to their instructors" (Serio, 2022, p. 33), a process traditionally facilitated by a doctor's note. However, University Health Services (UHS) policies conflict with this tradition, as UHS calls for students with "symptoms of acute illness" to refrain from class attendance and calls for instructors not to send students to "any medical care facility merely for the purpose of obtaining a verification note" (University of Massachusetts Health Services, n.d.). COVID-19's most common symptoms—including cough, fatigue, and headache—fall under the *acute* category, meaning they tend to warrant rest instead of visits to doctors or hospitals (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). The inability to verify COVID symptoms may cause instructors to worry about student dishonesty, but a strict doctors-note-for-all policy violates UHS standards and incentivizes attendance for symptomatic—and potentially infectious—students.

The University of Massachusetts's Health Services is not unique in its aversion to offering verification notes. The American College Health Association (ACHA)—the leading professional organization of college health centers—encourages its member institutions not to act as symptom-verifiers. In a landmark article in the Association's professional journal, Carson-Rikert and Christmas (2009) argue that it is legally and medically problematic for instructors to ask for sick notes. Among their assertions:

- Acute symptoms—like fatigue and cough—do not require hospitalization or medical care.

- Doctors and nurses rely on patient testimony, so “excuse notes” do not act as a check on dishonest students. Rather, they risk insulting honest students and “[inject] dishonesty into a healthcare system that relies on relationships of trust” (p. 562).

- Requiring a student to share part of their medical record with an instructor violates the spirit of Federal Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

ACHA encourages instructors not to ask for “sick notes,” and a five-year study by Duke University revealed that asking students to *self*-report symptoms that kept them from the classroom did not result in a marked increase of students’ absences—or the feared abuse of such a policy (Corson-Rikert & Christmas, 2009, p. 563).

Inspired by this research about medical absences, I began teaching with a revised absence policy, recognizing that even diligent students may need occasional “one-off” absences, not only for illnesses but also religious observances or personal emergencies. Instead of adjudicating the distinction between “excused” or “unexcused” absences, I use in-room audio-visual recording technology (Echo360) and require absent students to complete the following steps:

1. Watch the Echo360 recording of the class period.
2. Write a 300–400-word summary of topics covered in the class and complete any activities they missed.
3. Email this summary before the next regularly scheduled class.

Completing this process will result in the student being retroactively marked *present* on the day in question.

This new policy has resulted in markedly less stress among me and my students, as students do not feel pressure to share their medical history, and the 300-400-word required summary pushes absent students to watch closely with an eye toward capturing details. The policy uses existing classroom technology to accommodate rather than punish students, to remove from the instructor’s purview the responsibility of monitoring truancy, and to model and acknowledge the professional reality that even trustworthy people either fall ill or cannot be in two places at once. Using Echo360 to accommodate COVID-19 and other medical issues affirms the student’s Code of Conduct requirement for “honest[y]... in all of their interactions with the faculty” (*Code of Student Conduct*, 2019) and is consistent with a Registrar requirement that students with excused absences—students with legitimate and medical absences—“still [must] meet all course requirements” and have “reasonable assistance” in doing so (University Registrar, n.d.). This system of accommodation makes the classroom more welcoming to ill or disabled students and does not incentivize students coming to class with symptoms that inhibit their own learning ability or endanger their classmates or instructor.

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Beyond Happy Hour: Building Bridges and a Community of Collegiality and Care

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While the definition of collegiality as it relates to promotion and tenure processes is debatable (Hatfield, 2006), the general importance of building environments where individuals working together can cooperate and share power is undeniable (Freedman, 2009). As a base for this panel, we follow the American Association of University Professors (2016) definition of collegiality as "collaborative and constructive cooperation." We suggest collegiality is intricately related to workplace experiences of engagement, inclusion, and belonging and involves feeling valued, accepted, and needed while positively contributing to feelings of value, acceptance, and necessity (Puranitee et al., 2022).

As universities emerge from--or further--the hybrid work environment induced by the COVID-19 global pandemic, "we need to figure out how to create a sense of belonging and community within organizations where the fear, anger, and depression are being replaced by choice, flexibility, and freedom" (Chamorro-Premuzic and Berg, 2021, August 3). Building a community of collegiality and care is a principal component of such efforts, as is intentionality and an eye to include individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and preferences. For example, African American faculty members who choose predominately white institutions may feel isolated from others who share their racial or ethnic backgrounds or even their research interests (Ross and Edwards, 2016). As university leaders build shared experiences, they must respect individual freedom and choice and create opportunities to build community.

In our unit, we deploy a model of collegial engagement that emphasizes group events and care responses while energizing individuals to plan activities that best reflect their interests and values. In this way, we learn about each other's unique attributes while also growing as a team. To build our community, we established two standing committees: One focused on community engagement and the other focused on establishing a community of care. Each member of our unit plans a monthly event that facilitates department participation, conversation, and relaxation. We've cheered on our top-ranked women's soccer team and applauded a colleague's improv performance. Each unique event goes beyond "Happy Hour" and instead focuses on engaging in each other's interests outside of the classroom, supporting colleagues, and connecting with our students.

Employing a model that emphasizes individual interests and needs while building a shared community allows us to achieve the shared benefits of belongingness and community (better workplace experiences, sense of well-being, organizational helping, and informal mentoring) while acknowledging the importance of individual experiences of engagement and integration events (Chamarro-Premuzic and Berg, 2021, August 3; Cross et al., 2021; Farmer et al., 2015; Freedman, 2009; Puranitee et al., 2022).

We also build bridges. As Opie et al (2022) noted, “Each time a pair of individuals connect authentically at work, they put down one layer of a bridge. The more they connect, the stronger the bridge grows. Once a bridge is built, both people can reach out to others to develop more bridges, which then serve as channels for collective action on equity” (p. 84).

Additionally, we understand the importance of caring for the whole employee. The benefits of taking care of employees include outcomes like increased productivity and innovation; high workplace morale; and job satisfaction. To this end, we established a community of care committee that goes beyond showing random acts of kindness and taps into the emotional well-being of each unit member and by proxy extends to members’ families. We celebrate when our colleagues expand their families, and we coordinate space for colleagues who mourn the loss of loved ones. As Dumas et al (2013) explains, “When organizations sponsor social activities for their employees, care should be taken to ensure an atmosphere where employees are likely to feel comfortable and respected and have a good experience” (p. 1394). In focusing on a community of care, we have built strong and trusting relationships with each other, which in turn, has helped to reduce stress and conflict.

Our ABC panel will pair these theories of engagement and collegiality in practice with an interactive activity for panel attendees to identify opportunities to create similar communities. We hope to demonstrate the role that collegiality plays in increased collaboration, belonging, and productivity.

*Reference list available by request but excluded from proposal to meet word limits.

Embracing DEI Practices in Business Communication with a Critical Design Thinking Approach

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To help business communication teachers to truly innovate and embrace the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) practices, this workshop introduces strategies and techniques to create inclusive business communication in a globalized world at a divisive time.

Why were women's voices used as default for digital assistants? Why does it matter to do a land acknowledgement? How can we design inclusive meeting protocols? Using intercultural business communication cases, this hands-on workshop teaches participants to reconsider commonly held design beliefs and routine design practices with a lens of cultural differences. It demonstrates a linear approach of design thinking, which if not grounded in a critical intellectual tradition, may end up affirming the status quo without questioning the structural inequality.

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 manifest as a way of life. However, they are often regarded as a deficit, a threat to harmonious communication, or a design difficulty. Informed by Sun's (2012, 2020) work in cross-cultural, multicultural, and global design, 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 connecting inclusive design principles with DEI practices, a new design approach of discursive affordances (Sun & Hart-Davidson, 2014; Sun, 2020) is introduced to uncover design and innovation opportunities. Stressing affordances as dialogic discursive relations, discursive affordances connect 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. Using the virtual stickers widely used in social messaging apps is an example for discursive affordances. At first, they were introduced by East Asian designers to help local users convey subtle and sophisticated feelings in text-based communication. Later users developed a new communication pattern of having the entire conversation using virtual stickers only, and companies like LINE (Japan) and KakaoTalk (Korea) turned virtual sticker characters into offline celebrity brands and opened theme-based café and friends stores in metropolitan cities globally, nurturing new practices of cultural consumption. Nowadays, virtual stickers have become a standard feature for all the social messaging platforms. In associating macro institutions with micro interactions to redress asymmetrical relations in everyday life, this case shows that a discursive affordances approach turns differences into design resources for "togetherness-in-difference" (Mao, 2006) and co-creates culturally sustaining value propositions to empower local users and lead the global competition.

“Design is one of the fundamental ways of power distribution and redistribution” (Sun, 2020, p. 33). After real design cases are analyzed, timely design scenarios are provided to participants to explore innovative solutions with the discursive affordances approach in small groups. Past workshop design exercises include solving the Zoom meeting fatigue and drafting productive and equitable meeting protocols.

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

Objectives

a. Understand cultural differences as dynamic and relational concerning race, gender, and disability in a globalized world
b. Identify dimensions of discursive affordances of digital and mobile designs
c. Apply the discursive affordances approach to evaluate designs
d. Develop a critical view of design thinking for DEI innovations

Agenda (3 hours)

- Workshop intro with design icebreaker activity (10 min)
- What is inclusive 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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Restructuring Rubrics for Inclusivity and Access

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Purpose

Instructors communicate with their students in various ways. One of the primary modes of communication between instructors and students is the use of rubrics. The rubric language is often overlooked as a mode of increasing equity and inclusion for students in the course. Since some rubric language may be less comprehensible to students than it is to instructors, rubrics do not always communicate the requests of the instructor clearly to all students. Those students who have had more instructional time and/or more personal interactions with faculty may have greater understanding of how rubrics are structured, what they mean, and how they are likely to be applied to an assignment. On the other hand, students with less of these experiences may find themselves at a disadvantage when it comes to understanding what their instructors are asking them, as these students have had less engagement with these types of documents and their application to student work. Furthermore, some instructors use short-hand or underdeveloped language in their rubrics that don't tell students explicitly what in their assignments will be measured and how these measurements will occur. Also, many instructors write rubrics using educator language (eduspeak) that is often only clear to faculty or students who have had a lot of interactions with faculty. Thus, the assignments and sometimes the course itself is developed in a way in which only the instructor understands.

These issues can be repaired by understanding rubrics as communication documents. With some targeted, clear language use, instructors can increase the efficacy of the rubric and improve their communication with students via strong rubric language and application. The purpose of this panel is to provide information about the key elements to review and revise on grading rubrics to increase usability and communication with students, which in turn will increase inclusivity and equity, specifically for students who have had fewer enrichment opportunities with faculty members and learning eduspeak.

Goals: The primary goal of this session is to develop awareness of how rubrics can be composed and utilized as a communication document. As such, rubrics should be written at a comprehension level accessible to students. Furthermore, attendees will leave the session with practical ways to improve their rubrics and/or develop and use rubrics that appropriately communicate course and/or assignment requirements with students from all backgrounds.

Methodology

The panel will begin with the presentation of current research on rubrics, including pros and cons and various applications. A definition of a rubric as a communication document will be articulated. Next, presenters will identify several issues that act as barriers to communication in rubrics: item descriptions, specific language, points versus holistic grading, and skills differentiation. Each of these issues are often overlooked by instructors for various reasons, which will also be addressed, as self-reflection and interrogation of personal biases is a requirement for engaging in DEI work.

The panelists will provide sample rubrics that have been re-developed in order to facilitate equity and inclusion with students. The pre/post rubrics will be reviewed and how they facilitate communication with students will be discussed.

Panelists will provide guidance for audience members' rubrics in the form of practical steps attendees can use to review and revise their own rubrics to improve functionality. Attendees are encouraged to bring a copy of their own rubrics to make notes and ask questions about improvements.

A question-and-answer period will take place at the end of the session.

Outcomes

Attendees will understand why rubrics are important communication documents. Attendees will utilize practical steps to review their own rubrics. Attendees will utilize practical steps to develop rubrics if they do not currently have one. Attendees will be able to articulate changes they can make to their rubrics to develop stronger learning outcomes for students.

Social Justice, Environmental Communication, and an Organization: A Case Study of One Woman's Role and Voice

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Introduction

A recent conflict between the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and a rural, local community illustrates the potential for diverse voices to be heard when negotiating access to a recreational lake area ("Grey Cliffs") that had suffered environmental damage. However, while this conflict resulted in a positive outcome overall for this community and the Corps, one prominent voice in the negotiation process was rejected by community participants: that of the grassroots organizer. Originally, the main community representative who began early discussions with the Corps about what to do about this conflict, "Norma," was key to organizing community town hall meetings with the Corps, governmental officials at both the state and local levels, and community stakeholders. During these meetings, she shared information and demonstrated experience gained through her work and research in grant writing and coordinating grassroots efforts. However, not long after she began these organizing efforts, the community rejected Norma as its representative and leader, preferring to rally behind more "established" male community leaders who communicated more expertise about the lake area.

Methodology, Purpose, and Goals

This presentation focuses on an ethnographic, observational case study, highlighting Norma as she attempted to present her values to the community in hopes that the community would identify with those same values. Her ultimate goals were to preserve Grey Cliffs and maintain access for the community at the same time. The case study, based on fieldwork, collection of documents from town hall meetings, interviews, and interview transcripts, uses a grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Kwortnik & Ross, 2007), interpretive (Heracleous & Barrett, 2001; Kuhn, 2006; Kvale, 1996) approach to study Norma's role as grassroots organizer and mediator between the community and the Corps as a government organization. Not only did sexism appear to be in the background as Norma attempted to negotiate her leadership role with the community, but her process of developing shared values was flawed as well.

The goals of this presentation are to analyze Norma's process of communicating her own values, analyze the community's response to these values, and suggest strategies for value alignment that can increase marginalized communicators' success when sharing information during sensitive conflicts.

To further contextualize this case study theoretically, I draw upon social justice theories (Edwards, 2018; Haas & Frost, 2017; Mangum, 2021; Moore et al., 2021; Sackey, 2018; Walton et al., 2019), including those of environmental sexism (Gaard, 2018; MacGregor, 2021; Taylor, 2014), ethos development (Aristotle, ca. 367-347, 335-323 B.C.E./1990, ca. 350 B.C.E./2012; Baumlin & Meyer, 2018; Campbell et al., 2015; McCormack, 2014; Mackiewicz, 2010), and co-constructed value frames (Entman, 1993;

Eubanks, 2015; Fairhurst, 2011; Smith et al., 2020; Smith & Ierland, 2018; Waller & Iluzada, 2020) in ways that highlight power structures, the changing rhetorical construction of ethos, and negotiated values. This theoretical framework emphasizes how Norma's attempts to negotiate an ethos with this community were impacted in part by her lack of character appeals, such as those based on affinity and sincerity, as she presented her own organizational narrative, which was grounded in grassroots efforts and knowledge. The grounded theory analysis also identifies community responses to Norma, resulting from her reliance on credibility alone: resistance based on her overly controlling information, lack of personal connection with the community, and untrustworthiness. With a damaged ethos, due to the rumors and reputations the community assigned her and her tangential positionality with the community, Norma's knowledge of organizational strategies became less relevant in the community's eyes. In addition, her lack of emotional awareness and need to establish trust distanced Norma even more from a community that expressed such strong feelings and values about the area. The community actively constrained Norma's marginalized agency as time went on, severely limiting her power to act.

Outcomes

Analyzing these challenges through this case study indicates what can happen when a rhetor fails to address crucial character appeals and highlights the necessity of incorporating and negotiating these missing ethos appeals as well as trust building, especially when attempting to address and work with a hostile audience. These ethos appeals and trust building relate to negotiating with community members using an aligned values perspective as well. Attendees will gain a greater awareness of the complex values negotiation process during conflicts; navigating this process more successfully can result in the potential for more marginalized voices' being heard, whether that marginalization is due to race, gender, or other non-dominant identities.

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Weaving Narratives: Three Approaches to Storytelling for Inclusive Leadership

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Storytelling is a powerful tool for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the classroom, workplace, and beyond. In this interactive workshop, we'll explore three different approaches to using storytelling to promote these values: a story checklist, a storylab, and a story exchange. Faculty and consultants can implement these (each with varying degrees of involvement, preparation, and vulnerability).

The first approach, the story checklist, is designed to get everyone thinking about the diversity present in the room and to challenge traditional "check the box thinking" that often defines DEI programs in the world of work and within higher education. Participants will engage in discussion of how to break outside of the box and what to "do" with the boxes (or identities) present in any given space. Participants will then engage in the collaborative activity.

The second approach, the storylab, is a more in-depth exercise where participants prepare mini vignettes and share them live in a session (akin to an interview). This activity allows participants to explore different perspectives and experiences, and to practice active listening and empathy-building. It gives participants a chance to identify and share stories that are empowering and demonstrate their commitment to inclusive leadership. Participants will all partake in a "mini" story-lab activity to demonstrate how this might work in the classroom.

The third approach, the story exchange, involves exchanging stories with another participant and then re-telling that story from a first-person angle. This activity allows participants to step into someone else's shoes and gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and perspectives, albeit temporarily. As part of this session, participants will participate in a guided story exchange workshop.

Throughout, the facilitator will also share best practices for facilitation in classroom/consulting settings, tips and tricks, and discussion prompts that tend to work to stimulate further conversation.

Ultimately, through these three approaches, participants will learn how to use storytelling to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in their own teaching, leadership, and personal interactions. This workshop is ideal for educators, leaders, and anyone interested in using storytelling as a tool for positive change.

Who is Enhancing the Tradition of Male Dominance? – Some Insights into Discourses that Shape Female Leaders' Nonverbal and Verbal Communication Styles

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Numerous publications on business leadership emphasize the overrepresentation of men in leadership positions, with the respective underrepresentation of women (Poorhosseinzadeh, & Strachan, 2021; Grant Thornton, 2021; Zippia, 2023). These data are confirmed by statistics:

• In terms of executive roles, 22% of all Chief Operating Officers are women, 36% are Chief Finance Officers, and 21% are Chief Information Officers (Grant Thornton, 2021).

• The number of female managers is rising: Senior management roles grew from 29% to 31% in 2021, with 83% of countries having 30% or more women in management positions (Grant Thornton, 2021).

The numbers also demonstrate 'male dominance' in subtler ways, as a ratio of educational achievement to earnings: "In 2020, women who earned a master's degree had an average salary of $72,568 in the United States, while men who achieved the same level of education earned an average of $117,617. In fact, women who earned doctorate degrees even earn 3% less than men with just a master's degree on average" (Zippia).

Studies seeking to explain the situation postulate the existence of invisible deeply underlying cognitive structures that, on the one hand, dictate women's unwillingness to lead (Born et al., 2018), and, on the other, foster compliance with male leadership stereotypes (Garbini, Mar 2021). Moreover, the underlying mechanisms causing discriminatory practices towards women leaders are thought to "have become naturalized and invisible", revealing the "natural and taken-for-granted" cultural mechanisms, which often have an ideological loading, positioning women leaders and building their identities in ways that can help to legitimize unequal relations between the genders (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2001, p. 225). Some even conclude that "the absence of women in male dominated contexts may be a self-reinforcing process" (Born et al., 2018, Abstract).

This suggests a hypothesis that the factors preventing women from accessing leadership roles are conceptual representations of leadership as a 'male' property, constructing the image of a good/successful leader as possessing the qualities more inherent in men than in women. Contradicting existing cultural perceptions of femininity, this may cause women's unwillingness to lead and prospective employers' unacceptance of a female leader who does not exhibit the 'desired' features or behaviors.

The purpose of this study is to reveal overt or covert masculinity in the discourses that shape the image of a leader. The research question is: What is the balance of masculine and feminine traits in the verbal or behavioral characteristics of a good/successful leader as presented in relevant discourses?

The research explores the discourses that shape the concepts of female leadership in terms of nonverbal and verbal behaviors. Assuming that the concepts (incl. that of leadership) are symbolically represented and constructed in discursive practices (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2001), this study relies on discursive and behavioral paradigm for the analysis of, respectively, verbal and nonverbal representations of characteristics of a leader. Using critical discourse analysis methodology, the author explores the construction of the concept of leadership in human interaction via teaching, self-educating, coaching, discussions, job advertising, and other business communication discourses.

The research is focused on three types of discourses involved in creation of an image of a female leader: teaching/coaching (textbook and training materials), employment (employer expectations in job descriptions and articles), and professional media (business magazines, interviews by leaders etc.). By analyzing gender-relevant keywords and phrases, the researcher aims to reveal instances of normalizing male dominance/marginalizing female engagement in the textbook and coaching materials (without a focus on specific industry), job advertisings and job descriptions placed on recruitment, career search, and company websites, as well as business press, websites and blogs. Considering the variety of cultural perceptions of gender, the primary focus will be on US materials and publications that reflect American cultural perceptions of leadership.
The texts representing relevant discourses are analyzed for the gender-biased nominations to compare the quantitative balance of 'masculine' and 'feminine' words. The masculine and feminine features of nonverbal behavior are studied through structural and functional analysis of the representations of leaders in static images (photographs).

The concepts of interest are the verbal and nonverbal signs associated with gender: on the one side, "patriarchal power structures, particularly careerism and entrepreneurialism" (Poorhosseinzadeh, & Strachan, 2021), e.g., words emphasizing strength, power, achievement, and, on the other side, indicators of femininity, such as cooperativeness, empathy, flexibility (Grebelsky-Lichtman & Katz, 2020). The quantitative balance of gender-related discourse markers is interpreted as the gender bias of the respective discourse.

The research in progress has identified higher numbers of masculinity-related verbal and nonverbal behaviors described as positive/desired characteristics of a leader. Colliding with the views of femininity and women's social roles, these masculine characteristics result in a cognitive dissonance in women considering managerial careers and present them with the illusion of a choice between developing 'masculinity' to become a successful leader and retaining femininity at a sacrifice of career growth.

However, the examples of nonverbal behaviors of the world's political leaders demonstrate notable growth of feminine behaviors associated with successful leadership results (Grebelsky-Lichtman & Katz, 2020). The mimicry of successful female leaders' behaviors has been found empowering and inspiring for the new leaders to perform challenging leadership tasks (Latu et al., 2019). Holding the perspective that "cultural constructions of women leaders are […] open to change" (Lämsä & Sintonen, 2001), I will invite the audience to the discussion of their perspectives on changing the leadership discourse to become women-friendlier. The expected outcomes for the audience include ideas and materials for teaching gender-related communication and leadership topics, as well as strategies to reframe leadership discourse towards greater gender equality.

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AI in Talent Acquisition: Ethical Considerations and Its Impact on Diversity Hiring

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made inroads into various walks of life today, and technology is guiding our actions in all arenas. For this study, we define AI as a machine-based system that interprets external and past data accurately, learns from it, and then uses this learning to achieve specific tasks, including but not limited to predicting future events (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2019). Therefore, AI covers a broad spectrum of programs that include deep machine learning, a simple regression-based prediction, or voice recognition tools. Driven by the promises and benefits it offers on speed and cost, organizations increasingly deploy AI in all possible processes.

AI in Talent Acquisition

While relatively late, Talent Acquisition (TA) isn't untouched by the AI revolution, and recruitment leaders across the world are deploying AI into their processes (Fernandes-Martinez and Fernandes, 2020). Organizations' expectations from AI are to provide a fair, unbiased, fast, and customized experience to users. In the TA landscape, however, AI is also expected to hire better employees with high success predictions (Hunkenschroer and Luetge, 2022). AI aims to assist decision-making via technological advancements like resume parsing to match candidates against job descriptions, interviews via facial recognition software, analyzing expressions of candidates and making judgments about their future behavior, and even making assumptions about personalities by the tone of the voice (Tippins et al., 2021). While the intent sounds noble, the AI-driven process is yet to prove the same. The reasons demanding a deep investigation into whether AI serves the desired purposes are serious. First, recruitment is a serious business, and any errors can have a deep impact on humans (Raghavan et al., 2020). Second, while one of the objectives of implementing AI in TA is to remove human biases, extant literature suggests that since AI learns from past (human) data to make decisions, it cannot be deemed free from unconscious biases. Lastly, while it aims to mimic humans, AI currently lacks a moral compass to guide itself (Chamorro-Premuzic & Akhtar, 2019; Persson, 2016; Polli, 2019).

Ethical Concerns and Biases

One of the biggest criticisms around AI use in TA space is that it is not regulated or audited for biases. For example, while it is illegal in certain geographies to ask candidates about their age, race, gender, or sexuality, AI-driven video interview analysis may well predict, store, and use this data to provide decisions (Reid et al., 2013; Fu et al., 2014). Additionally, lighting conditions during an interview may cause AI to misread one's race or skin color. Therefore, not only can AI make decisions driven by practices forbidden by law, but it also is prone to misread variables and hence cannot be trusted for accuracy.

Methodology and Outcomes

This study is qualitative in nature. We conduct interviews for thirty decision-makers and candidates to understand and analyze their views as well as experience of AI in TA, while leaning on Technological Determinism Theory for support. The study suggests that while AI was introduced to remove unconscious human biases, it may very well be fueling the same. For example, the popular AI tool, HireVue, records the spoken words, tonality, and facial features as well as expressions of the candidates, and matches it with the same of their best-performing employees to provide a success probability score. This creates a specific kind of problem in an organization that is low on diversity. If the organization is already lacking employees from a particular unrepresented social group, AI will fail to match candidates from that group and continue rejecting them. Similarly, another tool called Humans analyzes the emotions visible in video-interviews and predicts human behaviors. AI-driven TA tools may also not be free from proxy biases. The algorithm may tell AI to exclude biases against a particular pin code or race etc. This, in itself, is a bias TA processes must aim to avoid.

AI depends on limited public databases from the past (Guzzo et al., 2015) which are not free from biases or good on diversity and inclusion. It is a black box that lacks an open understanding of how the process works, making it difficult to audit or check for errors. Further, AI algorithms are yet not regulated and continue to breach laws applicable if it were human. Interestingly, AI tools may also impact the incoming data itself which it awaits to analyze. For example, low lighting, poor camera angle, or a low bandwidth-driven distorted self-video image can damage the candidate's confidence during an interview, resulting in poor score from AI decision-making system.

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Ethics and Social Responsibility in Precarious Times

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Broadly defining business and professionalism communication as any communication that takes place within an organization and with organizational stakeholders, this panel looks at ethical issues and ideas of social responsibility through contemporary lenses and cases. This panel speaks to uncertainty in a range of contexts: DEI initiatives in business schools, teaching ethics in professional communication as more/other than compliance, and risk communication related to medical controversies. Through these conversations, we hope to offer insights and takeaways in how educators and professionals approach ethics and social responsibility in precarious times.

The first speaker discusses how diversity, equity, and inclusion align with an understanding of business as an enterprise concerned with social responsibility. This speaker also calls attention to how new accreditation standards for business schools may be at odds with new laws in some U.S. states. The latest update in AACSB business accreditation standards includes diversity and inclusion as “a critical component” of the standards, with fully two-thirds of the standards containing some component of diversity and inclusion. While many business schools prepare for their next round of accreditation, anti-DEI policies are becoming law and some institutions are reducing their diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Business schools with existing DEI programs—or those where these efforts are in the planning stages—may risk precarity as they work to meet the new accreditation standards. Business communication instructors, many of whom are in non-tenure-track appointments, may also be in a precarious position. Likewise, instructors with marginalized identities may experience an additional level of precarity when they cover this topic in their courses. This potential for multiple uncertainties may leave some programs and instructors feeling especially vulnerable. These multiple levels of precarity can lead to concerns about whether leading DEI initiatives, teaching DEI course content, or engaging in DEI-related service are practical choices at this moment.

At the same time, business communication faculty may see diversity, equity, and inclusion as central to their pedagogy and, by extension, view their teaching practices as grounded in personal or professional ethics. Faculty and administrators in business schools who view business writ large as an enterprise with social responsibility at its core are well-positioned to both resist and be impacted by anti-DEI backlash.

Speaker 2 discusses teaching and understanding ethics from a case-based pedagogical approach, exploring differences and overlaps between ethics and social justice work. At a time when the ethical landscape is more and more complex and chaotic, how professional communicators understand and utilize ethics is increasingly important. That critical need is one that educators can address in business and professional communication. Dr. Daniel Goldberg, an applied ethicist at the Center for Bioethics and

Humanities at the University of Colorado, states ethics are “taught very poorly—most professionals have taken forced ethics education, at least in compliance settings, and they hate it because it is extremely dry and stripped of all life and meaning.”

Many students approach ethics with two basic ideas: that ethics are "just personal opinions," and that ethics are ultimately "anything goes" based on who or what is enforcing and deploying ethical standards or expectations. This speaker will discuss how to challenge this prevailing view in a professional communication course, building on the premise that business ethics are tied to social responsibility and are in part about evaluating the plausibility of divergent moral views.

Speaker 3 discusses ethical controversies in health and medicine, focusing on strategies to improve professionals’ audience awareness in communicating about these topics. Two prominent medical controversies have recently sparked serious worldwide consequences. These involve the combined measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) and COVID-19 mRNA vaccines. Despite overwhelming evidence supporting vaccine safety and efficacy, disinformation spread widely about dangers such as a link between MMR vaccine and autism and whether Covid vaccines alter people’s DNA. Contentious issues include vaccine mandates; childhood vaccination schedules; the importance of herd immunity; and the trustworthiness of healthcare providers, pharmaceutical companies, government agencies, and researchers.

Exacerbating matters, information sources that segments of society accept as trustworthy and knowledgeable also disseminate dubious information and sometimes lies. Socio-technically mediated communication amplifies complexities, making the information field of play precarious at best and life-threatening at worst. Often, socially-responsible communications professionals are not sufficiently audience aware to effectively dispel misinformation. This speaker will discuss how shifting perspective may be key to improved risk communication.

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Mining a Client Case for Business Ethics and Social Responsibility Assignments

Chris Thomas and Sarah Morin Clark
Indiana University

As our Business Writing students were putting the finishing touches on their client-based case proposals, crisis struck. The CEO of Barstool Sports, an affiliate partner of the client, had been accused of sexual misconduct. The story went viral on traditional and social media. The accusations were serious, and, of course, reflected on our case client. Moreover, many student teams had been working on proposals that involved the client further leveraging its existing and self-described successful relationship with Barstool Sports. Would these students' proposals – after weeks of research and team collaboration – still be relevant or even eligible as case competition finalists, in which student teams pitch their idea to the client and other professionals? As faculty case representatives, we asked the client to respond with a statement addressing the issue and the relationship with Barstool Sports going forward, while also answering student concerns about proposals involving that partnership.

Then we thought: what if we ask the students themselves to compose that message from the client's perspective. Rather than construct a crisis management and communication situation, we could have the students tackle this crisis in real-time not just from a distance as student consultants but rather as the CEO and senior leadership. Ultimately, this provided a dynamic learning opportunity for our students in which they gained experience addressing pressing industry and leadership issues from a more informed and invested perspective.

Over the course of the semester, students had already researched our client's ethos, they had spoken with the client CEO during Q&A sessions, and they had developed a sense of what the client's values were. How, then, would they respond if they were in the CEO's shoes? How might their response be shaped knowing that they are the intended audience? What ethical choices would they foreground in that message? Would they discontinue their relationship with Barstool Sports altogether? Rather than see this simply as another scenario-based assignment, students were invested in responding to the crisis.

This crisis has inspired a new vision of working on a client case report, an adaptive rather than static approach. While a case, report, or presentation, provides the opportunity for students to work with a real business client, it also provides business educators and trainers with the opportunity to develop new assignments that reflect relevant and timely business issues regarding ethics and social responsibility.

Presentation Objectives

This presentation draws on our experience leading Kelley's Communication program's Business Case Report, highlighting similar examples of adaptive case-based assignments, with a focus on ethical issues and social responsibility. To provide another example, we will discuss an assignment that asked students to create a mission statement for a client taking an ethical approach in the controversial hair extensions industry. As Harvard Business School celebrates 100 years of the case method and business educators and trainers continue to use this century-old business school staple, our presentation shares how to mine a case for adaptive assignments or in-class activities and demonstrates how this approach can deepen students' understanding and application of ethics and social responsibility.

Outcomes and Methodology

The primary goal of our presentation is to offer business educators and trainers an opportunity to use or create client case studies as an excellent resource for students to learn and practice concepts related to ethics and social responsibility. Further, we will share our examples and experiences on how to adapt assignments and in-class activities in real time, whether it be a crisis involving a client partnership or a perceived disconnect between a client's stated values and its business model and marketing strategy. Methodologically, this presentation will draw on interactive classroom examples, offering strategies for application and practice to encourage student engagement and development as business communicators. Such an approach should provide session participants with ideas for how to create new learner-centered assignments based on ethics and social responsibility.

Service Learning in Action: Bringing Community Engagement and Service to an Online University

Catherine Flynn
School of Business and Information Technology

Purpose

Purdue University Global is committed to a culture of service and social responsibility and has established a series of initiatives to bring civic engagement to its online students. This presentation will introduce PG's Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning, the Achievement of Community Engagement and Service recognition, the Purdue Global Service Learning Fellows program, and Purdue Global's service learning elective courses. The foundation established by these key initiatives permits Purdue Global to fulfill its land grant mission.

Goals

Students who engage in service learning activities combine community service with academic instruction, focusing on critical, reflective thinking and writing. Ideally, students use content knowledge from their program of study to identify a community need and plan and carry out projects to address the identified need. Facilitating such a venture in an online environment is a formidable task but can be carried out in a meaningful and fulfilling way. The session will provide practical guidance on establishing a service learning initiative in an online environment that allows students to develop positive citizenship characteristics that contribute to a civil society and sustainable community.

Methodology

The service learning initiative at Purdue Global began in spring of 2021 when a cross-disciplinary team of faculty, administration, and staff came together to brainstorm ideas for establishing a culture of service at the university. As a land-grant institution, Purdue is committed to being of service and building a reputation as a service learning institution. We began with the knowledge that many PG students are actively engaged in their communities as well as at the university. We focused the first phase of the initiative on recognizing our students for the volunteer service they are currently doing in their lives. We established a recognition program that applauds student efforts in Achievement of Community Engagement and Service. Participation in ACES is voluntary, it is not tied in any way to course credit, and students may submit applications at any time throughout their period of enrollment as a student at PG. From ACES, the Center for Community Engagement and Service moved to establish a team of Fellows from across the University to champion service learning within their corners of the institution. The Fellows program at PG is designed to foster the development and institutionalization of service-learning projects and scholarly pursuits, as well as establish collaborative efforts and outcomes. PG Fellows will advocate for and champion service learning at PG, working with students, faculty, and administration to encourage and promote engagement.

Two service learning elective courses – one undergraduate offering and one graduate – will roll out in fall 2023 with a traditional approach to curricular civic engagement and service. Active participation in the community is the cornerstone of democracy, and therefore the cornerstone of the service learning courses. These courses combine theory and practice to provide a structured experience in a service learning project. Students will identify and develop service learning projects working with nonprofit agencies in their community as they are learning to serve and serving to learn.

Outcomes

• Attendees will be informed on the value of community engagement and service learning recognition established by Purdue Global's Achievement of Community Engagement and Service (ACES).
• Attendees will become familiar with the culture of service learning being established at a fully online university.
• Attendees will be introduced to the Service Learning Fellows initiative to champion a culture of service learning in an online university.

Conclusion

Purdue University Global's commitment to a culture of service and social responsibility is reflected in significant initiatives being carried out by the Center for Community Engagement and Service Learning. PG is striving to ensure it is meeting the land grant mission of Purdue University; this commitment to community-engagement and service is a university-wide endeavor that emerged from across PG and Purdue's West Lafayette campus. The CCESL initiatives are changing the landscape of PG to one of a service mentality and focus.

The Narrative Imperative: Ethical Accountability in Strategic Storytelling

Heidi Schultz
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

This presentation explores the ethical implications and obligations of stories and storytellers in professional settings.

Storytelling operates as a powerful rhetorical tool that savvy business communicators deploy strategically to achieve specific goals. Stories establish and nurture organizational culture (Marshall and Adamic, 2015). Stories motivate employees (Grant, 2019). Stories add quantifiable value to products and services (Robinson and Jewel, 2009). And stories sell goods (Seger, 2014; Verhoef, et.al., 2015). As such, many for-profit and not-for-profit organizations understand the value of devoting resources to storytelling experts who work on behalf of these organizations. While the concept of 'chief storyteller' is still relatively new, technology giant Microsoft has had a 'chief storyteller' since 2010 (McMenemy, 2018). Denver (Denvergov.org, n.d.) and Detroit (Stam, A., 2020) – as well as many other cities – employ chief storytellers. And Shonda Rimes, American television writer and producer, worked with the toiletry brand Dove Beauty as its 'chief storyteller' for its 'Real Beauty' campaign (Dove, 2016).

These organizations – and countless others – recognize that storytelling is a formidable communication tool that persuades key constituencies to act in ways that promote specific business and professional goals. It's the reason so many businesses and businesspeople want to learn how to deploy stories effectively. That said, because storytelling works its magic as a "solvent on … logic and … skepticism" on those who consume stories (Gottschall, 2016), storytellers have a moral obligation to use the tool ethically. To be sure, storytellers can use their craft for good or for evil – sometimes with disastrous consequences.

With these insights as background, this presentation will examine the rise of storytelling in the broader marketplace, examine the reasons that storytelling is so effectively persuasive, look at three fabricated stories and the consequences of each, and lay out an ethical framework that instructors should consider including in any module, unit, or course that includes instruction in storytelling.

More specifically, this presentation will cover insights related to the rise in storytelling over the last 10 years based on its growing importance for leaders (Harvard Business Review, 2018), based on the prevalence of content marketing (Content Marketing Institute, 2022), and based on social media trends as a dominant force in storytelling and influencer marketing. Next, the presentation will briefly cover six key reasons for telling stories in professional settings, which provide additional context for the ongoing interest in storytelling. Then, the presentation will examine 1) the embellished Gulf of Tonkin story that President Johnson told in 1964 and address this story's implications for the Vietnam War, 2) the deceptive storytelling tactics used by burn surgeon Dr. Gary Heimbach in 2012 that resulted in legislation that required flame retardants in upholstered furniture despite a lack of evidence that it was helpful or safe, and 3) the highly emotional but flawed story that Theranos founder Elizabeth Holmes told in 2014 about her uncle as Holmes built Theranos to the company with a $9 billion valuation until its downfall that started in 2015 and resulted in Holmes' conviction on multiple fraud charges in 2021. Finally, the presentation will conclude by identifying and sharing an ethical framework grounded in the "The Four Truths of the Storyteller" (Guber, 2011) that instructors should consider including in any course that involves teaching storytelling.

Career Workshop for Graduate Students and Job Seekers

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Geert Jacobs
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Barbara L Shwom
Communication Partners

Deidre Lee Kelly
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Paula Lentz
University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

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As members of the Association for Business Communication contemplate the future of business communication at the 88th Annual International Conference, one group of people should be an important topic in the conversation—graduate students, the ones who will become the future leaders of ABC and who will fill future academic job openings in the discipline.

For graduate students to succeed in becoming leaders and filling academic job openings, they need professionalization opportunities (Graff, 2000; Wicke, 2001). For example, preparing for and seeking a job in business communication's academic job market is a task that can take multiple years of a graduate student's life. The professional, logistical, and social complexities of pursuing an academic career directly after graduation require juggling a variety of tasks and concerns simultaneously (Fernandez et al., 2019). Thus, the "professionalization" process is best undertaken with guidance on a variety of issues (Lorenzetti et al., 2019). As members of ABC's Graduate Studies Committee, we propose in this panel to offer an hour-long speed-matching event that puts graduate students who may want to seek a job in academic business communication in a position to talk one-on-one with multiple experienced business communication teacher-scholars.

The process of the event is as follows: everyone will sit in rows facing each other, with teacher-scholars on one side and graduate students on the other. Discussion begins, with graduate students and teacher-scholars discussing either the topic suggested by the event coordinators or a topic of interest to the student or teacher-scholar. One of the event coordinators keeps time. At the end of 5–7 minutes, graduate students will rotate one seat over (to the right or left) and will talk to the new teacher-scholar who is now in front of them. The pairs will talk about the next topic suggested by the event coordinators or a topic or topics of interest to the pairs. This process will continue until all the graduate students have talked to all of the teacher-scholars or the event ends.

To help graduate students learn about the professionalization process in this rapid-fire setting, the organizers of the event will recruit established teacher-scholars who have hiring experience, new teacher-scholars who recently experienced the hiring process, and teacher-scholars who are currently members of search committees. The number of graduate students will be capped through a registration process to achieve an approximately one-to-one ratio of faculty to job seekers, so that each graduate student can maximize talking time with the teacher-scholars.

The goal of these speed-meetings is not only to give the students exposure to information but also to build name recognition and relationships with people in the field. We will also give graduate students a small packet of information on how to succeed in the job market. The teacher-scholars will offer advice on specific topics that the panel will guide them on or other topics that the graduate students or teacher-scholars want to discuss.

This event will serve to help graduate students further their experience of the professionalization process in a low-stakes, hopefully high-outcome environment. Teacher-scholars will benefit by meeting graduate students who are currently or expect to be on the job market, which will help in the teacher-scholars' current or future job searches. In addition, all attendees of the event benefit from the type of high-quality networking across boundaries that the ABC international conference is known for. Ultimately, we hope that this event builds connections for and with the graduate students who will play a vital role in the future of ABC.

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Communicate Your Way Into a Job, On the job, and Up the Ladder

Trey Guinn
University of the Incarnate Word

Incorporating insights from his most recent book (*Communication Essentials, 2023*), author, professor, and executive coach Dr. Trey Guinn will facilitate a 60-minute roundtable discussion for those interested in (a) enhancing their workplace communication skills and/or (b) discussing innovative ways to teach others how to enhance their workplace communication skills. Special attention will be given to those skills related to communicating your way into a job (networking and interviewing), on the job, and up the ladder.

Participants should come ready for an engaging and interactive discussion!

** from McGraw Hill Publishing **

No matter how great your knowledge, expertise, or experience, poor communication skills undermine your ability to get your message across, achieve your objectives, and build crucial relationships. To advance your career—and succeed in other aspects of life, as well—building these skills is essential.

In *Communication Essentials*, expert Trey Guinn takes you step-by-step through the process of improvement, from understanding the importance of message clarity to specific, goal-based strategies to develop and maximize your skills.

In *Part I: The Essentials*, he covers the fundamentals, from why and how we communicate and what effective communication looks like to how it can all go wrong. In *Part II: The Essentials Applied*, he provides practical advice on identifying goals, owning your message, and anticipating how your audience will perceive you, the messenger. Finally, in *Part III: Beyond the Essentials*, you'll find practical tips to help you communicate your way into a job, improve your digital communication, work through difficult conversations, and much more.

Packed with insights, anecdotes, exercises, and Essential Takeaways to wrap up each chapter, *Communication Essentials* ensures you'll walk away feeling fully equipped and prepared to put your skills into action right away.

AI Business Communication Research Summit (Advance Registration Requested)

Peter W. Cardon
University of Southern California

Jolanta Aritz
University of Southern California

Carolin Fleischmann
TH Rosenheim

Kristen M Getchell
Babson College

Stephen Carradini
Arizona State University

James Stapp
Cornell University

Jeanette Heidewald
Indiana University

Abram Anders
Iowa State University

Andrew Ogilvie
University of Southern California

This daylong workshop on October 25 will bring together business communication scholars who want to engage in research about AI and business communication. It will involve many mini-presentations and working groups based on participant interests. The goal of the daylong workshop is to connect researchers on projects they will continue to work on over the next six months to one year. Ideally, these projects will result in formal research and writing.

Tentatively, the following topics will be included as options for the workshop (participants will be able to join two of the research streams):

- AI-assisted writing
- AI and interpersonal communication
- AI and group communication
- AI and ethics
- AI as a research tool
- Pedagogy for AI and business communication

Overview of Summit Activities

Introductions to each research theme. Theme leads give concise (10 minutes), brisk, interactive, and potentially interactive introductions to the research themes.

Formation of working groups. Participants join working groups of 5 to 15 people. These working groups work collaboratively (in Googe docs and other platforms) to build out agendas and next steps. They will have the opportunity to choose two working groups.

Short research pitches. Summit participants may submit research ideas for AI and business communication. They will be placed in small groups in which they briefly (in 3 to 5 minutes) share their ideas and then get feedback (10 to 15 minutes) from others in these small groups about how to develop and execute their research ideas.

Rough Schedule
(this would likely change as the Organizing Committee discusses the schedule)

Time	**Activity**
08:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.	Event opening and introductions to research themes
10:00 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	BREAK
10:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.	Working Group #1
11:45 a.m. to 01:00 p.m.	LUNCH
01:00 p.m. to 02:00 p.m.	Research pitches
02:00 p.m. to 02:15 p.m.	BREAK
02:15 p.m. to 03:45 p.m.	Working Group #2
03:45 p.m. to 04:00 p.m.	BREAK
04:00 p.m. to 04:15 p.m.	Closing Comments and Next Steps

An Analysis of Internships and Business Intern Soft Skills Performance Pre and Post Covid: What was Lost, What was Gained, What has Forever Changed?

Lorelei Amanda Ortiz
St. Edward's University

According to economic research by Fu (2021) and Konkel (2021) of Indeed.com, internships have historically provided college students and new hires valuable opportunities to explore and develop professional networks, discover career interests, and potentially receive full-time job offers. In fact, as the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) points out, 70% of employers make full-time job offers to interns, and 80% of students accept these offers. Internships also provide indispensable opportunities for college students to gain practical work experience and insight into workplace environments to help prepare them for professional success and job readiness after graduation (Konkel, 2021; Ortiz & MacDermott, 2017; Ortiz & MacDermott, 2018). The Covid-19 pandemic, however, brought many changes and challenges to traditional internship structures across all industries, both domestically and globally, and changed the nature of internships almost overnight (Klein & Scott, 2021; Teng et al., 2022; Youngblood, 2020).

Researchers and experts are still assessing the impact of the pandemic on internships; yet, recent studies are already highlighting some interesting findings. Internship listings data from Indeed.com show that internship job postings on Indeed's U.S. website through April 13, 2021, declined, with the share of internship postings per million down 39% and 15% from the same dates in 2019 and 2020, respectively (Fu, 2021; Konkel, 2021). However, remote internships increased during the pandemic, with 20-25% of internship postings mentioning remote work during 2020 and 2021, up from only 3% in March 2019, almost a sevenfold increase (Fu, 2021; Konkel, 2021). Research by Hiring Lab also found that remote postings doubled during the pandemic (Kulko, 2021). These findings are consistent with studies from the National Association of College and Employers (NACE), which found that only 22% of college students took internships in 2020, with half of those internships being in-person and many moving online as the pandemic progressed (Gray, 2021).

To further grasp the impact of Covid on internships, there must be some understanding of access and quality of internships (Gray, 2021; Konkel, 2021), which are essential to diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives of both academic institutions and organizations. Preliminary research, such as the 2021 NACE study, found that online interns were more likely to be continuing-generation, have higher GPAs, come from upper-income families, and be non-STEM majors than in-person interns (Gray, 2021). In terms of internship quality and takeaways, online interns in the NACE study reported lower satisfaction, career and academic developmental value, 21st-century skills development, network development, and high-skill tasks than in-person interns (Gray, 2021). Yet, other studies such as Teng et al. (2022) found that online interns working remotely reported high levels of satisfaction in terms of soft and technical skills development and learning gains. Also relevant is the question of whether the pandemic shift to remote internships impacted internship compensation. The NACE research found that online internship positions were more likely to be unpaid compared to in-person positions at a ratio of 42% to 34.9%, respectively.

The purpose of this presentation is to further explore pandemic impact on internship opportunities and the nature of internships such as the shift from mainly in-person internships to virtual, and now to a combination of virtual and in-person with emphasis on what impact these shifts had on employer expectations around soft skills such as oral and written communication, teamwork, organization, time management, productivity, and dependability. In addition, this presentation will explore whether the types of activities required by the internship, the length of internships, and weekly hours worked during the internship changed pre and post Covid. The presentation will also answer questions about the impact to networking and teamwork opportunities, the availability of internships, changes to onboarding training/support, mentoring and communication with employers/supervisor, and changes to expectations around workplace etiquette and professionalism. As part of this exploration, the presentation will also feature results of a pilot study that compares business interns' soft skills performance pre and post Covid. Using anonymized employer exit survey data from intern performance reviews required in a Business Internship course, the study compares soft skills performance of 24 interns during Fall 2019 and 23 interns during Spring 2022 to gain an understanding of pandemic impact on internships and intern performance, particularly as it relates to soft skills use.

This presentation will conclude with discussion and implications as well as practical suggestions for preparing students for success in the ever-changing landscape of internships, expanding on Forbes Council (2022) and Youngblood (2020) best practices, which include but are not limited to the importance of communication between employer and intern, setting and managing realistic expectations, and making interns feel part of the organization regardless of in-person or virtual. ABC members will gain greater understanding of what was lost, what was gained, and what has forever changed when it comes to pandemic impact on internships and how we can best prepare students for internship success.

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Applying 'Yes, And' to AI in the Business Communication Classroom: Leveraging the Power of AI through Improv

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In recent years, the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has significantly impacted various industries, including education. The Business Communication classroom, in particular, is an area that can greatly benefit from the application of AI. AI has the potential to enhance students' learning experience by providing them with personalized feedback, real-time language analysis, and natural language processing. However, the mere introduction of AI in the classroom does not guarantee successful learning outcomes. To make the most out of this technology, it is essential to incorporate effective communication strategies such as "Yes, And" to enhance collaboration and critical thinking. The foundational elements of improvisation create a classroom culture of "Yes, And," so students can easily recognize that AI is a starting point. Yes, And techniques guide them to use AI to iterate, pivot, and leverage diversity of thought in teams. This presentation aims to explore the potential benefits of applying "Yes, And" to AI in the Business Communication classroom and how we, as educators, can leverage the power of AI to facilitate effective communication and improve students' learning outcomes. This is an interactive session, so participants should come prepared to engage and have fun as we learn improv exercises that help us apply practical use cases of artificial intelligence in business communication.

AI has been employed to develop intelligent tutoring systems, personalized learning platforms, and automated grading systems. In business, AI is used in financial reporting and software development (Naidoo & Dulek, 2022). In the context of Business Communication, AI has been used to provide students with real-time feedback on their communication skills, help them improve their writing, and analyze their language proficiency. Additionally, as our scholars have discussed, AI has also been a useful tool for teamwork in our classrooms (Getchell, et al., 2022). While we have acknowledged the usefulness of embedded AI exercises in the classroom (Dingus & Black, 2021), there is still much to learn from how AI can help students engage in understanding how AI works in the business world and how it can help us make business decisions and communicate effectively.

One effective strategy for promoting these skills in the classroom is the "Yes, And" improvisation technique. This technique is commonly used in improvisational theater or comedy and involves accepting and building upon a previous statement made by a fellow performer or audience member. In the classroom context, this technique can encourage students to collaborate, build upon each other's ideas, and engage in constructive criticism. It is important for students to recognize that AI is simply a starting point, and similar to "Yes, And," the iterations and pivots are strengthened by teamwork and diversity of thought.

Thus, the combination of AI and "Yes, And" has the potential to create a powerful learning experience for students in the Business Communication classroom. This presentation seeks to explore how this combination can enhance AI's effectiveness in promoting students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills. The presenters on this panel share their experiences in the classroom with “Yes, And” techniques and will provide tangible examples to engage students immediately.

The presenters will share the value of improv in the workplace and the business communication classroom. In this presentation, the presenters will build on the already established value (Huffaker & West, 2005) of improv in the business classroom. The presenters will share elements of improv, give examples for each element, then discuss how improv and AI can work together to provide deep learning for students in the business communication classroom.

ChatGPT and Other Tools

The presenters will also explore using Chat GPT and similar tools in the business communication classroom. ChatGPT is a large language model based on the GPT-3.5 architecture developed by OpenAI (OpenAI, 2022). Large language models utilize deep learning algorithms to analyze large text corpora to understand patterns and relationships between words and phrases. The model can generate a response to a user’s prompt using its knowledge of language. These tools can also learn from their interactions with users, allowing them to continually improve their responses and become more accurate and efficient.

These AI tools have a variety of purposes, such as virtual assistance, chatbots, language translation, and content creation. They can be beneficial for professionals and within the classroom. However, they must be used with caution due to the known issue of hallucination, the phenomenon in which unintended text is generated in natural language generation (Ji et al., 2022). AlAfnan et al. explored the use of ChatGPT in the business communication classroom, weighing the many opportunities this new era of education creates and the associated challenges.

In conclusion, the application of "Yes, And" to AI in the Business Communication classroom can be a powerful tool for enhancing student learning outcomes. By leveraging the power of AI and effective communication strategies, we can create a dynamic and engaging learning environment that empowers students to succeed. In addition, students who utilize AI as a starting point will be empowered to improvise, improve, and iterate on ideas with the power of collaborative team dynamics.

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Coding and Computational Thinking: A Key to Success in Business and Professional Communication

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Why do we need to teach computational thinking?

As educators, we prepare students to compete in the marketplace as well as provide them "with power to lead, create and innovate within society" (Webb et al., 2016, p. 445). When addressing the future of business communication, the strategic use of artificial intelligence (AI) will play an important role in the workplace. As AI becomes more integrated into our job functions, plays a larger role in communication, and has an increasing role in textual generation, we need to consider the critical skills that students must have in order to work with, modify, and contextualize tools and AI-generated content. To be prepared for the future, educators in business and professional communication (BPC) must integrate computational thinking (CT) more explicitly in their programs. Developing interdisciplinary coursework that combines creative contexts with the CT higher-order thinking skills helps prepare students to know when, how, and why to engage AI tools to support their work.

At its broadest, computational thinking is a mindset that involves "a range of mental tools. . . including thinking recursively, using abstraction when figuring out a complex task, and using heuristic reasoning to discover a solution" (Bers, 2018, p. 60). While a traditional programming course (focused exclusively on learning a programming language) rarely offers the opportunity to build CT, coding-based courses with creative contexts encourage developing approaches that can be applied to a variety of problems. We argue that BPC students will benefit from applied, creative coding experiences. These coding courses focus on mindset development rather than technical expertise; they integrate CT, digital system literacies, and problem-solving approaches while asking students to apply those to contextualized creative projects. These coding courses should be strategically integrated into BPC programs to address the needs of our future students.

Students from humanities disciplines are uniquely positioned to address the role of AI in our workplace and society. Humanists can assist in identifying unintended consequences of AI through ethical and historical contexts. Given their people-focused perspectives, these professionals can help evaluate the interplay and interaction of AI tools and generated content within our culture, assist with AI regulation, help identify AI biases, mitigate repercussions, and deconstruct inherent AI power relationships (Liu, 2018). With an understanding of how AI systems work, BPC graduates can critically interrogate its use and provide an ethical balance when deploying and using AI tools and generated content.

Coding and computational thinking support many areas of BPC mindsets and actions such as user experience, iterative design, and mediation among creators, users, and tools. Discussing the incorporation of coding courses into graduate-level humanities programs, McDaniel stated, “Knowledge of coding and production strategies such as iterative design, agile development, extreme programming, scrum, and the software development life cycle. . . are important for students to understand. Even students. . . [who stay in academia] find value in ‘speaking the language’ of coding and understanding the ways in which problem-solving can be approached from technical perspectives” (McDaniel, 2015 p.215) As creators who code, students can address complex issues situated within their domain (Buchanan,1992).

Method

Using a systematic analysis, we located and reviewed university websites that have undergraduate degrees in Business/Technical Communication /Communication. From there, we systematically reviewed the websites and collected details on curriculum with courses in gaming, coding, and user experience.

Presentation Goals

We provide an overview of program data collected through the analysis, which revealed a paucity of creativity-based coding courses in BPC programs. We will also make recommendations for integrating CT-focused coding courses into BPC curricula.

Outcomes

BPC students need a thorough understanding of computational thinking to be part of their repertoire in a future where they will encounter AI-driven tools and choices. Adding creatively focused coding coursework will expose students to the computational thinking mindset they need to be active creators in control of their tools and design processes. These skills can ensure that they become agents in their digital futures.

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Comparative Effectiveness of Synthetic AI-Generated Presenters vs. Organic Human Presenters

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) communication tools are currently gaining massive attention in both cultural and professional contexts. However, because of their newness, very few studies have been conducted on the comparative effectiveness of AI tools that generate/augment a speaker's performance in a business context. The proposed study aims to provide comparative data on the effectiveness of AI-generated presenter video (synthetic media) compared to non-AI human presenter video (organic media) within a business context.

Purpose

This presentation provides early findings from this study. The study seeks to understand the viability of synthetic media presenters in persuasive and informative business contexts. Specific criteria for success include memory, understanding, and interest in engaging the business idea further.

Methodology

The study uses an A/B testing methodology and tests two approaches of the same video—one synthetic and one organic. The synthetic video is produced using the app Synthesia. The human participants are cast from local actors and filmed locally. Two genres are tested in this fashion: a persuasive business pitch and an informative professional video.

To control for demographic bias, the actors were selected to match the demographic characteristics of the available avatars. Male and female videos were created to control for gendered bias in assumptions about avatar technology.

After viewing a randomly selected video, respondents were asked a series of questions to provide quantitative and qualitative assessment of the video option. This series included questions on memory of specific information, understanding of core concepts, and interest in engaging the business idea further.

Respondents were not told whether they were viewing a synthetic or a human speaker, but instead they were asked at the end of the questionnaire which they had viewed, in order to assess bias and to understand how modern audiences perceive the current technology's synthetic nature.

Outcomes

Preliminary data from the study will be shared in this presentation. This study has implications across many use-cases, such as HR and entrepreneurship. The findings of this study contribute to the research on digital oratory and the need for business curricula to embrace digital video training. It also has the potential to encourage or discourage practitioner and educator use of a provocative new tool, based on its perceived effectiveness. This information is particularly important in multi-language, large-scale, and low-resource business contexts.

Conclusion

This study provides first-of-its-kind research, testing whether the state-of-the-art technology available to consumers today is actually as effective as its human alternative. The study seeks to contribute to the growing conversation on AI communication tools and their business implications. The results of this study are of great interest to scholars, business leaders, and entrepreneurs.

Critical Oral and Physical Communication Tools for the Future of Business Communication Instruction

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Strategic communication skills are critical to the craft of in-person and virtual business communication. To benefit from the educational rigor of content development and writing skills, students and faculty need an equal rigor for the foundation in the mechanics, patterns, and techniques that excellent business communicators employ when communicating their developed content through presentations, in meetings, or during varied social and professional interactions. Every faculty member and every student will benefit from integrating course material that trains the instrument of delivery: the body, voice, and breath-thought connection.

This interactive workshop experience introduces novel perspectives borrowed from the craft of the performing artist to teach the craft of oral business communication. Participants will learn concepts and vocabulary that contribute to a definable methodology for understanding and acting upon the tools of the body: proxemics, vocal production, and breath-thought connection. In addition to the physical, vocal, and breath-support-related training, part of an artist's strategic preparation is to understand the meaning of the text and what is actually happening in the subtext. This inquiry allows for a clearly developed understanding of the intentions of the text. Critical to a business communication strategy is this same understanding of intention, as well as the consideration of outcomes and given circumstances, as drivers for selecting the tools of delivery. Tools can be paired strategically with the prescribed or developed content to achieve the best outcomes.

Participants need to be willing to become both learners and active respondents during this workshop.

Participants will learn:

- Why breath is an important part of a strategy to influence how we form and vocalize thoughts and ideas.
- How to employ soft palate focus, resonance, articulation, and modulation to bring clarity and authority to speech.
- About seated and standing frame, readiness, and physical orientation of the body through concepts such as line focus, level, horizontal, and plane.
- The value of pairing gestural patterns to content to demonstrate why gestures directly affect delivery and meaning.
- The importance of why and how specific given circumstances of a presentation or interaction shape the actions of the communicator and the reception of the audience.
- Why outcomes and audience specific details are key for planning a strategic communication pattern.

The methodology is simple:

- Define and embody a concept or pattern.
- Exercise that pattern.
- Observe and understand how that pattern influences your delivery and manifests meaning.
- Consider the circumstances in which to engage in that pattern.
- Consider how the audience, space, and technology influence strategic choices of delivery.
- Develop clear outcomes and intentions.
- Consider how those initiatives drive strategic choices of delivery.
- Combine tools to achieve nuance and transmit meaning to the audience.

Providing the tools of business oral communication skills and a clear rubric increases the outcomes for student success. When educators have a defined set of general tools from which to assess delivery, students will benefit from comprehensive feedback that can articulate the learner gap and guide the learner toward a set of actions that will develop business oral communication and presentation skills.

A set of clear communication-action rubrics will be presented for consideration during the workshop.

Participants will learn how to integrate defined expected oral and physical delivery skills into assignments and classroom discussions.

Advances in technological communication have decreased the demand for everyday, in-person human interaction and oral skills. In light of this reality, where will students get the volume of practice that constitutes enough experiential data points to build an expertise before they enter the workforce? Oral skills have been touted as an important part of a student's education but are rarely taught through method. This workshop proposes a deliberate integration of the practice of oral communication tools as part of business communicators' education to comprehensively prepare them for the workplace demands of in-person and virtual communication skills.

Participants will realize immediate professional growth through learning new concepts and strategies for their own business communication practice and teaching. In doing so, they will be able to internalize the value of teaching their students how to transform the power of the written word into powerful and meaningful oral and physical presentations with the same concepts and strategies. This workshop will demonstrate why the tools of oral communication can powerfully underpin a business communication curriculum. Participants will become inspired by a set of teachable and transformational tools that provide immediate solutions to the oral communication challenges of the business communication faculty and students.

Disciplines Divided by a Common Topic: Assessing Approaches to Communication in Organizational Contexts

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Oscar Wilde once made the humorous remark that the English "have really everything in common with America nowadays, except, of course, language" (1891, p. 94). What rings true in the ears of the keen observer of two very similar, yet different cultures, also seems to be true when it comes to academic fields that are concerned with the role of communication and language in an organizational context.

Indeed, the study of business communication has been approached from a range of disciplinary perspectives, including marketing, sociology, communication studies, and linguistics. As a consequence, separate but related research strands have developed, some of which are traditionally more distant, while others may be described as cognate. Scholars have often embedded their research in different theoretical frameworks and used diverse methodological approaches, resulting in a multi-dimensional web of research that gives insight into the field from a variety of angles (Lutzky, 2021).

While this development has resulted in a breadth of scientific findings, it has also created disciplinary silos with scholars from cognate disciplines often researching related questions within the confines of their own area of study. In this paper, we aim to assess the status quo of this situation by focusing on four well-established areas that, to a degree, have developed in isolation from each other but could benefit from creating closer ties. In particular, our study focuses on the fields of public relations and business, organizational, and strategic communication.

To uncover similarities and differences in the academic outlook of these disciplines, we have compiled a corpus of handbooks from each of these fields. We define a handbook as a reference work that gives an overview of the main concerns and points of interest of a particular subject (OED, s.v. handbook, n.), such as The Handbook of Strategic Communication (Botan, 2021) or The Handbook of Business Discourse (Bargiela Chiappini, 2022). Our corpus includes twenty-two handbooks published during the last fifteen years in the four respective disciplines.

To assess this corpus, we are using a combination of methodological approaches, combining thematic analysis with citation analysis and corpus linguistics. By combining different methods in this way, we aim to uncover the main themes discussed in each of the four research strands, show where the disciplinary citation networks overlap, and investigate whether they draw on similar linguistic constructions in their discussion of theoretical concepts and empirical findings. While this combination of methods contributes to the goal of this study, which aims to assess similarities and differences in the research focus of the respective disciplines, it equally provides a practical illustration of how research may draw on tools across disciplinary boundaries, such as communication science and linguistics.

Approaching communication from different angles, we hypothesize that while there will be a certain thematic overlap between the four fields studied, the methodological and theoretical underpinnings should differ quite substantially. Pilot analyses have already revealed that their research focus differs. It has been shown, for example, that handbooks on business communication stress the discussion of language and discourse, investigate specific languages, highlight linguistic perspectives and offer insights into intercultural approaches. On the other hand, for handbooks in the fields of strategic communication and PR, we have identified a strong methodological focus with discussions emphasising the specific methods used in empirical research, including for instance surveys and discussions of sampling and populations. Organizational communication equally stands out by stressing the communicative constitution of organizations and theoretical concepts, such as authority and materiality.

While business communication has always had a boundary-spanning focus, branching out into disciplines such as business, management or organization studies, a future opportunity lies in leveraging the common outlook and interests of related communication disciplines, focusing on organizational contexts, and facilitating collaborations. While it certainly seems as if the four fields are cognate, it remains to be seen whether they are siblings, or rather distant cousins, and thus, how wide the disciplinary gulfs are that need to be bridged to embark on an interdisciplinary endeavour. By assessing the status quo of four communication disciplines, this paper lays the foundation for concrete recommendations and touchpoints that could help develop the field of business communication, with a view to breaking up disciplinary silos and bridging the gap.

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Embedding Professionalism in Undergraduate Business Programs

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A 2022 report by McKinsey asserts: “Companies have recognized that skills-based practices are a powerful solution to challenges that have intensified since the pandemic.” The U.S. Department of Labor defines professionalism in “Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success” by saying, “Professionalism does not mean wearing a suit or carrying a briefcase; rather, it means conducting oneself with responsibility, integrity, accountability, and excellence. It means communicating effectively and appropriately and always finding a way to be productive.

Employers want their workers to be responsible, ethical, and team-oriented, and to possess strong communication, interpersonal, and problem-solving skills. Wrap these skills up all together and you’ve got professionalism.”

Given this context, The Center for Professionalism and Communications has grown to instruct students not only in critical communications skills, but also in helping them recognize their strengths, face interpersonal and critical-thinking challenges, and listen well. Professionalism instruction gives students a competitive advantage in the job market. When a student excels at presenting themselves professionally, their confidence conveys credibility that can lead to increased opportunities for growth and career success. These positive experiences can help them build relationships, network, and advance their careers.

Our professionalism journey at Kogod begins with self-exploration. Students cannot be expected to build a personal brand if they don’t know the value they add to a team. Each first-year student in the Intro to Business course takes a CliftonStrengths assessment which reveals their innate talents and how those strengths show up when working with others.

With professionalism instruction, students learn early that diversity results in the most effective teams. Combining their self-knowledge with communications training so they can share ideas, ask questions, and provide feedback in a clear and concise manner, students become confident collaborators. And collaboration leads to better decision-making, increased productivity, and a more positive work environment. We help students improve their collaboration skills by having them participate in a meeting simulation in which they prepare for and present at a simulated workplace meeting—with a curveball thrown at them as they near the end, when their boss adds to the deliverables required from the working session. After the meeting, we debrief on lessons learned and encourage them to articulate how the skills they demonstrated in the meeting simulation will show up in the workplace.

Listening well is an essential professionalism practice, since it builds relationships between colleagues, managers, and customers. Listening fosters a sense of trust and respect, which can help prevent misunderstandings, conflicts, and workplace tension. We help students understand the value of active listening by participating in a Story Circles for Business workshop based on a UNESCO exercise. We also give students the tools they need to give constructive feedback to one another in workshops focused on improving and developing that skill.

Professionalism can increase productivity by reducing the time and effort required to complete tasks. Employees who understand expectations and can communicate their needs and concerns can work more efficiently. We help students learn how to collaborate effectively by participating in a Logic Puzzle Workshop, a requirement for our new Collaboration badge. They also analyze their participation in various group projects by participating in a workshop designed to investigate the effectiveness of team charters from different business classes.

Professionalism enables students to become better leaders. Managers who can communicate clearly, delegate tasks, provide feedback, and motivate their team can create a positive work environment and achieve organizational goals. Many opportunities to learn effective leadership have struggled post-pandemic. Involvement in campus activities has declined, meaning fewer opportunities for students to mentor and be mentored by one another. We offer instruction in assertive communication to help empower students to ensure their voices are heard.

All of our professionalism instruction ensures that our students are prepared to meet the demands of a 21st century workplace. Since so many businesses have gone to remote and/or hybrid environments, we instruct on how to ensure that you and your work get noticed when you don't share a physical workspace with your supervisor. We've hosted events with CEO Gary Cohn, authors Mark Clark and Meredith Persily, and others to reinforce the importance of professionalism skills in hybrid or remote settings.

Our presentation will document our process of transitioning into a Center for Professionalism and Communications—offering insights into our questions and challenges, communication and alignment with our program, and lessons learned. Through our experience, we hope that ABC conference attendees will be better positioned to integrate professionalism instruction into their current curricula.

Embracing ChatGPT as an Educational Technology

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Text language models such as ChatGPT have the potential to empower students by automating writing tasks. Many articles have advocated the opportunities for adopting ChatGPT, but fewer speculate on the impact of academic [dis]honesty and biased information (van Dis et al., 2023). To evaluate ChatGPT effectiveness, an ad-hoc test was conducted in a business communication class with 46 students. This presentation gives an overview of the test findings, shares students' reflections, and provides tips on how the tool can be meaningfully integrated into the classroom. The goal is to demonstrate how ChatGPT can be used for educational purposes by showing the interaction with it and task progress.

ChatGPT is known to generate content, but an account must be created at OpenAI. While students were creating a profile, the session began with a brief discussion of text language models and the three decades of AI neural networks development. Additionally, it was said that ChatGPT is the result of recent collaboration between OpenAI and Microsoft and contributions from business and academic research (Heaven, 2023). The students were particularly interested in knowing more about the recurrent neural networks after 1980 as a basis for machine translation and sequence language modeling. At first glance, the students reframed ChatGPT as a disruptive innovation. Despite their concerns that it could lead to academic dishonesty, they were eager to test its viability. For their participation, they earned 50 bonus points.

The participants received a list of prompts to use in ChatGPT about "the similarities between the direct and indirect approach to writing." The same phrase was rewritten eight times creating iterations to see whether the tool would give the same response. The eight responses were on topic but were constructed differently. Even with phrase variations and a diverse student sample, no two responses were identical. The students were also instructed to upload their responses to Canvas and later to Grammarly. While Turnitin did not detect any plagiarism initially, after stressing Canvas with more uploads, Turnitin began reporting a similarity index ranging from 3% to 45%. A Turnitin release scheduled for April 2023 will add functionality to detect ChatCPT content, with at least 97% accuracy (Turnitin, 2023). Also surprising was Grammarly Premium's minimizing suggestions to improve clarity and correctness, indicating that all responses were fluent and well-written.

The statements that follow expand on the reflections and students' positive feedback about using ChatGPT for learning:

- "Good source for research materials.
- For accurate results, one needs to ask the right questions.
- Can be used to expand vocabulary.
- Can offer personalized learning by asking additional questions.
- Can entice to work in teams.
- Can provide academic assistance on difficult topics.

- Can be used to brainstorm ideas and as a problem-solving tool.
- Can be useful at work to write letters and emails where plagiarism is not monitored."

For instructors, ChatGPT can be used as a supplement, but it will need instructor buy-in to practice it. Titli et al. (2023) suggest that AI tools require a new teaching design and demand the rethinking of teaching philosophies; however, ChatGPT can serve as a virtual tutor and be an inspiration to explore AI tools in class. It can also be used to facilitate discussion and to assess assignments based on content and organization among other parameters (Khan, Kahn, & Sajjad, 2023). Text generator models have the potential to improve research skills and foster new thinking, but developing a syllabus policy for ChatGPT use is crucial. A class policy to maintain writing integrity and student expectations is the beginning, although over time there may be more restrictive regulations. The guidelines that follow will engage students in assuming ownership of their writing while considering the ethical risks.

ChatGPT should be used as an informational source, like any other library material. When citing passages, students should paraphrase the text and give the in-text citation and reference in APA format. The instructor reserves the right to be vigilant in the use of ChatGPT and use Turnitin to review instances flagged with a similarity index.

AI text generators are not new, but the literature recently has led to an upsurge of challenges and opportunities to consider in education. This presentation reviewed an ad-hoc test of ChatGPT performance in the classroom. The study shared insights and revealed that text language models are sustainable for learning, but that students and instructors must collaborate with the main instructional approach. In this context, it is essential to establish concepts and ground rules to drive positive change and responsible AI practices, specifically with ChatGPT.

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Experimenting with Labor-Based Grading and the Future of Business Communication

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Purpose

Since the pandemic, there have been many concerns among faculty as to the impact on the education and skills of incoming students. Furthermore, the equity and social justice issues that came to the forefront during the pandemic also encourage instructors to engage in this work in their courses. Due to concerns about student engagement, widespread cheating, and the use of AI to complete assignments, many faculty are still unclear as to how to improve student writing and communication skills while building equity and maintaining high standards. These issues can all be addressed using a labor-based course structure.

Much of the research on equity in teaching writing focuses on labor-based grading (also known as contract grading, among other titles). Labor-based grading is a mode of assessment that credits students for a grade based on the amount of labor they put into the coursework. Requirements for a standard grade (usually a B) are stated in the syllabus as well as rules for increasing or decreasing that grade. The instructor provides feedback, and the students revise often, which generally results in more risk-taking from the student that leads to stronger writing skills and understanding of writing fundamentals. Further, labor-based grading can increase student engagement by eliminating barriers such as fear of judgement, instructor bias, and unclear assessment standards.

Due to the post-pandemic issues facing business communication, I ran an experimental labor-based business communication course and will share the outcomes while providing guidance and encouragement to other instructors who want to attempt labor-based grading. The purpose of this presentation is to explore the efficacy of labor-based grading for student outcomes post-pandemic.

Goals

Goals for this presentation are to briefly share the research as well as a reading list for labor-based grading, share what worked well in my pilot course, describe what did not work, and articulate how labor-based grading can help rectify the deficits, perceived or actual, in student skills and address various post-pandemic challenges.

Methodology

I will begin with a brief presentation of the research on labor-based grading for writing courses with an accessible reading list attendees can take home. The overview of the research will situate the audience in the history of and discussion about labor-based grading. This is meant to activate background knowledge about course structure, DEI measures, and this research-based practice.

Next, I will provide a general description of course rules/syllabi both from research and my own use. I will also describe how an instructor can develop student buy-in to the labor-based course organization. A break-down of how a labor-based business communication course operates will be shared, including sample documents, course structure, and interactions.

Further, I will provide pro-tips for creating and running a labor-based business communication course and discuss issues such as appropriate levels of communication, developing student interactions, and working with students who want to increase their grades or who have fallen behind.

What to avoid in running a labor-based course will also be addressed, as there are a few pitfalls that will negatively impact the desired outcomes for the course.

I will wrap up my presentation with a discussion of measuring skills by comparing/contrasting outcomes of my labor-based course with those from an average course structure. Outcomes for students in subsequent courses will be addressed. Student satisfaction will also be examined.

Outcomes

Attendees will be familiar with the research on labor-based grading and its application to business communication courses. Attendees will understand how to convert a business communication course to a labor-based course. Attendees will discuss their understanding of labor-based grading.

Exploring the Emerging Professional Communication Technologies to Best Prepare Students

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Suffolk University

Theme

The evolution of business communications in the workplace and implications for higher education instruction.

Purpose

The current higher education student population and the incoming students of 2024 have faced monumental educational challenges. The global pandemic has impacted many learners' mindsets (Becker, 2021). Moreover, with the rise of online cheating resources and easily accessible writing AI programs, there's a surge of mixed messages related to AI use in academia. Our research seeks to establish bridging themes and provide updates to study guides and syllabi to address these issues.

Using qualitative research, our team has explored the possible evolution that professional communications may undergo in the coming five years. We've identified employers' current and future needs for writing and communication skills for their new hires out of college and pinpointed emerging themes for immediate curriculum development.

Methodology

The session will begin with an overview of primary qualitative research (interviews) and current business communication trends in the workplace. We'll analyze the trends and issues highlighted by industry leaders, which are further supplemented by our secondary research. This analysis will provide valuable insights to help evolve our classroom strategies for optimum learner success. Critical course adjustments, based on our research, that can be embedded in the B-Comm curriculum will also be discussed.

Outcomes

Participants will 1) get insights from our qualitative research, revealing industry leaders' opinions on the current and future landscape of business communication, 2) understand communication skills that are in high demand by employers, and 3) learn strategies to "robot proof" students' professional communication skills.

These outcomes will also empower instructors to engage students better while bolstering their chances for success in the hiring process.

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Exploring the Future of Business Writing with AI: A Mixed-Methods Study

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Introduction

The topic of AI writing has sparked significant debate and garnered much attention in recent years, particularly with regards to its use in business practices. However, despite the increasing prevalence of AI writing tools in the field, "there is a surprising dearth of accessible" studies (Naidoo & Dulek, 2022, p. 126) in the top business communication journals to explore the real-world practices of AI writing.

This study aims to provide a comprehensive perspective on the use of AI writing tools in digital marketing by incorporating interviews, UX testing, and surveys. By exploring how writers are using AI writing tools and how readers perceive their output, this study seeks to shed light on the future of digital marketing with AI. The findings of this study will help inform future research and practice in the field of business communication, providing useful insights for businesses and writers alike.

Literature Review

Between 1960 and the present, only five articles on the subject of AI have been published in the *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly* (BPCQ), the *International Journal of Business Communication* (IJBC), and the *Journal of International Business Studies* (JIBS). These articles represent the preliminary investigations by researchers into the potential applications of AI in various areas, such as business meetings (Cardon et al., 2021), text summarization (Naidoo & Dulek, 2022), personalized messages (Brown-Devlin et al., 2022), and researching and teaching business communication (Getchell et al., 2022; Porter, 2017). The objective of this article is to address the gap in the existing literature by integrating the viewpoints of users of AI writing tools and the perspectives of readers of algorithmically generated content.

Methodology

This study is conducted in two parts. In the first part, ten digital marketers were invited to use a popular AI writing tool named Jasper. These writers were asked to write a piece of digital marketing content on their own, and then use Jasper to complete the same task. After that, the writers were interviewed to compare their experience of writing alone and using AI to write.

In the second part, a survey was conducted with readers. The participants were provided with a piece of marketing content that was either written by a human writer or by Jasper in Part 1 of the study. The readers were asked to rate their feelings about the content in terms of its fun, creativity, and trustworthiness. Additionally, they were asked to identify whether the content was written by a human or AI and their willingness to purchase the product after reading the marketing content.

In total, the study conducted ten one-on-one usability sessions with digital marketers and collected 50 survey responses from readers.

Findings

Part I of the study indicates that using AI significantly increases writers' writing speed and efficiency. Instead of starting from scratch, writers can use AI to generate several first drafts in a few seconds, choose the one that they think looks good, and revise it as needed. This greatly improves the efficiency of their work. Additionally, when writers experience writer's block, the AI writing tool can generate new ideas to help them continue writing. The tool can also assist writers in tailoring content to different styles for various social media platforms, such as TikTok, Twitter, and Facebook. Overall, AI algorithms are highly skilled at writing based on specific rules, genres, and styles. They can do so quickly and at a high level of quality. However, writers in the study note that AI lacks the ability to communicate with real clients to clarify writing requests and obtain more information needed for writing. This inability occurs because, as digital marketers, their writing tasks are often vague and nebulous, requiring them to ask questions to define and clarify their tasks. AI tools can only perform given tasks well and currently lack the ability to define tasks on their own.

Part II of the study found that readers had difficulty differentiating between AI writing and human writing. Of the 50 survey respondents, 60% incorrectly identified the author of the content. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean ratings for fun, creativity, and trustworthiness of human and AI-written content. The results showed a significant difference in trustworthiness, with readers giving significantly higher ratings ($p = .003$) for human writing ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.2$) compared to AI writing ($M = 2.6$, $SD = 1.3$). However, there was no significant difference in ratings for fun, creativity, or willingness to use the product between human and AI writing.

Discussion

The results from this study weave together a multifaceted narrative on the role of AI in digital marketing writing. AI tools, exemplified by Jasper, significantly bolster the efficiency of digital marketers by providing rapid draft options and spurring idea generation, offering a lifeline during instances like writer's block. Yet their inability to engage in client-specific clarifications highlights the indispensable value of human interaction in business communication. On the flip side, despite their sophistication in mimicking human tone and style to the point where most readers couldn't discern between AI and human-authored content, a trust disparity is evident. Even subconsciously, readers appeared to place more trust in human-generated content. This underscores a prevailing challenge: while AI tools have made remarkable strides in emulating human writing, establishing genuine trust remains a hurdle yet to be surmounted.

Conclusion

In essence, while AI writing tools like Jasper, built on the powerful GPT 3.5 model available in 2022, offer significant efficiency in digital marketing, they have yet to fully bridge the gap in audience trust. It's worth noting that the research was conducted prior to the emergence of ChatGPT, which is grounded on the more advanced GPT 4 model. Given the rapid advancements in AI, it's conceivable that the landscape and audience perceptions might evolve or change. Therefore, as we navigate this swiftly shifting landscape, there's a pressing need for continued studies in our field to assess the capabilities and implications of newer and more advanced AI iterations in the domain of digital marketing.

Acknowledgments

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Future of Artificial Intelligence for Communication in the Corporate World

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Abstract

The rapid increase in the technology has brought drastic changes/challenges in society; people's lifestyles have totally changed in the current scenario of the modern world. The challenges that businesses face in the 21st century range from the globalization of the marketplace to the digitization of technologies "revolutionizing communication**"** (Barkema, et al., 2002). Other major challenges range from the outsourcing of core business processes to innovation and customer relations (van der Wiele, et al., 2002).

These drastic changes have occurred by the introduction of artificial intelligence. AI is a leading technology trend today since it allows computers to solve complex problems in the way that humans do. Artificial intelligence technologies such as big data, cloud computing, the internet of things, and block chains are changing our life quality as well as the way we work. The history of communication dates back to the period of industrialization and has come all the way to the simulation of human communication skills in machines programmed to think like a human and mimic human action. Communication, in a nutshell, is the interaction between entities. For a business organization, potential and current customers, government authorities, the general public, and the press and media are all stake holders. Efforts are made to bring in the paradigm shift for how accurate information finds the right user, rather the customer constantly searching through customer service portals.

The purpose of this paper, is to focus on the implementation of artificial intelligence, which not only tackles communication barriers but initiates a further innovative revolution in the field of communication for the corporate world. The study also reveals the importance of implementing artificial intelligence in the communication process throughout the corporation, which can be helpful in eradicating the present problems of communication management

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence, instead of being seen as a replacement for humans, should be seen as a tool for assistance. Customer satisfaction through proper organizational communication has further increased the dependence on AI. Customer relations management (CRM) requires human intervention, thanks to advancements in forecast performance as foreseen by deep learning, computer personal assistants that provide self-computing, and autocorrect and analytical systems. Crises are inevitable occurrences in an organization. They are simply the negative circumstances which find their root cause in internal management (communication). Crises arise on short notice and pose a threat to the organization. Prudence is in sensing the crises at the initial stages. The case with communication crises is no different than other crises in terms of tackling and resolving them. They can be predicted well in advance and deeply analyzed.

A dramatic increase in communication crises/challenges over the last decade as well as the implementation of artificial intelligence has directed the attention of management to eradicating the present problems of communication management.

This research is based on theoretical analysis as well as references related to the basic causes of business communication crises and parameters for detection/adaptation of artificial intelligence, which will help in solving the problems of the corporate world.

Review of Literature

Ayse Meric Yazici (2022) discusses the advancements in technology that have changed business practices positively. This paper evaluates automated services, big data analytics, and digitizing, which allow businesses so solve complicated business problems. Efficient AI in business can easily identify and resolve estimated errors. AI has emerged as a tool that discovers mixed information, predicts the outcomes of marketing activities, and enhances the possible future trends of business optimization.

Dr .V Padmanabhan and Jimcy C. S. (2020) found that the significance of AI is increasing in every part of the business sector. AI has given various businesses opportunities to sustain themselves in a highly competitive market. The paper also states that "Chatbot" is an advanced approach to carrying out smart discussions in the conversational aspects of organizations.

Meera Singh (2015) explores the importance of effective communication and its benefits to the organization. Professional communication in an organization develops a sense of punctuality and an efficient working mechanism that allows the smooth flow of information.

Framework

At the current stage of this research, the framework has been divided into two parts; the first part is empirical research and the second addresses the need to understand the meaning and concepts of artificial intelligence and to identify the feasibility of artificial intelligence and its applications in business communication for the smooth flow within the organization. To keep the task meaningful and to provide quality research, studies published in refereed national/international journals, books, conferences, working papers, annual reports, blogs, etc. have been considered.
The research design of a study outlines the basic approach that researchers use to answer their question (Polit & Beck, 2010). To meet the aims and objectives of the study, it is important that the researcher select the most appropriate design for achieving the aims of the study (Whall, 2006). The challenges that businesses face in the 21st century range from the globalization of the marketplace to the digitization of technologies revolutionizing communication (Barkema, et al., 2000). Other major challenges range from the outsourcing of core business processes to innovation and customer relations (van der Wiele, et al., 2002)

Objective

- Current AI applications floating in the corporate world
- The use of AI in communication crisis management

- Future possible technologies/mechanisms
- Formal and informal use of AI in the communication process

Since the developments in communication have taken place over some time, the uses of AI are scattered in different studies. We have tried to sum up all the AI mechanisms used in the communication process to the best of available resources.

Some organizational communication channels have multiple intermediaries, and messages could be altered or sometimes wrongly expressed. AI can overcome such issues.

There is no doubt that the advancements could be more classy. Real time response and surveillance could be brought into the communication. The present use of bio metric attendance falls short of providing for the unavailability of personnel; personalized reminders through which the person can report the reason for the absence are much more efficient.

Need for the Implementation of Artificial Intelligence

In view of the literature above, there is need for the implementation of artificial intelligence. After going through the future possibilities and the present, AI implied for better functioning of the corporation. We have reached the conclusion that there is ongoing research and development in communication. There is cutthroat competition, and the intensity is reaching new heights day by day. Deep learning and multiple critical algorithms are being formulated. It is nearly impossible to exactly predict what could be the end point of communication evolution. There arises a need to ponder new techniques, as the environment is dynamic and ever changing. The human factor can be emphasized by artificial intelligence. Reports in real time and that in-depth information of communication networks regarding the do's and don'ts can be more administratively efficient. The organization is a combination of both formal and informal groups. There is a need for balance between them. AI gives a personalized and collegial attachment apart from the daily routine orders and boosts morale. Thus informal communication could also be backed by AI.

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The Future of Business Communication

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Abstract

Business communication is crucial for organisational success, facilitating the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and information across different level of management. This article explores various platforms that are currently or will be utilized to simplify and enhance business communication, ultimately contributing to the success of business in the future.

Communication, A Key to Successful Business

The smooth exchange of information between management levels and others associated with the organisation is essential for effective corporate communication. It is a crucial component of any company that wants to develop and prosper. The rising demand for effective communication brought on by the growth of social media have led to the emergence of systems that streamline communication and reduce errors.

- Prof. J. Haste stated that when communication occurs between two or more business people for effective organization and administration of business, it is considered business communication (Business communication, n.d.).

- Ricks and Gow (Business Communication, n.d.) defined business communication as a system that affects change throughout the whole organization.

Business communication has become a necessity for every business that wants to grow; moreover, social media has led to increased demand for effective communication. Consequently, it offers several platforms which can help an organisation communicate and reduce errors.

Business Communication Tools in the Modern World

As industries develop, many adopt new technologies to aid in their growth. SLACK, ASANA, WEBEX, ZOOM, and YAMMER are just a few examples of the platforms that have helped businesses develop by facilitating communication with both domestic and international participants. Technology advancements have transformed company communication, making it crucial to foresee future trends.

The introduction of new technology has revolutionized the ways to communicate in business and has made it tricky to understand what the future might hold. In the present world, technology is playing a massive role in communication activities. Programs like AI, chatbots, and virtual reality, which are discussed below, are going to play an important role in business communication.

Artificial Intelligence

One of the most significant and revolutionising changes in the business communication is the growing of AI technology. Advancements in Artificial Intelligence give it an edge in communication especially within the business. From the business perspective, AI is an asset but it is worrying for employees.
AI will be beneficial for business communication in the following ways:

AI Powered Chatbots. Chatbots are automated services used to engage with customers, respond to their queries and provide guidance in using in using the product or service. They are powered by AI and natural language processing technologies that enable them to understand and respond to the user. Although, chatbots have been in use in recent times, they are still in the developing phase. They use machine learning and update knowledge with every engagement.

Artificial Personal Assistants. Applications like Alexa, Cortana, and Siri could be the future of internal business communication within the organisation or business. Basically, these applications or technology are virtual assistants. They are capable of making phone calls, scheduling meetings, and organising calendars. As they become increasingly intelligent, businesses will soon be able to utilize this technology to operate all internal communication.

Blockchain Technology

Distributed ledger technology such as blockchain offers safe, verifiable, and authentic corporate communication. Blocks and chains are used to record transactions, protecting the integrity of the data and preventing manipulation. Business communication is transformed by blockchain technology and help in decentralisation, data security, transparency, data privacy, and traceability.

Quantum Communication

A secure way of transferring and exchanging information that cannot be hacked or intercepted takes advantage of the law of applied quantum physics. Quantum information processing and quantum communication protect data by moving the data parcels along optical cables which are represented by multiple combinations of 1 and 0 simultaneously. Quantum communication can help the business organisations transmit their data securely and transfer it among their employees efficiently.

Augmented Reality

By superimposing virtual information in the form of text, graphics, and audio, augmented reality (AR) improves real-world experiences. When used in the context of corporate communication, AR can help clients visualise and comprehend intricate procedures, streamlining the decision-making process and saving time for the firm and the client.

Conclusion

The fusion of cutting-edge technologies will define commercial communication in the future. Among the game-changing technologies that will influence business communication in the upcoming years are artificial intelligence, blockchain, quantum communication, and augmented reality. Businesses can improve productivity, streamline communications, and succeed more in today's competitive business environment by adopting these technologies.

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Go Beyond Emails and Memos: Prepare Future Business Communicators with Modernized Multimedia Delivery Channels

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The basic steps in business writing and presentations vary little regardless of the message type. We begin the process with research, which leads us to brainstorming, organizing/outlining, writing, revising/editing, seeking feedback, distributing/delivering, and evaluating (Marsh et al., 2020). The audience and purpose dictate the channel through which the message will be conveyed. Why, then, do business communication faculty seem entrenched in so few delivery methods? Reports, emails, and memos are important for our students, but the process of business writing and presenting remains nearly the same whether you are dispensing your message via the web, video, or podcast. We must prepare our students for the era where digital communication skills are expected.

Many faculty assume our digital native students are already experts in digital communication, and they may agree. However, when Porat et al. (2018) surveyed junior high school students regarding their digital confidence, they found a significant gap between students' confidence and their actual performance, highlighting the need to devise instruction to cultivate students' digital competencies. Morgan's (2018) inspection of typical business communication textbooks found that less than 20% of the material was devoted to digital communication, with 80% dedicated to more traditional communication means. Yet, the reality is that 80% of companies are investing in omnichannel communication (Morgan, 2018).

In response to this shift to digital communication competency, our classrooms must evolve from devoting full attention to business writing and presentation skills demonstrated through traditional platforms to emphasizing the emerging pattern of corporate communication (Joglekar et al., 2022). With companies investing in stakeholder groups such as social media influencers and setting digital-first priorities in their corporate strategy (Joglekar et al., 2022), we need to develop students' digital intelligence to meet employers' demands (Park, 2016).

Our presentation will discuss three alternative ways (podcast, video, and webpage) to engage nearly the same skill set as traditional presentations and business writing but in ways that additionally facilitate students' creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital competency.

Video

Entrepreneurial start-ups, Fortune 500 companies, and all levels in between deploy video to compete with the masses vying for limited attention (Lind, 2020). The medium is now an established commercial reality due to the low cost of production and distribution and its connection with modern audiences (Lind, 2020). Students have high quality video cameras in their hands and access to free, easy to use editing software online. A structured business-related assignment can tap into their existing interests while sharpening their writing and presenting skills in a new way.

How Does Narrative Co-Construction Respond to the Leadership Dilemma of Organizational Goals and Agency?

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Background

With the marketization of hospitals, directors in medical departments not only play the roles of medical experts but also need to lead a whole team to achieve economic and medical goals. Therefore, leadership issues become new tasks and challenges for medical directors and their subordinates. To achieve organizational goals, directors of medical departments rely on their authority to manage a team. However, a hierarchical relationship will hinder members' agency. Authority and agency become a dilemma in leadership practice.

Literature Review

The existing leadership research represents two orientations, either emphasizing achieving organizational goals as the core of leadership (Locke, 1999) or oriented to relationship management as the essence of leadership (Plsek & Wilson, 2001). The reality is that these two directions co-exist in the leadership process, like a seesaw (Gronn, 2002). Leaders must regulate the tensions in this dilemma to achieve the optimal effects of leadership.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership encompasses the key elements of communication with members, goal setting, culture construction, and team motivation. From a narrative perspective, leadership is a discursive activity to probe, define, and solve problems together by creating a shared meaning (Jacoby & Ochs, 1995; Tourish, 2014). Leadership is a problem-solving process through narrative co-construction. During this narrative communication process, leaders establish a their authority and trigger members' agency by constructing a coherent narrative with members.

Research Question

This study investigates how narrative co-construction as the nature of leadership responds to this dilemma by shaping the power relations and agency in a team.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research design with observations and in-depth interviews. The fieldwork was in a private hospital in Mainland China. This study interviewed three directors as leaders and 17 subordinate physicians as members in three oncology departments: medical oncology, surgical oncology, and radiation oncology. Narrative analysis was applied to the data.

Preliminary Findings

Leaders leverage power and agency through the management of narrative co-authorship. 1) Coherent narratives co-constructed by all the members create more efficiency in a team's goal setting. For example, each department has its own narrative of its department goals. The more coherent are the narratives among members, the more effectively will the team consolidate the resources to achieve the goal. 2) Co-authorship in developing a team narrative motivates members to take the initiative. For example, with a team narrative of high-quality health care, the whole team carries the belief that high quality is to "seldom cure, often comfort." When they treat patients, the members practice their unique ways of delivering high-quality medical service. 3) Different involvement in this co-authorship relates closely to team culture. In entrepreneurial departments built up by the director from zero, the historical stories of the department may be elusive for new members. Only the leader or senior team members can tell these developmental stories. The differing extents of involvement in co-authorship, especially for new team members, will create distance and power relations among members and further influence members' agency.

Discussion

The study expands leadership research by taking a narrative perspective to investigate team dynamics and agency. Narrative is ubiquitous in organizational communication and in everyday interaction to create meaning and solve problems. Co-constructed narratives serve as leadership actors in teams (Raelin, 2016). The effectiveness of leadership relies on the distribution of narrative authorship.

Conclusion

A narrative approach in leadership indicates the importance of co-construction in shaping organizational performance. This study also contributes to the leadership research in the healthcare context in responding to the marketization of hospitals, which could further trigger business communication research in highly institutionalized contexts.

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Not Chat-GPT: Other Software Used to Build Students' Communication Skills

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Business communication software can help students build skills and prepare for a competitive job market. Steps to consider with technology tools include identifying student needs, analyzing programs, and launching pilot initiatives. The panelists will share their journeys using a range of platforms from micro-credentials to a virtual writing coach to smart scoring of resumes and interviews.

Presentation 1 deals with micro-credentials/digital badging, which can be implemented with students from the start of their college careers. Micro-credentials and digital badges (symbolic representations of acquired skills) provide an efficient path for individuals to learn a new skill or certify their competence. For learners, micro-credentials can provide opportunities to achieve differentiation from others in similar programs. As employers (Greenberg, 2023; Kato, Muros, & Weko, 2020), universities (UPCEA, 2022), and learners (Hollands et al., 2023) diverge on the value of these credentials (D'Agostino, 2023), the presenter will address diverse perspectives and share the institutional experience in introducing a badging system. Presenter 1 will use case study methodology to share a pilot of the Suitable badging platform as a BCC Director and curriculum coordinator. Collaboration with varied university stakeholders led to the development of a value proposition for the badging system, and has contributed to improving student engagement and participation in business communication programming.

Presentation 2 focuses on writing skills software. As students increasingly rely on Automated Written Corrective Feedback (AWCF) (Mayne, 2021), they may become invested in software such as McCann's IntelliWriterⒸ which claims to "help students significantly improve the quality of their writing" (IntelliWriter). As a "writing mastery tool," IntelliWriter brands itself as academic AWCF software, one that this presenter posits can improve student focus when coupled with traditional modes of feedback. However, studies suggest that students do not make good use of automated feedback (Attali, 2004; Chapelle et al., 2015; Warschauer & Grimes, 2008; Koltovskaia, 2020) and that they require guidance and encouragement to engage with it effectively (Zhang, 2017). This presentation will offer the results of a semester-long case study of IntelliWriter use based on qualitative data. The presenter will focus on students' affective engagement with this AWCF, including students' emotional reactions and attitudinal responses to the IntelliWriter feedback (Koltovskaia, 2020).

Presenter 3 will discuss the results of a pilot program using an online platform called Quinncia that collects student resumes and parses the data across highly used Applicant Tracking System (ATS) programs. A common scenario for many college students is uploading a resume to an online posting and never obtaining a response, much less a job interview. Nearly 75% of uploaded resumes are never seen by an actual human being (White & Bell, 2021). According to data compiled by Jobscan, 99% of Fortune 500 companies use some form of an ATS (Hu, 2019). To attempt improvement with the success rate of resume acceptance on employer websites, universities are eagerly embracing software platforms that provide rigorous resume data analysis. This presenter will share her experiences with upper-level business majors enrolled in a business communications course who used Quinncia. The presenter will share analysis of how and if students' resume scores improved by using Quinncia.

Lastly, interview technology has steadily gained momentum and appears inescapable, with both video and virtual submissions. The marketplace value of job interview software was USD 281.76 million in 2022, with a forecasted estimated surge to USD 541.56 million by 2028 (Digital Journal, 2023). Automated interviews typically involve candidates recording interview responses under time constraints. These data answers are converted to numbers for pattern recognition and statistical trends, resulting in scoring, ranking, or interpretative reporting of candidates (Hickman, 2023). These artificial intelligence methods have the potential of convenience and efficiency for the employer, yet may lead to stress, bias, and discrimination for candidates during hiring (Kilgore, 2022). Educators can introduce these interview tools and engage interviewees in these processes (Fulk, Dent, Kapakos, & White, 2022). Self-presentation strategies can equip applicants to craft responses and showcase their competencies and skills (Western Carolina University, 2023). Training about technology, processes, data, and decision-making can improve the automated interview experience (Jaser, Petrakaki, Starr, & Magana, 2022). Using Big Interview with business students, this final case study will illuminate natural language processing and actions to propel interview success for job seekers.

The four panelists hope to assist the audience in identifying software tools and strategies for students that will ultimately enhance their digital, written, and oral communication experiences across the business communication curriculum as they prepare for the workplace.

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Research Roundtable:
Exploring Research in Business Communication (Virtual)

Milena Nagengast, Moderator
University of Economics and Business

Mark A. Hannah
Arizona State University

Gregory Rouault
Hiroshima Shudo University

Participants with expertise in a theory or method of business communication research describe a current project, explain their approach and data, and indicate the project's implications and applications. The research roundtable aims to exchange ideas on research projects, theories, and methods, ask questions on a “sticky” problem, and form research collaborations.

Mark Hannah, Evaluating Conceptions of Professionalism and its Keyword Networks in Business Communication

Understanding the relationship between professionalism and workplace performance is an important feature of business communication pedagogy and practice. Ideas about workplace professionalism are underscored by keyword networks that induce normative understandings that exclude underrepresented/marginalized groups from their purview. This project asserts that deconstructing normative representations requires a nuanced understanding of the language/vocabulary that sustains such networks. It uses a case study to evaluate a training module that encourages graduate instructors to interrogate the keyword networks they deploy to discuss professionalism. Study findings inform recommendations for engaging professionalism to cultivate broader inclusion/visibility of all persons within business communication’s pedagogical and disciplinary reach.

Gregory (Greg) Rouault, Turn-taking and Pragmatics in Cooperative Board Game Interactions

This research seeks to identify the ways in which the pragmatic moves in cooperative games run parallel to Handford’s (2010) model of communication in business meetings. A corpus of gameplay interactions available online (videos and transcripts) is to be analyzed qualitatively through coding for textual content and discourse pragmatics. It is hypothesized that successful cooperative gameplay requires pragmatic moves, turn-taking, and expressions similar to those needed to actively participate in business discourse. The implications for educators include providing evidence of engaging, task-based tools to prompt and push the language output and use needed for business communications through cooperative games.

Securities Brokers' Duty of Best Execution: A Study of Investor Communications

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Theoretical Framework

This study analyzes the investor communication issues arising between a securities broker and an individual investor in terms of the securities broker's obligation of Best Execution.

Purpose and Objectives

Best Execution is an obligation whereby securities brokers must fulfill their customers' orders with the most favorable terms and conditions. There are two main approaches to achieving this obligation: (i) a single-market approach (i.e., concentrating on the trading of a certain stock in a specific single market creates a one-price-per-stock situation) and (ii) an inter-market competition approach (i.e., promoting competition through multiple venues of trade execution). The approach adopted or whether to employ a combination of both approaches to create an environment in which the Best Execution obligation can be fulfilled varies across countries.

This study analyzes how Best Execution is explained to investors, especially individual investors, in an easy-to-understand manner.

Research Methodology

The author studies this investor communication issue using a questionnaire survey administered through an internet research company and analyzes the results using critical discourse analysis, focusing on investor communications.

The survey design and methods used are as follows. First, 20–30 respondents from panels, provided by the internet research company, who are residents in Japan are selected; then, issues related to investor communications are identified by questioning the selected respondents.

(Preliminary) Results

The main communication issues appear to be due to literacy or knowledge gaps. While explaining Best Execution, it is important for a securities broker to adopt words that individual investors can easily and accurately understand; thus, smooth communication can be ensured between a securities broker and an individual investor.

Number of Topics

Two topics are covered in this presentation: investor communications and disclosure of business rules and practices.

Storytelling as Powerful Device for Developing Business School Communicators

Sarfaraz Hussain
Aligarh Muslim University

Description

This panel of teachers will explore the ways in which they utilize storytelling within the classroom. They will discuss powerful tools in which storytelling connects business communicators to audiences via powerful and familiar frames in highly organized and effective ways. Panelists will draw from advertising, narratives, data visualization, vivid language, audience analysis, presentations, and assignments to convey the power of storytelling.

Purpose

The purpose of this session is to inspire participants to think of the ways they utilize examples of storytelling in their life experiences and classroom. It will prod them to consider incorporating some of the tools, or others, into the countless ways those devices can be used to frame a presentation or better reach and motivate an audience member.

Goals

Participants of this session will:

1. Learn about the ways in which three business school educators utilize storytelling in the classroom environment.

2. Begin to identify the ways in which storytelling intersects in their current classroom environment or professional experiences and think exhaustively about what may still be attempted beyond that experience or this presentation.

3. Create ways in which to add storytelling to existing classroom activities or develop new assignments in which students utilize these powerful frames.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

1. Utilize critical thinking to understand the plethora of storytelling in their everyday lives of personal and professional experiences.

2. Think creatively about how such storytelling can be utilized to enhance a proposal, relate to an audience, or enhance an organizational gap in message that could be better related to audience members.

3. Design and deliver clear, concise, and audience centered storytelling messages to lead or supplement existing communication, add to a presentation or proposal, or simply reach an audience member in a more effective way.

Extended Abstract

Three business communication faculty from Indiana University's Kelley School of Business discuss how they utilize storytelling in their own classroom experiences. This presentation comes just as academic and practitioners alike from multiple disciplines are increasingly talking about storytelling. The panel will discuss powerful tools drawing from advertising examples and narratives as envisioned by practitioners like Smith (2019) in the *10 Stories Great Leaders Tell* and *Seven Basic Plots* by Booker (2004). They will also discuss how story intersects with data visualization to create compelling imagery, vivid language is utilized to paint clever portraits within presentations, and audience analysis is conducted to locate the precise story for every occasion. Through storytelling, a needed yet often overlooked tool, messages are enhanced easily through this connective device that adds popular frameworks for communication in powerful, familiar, and effective ways for any business communicator.

As their classroom experience has demonstrated, storytelling delivered via the multiple forms they will discuss, is often an invaluable tool for developing business communicators as they consider their identity, relate their experiences, and consider their audience. For many of these same students, this experience is the first time their developing professional life has intersected with their experiences in a way that fosters good storytelling of many of these aspiring leaders. Gardner (1995) has offered that storytelling and narratives can assist the way that leaders develop relationships with followers. The panel's experience has demonstrated that aspiring business professionals in the FOMO generation want to connect with their audiences in the best possible ways.

By its nature, storytelling is the omnipresent communication device of life that connects communicators and audiences daily. Since the dawn of time, storytelling has helped make those connections while reinforcing shared meaning in countless ways (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Lieblich et al., 1998). Those communicating within and without organizations often formally and informally utilize storytelling to connect their craft with others, discuss latest efforts or products, or produce vast takeaways on mutually experienced phenomena (Houston, 2000). Storytelling comes in many forms, whether it is the clever advertisement used to convey a product to others or the stand-aside gossip utilized to relate one particular detail in the company handbook not understood by the organizational newbie. Storytelling, even delivered in the form of narrative as envisioned by Fisher (1985), takes on a professional tone that business communicators can utilize. This usage extends beyond the clever jingle of the past and more directly into the boardroom and workspace while connecting speaker and audience.

There is a noted history of business communication intersecting with storytelling and narratives. Scholars like Wachtman and Johnson (2009) have noted how storytelling helps companies as they market themselves or their brands in a persuasive way to new audiences. Corporate websites have conveyed storytelling to promote brand awareness around family-owned business (Canziani et al., 2020; Herskovitz & Malcolm, 2010; Woodside, 2010). Dailey & Browning (2014) reviewed repetitive narratives in organizational culture, including multiple efforts by management scholars seeking to define strategic management and identity via the device (Brown et al., 2005; Chreim, 2005; Down, 2006; Dunford & Jones, 2000; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Parada & Viladás, 2010). While criticism of storytelling and narratives often focus on its omnipresent nature as being a catch-all, the very volume of its presence reinforces its importance (McGee & Nelson, 1985). For example, every individual should consider their last 24 hours and how often storytelling has been utilized in communication via an advertisement, social media post, movie, podcast, phone call, workplace conversation, or to explain the meaning behind a policy decision, to name a few.

Storytelling is truly omnipresent. Unfortunately, in the sometimes-staid world of professional business, communication is often the first necessary tool to be overlooked and the powerful device of storytelling easily dismissed as juvenile, inefficient, or ineffective. This presentation, contrary to that notion, contends there should be greater consideration for how story connects speaker to audience and how great ideas become more robust and palatable through clever narrative devices, powerful language, or impressive framing. In this session, all storytelling educators are encouraged to inventory the narrative-making in their classrooms and assess what opportunities may be available for them to embrace story as part of their lesson plan.

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Teaching and Researching Revision: Introducing a Tool to Extract Edits from Word Documents

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As instructors consider the technologies that will disrupt the future of business communication, writing tools enhanced by artificial intelligence (AI)—such as ChatGPT—are probably at the top of the list. Researchers have already begun proposing teaching strategies to overcome the challenges and embrace the opportunities of AI. For example, one study analyzed the performance of AI-generated business writing (AlAfnan, Dishari, Jovic, & Lomidze, 2023). Based on evaluations produced by human graders and plagiarism-detection software, the researchers recommended that business writing instructors use case-based assignments and adjust rubrics to more heavily weight content that AI fails at generating well (e.g., detailed content, original content, genre-specific content). This presentation adds to this emerging stream of teaching strategies by presenting a new teaching tool that can prepare students to harness the power of AI-assisted writing in the workplace.

Although users are quick to share their opinions about the shortcomings of AI-assisted writing tools, e.g., that its prose is “underdeveloped” and “lacking specifics” (Mills, 2023), others emphasize its affordances, e.g., writers and AI can form a “new collaboration”—AI writes the text and the writers edit it (Mollic, 2022). Similarly, one writing instructor has argued that the key to teaching students to navigate our new AI-assisted world is to “[help] students become good editors” (Rigolino, 2023). Such a goal may be easier said than done, however.

One challenge of teaching students to edit involves this inherent difficulty: editing is, by nature, a hidden task (Greenburg, 2010, p. 8). Instructors typically have access to a corporation’s final, published products but not to its earlier drafts that would help students see a communication team’s revision process. This poses a problem for instructors who wish to use authentic examples of the editing process in their instruction. Empirical studies of job descriptions (Kreth & Bowen, 2017) and of editors at work (Bisaillon, 2007) have provided vital insight into the professional editing process, but we propose that there may be additional pedagogical value in using empirical classroom data (i.e., a searchable collection of authentic changes) to make editing processes more visible and encourage observational learning.

Tool Description

To help students analyze authentic revised writing, we developed an open-source tool that business communication instructors can use to quickly extract edited content in Microsoft Word files. This tool makes comparing student edits easy. For example, an instructor could ask students to edit a short paragraph of text. After students had submitted their work, the instructor could extract all the edits with the tool and analyze the results. Students could observe in (almost) real time how their sentence-level edits compare to their peers' edits. They thus receive immediate validation, corrective feedback, and insight into additional ways a text could be effectively edited. By making the students' authentic edits visible, instructors can quickly gauge the students' mastery of editing tasks and draw upon numerous examples for further instruction.

The tool offers several additional features and benefits:

- It works with edits made with Track Changes enabled in Microsoft Word, the most-used word processor of professional technical editors (Adobe, 2022).

- Its output is formatted as a tab-separated file. This format allows users to easily import the data into Microsoft Excel and analyze it using functions, pivot tables, and data visualizations.

- The output file contains one edit per row with each edit classified as either deleted text (DEL), inserted text (INS), or moved text (MOV) so instructors can easily calculate the distribution of these edit types in a document. The full sentence in which each edit occurs is also included in the row so users can see the edit in context.

- The tool is written in Python, a popular open-source programming language that allows for easy sharing and distribution. It also has a graphical user interface, so it is easy to use for instructors who are less familiar with programming languages.

Researchers of business communication may appreciate this presentation because it introduces a tool they can use to extract editing data. Such a tool could help advance editing research by enabling researchers to quantify editors' work for assessing the lightness or heaviness of an edit or for assessing whether editors follow recommended onscreen editing practices (Hart, 2007).

Teachers of business communication will appreciate this presentation because it introduces a tool they can use to help students (1) see an editorial process that is otherwise hidden, (2) develop a meta-awareness of their editing processes, and (3) prepare to make strategic revisions on AI-assisted workplace writing.

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Three Minute Research Pitch

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Kathryn Kellner
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Karen Grandy
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Milena Nagengast
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This panel invites presenters to present a research question or issue in three minutes and to solicit feedback or advice from the audience and other panelists. It aims to parallel successful conference events such as My Favorite Assignment. It is an opportunity for researchers to sound their projects within a supportive and informed peer group and to exchange ideas and information.

A Contemporary Pathway Towards Civility: Insights on Digital Learning Conversations for Business Communication

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This presentation aims to advance the alignment of contemporary pro-social theories with the innovative application of a virtual learning experience in Business Communication curriculum. The objective is to promote the employment of digital learning experiences via Unify America© to pursue teaching civility as a necessary human skill. Previous studies show that this blueprint can balance the scales in favor of "getting one another" for a kinder and more productive world. How can we better dwell in conversation for global organizational evolution? Answering this question will add to the conversation centered on a worldly loss of greater civility in dyadic situations. A better understanding of developing frameworks could put forward action-of-logic ideas about how Business Communication pedagogy could contribute to the additive curriculum that fosters strategies for civility in organizational behavior development.

Ambrose (2020) suggests that civility should be more about teaching and less about preaching. As an instructor in an undergraduate program at a western university in the United States, the researcher has seen the necessity for extra, coordinated efforts to promote civility scholarship as well as the validation of soft-skill pedagogy. When students enter college, they have limited experience interacting in professional environments where diverse ideas, values, experiences, and backgrounds contribute to dyadic interaction (Clark & Dunham, 2020). Awareness of the importance of fostering civility in professional environments is essential to prevent misunderstandings, a lack of trust and comity, mismanagement, and worrisome or threatening situations (Clark & Dunham, 2020). The real value of life comes through relationships and conversations.

Teaching the architecture of better dialogue through prosocial theoretical frames of mindset, reciprocity styles, and leadership theory could enhance how humanity resides in each other's presence. More pointedly, partnering with Unify America© and practicing dyadic interactions through interpersonal positivity will help to engender a sense of kindness and generosity in professional environments. This topic is informed by conventional communication models and is supported by prosocial relational models. Grant's (2013) give-and-take theory, Grant's (2021) rethinking mindset, and Schein and Schein's (2018) humble leadership theory will lay the groundwork for understanding the practiced concepts of civility and the foundation of future research. These theoretical frames promote the differentiated effects of curiosity, generosity, and humility.

Grant's (2013) Give-and-Take Model:

> According to the Give and Take Theory, there are three types of communicators: a) giver, b) taker, and c) matcher. Givers are generous in sharing time, energy, knowledge, skills, and ideas

> and in sharing their network (Grant, 2013). Grant (2013) proposes the giver reciprocity style as the ideal in relationship etiquette.

Grant's (2021) Scientific Mindset:

> Grant (2021) puts forward the idea that humans take on the role of either politician, preacher, prosecutor, or scientist. We should approach our interactions with a scientific mindset to challenge our assumptions and nurture our intellect to embrace and understand our differences: "Scientific thinking favors humility over pride, doubt over certainty, curiosity over closure" (Grant, 2021, p. 28).

Schein and Schein's (2018) Humble Leadership Theory:

> The importance of a humble heart attitude demonstrates a willingness to work towards concession. Schein & Schein (2018) tell us that interpersonal engagement, organizational agility, ambidexterity, and innovation can flourish in the rapidly changing world when the fundamental relationship between people becomes more personalized. The role of humility cooperates within an evolved way of thinking and the observable values and traits of civil interaction.

Unify America© is an interactive online communication platform developed by Harry Nathan Gottlieb in 2020 to help bring people together (Unify America, n.d.). A deeply polarized climate prompted Gottlieb to interview scores of Americans, and he concluded that people are far more united than they thought. Energized by this knowledge, Gottlieb intersected his resources of entrepreneurship and the gamified digital space to create a platform for people to come together to share a dialogue (Unify America, n.d.). Intentionally sharing a dialogue with someone outside your bubble is a way to learn about alternative viewpoints. Insights chronicled through the Unify America© platform show a positive movement toward kindness and civility, bringing about a theory of change (Unify America, n.d.).

The gaps in civility pedagogy present a weighted argument for the importance of soft-skills training with the intersection of curiosity, generosity, and humility. Empirical evidence suggests through repeatable, observable behaviors, a strategy for civility education should be implemented. Hope for greater civility is on the horizon, as civility is contagious: "We are all on the highway together. We should communicate effectively with reciprocal courtesy" (Selzer, 2019, p. 56). The result is a more pleasant trip through life.

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A.I. Virtual Interviewing in the College Classroom: Effective Teaching Tool or Cool Trick?

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore how experience with vMock, an AI-based career development tool, influences student attitudes about the use of AI in hiring practices. Will experience with AI feedback decrease fear and opposition to these systems? Our presentation will present the results of our study and our experiences utilizing vMock as a teaching tool for developing effective interviewing skills.

Purpose

As ChatGPT and other systems that utilize artificial intelligence (AI) dominate current headlines, AI-based hiring software systems are receiving increasing scrutiny by the general public. Recent Pew Research Center surveys indicate a sense of caution from American consumers as the use of AI reaches further into our daily lives (Kennedy et al., 2023). Some 83% of employers, including 99% of Fortune 500 companies, now use some form of AI-based tool as part of their hiring process, said the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's chair Charlotte Burrows (Hsu, 2023). Consumers are not the only ones critical of AI-based systems: one study found that 88% of employers believed that AI-based hiring programs were filtering out qualified applicants (Fuller et al., 2021). Worried about the potential for AI-based screening systems to further exacerbate issues with discrimination and bias, the EEOC launched an initiative in 2021 to ensure that artificial intelligence and other emerging tools used in hiring and other employment decisions comply with federal civil rights laws.

One component that has received particular criticism are systems that include AI-analysis of video interviews using facial expression and speech recognition analysis. One company, HireVue, received so much criticism that in 2021 it discontinued its use of facial expression analysis (Maurer, 2021). HireVue's platform has hosted more than 19 million video interviews for over 850 customers worldwide. Despite this backlash, AI-based analysis of video interviews continues on other platforms.

As employer use of AI for hiring has grown, new companies are emerging to offer consumers AI-based resume development tools and interview feedback systems. These companies offer subscribers a glimpse into the AI "black box" to understand how AI perceives their application materials. Our college recently acquired a subscription to vMock, one of these new AI-based career development platforms. This study focuses on the video interview portion of vMock, which allows subscribers to record answers to common interview questions and then within minutes view an AI-generated analysis of their interview performance. Feedback is provided in three overall categories: non-verbal communication, delivery of speech, and content strength. Students enrolled in sections of Organizational Communication courses conducted a vMock video interview analysis and then completed a questionnaire assessing their experience. In addition to asking participants to rate the quality and accuracy of the feedback provided by vMock, participants were asked to rate their levels of interview anxiety and overall perceptions of the vMock system. We were particularly interested in whether the participant enjoyed and preferred the AI-based interview experience, and whether the participant perceived the process to be objective and impartial. Finally, we assessed personality factors like introversion, extroversion, and early technology adoption in addition to prior interviewing experience as control variables.

Goals

Given the current environment of caution and criticism related to AI-based interviewing systems, this study seeks to explore how direct experience with AI-based interviewing platforms would influence student attitudes about the use of AI-based systems in corporate hiring practices. We are curious to see if direct experience with AI feedback will have a positive influence on attitudes toward AI-based hiring systems or whether it will increase fear and opposition to these systems. Our presentation will present the results of our study and our experiences utilizing vMock as a teaching tool for developing effective interviewing skills.

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Avatars, AI, and VR – Oh My: Exploring the Effectiveness of Technology Tools to Teach Public Speaking

Kerry Mitchell
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Public speaking is a well-known fear among undergraduate students. Due to the pandemic, the fear has intensified as students missed opportunities to practice their public speaking skills live while attending classes online. This session explores various tools that have been implemented during and after the pandemic in an undergraduate business course, Strategic Business Communication, to teach public speaking and reduce public speaking anxiety. The purpose of this session is to share what was learned by using 1) virtual reality software and 2) public speaking software, both of which analyze vocal qualities such as pitch, pauses, pace, and volume.

Goal

The goals of using different software were to improve students' public speaking ability and to decrease public speaking anxiety. In a meta-analysis on the effect of virtual reality on reducing public speaking anxiety, Lim, Aryadoust, and Esposito (2022) suggest that, "Overall, VR had a statistically significant effect on reducing public speaking anxiety" (p. 1). The studies in their meta-analysis were generally not conducted on students, so our aim was to explore how we could use virtual reality with students in the undergraduate Strategic Business Communication course. The goal was to see which technologies helped students and which they preferred to use.

Methodology

The experiences with AI were not conducted as studied; rather, they were observations of different methods we tried in class. However, this is formatted as a study to help readers understand what occurred. Many of our students did not have to take public speaking in high school or took it online without having to present in front of an audience. In the Fall 2021 quarter, we implemented the use of PitchVantage software to help students practice with software that has an audience of avatars on the computer or mobile device and measures analyze vocal qualities such as pitch, pauses, pace, and volume. The software can be installed on a computer as well as a tablet or phone. Students can practice a presentation as many as times as they want in the hope to improve their scores in these measurements. We implemented the software in 7 sections of the Strategic Business Communication course and tracked their grades on 3 presentations given in class as well as compared their self-reported anxiety at the beginning and end of the quarter.

Additionally, we wanted to try other methods of learning. As we began to see more students with an increased fear of public speaking, we wondered if immersion therapy that was more realistic would help students practice in a more realistic setting. This led to trying a virtual reality software, Virtual Speech, that students could use with an Oculus headset. Due to the cost and the trial basis, we had only one headset that could use the virtual reality program; thus, students could practice during class sessions or during office hours with a teaching assistant (TA). They did not require a computer or mobile device but did have to make an appointment with a TA who helped show them how to use the headset and program. We rolled this out as a test during Winter 2022 with a planned pre-test and post-test based on the work of Boetje and van Ginkel (2021). Unfortunately, we ran into problems with student motivation to test virtual reality in a controlled space and time and were not able to complete the tests.

Findings

The software PitchVantage, proved to be effective at building student confidence and getting students to complete practices before their live presentations. PitchVantage was described as helpful by students as it allowed them to practice their speaking skills whenever they wanted without time restrictions. PitchVantage has been used for four quarters and continues to improve student confidence. While we do not have specific connections to grades, we have qualitative responses showing that students found PitchVantage helpful. The software shows that most students practiced their presentations 3 – 5 times before the live presentation. Several students did have improved scores over the quarter. Others stated in evaluations that they did not think the tool was helpful, but they did practice more. Practice is important, as it can be the key factor in a good presentation. Additionally, students provide reflections on the presentations, and many mentioned how PitchVantage helped them. Some examples are the following:

> "Firstly, what I observed in rewatching my presentations was that while I did have a projecting voice, I struggled to vary my tone. I lost points for not being able to orchestrate various tones and emotions throughout the story. Prior to my recordings in Pitch Vintage, I was unaware that I should work on my volume, pitch, variety, and enthusiasm as few people tend to tell me to work on it because I just have a loud voice. I soon realized I don't alter my pitch and am just loud at the same tone throughout presenting."
>
> "I think my general strength as a presenter is not using filler words. In my original presentation, I did not [use] any filler words. Using Pitch Vantage to practice helped me a lot with this strength."
>
> "The assignments that helped most with this were the practice sessions in PitchVantage. Being able to have a structured practice outlet where I can practice as much as I want was very helpful in growing confidence before each presentation."
>
> "Pitch Vantage helped a lot to be able to see myself present and be more aware of my pitch, eye contact, and filler words so I could address those aspects in my presentation."
>
> "What helped me improve as a speaker was using Pitch Vantage. Being able to see myself after recording my presentations put me in the position of audience member and showed me where I was going wrong so I could target where I needed to improve better. The fake audience on Pitch Vantage helped as well. By seeing when the audience got bored or was no longer paying attention, I knew I had to reengage them and be more engaging."
>
> "A lot of the videos on Pitch Vantage, although I was not a fan at first, really helped with this as well. Watching the practice videos back and figuring out what I could do better helped in

> preparation as well as figuring out on what to improve. These practice videos also really helped grow some strengths in inflecting my voice and making a better hook to really grab the audience's attention."
>
> "The assignments that helped me improve on these areas were definitely the presentations and the practices on Pitch Vantage."
>
> "For speaking and presenting, it was without a doubt the class presentations and use of Pitchvantage that helped me the most. Initially, I didn't think Pitchvantage would be so helpful. However, as I used it before each presentation, I became more comfortable with the sound of my voice, making mistakes, and looking at an audience."

The response to testing virtual reality was surprising, as few students took advantage of the opportunity. Students did not like making appointments, and many felt restricted while wearing headsets. Additionally, those who did try the program thought it was fun and useful but thought the times of practice were not ideal since they had to make an appointment with a TA.

Discussion

The results are limited to undergraduate students and to having one virtual reality headset. If students had their own headsets and could afford the cost of the virtual reality headset, the results may have been improved. Using virtual reality is something we plan to explore in the future if costs are reduced and it is easier for students to access at any time.

In conclusion, while virtual reality technology did not prove successful in improving students' public speaking skills, other technologies such as PitchVantage proved to be more effective. PitchVantage was likely more successful as students could use it at any time without needing an appointment and preparing for that appointment. The lessons learned from these experiences can be used to improve public speaking education in undergraduate classrooms. The use of technology and teaching support can help students overcome their fear of public speaking and develop crucial skills that will benefit them in their personal and professional lives.

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Belaying a Student Employability Initiative: Full-College Collaboration to Implement MOS Certifications

Leah Schell-Barber
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Employees who earn Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications get hired faster, are recognized as invaluable, earn 15 percent higher salaries, and are more often promoted than their uncertified peers (Micsullivan et al., 2022). For these reasons, many institutions of higher education are offering MOS certifications to students. However, these certifications are often offered through the institution's information technology department or through a 2-year Microsoft Office Specialist degree. These formats force students to either prepare for exams on their own or work through two years of coursework that may not be associated with their four-year program.

Cleveland State University found value in providing access and opportunity to students for preparation of these certifications through coursework already required for all business majors. A committee of faculty, administrators, and graduate assistants designed a pathway for students to earn MOS certifications as part of their degree. It is important to note that students are not required to take additional courses or fund their exams. The only cost to the student is a one-time $70 fee to access materials during their full tenure at the University.

Innovations in Business Communication

Business Communications (BC) is a required course for all business majors at my University and is predominately taught during a student's first or second year of study. As part of an initiative to make the College of Business the Cornerstone for Northeast Ohio's business graduates, the committee assessed and implemented Microsoft Office certification into existing courses.
Through the initial assessment period, BC was identified as the best course for the PowerPoint certification. A product for all Microsoft Office trainings was collaboratively chosen by the committee since it added the most value in terms of cost savings for students, longevity for student usage, and consistency in quality of the materials.

To successfully implement MOS PowerPoint Certification products into BC, I created a master course that could be copied by part-time instructors into their BC sections. Not only did this create much-needed consistency throughout these sections, but it also provided an opportunity for consistent measurement of written and oral communications goals for the AACSB Assurance of Learning Standards for institutional accreditation.

As part of the BC redesign, I incorporated PowerPoint modules and developed a course project that required students to transfer their learning from the modules to a PowerPoint presentation. My goals for this assignment were twofold. First, I wanted students to understand that the modules weren't "busy work" and that their content makes more dynamic and professional presentations. Second, students could practice PowerPoints skills and prepare for the certification exam.

During the Fall 2022 semester, all students in my BC sections were required to complete the PowerPoint modules and take the certification exam. This provided students with the opportunity to earn a badge for their career readiness materials. It also provided the College with benchmark data focused on course completion and certification exam pass rates. While our research is still preliminary, we've found that 59 percent of BC students passed the certification exam.

College-Wide Collaboration
In addition to incorporating t
he PowerPoint certification into BC, other first-year and sophomore-level courses were redesigned to include other Microsoft certifications. For example, the Software Applications course prepares students for the Excel certification; and the World of Business course introduces students to the first two modules for Word, Outlook, and Excel. These modules are reinforced in other courses such as Introductory Accounting I and a senior-level marketing research course. Overall, our goal is for students to continue using what they've learned through the certification exam preparation process throughout their tenure as undergraduates.

The implementation process was not without its setbacks. For example, before our first assessment, we found that some Software Applications courses were requiring students to interact with modules outside of Excel. This caused overlap in student assignments. Additionally, the certification exam fees are funded by outside donors. We've quickly realized that there are more students ready to take exams than there is funding to cover them. Finally, we found that some students do not take the exam process seriously and fail to prepare. This causes exam vouchers to be used without any intention by the student to pass the certification.

Conclusions

The College of Business has seen success in having over 800 unique students interact with the MOS modules. We continue to collect success data to evaluate program effectiveness. Faculty have also readjusted to eliminate overlap in modules. This College-wide initiative has been mostly successful, and future plans include requiring students to earn at least one MOS certification to graduate.

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Breaking the Mold: Say Goodbye to Dry Lectures and Hello to Engaging Business Communication Classes in a Large-Lecture Setting

Jennifer Lee Magas and Lara Mandrell
Texas Tech University

Based on its Job Outlook 2023 survey, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2022) recently advised new college graduates to "emphasize the skills they gained in their various experiences," indicating that "employers are more concerned about competency and skills [than GPA]." The organization's job outlook surveys within the last five years reveal that skills such as the ability to work in a team, communication skills (written and verbal), and interpersonal skills remain priorities for employers; and business programs often rely on business communication courses to teach these in-demand competencies.

These courses are often taught in small sections, frequently "recommended for a variety of reasons, from workload considerations to student learning needs" (Morris, 2017). In fact, "Class size and staff-to-student ratios are widely used as indicators of quality at colleges and universities" (Wright et al., 2019), no matter the subject, and those who have taught writing would likely agree that providing hands-on training, personalized coaching, and individualized feedback are more feasible with fewer students.

However, growing enrollments have stymied this goal. While enrollment has declined for many universities across the U.S. since the pandemic (Anderson, 2022), it has remained steady and even expanded in Texas (Ketterer, 2022). Texas Tech University is one whose programs have experienced persistent growth, obligating its business communication program to offer increasingly more sections to meet the demands of its many stakeholders and presenting an ongoing challenge as the program has tried to maintain its small class sizes.

Hiring more faculty to teach more sections is the instinctive and simplest solution; however, at Texas Tech, this was also an impossible solution. Instead, department administration and faculty dedicated hours to researching this problem as well as planning and implementing an alternative that not only addresses the immediate need to teach large numbers of students but also provides instruction that both engages students and effectively prepares them to enter the workforce.

In this workshop, two faculty members will share their experiences transforming small sections of a Business Communication course into a large lecture-style section at Texas Tech University in 2022. Participants will:

- Learn how to assess course goals, structure, and outcomes to create a pedagogy and instructional model for a large class that feels intimate and personalized, similar to a small class.

- Discover best practices and insights from professors who teach comparable large classes.

- Explore methods for assessing student learning, providing feedback, and updating curriculum to reflect current industry trends and practices to create a student-centered approach that emphasizes hands-on, practical experience.

- See firsthand how technology can assist with building a writing lab into the classroom.

- Identify ways to incorporate advanced technology tools, collaboration platforms, virtual assistants, and presentation software to engage students, personalize feedback, foster collaboration, and emphasize the importance of clear and concise professional writing.

- Find hands-on, real-world activities and low-stakes deliverables that are easily graded, such as email signatures, meeting agendas, and mini-credentials or certificates.

- Leave equipped with best practices, sample assignments, and technologies to modernize your business communication curriculum to meet student and administrative needs.

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Business Writing with AI: A Challenging Writing Assignment Teaching Strategic Use of AI

Jeanette Heidewald
Indiana University

You want to teach your undergraduate students effective business writing strategies as you simultaneously have them use the latest AI writing tools, but how? How can you incorporate Generative AI without simply encouraging your students to copy/paste? How can you teach best practices for writing with an AI writing assistant if you're also currently learning the technology yourself? I will review an easy-to-follow, self-written, in-class (or online teaching) assignment tested with sophomore-level business students that builds from the students' knowledge of business writing as it guides students toward the best strategies for using AI to improve their writing process and outcomes. This session is helpful for business communication and business writing instructors new to using Generative AI tools. We also welcome instructors with additional ideas for incorporating AI writing tools into our classes to join in the conversation. A handout of the assignment will be provided.

ChatGPT in the Professional Writing Classroom: Implications for Pedagogy and Policy

Emily DeJeu
Carnegie Mellon University

Kristopher Purzycki
University of Wisconsin-Green Bay

Tara Moore
Elizabethtown College

Cassandra Branham
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University

Clayton Benjamin
University of Minnesota

For ABC's 88th annual conference, organizers Mahon and Seawright charged participants with considering the future of Business Communication. In that spirit, this panel explores the implications of emerging AI writing technologies, like ChatGPT, for business communication educators. Given the fact that 89% of students indicate that they are using ChatGPT for schoolwork, and 30% of professionals are using it to assist with workplace tasks, we argue that it is crucial that communication educators think through how to address this tool's use with students and administrators in ways that encourage ethical and effective policymaking and classroom usage (Constantz, 2023; Westfall, 2023)

This first two panelists (Emily DeJeu and Kristopher Purzycki) make the case that, far from hindering students' learning, AI-assistive writing technologies like ChatGPT can assist students in building important rhetorical- and genre-related awareness and can help them author complex, advanced texts. First, DeJeu argues that ChatGPT can be integrated into existing business communication curricula in ways that enhance students' rhetorical awareness (a highly transferable kind of knowledge) and genre awareness (which is crucial for helping novices write new types of texts effectively). As an illustration, DeJeu explains how she used ChatGPT to help her students better understand how to deliver bad news clearly but gently, keeping readers' reactions in mind. Panel attendees will gain an understanding of both theoretical implications of and some practical applications for integrating ChatGPT into an introductory course to familiarize novice students with the basics of common business genres.

In his business writing courses, Purzycki works with students to train ChatGPT to prepare them to write in professions where those technologies are heavily used. In this presentation, he describes how this hands-on process helps move students beyond the tool's novelty to impart professional writing fundamentals such as peer review, critical inquiry, and mastering genre conventions. As will be discussed, guiding students through the iterative process of "teaching" ChatGPT to respond with a desired tone and vocabulary challenges students to exploit the tool's limitations and provide detailed direction to accomplish specific goals. Purzycki describes how this technique supports subsequent

Next, Tara Moore shifts the focus from ChatGPT-based pedagogy to questions of AI-related classroom policies. Moore shares how, in the absence of an official AI policy from the university, students in her senior web writing class collaborated with the instructor to draft an updated syllabus policy. Moore discusses the extent to which this collaboration affected students' sense of engagement with course content; the impacts of using or choosing to forego AI assistance on students' written submissions; and students' reflections on how their level of AI use in the course impacted

Finally, Sandy Branham and Clayton Benjamin pivot from classroom policy to policies surrounding how educators create and provide access to educational materials. They note that paywalled resources like textbooks can be cost prohibitive for students, whereas open educational resources (OERs) are accessible and increasingly popular. However, OERs' management and production often rely on educator's uncompensated and unseen labor. Branham and Benjamin explore how AI technologies, such as ChatGPT, might be used to assist in the production of OERs to reduce production time and labor and to create customizable, high-quality textbooks.

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Communicating Calm in the Classroom

Shelly Scott-Harmon
Indiana University

Since COVID turned our classrooms inside out, I have struggled to find the best ways to balance my students' anxiety with my course goals. I teach Business Presentations, a first-year public speaking course at the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University in Bloomington. During the six years I have taught the course, I have observed student anxiety levels skyrocket. While that is certainly not unique to me, what has been especially challenging has been assisting students with troublesome anxiety without undermining the very nature of a course that requires students to speak in front of classmates a dozen times a semester.

Public speaking has always produced overwhelming feelings in some students, but it has gotten more common and more extreme since the return to the classroom. Each semester, it gets a little worse. It is no longer surprising when students end speeches in tears; and early this term, two different students left the classroom in the middle of their presentations and did not return. In the first major speech, a student broke off after restarting three times, announced he hated the course, would take the "F" and refused to go on. Last fall I dealt with a student's full-on panic attack during a speech and had to clear the room. The occasional classroom crisis is not as exhausting as the daily dramas students experience, though, as they muster up the courage to show up to class. It is the accumulating anxieties that wear them and me out.

Much is being done at many levels to address these issues. Our school has a Balance Room conveniently located in our classroom building where students can go to decompress. Balance at Kelley is a student organization that promotes mental health. Balance Week occurs before final exams each semester with events where students can pet dogs, smash things, pick up wellness kits and eat healthy snacks. Our department provides resources and hosts seminars for faculty to attend to our own mental health while learning ways to assist students in doing the same.

For my part, I have tried to adjust my teaching each semester to address students' changing needs. Last year I concluded that I was not doing enough. The brief chats and periodic exercises were helping a few students, but managing anxiety with a one-size-fits-all approach was ineffective overall. Therefore, I am making changes by eliminating or abbreviating some elements of conventional lesson plans to make room for a more intensive and consistent schedule of varied activities and discussions to address anxiety. Investing time in such things saves time on presentation days. On day one, I acknowledge that missing nearly two years of in-person activities has put us at a disadvantage but presented us with opportunities as well. I share personal experiences to normalize students' feelings and emphasize they need not feel shame.

Each class session, I work to communicate calm. I take two approaches: calm them down and hype them up. Calming includes tapping technique, visualization, expressions of gratitude, deep breathing, mindfulness and yoga stretches. Hyping them up includes a dance party button, walkup songs, student energy coaches, and lots of group warmups. Students never enter my dimly lit classroom to silence: music plays and folks are chatting. I invite them to bring in comfort items, journals, and sketchbooks. I hold extra office hours for students who want to discuss successes and failures in dealing with anxiety and make the final fifteen minutes of some classes optional so we can experiment with new calming activities. Together we are learning how to calm ourselves and coach others to do so as well.

Construct "G.I.F.T.S" (Great Ideas for Teaching Students) with Five Essential Blocks

Yuxiang Du
Baylor University

As an educator, I am always interested in innovative ways to motivate my students and help them learn and practice skills. New teaching ideas and activities were developed and implemented every semester to improve class instruction and engagement. These new ideas lead to six G.I.F.T.S. (Great Ideas for Teaching Students) presentations at the National Communication Association (NCA) conventions in the past five years.

My teaching ideas concentrate on prevalent topics that are frequently covered in various communication courses. These topics are power, perception, creativity, innovation, culture, brainstorming, leadership, teamwork, active listening, and verbal communication.

In this presentation, I want to share with you the five crucial building blocks I use to build and develop my teaching ideas.

- **Active learning:** good teaching ideas require students to be actively involved in the learning process. They are given tasks and activities to complete, and they have to work together in groups to complete them. This approach allows students to engage with the material in a more meaningful way and encourages collaboration and communication skills.

- **Student-centered learning**: good teaching ideas focus on the needs and interests of the students. The activities and discussions are designed to be relevant and engaging to the students, which helps to increase their motivation and interest in the subject matter.

- **Creativity and innovation:** good teaching ideas place an emphasis on creativity and innovation. They encourage students to think outside the box, generate new ideas, and come up with solutions to problems. These skills are essential for success in today's rapidly changing world.

- **Communication skills:** good teaching ideas require students to develop effective communication skills. They must be able to communicate their ideas and work effectively in groups. This is a valuable skill that is essential for success in any field.

- **Critical thinking:** good teaching ideas require students to think critically and analyze information. They are given tasks that require them to evaluate the success of an innovation or brainstorm new ideas. These activities help to develop students' analytical and problem-solving skills.

To illustrate the application of these five building blocks in developing teaching ideas, I will share a sample idea that I have not presented in previous conferences.

Teaching idea: Teaching innovation and creativity with a crowdfunding activity

Learning objectives:

1. to explain the diffusion of innovation theory.
2. to analyze the five attributes of innovation that contribute to its successful adoption.
3. to design effective communication methods to facilitate the successful adoption of an innovation.

Procedure:

1. Use the example of Concord, the supersonic passenger airplane, to explain the diffusion of innovation theory and the five attributes of innovation.
2. Use the following questions to further understand these concepts:
    a. How successful were the Concords?
    b. Which one of the five attributes is the primary contributor to its success or failure?
    c. What could have been done to increase its success?
    d. Which of the following innovations do you think has the potential to become successful and mainstream in the United States? and why? A) self-driving cars; B) Metaverse; C) high speed trains D) solar panels for home
3. Show students some projects/innovations on crowdfunding websites such as kickstarter.com. Randomly assign students into groups of four to six students.
4. To generate innovative ideas that can be put up on crowdfunding sites for support, each group will randomly select a category to work on. Instructors can facilitate this process by using folded post-it notes, and categories could include toys, games, technology, fashion/clothes, home, tools, art, and craft.
5. Ask them to evaluate their innovation and chances of successful adoption:
    a. relative advantage level (0%-100%):
    b. compatibility level (0%-100%):
    c. complexity level (0%-100%):
    d. trialability level (0%-100%):

e. observability level (0%-100%):

f. chances of being funded (0%-100%):

g. chances of mainstream adoption (0%-100%):

6. At the end of the group discussion, assuming that their innovation is going to be funded, students discuss how to make their idea mainstream. This includes developing marketing plans and selecting effective communication channels. The group can discuss various strategies to promote their innovation and make it more appealing to the target audience.

7. The next step is to present the ideas and discussion results to the class, allowing for constructive feedback and critique.

Creating Change: Client-Based Writing Projects in an Online Course

Danica L. Schieber
Sam Houston State University

An essential part of our role as instructors is helping students gain skills and experience to prepare for their future careers. Helping our students prepare for the job search and building professional communication skills is also often a large part of business communication courses (Amoroso & Burke, 2018). Many business communication instructors like to include real client-based projects to give their students the opportunity to write for a real audience outside of the classroom. Many researchers have analyzed the benefits of these assignments, such as solving community problems, exposure to authentic writing situations and client feedback, and transfer of learning from the classroom to students' future workplaces (Blakeslee, 2001; Bourelle, 2012; Cyphert, 2006; Tuomi-Grohn, 2003; Yancey, Robertson, & Taczak 2014). However, it can be slightly more challenging for both students and instructors to complete a community engagement project in an online asynchronous course.

Purpose: This presentation will highlight students' work with local clients in the community and their professional development working as consultants in an online business communication course. Students had the opportunity to work with the Montgomery County Women's Center to create a real project based on their business communication need. After the project was completed, students reflected on the process and data was collected following IRB approval.

Goals: The research questions include:

RQ 1: How did students describe their experience working with a real client online?
RQ 2: Were there skills that students felt they improved upon?
RQ 3: How do students feel that working for a real client made them more marketable?

Methodology: After reflection data was collected, it was organized into themes based on Grounded Theory. The themes that emerged from the data were then organized and examined further.

Outcomes: Results from the student reflections will be discussed. Experiences and ideas for teaching online community engagement will also be discussed. Moving forward, future research can focus on how online academic and community engagement projects differ from in-person projects and how that can impact the student experience.

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Establishing Corporate-Classroom Partnerships: A Guide to Providing Students with Real-World Business Communication Projects

Adam Lloyd
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Many business communication instructors are aware that partnering with companies for their classes to create deliverables that will be used by these organizations teaches students numerous skills that they cannot get from traditional case studies, self-generated business proposals, or writing for hypothetical audiences. However, the logistics of developing these courses can be challenging. This talk is aimed at faculty or universities who don't currently have a program for cultivating these partnerships and provides guidance for creating such a program from scratch, including outreach and recruitment, selecting and structuring projects for the benefits to all stakeholders, and examples of the deliverables these partnerships can engender.

Over the past six years, as professional track faculty at the University of Maryland, I developed and have taught a course that brings in different companies for each of my business writing sections (ranging from national conglomerates like 3M, to nonprofits such as the American Heart Association, to post-seed startups). The deliverables my students have created include corporate diversity statements, multimodal marketing campaigns, onboarding materials, webpages, sales funnels, descriptions for internal LMS modules, statements of qualifications, and more.

To mitigate some of the pitfalls and trial-and-error that one may face when initiating one's own classroom-business partnerships, I offer advice on five areas critical to the success of these collaborations.

1. Resources and Outreach: finding potential partner companies and methods for persuading them to participate.

2. Selecting/Developing Projects: collaborating with partner companies to identify projects that will lead to success for your course, your students, and your partner companies.

3. Setting Expectations: structuring project assignments, scheduling ongoing consultations with the partner companies, and evaluating project outcomes.

4. Pre-Collaboration Preparation: providing students with a knowledge base that allows for the effective creation of the deliverables.

5. Evaluation and Follow-Up: soliciting feedback from students and partner companies to refine and improve future iterations of this business partnership-based course.

For those less familiar with the advantages of partnering with businesses on course projects, the following are several of the outcomes:

1. Students are required to engage in ongoing communication and consultation with representatives from the partner company. These discussions, inquiries, feedback sessions, and presentations with members of senior management and (often) founders and CEOs aid students in developing meaningful professional dialogues that exemplify those they will have in their post-academic lives.

2. Mirroring actual workplaces, adaptability and learning to pivot are essential, as timelines, scope, focus, and/or requirements for the deliverables can change mid-project, depending upon each company's evolving needs and circumstances.

3. Collaborative problem-solving, the ability to take ownership of decisions, and developing written deliverables without step-by-step instructions or rubrics moves students beyond academic assignment-based paradigms.

4. With projects originating from a variety of industries, students are introduced to business genres and fields less frequently encountered in traditional business communication courses.

5. Students must analyze and adopt a company's tone, style, language, and be fully cognizant of the intertextual relationship between their work and that which preceded it, as well as the responses their projects will generate within the company and among its customers/clients.

6. Typically, there is greater student enthusiasm and effort, knowing that their work will be assessed by business professionals and will live on and provide utility beyond the semester's end. Furthermore, students develop greater confidence, having evidence that they can take what is learned in the classroom and translate that into effective work products.

7. Finally, students complete the semester having created documents capable of being included in a portfolio, having experience that can be added to their resumes and discussed in job interviews, and having built valuable career connections (and the occasional job offer from a partner company).

Ethical OER Creation and Remixing: Respecting Copyright Laws and Authors' Intent

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Rationale

The 2019 UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (UNESCO, 2019) has made OER a priority for increasing access to education. While there has been an increase of the publication of OER textbooks, and collections of OER on sites such as OpenStax, OER Commons, and the Open Textbook Library, these catalogs do not yet compete with the variety of content offered by traditional textbook publishers.

OER textbooks vary in their usage, author expertise, peer review, diverse perspectives, and version of open license. Faculty need to understand the legal and ethical elements of OER if they wish to appropriately incorporate OER in their classrooms and lobby for OER support in their colleges and universities.

Some barriers to incorporating OER textbooks include the availability of relevant and peer-reviewed texts, and faculty willingness and ability to author new OER texts (Amiel, 2013; Butcher & Hoosen, 2012). Thus remixing (adapting, combining, and adding additional material to create customized versions of an existing OER text) may be a viable route for faculty to make the switch from traditionally published textbooks to OER textbooks. The remixing process can be ethically complex though as authors paraphrase traditionally published texts and modify original authors' interpretations and voices in existing texts.

Using AI text generators such as ChatGPT to write OER content could further complicate the ethics of the remixing process. Proper citation of AI-generated content is evolving and there are documented concerns as to the accuracy and bias of content (Khlaif, 2023). Furthermore, AI tools' ability to avoid plagiarism is suspect. After being prompted to write textbook content, ChatGPT said it used "training on a vast corpus of texts, including academic textbooks, articles, and other relevant resources in the field of business communication" to generate requested textbook content (ChatGPT, personal communication, 27

Upholding clear ethical guidelines can increase the credibility of the OER remixing process and assist in legitimizing the use of OER in the business communication classroom. However, beyond the restrictions and allowances of copyright law and Open Licenses, there is no consensus on best ethical practices for authoring and remixing OER. Previous w

Including librarian involvement during the OER development process is recommended, as librarians are trained in copyright, licensing, and intellectual property rights (Coyne & Alfis

Panelists will share their personal experiences navigating ethical issues and open licenses as they write and remix OER and facilitate a

Some questions may include:

- How can we ethically edit original authors' interpretations and voices when remixing OER?
- How can we avoid plagiarism and over-relying on popular textbooks when writing and remixing OER?
- How can we leverage library resources at our institutions to navigate ethical considerations?
- How do we select the right Creative Commons License for our work?
- How can we ethically use AI to generate written and visual content for OER?

Open Licenses
The Creative Commons copyright licenses give individuals and groups the ability to choose how their creative work can be copied, distributed, edited, remixed, and built upon (Creative Commons, 2017).

There are 6 types of open licenses (Creative Commons, 2017):

1. Attribution (CC BY)
This license lets others distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon work, even for commercial purposes, when credit is given to the original creator(s). This license allows for the maximum dissemination of materials.

2. Attribution-ShareAlike (CC BY-SA)
This license lets others remix, adapt, and build upon work, even for commercial purposes, when credit is given to the original creator(s). Any new (remixed, adapted, supplemented) creation and derivatives must be licensed under the same terms as the original work.

3. Attribution-NoDerivs (CC BY-ND)
This license lets others reuse work, even for commercial purposes, when credit is given to the original creator(s). However, derivatives cannot be shared with others.

4. Attribution-NonCommercial (CC BY-NC)
This license lets others remix, adapt, and build upon work for non-commercial purposes, with credit given to the original creator(s). Any new (remixed, adapted, supplemented) creation and derivatives must be non-commercial but do not have to have the same license as the original work.

5. Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA)
This license lets others remix, adapt, and build upon work for non-commercial purposes, when credit is given to the original creator(s). Any new (remixed, adapted, supplemented) creation and derivatives must be non-commercial and must be licensed under the same terms as the original work.

6. Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND)
This license allows others to download and share work when credit is given to the original creator(s). No changes can be made to the original work, and it cannot be used commercially.

Conclusion

To improve the quality, production, and acceptance of OER textbooks, faculty need to be confident in their understanding of Open Licenses and ethical authoring and remixing of OER textbooks. This panel will provide participants the opportunity to discuss ethical guidelines and personal experiences in authoring and remixing OER.

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Exploring How AI Writing Tool Instruction Shapes Attitudes

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The explosion of interest in writing tools powered by artificial intelligence (AI) since the end of November in 2022 has changed the landscape for all educators, especially those of us who teach students about content creation. A Google Scholar search for “chatgpt” on March 21 retrieved 1,350 publications already in 2023. Compare that to the total number for 2022 at 300, and the explosion is not just hyperbole.

Some faculty have reacted with fear and outrage (McMurtrie, 2022). In one article, the authors promised their readers both challenges and opportunities associated with AI tools, but the only opportunities appeared in the section written by ChatGPT3 (Cotton et al., 2023). On the other hand, some faculty have thought about this technological disruption more as a teaching moment (McMurtrie, 2023). For example, ABC’s Eastern Region hosted a virtual panel early in 2023 to help business communication instructors deal constructively with ChatGPT in their current classrooms (ABC Eastern Region, 2023).

Although AI tools have been creating news stories for many years (Jung et al., 2017; Montal & Reich, 2017), their use for business and technical content creation is relatively novel (Darics et al., 2023; Pratt, 2022). Our technical and professional communication research group also sees the newfound awareness of AI writing tools as an opportunity—perhaps even a mandate—to enhance our own teaching of content creation. As Rudolph and his co-authors wrote,

> It is ironic that ChatGPT has caused so many anxieties in the academic community, and yet it may prove most useful to teachers when it comes to facilitating more innovative teaching and learning. (Rudolph et al., 2023)

In this paper, we will share what we are learning about the impact of deliberate instruction in using AI writing tools on student attitudes toward the technology. For this presentation, we will focus on our use of two AI writing tools for different phases of the writing process in two courses taken by students pursuing either an MA in professional and technical communication or a graduate certificate in technical writing.

In the grant and proposal writing course, 19 students used ChatGPT3 for two interrelated assignments. Students completed a tutorial on the use of strategic prompts to get the best results from the tool. In the first assignment, the tool was used during the pre-writing phase by helping students conceptualize their major grant or proposal assignment. Through prompting, students focused on establishing a baseline logic that identified their funding needs and the benefits of securing those funds. In the second assignment, students used the tool during the revision phase to simulate a panel of colleagues to get feedback on their proposal’s concept, identifying strengths that could be enhanced in the final narrative, and weaknesses that could either be minimized or differently presented.

In the style in technical writing course, 13 students used Hyper.ai for one assignment. Students watched the instructor demonstrate the use of the tool. In the first part of the assignment, students used the tool for drafting. They created versions of a blog post in maximally distinct tones of voice, one casual and one formal, using only the functions in HyperWrite and HyperChat. In the second part of the assignment, students analyzed the linguistic style differences between the two tone versions created by Hyper.ai and concluded with an assessment of the tool's effectiveness.

In both courses, students were asked to reflect in writing on the AI tools they used to complete assignments during the course. To determine attitudes toward AI writing tools, we requested levels of agreement on a Likert scale for statements such as

- Using AI to brainstorm during content creation is ethical.
- Using AI to draft during content creation is ethical.
- Using AI during content creation requires acknowledgment of the tool(s) used.
- Someone suspected of using AI for content creation should be reported.

For comparison, we are also collecting data about AI writing tool usage and attitudes from teachers and content creators who have not received instruction.

The quantitative results from the survey and the qualitative results from student reflections will be reported. Our early results show considerable variation in student attitudes and are helping us identify areas we must discuss with them and our faculty colleagues in the future. Ultimately, we hope the data about attitudes toward AI writing tools with and without instruction may be beneficial to other instructors.

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How to Use Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Your Business Communication Course

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Our faculty panel will describe how we used artificial intelligence in our business communication classes. Although a few business communication faculty have researched AI and the potential impact on our work (Getchell, 2022), tools like ChatGPT, Bing AI, and others have come quickly and surprised even those most closely following the technology. Despite legitimate concerns about these tools, our faculty panel has had success in incorporating AI into our classrooms. As we continue to experiment, our goal is to share our experience with other ABC members.

Faculty Need Business Communication Class Examples
ABC members want to share ideas for using ChatGPT and other AI technologies. A presentation on the topic hosted by the Eastern, Canadian, and Midwestern regions drew more than 90 faculty on Zoom. Participants expressed appreciation for the positive approach: ideas for embracing rather than banning chatbots in the classroom.

An increasing number of articles and videos illustrate how faculty can use AI in their classes, but we need more business communication examples. Our discipline includes connections to industry, applied assignments, and writing criteria that allow for specific, innovative approaches to using AI.

Use Cases Illustrate Results of Our Experimentation
Use cases will describe how we interacted with the technology, how it performed, and what results we found. We'll explain what we learned and how faculty might adapt our process to meet their own goals. Our ideas will evolve as the technology continues to evolve in the coming months; however, our current plans include the following.

a) Using AI tools to support audience analysis and storytelling. This case will look at how to leverage ChatGPT through prompts that explicitly break down rhetorical situations and give specific tasks that support rhetorical thinking. For example, students can create user personas by creating prompts from UX design frameworks that provide context for understanding design and writing in any context.

b) Using AI tools to support instructional design. This case will explore the use of LLM tools like ChatGPT and multimodal tools for generating instructional content in support of learning design. These tools can help support the development and design of lecture videos, interactive quizzes, and creative challenges. AI tools can act as an intelligent assistant that can extend faculty's capacities as instructional designers.

c) Using AI tools for student writing feedback. This case explores the value of using LLMs to provide feedback on students' draft writing assignments. With AI tools acting as peer reviewers, students compare comments to their own. Students practice adjusting prompts with the goal of getting iterative feedback on their drafts to improve their writing and to improve feedback to their peers.

d) Using AI tools for student research and presentations. This case includes an assignment for students to research AI and a topic of their choice (e.g., ethical or legal implications, privacy, accuracy, crisis communications, sustainability). Within those topics, students choose a narrow focus and deliver a short presentation in class. Students may use LLMs for their research and presentation development and report on the results. The goal is for students to discover the value and limitations of emerging AI tools.

e) Using a chatbot for ideation and critical analysis in a traditional business communication class. This case explores the opportunities and challenges students encounter when using a chatbot in the ideation and critical analysis stages of the writing and presentation process. The case centers on usage in a traditional upper-level business communication class. Knowing AI doesn't always yield accurate results, but interacting with it can help students develop critical thinking, organizational, and writing skills. This case demonstrates how business students, in particular, can adopt what's useful and discard what isn't from chatbot results. How can faculty support students as they prepare to use these newly developed skills in the workplace? What industries are welcoming this approach, and what are the ramifications?

Faculty Must Prepare for How AI Will Affect Our Assignments

Our faculty panel also will address what a business writing assignment might look like in ten years. Given our experience and current thinking, what should faculty consider as they envision a future assignment? We'll offer insight on the skills and abilities students will need in the future and how faculty can begin to prepare.

Faculty are still reeling from the initial rollout of ChatGPT. Our panel will offer ABC members ideas and, perhaps more importantly, hope. Seeing tangible ways they can use AI, faculty will gain confidence to incorporate AI into their own classes for positive results.

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Incorporating Virtual Reality and Innovative Technologies In/Out of the Classroom

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University of the Incarnate Word

High-immersion virtual reality (VR) technology is often associated with gaming. Yet, it is increasingly popular in educational contexts due to its potential to engage and motivate learners. Education is not the only space where VR has been considered. Counselors and psychologists were early adopters of VR equipment to help clients manage phobias, including public speaking. Often paired with Cognitive Behavior Therapy, therapists found VR an effective mechanism to reduce public speaking fear and one that was well-received by clients (Wallach et al., 2009).

Communication educators would be wise to consider this work, especially given the reality that many individuals struggle with speech anxiety, social anxiety, or a combination of the two. This reality seems to have only been heightened during COVID, when many people found themselves in quarantine, isolation, or simply consuming more media than engaging with people.

There are some examples of communication scholars thinking and talking about VR's educational potential for students in public speaking courses who struggle with anxiety (Davis et al., 2020). Virtual reality has potential in the educational space that goes beyond helping students address communication apprehension due to the situated and embodied learning inherent with VR (Gallagher et al., 2020).

Digital connection, metaverse, and VR are all around us. Even still, integrating VR in the communication courses is not (yet) commonplace, and perhaps it may take a long while before getting there. At minimum, communication educators should know what VR is and its potential influence. This presentation will highlight just a few ways that communication educators can begin thinking about and potentially introducing VR into the classroom in safe, fun, and effective ways. Specifically, I will share my experiences and learnings introducing VR headsets into communication courses through activities like mock interviews, “dyad dates,” and delivering ted-style presentations. I will discuss what I have learned about VR headsets, including implementable practices and potential hazards.

With any remaining time, the presenter will open the floor for conversation related to the pedagogical, theoretical, and pragmatic issues related to VR in the classroom.

Making It Real: Strategies to Make the Business Communication Course More Like Communicating in Business.

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University of Pennsylvania

My usually vivacious and provocative students stared, slack jawed and silent. I could see their minds twist—trying to reconcile the story I had just told with their lived experience. “Yes,” I repeated. “The COO said, ‘I don’t have time for this’ and ended the Zoom call in frustration.” My class struggled to process the idea that an executive could and would storm out (or Zoom out) in the middle of a presentation! The reality stung.

Students need to learn the real stakes of communicating in the workplace. Communication skills are critical to professional success. However, many students graduate without attaining essential skills, leading to a significant gap in proficiency between employers' expectations and the reality of work.

The first half of the panel will examine how business communication differs from other types of communication. Then, we will explore strategies to make business communication feel real in the classroom.

Business Communication vs “Other” Communication

Traditional business communication courses can resemble English classes more than boardroom settings. As a result, students may overemphasize formal presentations while neglecting routine communication, which is crucial to career success. To bridge this gap, educators must make learning business communication more like speaking and writing in business. A key difference is that business communication happens in multiple stages, through different channels, to varied stakeholders. This distinction is something we’ve coined, “The Business Communication Continuum.” Business writing and speaking are not discrete communications. Successful communicators use varied strategies in pursuit of a longer-term goal.

The Business Communication Continuum model breaks away from the one-and-done style of traditional assignments. It illustrates the multiple stages, stakeholders, and shifting deadlines of real business communication. The story told to the class was a real example about a high stakes meeting between a development team and senior execs. The meeting ended abruptly after the developers talked *ad nauseam* about product specs, oblivious to the specific slice that the COO needed in that specific meeting.

Making Business Communication Feel “Real”

In the second half of the panel, the spotlight will turn to the attendees as we invite you to try activities that push undergraduates past a student mentality. Because many undergraduates lack extensive business experience, they do not appreciate the difference between business communication and other types of communication. The late teens/early twenties are also a period when emerging adults begin to lose their focus on their own needs and desires and start to recognize the needs and desires of the people around them.

Even when students intellectually understand that they are crafting a message for a specific audience, they can struggle. They are so enmeshed in what they believe that they cannot pinpoint what their audience needs to know. How many of us have sat through polished presentations that do not address real audience concerns? When explanations and examples don't work, students need to "Feel the Pain" to change their perspective.

Simple interactive activities can help short-circuit the focus on self and enable students to change their perspective. Pivoting to a new audience with only minutes to prepare or pulling the purpose out of a poorly written message can be painful or uncomfortable for even confident communicators. The discomfort is essential—frustrating students into higher levels of understanding. The only way to become a better Business Communicator is to do it.

The road to real influence is long. Strolling into the CEO's office to spontaneously pitch your brilliant proposal only gets you a promotion in the movies. In real life, a stunt like that gets you fired. Learning the Business Communication Continuum and "Feeling the Pain" has helped our undergraduates thrive after graduation. Come prepared to step out of your comfort zone and participate in this interactive presentation.

Mastery Class: Getting Undergraduates to Do the Work

Jenny Morse
Appendance, Inc.

In the post-CoVID era, undergraduate students are underprepared for college-level work because they have spent 1-3 years in an environment with less accountability. Students may be more inclined to press the boundaries of academic misconduct, less engaged in course material, less able to focus on course content, and lack confidence interacting with other students. Additionally, more students are struggling with mental health issues and are entering our classrooms requiring more support and flexibility around how we are teaching. For example, at Colorado State University, some instructors are receiving notices that students cannot be given any deadlines due to the stress and anxiety deadlines create.

The traditional educational model was not designed to address most of these problems. The model has been to present knowledge to students and test them on that knowledge. While that model has been outdated for maybe 20 years with the extraordinary reach of the internet, it is even more outdated given the attitudes and objectives of our current undergraduates who have access to all the knowledge and information they could ever want without once opening an assigned textbook. Furthermore, the incredible pace of developing AI tools means these same students struggle to understand ethical boundaries on what counts as their own work or what work they would even need to produce on their own.

Given this current state, new models for education are necessary. One such model is that of mastery. In the mastery model, students must achieve particular skills or outcomes before they can move forward in a course. Rather than a course design that presents a body of knowledge, tests students' retention, and then moves to the next body of knowledge, mastery allows each student to make progress at their own pace.

This session presents one mastery model as designed for the Business Communication course required for all undergraduate business majors at Colorado State University.

Benefits of the mastery model are that

1. assignments are completed in order, but do not have official due dates
2. the final grade is based on the number of assignments mastered within the term of the semester, so all passing students have mastered all course concepts
3. students must revise their own work according to the specified skills and tools, so even if a rough draft were AI produced, students must figure out how to improve it using what they are learning in class

4. rather than assigning students specific homework, quizzes, or other content, students must figure out which tools they benefit from to create passing assignments

5. in the classroom, the instructor meets one-on-one with every student in attendance during every class session, allowing for face-to-face feedback and guidance

6. because of the in-class contact, grading is more frequent but less time-intensive since feedback is verbal rather than written

7. students have flexibility to work around other courses or jobs

In addition to sharing data collected from running the mastery model over 3 semesters, the presentation will also include resources like syllabi, assignments, rubrics, and other guidance that will allow other instructors to adapt the mastery model for their own courses.

PitchVantage's Partial Advantage: Blending Individual Practice on an AI-based Platform with Coaching from Trained TAs and a Positive Classroom Environment Lowers Students' Speaking Anxiety

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At the University of Colorado-Boulder's Leeds School of Business, students in certain sections of a first-year communication strategy class use PitchVantage, a cloud-based presentation recording and simulation tool. The platform uses avatars to provide real-time feedback on students' presentations, assessing elements such as eye contact, gestures, and vocal variety. Avatars either nod or smile when student presenters are presenting smoothly–that is, when employing strong eye contact, gestures, and vocal variety–or turn away and even check their watches when presenters present poorly. The platform also offers instant AI coaching on vocalics, body language, and content structure.

To investigate the effectiveness of PitchVantage in reducing public speaking anxiety (PSA), we examined its use in comparison to fully immersive virtual reality (VR) experiences. We also explored the role of trained TAs and a positive classroom environment in reducing PSA.
Our hypothesis is that combining individual practice on PitchVantage with coaching from trained TAs and a supportive classroom environment can be effective in reducing students' PSA. Additionally, we considered the importance of allowing students to control their own educational tasks, including self-pacing their exposure to virtual social threats by controlling additional variables such as audience size and avatars' reactions, for optimal anxiety reduction.

Previous research has shown that practicing a speech can lower students' anxiety about delivering their presentations to live in-class audiences (Ayres et al., 1998). Similarly, fully immersive VR platforms have been found to reduce PSA in individual, self-paced practice with simulated audiences (Harris et al., 2002; Takac et al, 2019). The reactions of a student's peers in a classroom can also account for more changes in PSA than skills training alone (Ayres et al., 1998), highlighting the importance of creating a positive classroom environment (Finn et al., 2009). Such a positive environment is particularly important given that today's college students experience higher levels of stress and anxiety than previous generations and are "less likely to be self-reliant" (Clark and Austin, 2022).

Control-value theory proposes that students prefer taking on educational tasks if they are able to control their trajectory of success (Pekrun et al., 2006). PitchVantage allows students to control only one variable, audience size, but research has shown that self-pacing one's exposure to virtual social threat can reliably alleviate anxiety and arousal (Premkumar et al., 2021).

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Professors Should Use Rhetorical Theory for Generation Z Students Who Struggle with the Imposter Syndrome

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Introduction

Professors in the classroom have a direct impact on the self-confidence of Generation Z students. According to the Evergreen State College, "Rhetorical discourse characteristically is (1) planned, (2) adapted to an audience, (3) shaped by human motives, (4) responsive to a situation, (5) persuasion-seeking, and (6) concerned with contingent issues" (para. 3). Rhetorical discourse is an approach that professors can use to help Generation Z students minimize self-doubt. Professors provide written and verbal feedback to students and must determine how to convey criticism and strengthen their self-confidence. The origin of rhetorical theory can be traced back to Aristotle in ancient Greece; it means the ability to persuade. As humans, we intentionally and unintentionally use rhetorical discourse to persuade others to perform specific actions or to believe something (Mayfield et al., 2020).

In the classroom, professors communicate with students and observe their behaviors related to how they handle successes and failures. Some students mentally self-sabotage their ability to believe in themselves. Their negative thought patterns, if not addressed, can harm their academic and job successes. Professors using rhetorical discourse through various communication channels can impact students' abilities to be self-assured in the classroom and the workplace. Professors that use tactful, persuasive responses through written and verbal communication can significantly affect students.

The imposter syndrome, which was initially called "imposter phenomenon" by Clance and Imes (1978), describes a person who feels mentally inadequate (has self-doubt). However, that person does have the skills to succeed. Research has shown that students between the ages of 19 and 24 experience the imposter syndrome at a high rate, and some students are severely depressed (Alrayyes, et al., 2020; Meadhbh Murray, et al., 2022). Students may exhibit one of the five imposter syndrome stereotypes: perfectionist, natural genius, superman/superwoman, expert, and soloist (Burton, 2011; Feigofsky, 2022). Although the students will have tangible evidence of personal success, those suffering from imposterism attribute their accomplishments to sheer luck (Alrayyes et al., 2022).

Imposter syndrome traits can have significant effects on students that may cause anxiety, burnout, and depression (Alrayyes et al., 2020; Clance & Imes, 1978; Meadhbh Murray et al., 2022). According to Alrayyes et al.'s (2022) study, female and minority students suffer the most from imposter syndrome habits. It is natural to feel that one may fail at something or have self-doubt about one's ability to accomplish a goal (Imposter Syndrome, 2023). Most students can think their way out of a pessimistic thought pattern. However, some students cannot, and allow those negative thoughts to fester, which causes self-doubt.

Purpose and Goal

The purpose of this presentation is to help professors identify Generation Z students who suffer from self-sabotaging behaviors.

The goal is to present examples of rhetorical discourse responses that professors can use to counterbalance the imposter syndrome in Generation Z students. The in-person presentation handout will have more examples.

Imposter Syndrome Stereotypes

(1) The perfectionist: "They believe that perfection defines competence, and anything less than that is considered a failure" (Feigofsky, 2022, p. 1).

> Rhetorical Discourse response: It's okay to be imperfect and to have flaws. Those imperfections do not diminish your ability to achieve. Goldman and Brann's (2016) study finds that students want professors to speak to them, not speak down to them.

(2) Natural genius: "They measure their competence by how easily any achievement/success comes to them" (Feigofsky, 2022, p. 1).

> Rhetorical Discourse response: Some people have a natural talent for certain things, and that's okay. Generous et al.'s (2023), study revealed that students want professors to communicate their personal experiences and relate them to the content.

(3) Superman/Superwoman: "They view competence as the ability to juggle multiple things at once and succeed" (Feigofsky, 2022, p. 1).

> Rhetorical Discourse response: Multi-tasking is a good skill set, and it's okay for you to handle one task at a time. Generous et al.'s (2023) findings indicated that professors should communicate with students about prioritizing their well-being.

(4) Expert: "They measure competence based on their volume of knowledge/skill" (Feigofsky, 2022, p. 1).

> Rhetorical Discourse response: Don't compare yourself to others; you don't have to know everything.

(5) Soloist: "They measure competence by being successful on their own" (Feigofsky, 2022, p. 1).

> Rhetorical Discourse response: Being self-sufficient is good, but remember there is strength in numbers. Goldman and Brann's (2016) study revealed that students' perceptions of relatedness were promoted through group work.

Outcomes and Summary

The learning outcomes for using rhetorical discourse are to assist professors in recognizing students with self-sabotaging behaviors and to strengthen students' self-assurance.

For this proposal, five imposter syndrome stereotypes were discussed. The in-person presentation will include a handout with more imposter syndrome behaviors and rhetorical discourse responses. Thus, rhetorical discourse is a form of communication that professors can use to teach students to control their thoughts so they can succeed academically and professionally.

Relationship-Rich Education: Theory to Practice

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While relationship-rich education is not a new concept, pandemic-induced digital interactions brought to the forefront questions about effectively relating to students in an online environment. The difficulties instructors faced in forming rich relationships through virtual connections remained close to mind as many schools returned to traditional classroom settings. The challenges of teaching in an online environment highlighted the impact of relationship-rich pedagogical practices in traditional, in-person classrooms.

Prominent education scholars, including hooks (1994), Noddings (2013), and Freire (2005) have long argued for centering the relational component of schooling. In their texts, these scholars seem to take for granted in-person, educational spaces. Although scholarship related to online pedagogy is growing as the prominence of online programs and courses has increased, even prior to COVID-19 mandates, the bulk of relational pedagogy scholarship focused on in-person teaching. The gap is not surprising given the relative newness of online schooling and the impact of the medium on the means available for forming relationships. Although relationally focused scholars advocate for specific practices (e.g., connecting students' interests to the curriculum), they also speak in more ambiguous terms, such as "love" (hooks), "engrossment" (Noddings), and "humanizing" (Freire). While the ambiguous terminology points to the impossibility of reducing relationally rich education to a set of techniques, the lack of specifics may leave educators at a loss for putting theories into practice.

A recent publication by Felten and Lambert (2020), Relationship-rich Education: How Human Connections Drive Success in College, draws from 385 interviews of students and faculty across the US to provide practical, context-dependent, and evidence-based means for developing relationship-rich practices. The authors recommend four principles to guide relationship-rich education: (1) relentless welcome (2) inspired learning (3) webs of relationships, (4) meaningful questions. The interviews were conducted in both small, liberal arts colleges and large, public universities. In short, the authors advocate for relationship-rich environments, including practices, policies, and priorities that provide multiple touch points for students. The goal is for all students to have access to inviting and caring spaces so that they may develop relationships that enhance their educational experiences and ultimately lead to positive student outcomes.

Felten and Lambert's (2020) empirical approach provides examples of relationship-rich education in practice, providing practitioners with concrete applications for putting the theory into practice. While the authors' scope ranges from institutional policies to mentoring relationships, they dedicate an entire chapter to creating relationship-rich classrooms. Too often, there is a disincentive for professors to take the time and care to facilitate relationship-rich classroom environments. David M. Levy, professor in the Information School at the University of Washington, clarifies: "What I have tried to do in my classrooms is communicate to students that I am available to them, but also to create the conditions in the classroom so that students talk with one another. As teachers, we are being measured and evaluated all the time on things that don't have to do with what I think are central human values, like our ability to be full human beings in relation to one another" (Felten & Lambert, 2020, p. 80). While there tends to be a lack of institutionalized support for relationship-rich education, the positive effects on student outcomes and satisfaction point to the value.

Presenters in this session will highlight the theoretical foundations and the positive outcomes associated with relationship-rich education. Presenters will elucidate the theory through examples taken from their own classrooms as well as the department's culture, providing practical approaches to enhance relationship-rich education. Audience members will participate in guided discussions in small groups, with the goal of identifying practices, assignments, and approaches to apply in their respective contexts.

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Scaffold, Sounding Board, or Springboard? Examining ChatGPT's Role in Our Classrooms

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Proposal Overview

Business communication instructors and course coordinators from Temple University, the University of Arkansas, and the University of Iowa discuss and model how they have used ChatGPT and similar tools in their business communication courses. This session both provides several innovative instructional methods for instructors and contributes to the overall discussion regarding to what extent these tools complement our curriculum, foster student learning, and affect skill development.

Proposal Theme

Business communication courses must navigate numerous pressures from multiple internal and external stakeholders. ChatGPT has only accelerated these pressures as well as made us consider how we integrate technology into our curriculum. We discuss the varied ways we have responded to these pressures and provide preliminary results and lessons learned from these efforts.

Proposal Purpose

This panel's purpose is to share how we have incorporated ChatGPT in our classrooms, exploring lessons learned, challenges overcome, and strategies for adaptation and adoption in other classes. We discuss how curriculum integration of AI-generative tools enables us to address advisory councils' perennial concerns over student writing, better prepares students for the l AI-assisted writing they will encounter in industry, and spurs more engaging and insightful classroom discussions.

Proposal Goals

In sharing our respective curriculum re-design experiences, we hope to prompt discussion about the extent to which these efforts helped us, to borrow from the conference theme, “reach new heights” and explore with our students “the future of business communication.” Did these new technological tools facilitate scaling “new heights” or create deeper connections with existing course concepts and values? Can ChatGPT revitalize core concepts or lend them relevance? Did incorporation of ChatGPT and similar tools require less a refreshing than a wholesale retooling of how we teach written and oral communication and data visualization? The presenters respond to these questions by providing specific assignment and activity parameters that they (a) executed across multiple sections taught by different instructors and (b) implemented without confusing students or overwhelming instructors.

Proposal Methodology

We provide several examples of how our classrooms responded to ChatGPT challenges, including:

- Using ChatGPT as part of a scaffolding process in service of a “communication within the curriculum” initiative. Students, whose emailing skills are often seen as lacking by key stakeholders, work with ChatGPT to generate text and then optimize that text by providing the critical, often technical, information that the audience requires. This approach treats AI-assisted writing in a similar manner to data visualization programs, namely that these programs produce raw content that requires user optimization for use by other humans. It thus can reinforce or anticipate key concepts discussed during data visualization assignments.

- Taking a ChatGPT-generated one-pager, analyzing it according to its fulfillment of seven designated writing criteria for effective communication, and then revising the AI-generated one-pager. Students may revise with ChatGPT or without it. The teaching scaffolding for the assignment includes instruction in what constitutes a stand-alone-sense header and an effective claim, followed by instruction in how to organize those components to produce a skimmable document. Students are assessed on how well the revision meets standards of effective writing as designated by the seven criteria. If students can produce effective writing, does how they produce it become immaterial?

- Spurring discussion by asking ChatGPT random questions and reviewing the results for writing quality and correctness. What’s the weather today? How do you make eggs benedict? How do you create an app? After we develop some comfort with the platform, students choose a short assignment they wrote for any class, review their writing, and then enter the prompt into ChatGPT. As a class, we again discuss the similarities, differences, and quality of the responses while also delving into the ethical uses of AI writing tools.

- Discussing industry uses of where AI-generated writing already occurs, from the controversy surrounding CNET’s AI-authored content to more anodyne uses such as automated financial reporting on corporate quarterly earnings statements. What can—and should—communicators add to these documents? What is the relationship between transparency, ethics, the role of the author, and how we value communicative output?

Proposal Outcomes/Takeaways

Beyond sharing our preliminary findings to the questions posed above, we discuss:

- How students responded, via reflection assignments and surveys, to ChatGPT
- To what degree did ChatGPT usage affects students' grades/scores and ability to master key concepts
- How long-valued core course concepts, including tone moderation and audience analysis, now take different valences

Exploration of these broader discussion points provides the groundwork for further assignment and rubric re-design as we prepare students for the future of business communication.

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Slide by Slide, Side by Side: Varied Strategies in the Business Communication Classroom Offer Diverse Instruction for All Students

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As emerging technologies become more accessible to students, business communication faculty must examine how their instruction can add value in their classroom, all while using pedagogical methods to accommodate a variety of learners and capture students' attention. Management Communication is a mandatory junior-year writing course for all Isenberg School of Management students. Regardless of each instructor's approach, the University of Massachusetts requires that instructors assign a minimum of ten single-spaced, final draft pages and teach four elements: professional, everyday communication; a research-based short report; a PowerPoint deck; and a business presentation. Within these requirements, instructors have the freedom and flexibility to craft their own assignments.

In this presentation, the co-presenters will outline the required components of the Isenberg School's Management Communication course and their varying approaches to teaching class content. More specifically, the co-presenters will offer insights on four key areas: oral presentations, website final portfolios, assigned "creative work," and teaching with tests.

One co-presenter will explain the value of using the *Wall Street Journal* for both the oral presentation and PowerPoint deck curriculum components. Our classroom is full of "digital natives," for whom technology is a foundational element of their upbringing, and one that instructors would be wise to tie into research-based assignments. The presenter requires students to explore the University's library database and select a *Wall Street Journal* article of their choosing, then analyze it and present to the class. The task of selecting their own topic and *Journal* article piques students' interest, consistent with findings from Wadsworth et al. (2013) that the use of business periodicals for class assignments, especially the *Wall Street Journal*, was "helpful" and that "100% [of students] felt that reading the WSJ showed real-life business application for course topics" (Christiansen, 2003).

The presenter requires students to showcase their final drafts in website portfolios, in lieu of a final exam, motivating students to engage in the rigorous process of peer review and editing, all while designing a digital space to share their work beyond the classroom. Hudori et al. (2020) states that portfolios can be used "as a future reference"; and through utilizing a variety of writing samples, it is "particularly useful in assessment standards" (p. 5). The web design component of this assignment unlocks a new capability in the undergraduate as an emerging professional while incorporating technology.

A second presenter will discuss his practice of assigning book-length creative work to students: one work of journalism (John Krakauer's *Three Cups of Deceit*) and one novel (Kazou Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*). Both texts discuss the dangers of over-genteel prose and its role in exploitation: Krakauer describes a master manipulator who used a compelling narrative to funnel dollars out of a charitable organization, and Ishiguro's novel concerns a character so enrapt in the rhetoric of expediency and professionalism that he unwittingly enables Nazi sympathy. The instructor shares with students the infamous Nazi memo analyzed by Katz (1992), who characterizes the recovered inter-organizational memo as "*too* technical, *too* logical. The writer shows no concern that the purpose of his memo is. . . not only to improve efficiency, but also to exterminate people" (p. 257)—a reminder of bad actors' savvy rhetorical methods and the consequences thereof. As the university's Business Communication Program begins to incorporate the curriculum of Life Design—which Guichard (2005) argues can help professionals work towards "formulating new constructs to help clients negotiate a lifetime of job changes without losing a sense of self and social identity" (Savickas, 2012)—teaching these texts pushes students toward interrogating their own values about labor and the role of work in their lives. Additionally, by helping students make in-roads to accessible, contemporary literature, we expose them to clear, sustained writing, models which embolden their own command of style and that affirm the role *cultural literacy* plays in the contemporary workplace. Rutz (2005) found that "[r]epeated exposure to writing assignments situated in various disciplinary and rhetorical contexts"—like novels, for example—"offers students valuable practice as they grapple with rhetorical problems over time."

This presenter supplements the course's written assignments with in-class tests, one about active voice and the values of ethical communication; and another test given after the instructor collects first drafts of slide decks, notes common errors, and constructs revision and editing exercises. This practice allows the instructor to address common errors and reiterate important lessons *en masse*. Both tests aim to establish that, though communication is an art and not a science, the discipline has established best principles that are close to non-negotiable.

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Students Grading Themselves: Getting Closer to the Bullseye

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"I found that assessing students was like trying to hit a dartboard while blindfolded."

This quote is from Madeline Grimm (2021) in her opinion piece "Why Students Should Be Allowed to Grade Themselves," published on the Inside Higher Ed website. Her arguments stem from educators' shared experience, the "COVID semester," (my words) but the lessons learned reach far beyond an "emergency measure" (her words).

I teach Business Presentations. The students give approximately ten presentations in the semester—five individual, five team. This is a freshman-level course and is required for the business school.

While I've been using self-assessments for over 15 years, I've been experimenting with self-grading (ungrading) in more recent semesters—but before the COVID semester. To date, I have used this method only with my honors students in the second half of the semester. By that point, students are familiar with my rubrics and the rating guide (what constitutes an A, B, etc.) in the syllabus. In theory, students should be able to use the same criteria (organization, content, delivery, Q&A, and visuals) that I use and come up with a comparable grade. This usually happens, but students tend to grade their process getting to presentation day and not just the presentation itself. It is hard for them to separate their work from the final product. Our conversations around ungrading give me more opportunity to teach the basics of communication—it's about the message perceived, not the message intended.

In this session, I will discuss what led me to experiment with students grading themselves, the rubric and process used, limitations (some noted by Sadler and Good, 2006), and what I've learned—and am still trying to figure out—from this method. I invite others in the Q&A/discussion to share their experiences. I hope this is more of a rich conversation than a "how to."

This topic ties to our conference theme, Reaching New Heights: The Future of Business Communication, because it teaches students to understand how audience members in the workplace are evaluating them. It also helps them take ownership of their work. And it encourages discussion between students and faculty rather than grades just seemingly being "handed out." It empowers students to trust themselves and their rationale.

Allowing students to grade themselves gets us all a little closer to hitting the bullseye.

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Surveilling, Ethically Exploring, Exploiting, and Analyzing: Using Generative AI Tools in the Professional Communication Classroom

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ChatGPT and other generative AI technologies have hit both the education and professional world: students, teachers, and professionals are all finding uses for text generative technologies to assist with their work, and recent data have shown they are being used frequently in many contexts (Constantz, 2023; Westfall, 2023). However, communication instructors are still struggling to find the place of these technologies in their classrooms given practical and theoretical concerns about ethics, policy, and pedagogy. In this panel, we take the stance that ChatGPT can and should be used productively in the professional writing classroom, given its widespread nature and beneficial qualities. In particular, we present some of the ethical concerns around using generative AI in the classroom, as well as outline several strategies for using it productively as part of professional writing and communication education.

The first presenter explores how instructors can use AI text generators in the writing classroom as an exercise in communicating ethical concerns such as data mining, authorship, and surveillance. Who has access to the information that technologies mediate and who does not? This presenter also shares a beginner's guide to AI and writing in the college classroom that provides a short overview and sample questions for instructors and students to critically examine AI, such as how are AIs trained; what data do they collect and how is it distributed; who has authorship or copyright of the information; and what are potential social, intellectual, and environmental implications. While numerous concerns have been cited from instructors with some of the recent AI developments, one ethical issue we should all be concerned with is how these generators surveil our writing. Surveillance is an assemblage that extends far beyond the text generator; instructors are well adept to intervene and critically consider the impact of AI.

The second presenter demonstrates how automated text production software can be creatively deployed to augment a communication design task into a more challenging one. In repurposing the content of an existing assignment focused on literature research in a business and technical communication course, he shows how a task can be parsed out into areas where students can actively depend on ChatGPT to complete certain steps and other areas where students will be required to make a critical intervention involving human analysis, including ethics considerations. The presentation demonstrates how tasks demanding accountability often need the active engagement of a human actor because the contexts within which humans function are unlimited and endlessly shifting, whereas automated thinking systems have a limit to their knowledge and learning.

The third presenter demonstrates how ChatGPT can serve as an assistant for students tackling tricky assignments or unfamiliar genres of professional writing. While ChatGPT does not necessarily know or incorporate the personal details of each student's expertise or experience, AI-generated writing does have the possibility of providing roughly structured examples for unfamiliar genres that students can engage with and learn from, much like a textbook example found in print media. As such, AI-generated writing can serve as pedagogical support for students struggling to comprehend genre, in need of examples, or those seeking a place to begin working with genre constraints in business writing. By taking a ChatGPT generated cover letter and adding personalized content to it, this component of the panel aims to demonstrate that ChatGPT is not a completely personalized solution for business writing, but rather a potential place to begin teaching unclear or abstract professional writing genres.

The fourth presenter presents a textual analysis that compares student-written and ChatGPT-produced technical reports. The analysis reveals that while ChatGPT is able to mimic generic conventions around macrostructure and some rhetorical moves, its text is distinctly different from student-written reports in its lack of description. That is, students focused more on describing the data and what it meant, while ChatGPT focused more on building a narrative of data collection. Based on this analysis, she showcases a classroom activity that teachers can use to demonstrate these differences, and help students develop critical eyes for revising automatically generated texts.

Teaching Business Writing in a Multi-Section Course: Strategies for Effectiveness, Consistency, and Efficiency

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Though faculty and students alike may prefer small class sizes, "intimate class settings" are not realistic for faculty or students in core courses at many large institutions (Flaherty, 2020). State funding of public higher education institutions continues to decrease (National Education Association, 2022), leaving institutions to make difficult budget cuts. An efficient response to these pressures is increasing class size; doing so allows more students to complete academic program requirements, while simultaneously reducing human resource costs (Ake-Little et al., 2020).

A compromise between large and small class size is development of a multi-section course. This often is feasible, both practically and financially, by relying on part-time and adjunct instructors (Ran & Xu, 2017) or graduate teaching assistants. Utilizing instructional teams made up of different types of educators, both presenters oversee undergraduate business writing courses at large, public institutions. Each course has high enrollments (as many as 500 students per semester) and a hybrid, multi-section format.

Regardless of class size, instructors of business communication courses face challenges of subjectivity and consistency. These challenges are intensified when multiple individuals are responsible for instruction and evaluation across sections. After a combined 15 years' experience teaching high enrollment, multi-section courses, the presenters have compiled lessons and strategies that have enabled their institutions to offer equivalent, high-quality classroom experiences for business writing students.

Establishing Course Content and Classroom Expectations

The descriptor "multi-section" can refer to both multiple sections of the same course as well as to multiple components of a single course (e.g., lecture, recitation, discussion section). At both of the presenters' institutions, students take a large, online lecture class alongside a smaller, in-person class led by either an adjunct instructor or graduate teaching assistant. While each course component has a distinct purpose, they must also be complementary.

The presenters serve as lead lecturers and course designers in their respective courses, developing the content and curriculum to be delivered to all sections of the class. Both presenters use interviews with alumni and connections with employers to personalize the curriculum for their students. The common lecture material and readings provide consistent business writing standards for all undergraduate students. Using a common syllabus and lesson plans for all sections of the course streamlines the course development process and saves time when answering student questions. Implementation of common policies across sections helps eliminate leniency and misunderstanding and allows for instructors to efficiently make decisions during the semester.

Assignment Development and Evaluation

Assignments and rubrics are used across each section of the course to maintain a comparable experience for all students and allow for grading consistency among instructors. This approach allows for learning outcome assessment to be completed at the course level, providing consistent assessment data for 400-500 students per semester.

Overseeing Instructional Team Members

The business writing courses discussed used two different approaches to hiring part-time instructors to teach each in-person section of the course. Adjunct instructors with prior work experience are used at one university; graduate teaching assistants in accounting or journalism are used at the other. Presenters discussed strategies for recruiting, training, and retaining quality part-time instructors.

Adapting to the Post-Pandemic Teaching Environment

Presenters highlighted how they have adapted their courses since their development, with a special focus on post-COVID changes to balance structure and flexibility (Supiano, 2023). Providing flexibility in deadlines and attendance, using online lectures, and providing additional asynchronous resources to scaffold assignments are a few of the strategies that have allowed for continued student success in the multi-section courses.

Reflecting on the Challenges of Multi-Section Teaching

While teaching communication skills in a small class has benefits, the reality of higher education budgets may cause more universities to move core requirements to a multi-section model to increase efficiency and reduce faculty costs. As both presenters developed their multi-section courses from the outset and continue to refine them each semester, they shared the strategies used in each area to overcome the challenges of teaching business writing in this format. Whether “multi-section" refers to 500 students across 15 sections or two sections of the same course, use of these strategies can enable a quality experience for each student.

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Teaching Critical Thinking in Business Communication: A Focus on Critical Questioning

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Why do we care so much about critical thinking?

Students are bombarded with information overload in nearly every aspect of their lives. Their social media apps share eye-grabbing images, their news feeds quote shocking headlines, and their web searches result in questionable findings. And new artificial intelligence tools spout chapter and verse about all possible topics. What is fake, and what is real? How do our students know the difference? How do they navigate the muddled barrage of content they receive?

By equipping our students with critical thinking and questioning skills, we can help them identify content, analyze its relevancy, and become better users of information rather than merely receivers of information. Business communication courses have a unique opportunity to integrate critical thinking and questioning techniques as part of the analyzing, composing, and evaluation process for writing and speaking assignments.

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to recommend a guided critical thinking/questioning technique to actively engage business communication students in the analysis, composition, and evaluation of their writing and speaking. Critical thinking is a learned skill that requires time and effort across a variety of disciplines to develop and practice. Critical questioning is a method of critical thinking that is immediately applicable in the business communication classroom. Writing and speaking assignments provide both the context and the content to practice critical thinking and questioning skills. This presentation will demonstrate how to apply a guided critical thinking/questioning technique to typical business communication assignments. The technique can be applied to a variety of prompts to help students learn to become more critical thinkers as well as effective communicators.

Goals

The goals of this presentation are threefold: (1) to briefly outline the educational research in critical thinking methodologies and current practices, (2) to describe specific assignment prompts and evaluation tools that engage students in critical thinking and questioning in the business communication classroom, and (3) to provide a guided critical thinking/questioning technique that business communication instructors can use with their students to effectively practice and assess their skills.

Methodology

As the foundation for this presentation, a systematic review of literature was conducted into the critical thinking methodologies that have long been upheld as the basis for effective instructional strategies, such as project-based learning. In 1910, philosopher and educator John Dewey introduced the concept of critical thinking in his book *How We Think* (Gosner, 2023). Since then, several disciplines have historically investigated (and continue to investigate) the definition of critical thinking as well as its appropriate application in and assessment of teaching and learning. These disciplines include philosophy, cognitive psychology, and educational science—each emphasizing different aspects of the application of critical thinking (Hasnunidah et al., 2020; Sari et al., 2021; Shanta & Wells, 2020; Thorndahl & Stentoft, 2020). To make sense of the myriad of research into the instructional methodologies that employ critical thinking and questioning skills, a theoretical reasoning approach was applied to derive the salient content for business communication curricula. That content provided the framework for a guided critical thinking/questioning technique that focuses on students' knowledge, comprehension, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

Outcomes

During the presentation, the guided critical thinking/questioning technique will be demonstrated as it applies to practical learning assignments in the typical undergraduate business communication curricula, such as negative news messages, persuasive appeals, reports, and presentations. Presentation participants will be able to immediately integrate the guided technique in their classrooms to help students practice their critical thinking/questioning skills and apply them to effective communication strategies.

In conclusion, because critical thinking is a learned skill, it requires practice in a wide range of contexts. Business communication instructors have a unique opportunity to integrate critical thinking assessments to strengthen students' perspectives about the information they find and receive as well as the content and organization of the messages they compose. This presentation will provide several resources to support the effective integration of critical thinking and questioning skills in any undergraduate business communication course.

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The Revolution of Learning Is Here - When You Get to Choose What, How and with Whom to Learn

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Purpose

The fast-changing skill requirements in work-life have led to the need for new learning ecosystems that better prepare students for new and changing program requirements (Lahikainen, et al., 2019). The new world of work increasingly places greater importance on self-direction, interpersonal skills, dialogical skills, empathy, and teamwork skills just to mention few (Työ, 2017). 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). Quickly changing technology and increased complexity of work are challenges that need to be tackled. For this challenge a new learning ecosystem was developed by a multidisciplinary work team from Tampere University of Applied Sciences, Finland. The purpose of this new ecosystem is to minimize the gap between higher educational institutions and work-life. Real-time work and life skills of young talents can be significantly increased through more equal cooperation and communication of educational units and networks.

Goals

The first student group studying in the Network Learning and Competencies degree program started in January 2023; and in this presentation, the current situation is analyzed specifically from the students' perspectives and experiences. In particular, the following research questions will be addressed: What is the significance and consequences of freedom to choose learning objectives instead of having them given automatically from the educational institution and curriculum? How can students choose learning objectives based on learning needs in the ecosystem, acknowledging both individual needs and the team's needs?

Methodology

In 2023, participating student groups will be surveyed and interviewed about their experience in developing their own learning objectives as part of the Network Learning and Competencies degree program. Their responses will be analyzed and coded by the presenter and the research team. Results from the surveys and interviews will be presented at the conference.

Outcomes/Takeaways

This presentation, in line with similar studies such as Jukubik (2019), will offer an example of the co-creation theory through the value and usability of the learning ecosystem theoretical framework. To create and maintain a successful systemic ecosystem where learning happens to all participants—work-life representatives, organizations in general, students, coaches, and teachers—the role of a 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-Trayner and Wenger-Trayner, 2021).

For work-life organizations, it is essential that an educational actor take the role of a system convenor and facilitate the co-learning situations. TAMK's learning ecosystem operates exactly as one system; 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 the 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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Using Cases in the Era of ChatGPT

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Undergraduate business communications courses often provide the option of writing in response to a case, or prompt, to demonstrate mastery of communications best practices. Students who feel that they don't have sufficient "real world" experience to draw upon to craft an informational or persuasive message tend to find these scenarios helpful, as they don't need to spend their executive functioning making up a situation. Rather, they can focus on their writing. Now that AI tools like ChatGPT have entered the space, students (and professionals) have an additional resource at their fingertips when writing in response to a detailed scenario. Instead of penalizing students for using this resource—again, one they may come to use in the non-classroom setting—we have an opportunity to help them lean into using resources like ChatGPT to improve their communications.

Teaching students the fundamental elements of strong written communications provides them with the "code" or language to use when asking AI to strengthen the message. Seeing the message become clearer in real time provides students real time feedback on how these fundamentals can improve message readability, flow, and clarity. In this session, we'll explore how inputting an existing prompt into a free AI tool can provide a hands-on opportunity for students to learn best practices in business communications. We'll also discuss the overarching opportunities and challenges that tools like ChatGPT create and how to help students (and our colleagues) navigate this new reality of AI communications resources.

Using Improv to Cultivate Psychological Safety When Teaching Presentation Skills

Kerry Mitchell
University of Denver

The ability to deliver a presentation effectively is a critical skill that many individuals struggle with due to fear of judgment or criticism. "Psychological safety" refers to an environment in which individuals feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of negative consequences. In this workshop, participants will experience improv exercises used for psychological safety and improving speaking skills.

Improvisation and comedy have been suggested to improve psychological safety and team performance in the MBA classroom (Perrmann-Graham et al., 2021). Improv has also been used as a tool to teach oral communication skills for graduates (Phelps et al., 2021). This workshop will use exercises to increase psychological safety to improve speaking skills. A safe environment helps students relax and not be afraid to make mistakes when presenting.

Purpose

The purpose of this workshop is to provide participants with improv exercises to use in the classroom or with clients when teambuilding to create a psychologically safe environment:

- Explore the use of improv as a method of teaching psychological safety and presentation skills
- Share best practices for incorporating improv into teaching presentation skills

Methodology

The workshop will be an interactive session in which participants explore a variety of improvisational exercises to build psychological safety on a team or in a classroom. The techniques can be used when teaching speaking or presentation skills.

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Using Yellowdig to Inspire and Enliven Business Communication Course Discussions

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Purpose

In our 20+ years of teaching business communications, one of the most difficult and often uninspired assignments we've graded has been discussions of learning materials on the LMS (Canvas, Blackboard, etc.). Students tend to "phone in" such assignments, putting little effort into them, counting their words as they write, and relying on comments such as "good job" or "I agree" to indicate they're actually creating meaningful interactions with others.

These discussions, while well-meaning, create little to no value. The students refer to them as "busy work" and typically don't enjoy them or learn from doing them.

Six years ago, when taking a master class on teaching online for the newly minted ASU Online degree program, we encountered Yellowdig. Yellowdig is a whole other breed of discussion, mimicking Facebook or Slack, allowing students to quickly amass points (auto-graded) as they respond to prompts created to inspire a deeper connection to other students in the course as well as to the actual course materials.

The purpose of these discussions is to encourage students to do additional research; to find other articles/materials, links, and videos on the subject matter; and to use critical thinking skills to embed their learning of the relevant concepts and ideas we want them to use in their written work in the course.

Goals

Our goal in Yellowdig discussions is to foster community first and learning as a by-product. Particularly in a fully online environment (pre- as well as post-pandemic) the feelings of camaraderie and closeness created by the set-up of Yellowdig, allow students who once felt completely disconnected from one another, to feel like they have networked and made professional connections during the semester. They walk away from the course often commenting that "Yellowdig was their favorite aspect," of their learning because they built a vibrant community through their discussions. In the typical LMS discussion platform, there was little to no connection between students or the materials we studied. Although we tried various ways to generate interest, the learning platform fell far short of our expectations.

Methodology

Yellowdig is simple to use both for students and teachers. It relies on an easy method to create a post (in response to a short prompt). Students earn points not only from what they post, but from how much interaction their posts receive from others. Their grade depends on creating interest in what they have to say, so they take more time, go into greater depth, and are much more interactive in terms of using the platform as a learning tool. Students are encouraged to record personal videos for their introductions, as well as find materials relevant to the prompts each week.

A teacher can read posts quickly and easily, add "kudos" posts for students who respond effectively (such as "creating community" or a "verified" answer to the prompts) and add "thumbs up," and a wide variety of emojis and other fun responses.

Students who add links and additional information earn more points. Most of the grading is done automatically by the system, so it eases the grading burden on the professor by as much as 25%.
We will draw (in our presentation) on our interactions with Yellowdig administrators (via email), virtual conferences, Yellowdig workshops, and on a demonstration of the platform live (if that’s a possibility).

Outcomes

Although some outcomes may seem anecdotal in nature, after using Yellowdig for the past 2.5 years in all our courses for ASU Online, we see a long-term trend of better results for students in not only the discussion of course materials, but also their understanding of how to communicate effectively with each other. It allows them to take a deeper dive into the ideas and concepts we emphasize throughout the course. Yellowdig creates a community that fosters learning. It improves their interpersonal communication skills and their sense of themselves as professionals, and it allows them to develop a more profound sense of the importance of written and spoken communication in their respective fields of study. This course is taken primarily by W. P. Carey School of Business students who want to improve and enhance their writing and speaking skills. It is an undergraduate requirement within the business school.

Visualizing the Future of Business Communication: User Experience Evaluation of Approaches to Writing Process Feedback

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Abstract

This presentation reports on efforts to improve business writing education. Instead of giving feedback on their written "product"—as is normally the case in writing instruction—our focus is on providing "process" feedback. More specifically, we demonstrate how to use keystroke-logging software that provides automated feedback to students on their writing processes, including visualizations of source use behavior.

Purpose

Despite the emergence of AI tools like ChatGPT, the ability to write effectively will continue to be a key factor in professional success. In the future of business communication, it will be essential to develop new human-centered digital writing tools, which help *people* become better writers in this new context. This presentation will report on an important effort to use technological tools to understand and improve the processes by which humans write (and rewrite).

We will discuss efforts to improve business writing education using a software tool that provides automated feedback to students on their writing processes— rather than their written product, as is normally the case in writing instruction. This feedback can be used in the classroom by students and their instructors to better understand *how* they write. Preliminary studies of writing process feedback indicate that it has significant positive impact on student writing quality (Vandermuelen, 2020). We argue that a focus on writing process feedback should be an important aspect of the future of business writing instruction, as it represents a significant shift in writing pedagogy, which until now has been primarily centered on feedback based on students’ written products.

Goals

In this presentation we will discuss a collaboration between a Fulbright Scholar from the U.S. and a research team in the Department of Management at the University of Antwerp (Belgium) that developed Inputlog, a keystroke-logging software tool designed for the visualization and analysis of the writing process, including the use of sources. Our presentation will detail our collaborative efforts to use human-centered design principles to evaluate and refine the software as a process feedback tool for use in educational and professional contexts. We will also discuss our efforts to develop and test curricula and teacher training materials—focused on visualizations of the use of sources during the writing process—designed to improve implementation of writing process feedback in the business writing classroom.

Methodology

The project builds on previous research on the human-centered design of writing process feedback tools (Conijn et al., 2022) and visualizations (Conijn et al., 2020). This is an ongoing project, which will include several iterations of data collection, analysis, and redesign of software, curriculum, and teacher training resources.

At this stage of the project, we have collected two international datasets from teachers and students (from the U.S. and Belgium) related to writing process feedback that serve as the basis for ongoing user experience research. Qualitative data has been collected via multiple methods and sources: focus groups, surveys, and from the textual artifacts produced by participants during the trial studies. This data has been coded using NVIVO software.

While the initial study has focused on developing and testing the software, curricula, and teacher training materials for writing process feedback focused on the use of sources, further iterations of the project will include other aspects of the writing process such as use of time, fluency, and revision.

Outcomes

We will discuss our analysis of qualitative user experience data, which has provided several preliminary findings related to the effectiveness of process feedback, focused on source use and types of transferrable rhetorical knowledge it can produce for students. We will also discuss how these findings have led to revisions designed to improve Inputlog's effectiveness in providing process feedback on source use, including the development and implementation of additional source use visualizations.

Finally, we will discuss the way that this logging tool can generate data on the use of sources during the writing process that can help business writing instructors understand how students use tools like ChatGPT, so that they are better able to provide instruction designed to improve students' ability to use these tools effectively and ethically in the classroom and workplace.

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ChatGPT and Other AI in Applied International Business: Friend or Foe

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Nearly every list of 21st-century skills necessary for the workplace includes intercultural competence. As instructors of Business Communication at universities in the USA and Germany, we believe that students learn this competence best by practicing it. This includes understanding how to best utilize technology for business communication, such as in the case of AI-generated messages. With the introduction of ChatGPT and its continuing development, communication in the workplace will change significantly, so institutions of higher education need to impart skills and develop best practices if graduates are to be successful in the global workplace.

Therefore, we explored the ways in which students' intercultural communication beliefs around the acceptable use of machine-generated communication differ, how exploring those differences as applied to a global workforce affects the students' understanding of machine-generated communication, and how the students themselves defined their own code of conduct around the use of machine-generated communication.

This presentation will describe our initial thinking and research, how we honed down the project as well as kept up with the lightning-fast changes in ChatGPT itself to version 4 and with the opinions about the use of the tool in business that seemed to change daily. We will then describe the project, our pre- and post-surveys, and the results of both. We will also go over the findings we received from the students themselves about what they learned about both using ChatGPT and about intercultural acceptance and nuances of the tool.

This project involved graduate students at a university in North Carolina, USA, and Mainz, Germany who were all taking graduate business communication courses. The participants first did individual work, then met virtually in small groups comprising teams from both universities.

It was a short-term qualitative project designed for students to understand how the concepts of intercultural business communication are defined differently in different countries and to explore how each culture responds to AI-generated communication. Included in the discussion were evaluations of acceptable tone, emotion, structure, and wording in each culture.

We had participants sum up their knowledge of or beliefs about the use of machine-generated communication prior to the start of the project. They addressed the same topic again after the project was over, noting where their answers changed—if they changed—since participating in the project.

Prior to the start of the project, participants were given Chen and Starosa's Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (2000) as published by Mollenberg et al. (2001) and Portalla and Chen's Intercultural Effectiveness Measurement (2010).

These instruments help students in intercultural and international business courses understand how they themselves react to working in global companies and workforces.

For the virtual teamwork, participants first answered questions as to which one of each set of communications was, in their opinion, AI-generated. They had to have at least three reasons for their choice. Their choices and reasons for the choices were the basis of the first part of the conversation.

They then began the second part of the conversation with the following questions:

• Does machine-generated communication understand intercultural nuances? If so, how? If not, why? Have evidence to back your views.

• What are the pros and cons for the appropriateness of machine-generated work as used in the global workforce?

The professors suggested that the students reach less for one right answer and more for discussions of how they each feel about the use of AI to create business communication. Every culture has its own idea of what "good business communication" looks like. Our aim was that through the discussion of the questions above and of the videos and other material that each participant would learn what nuances, aspects, and tone mean to different cultures.

Please also note that the very act of discussing via Teams when to hold the meeting, with at least three different time zones, was also intended to help participants grow in their experience of intercultural communication. The written and media communication that occurred before the Zoom session had as big an impact on how participants learn intercultural communication as the actual Zoom session.

The presentation hopes to encourage instructors to incorporate AI tools into their curricula by introducing one example of one method and also by showing the benefits as well as the challenges of this technology for business and professional communication.

Corporate Social Responsibility Across Cultures

Marie-Pierre Escoubas, Marco Cipolloni, and Viviana Gaballo
Sapienza University of Rome

This panel – "Corporate Social Responsibility Across Cultures" – aims to analyze the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) from a global perspective and across cultural borders by offering an intercultural view of CSR from the diverse perspectives of the Francophone, Pan-Hispanic, and Anglophone corporate cultures.

The concept of "corporate social responsibility" is investigated by applying text analytics to corpora of specialized texts to understand and explain the term, its variations, and its distribution on a global scale. The ensuing usage mapping will provide the audience with initial data as to how the concept of CSR is received, applied, and developed across time and cultures, with a hint at the possible social and political implications (Fleming and Jones, 2013).

1st speaker: Marie-Pierre Escoubas Benveniste. "Corporate social responsibility": Analysis of a term

The globalization of the economy, the emergencies linked to global climate change, and the growing obstacles that threaten to compromise the cohesion of Western societies have led the European Union to enrich and strengthen its directives and recommendations concerning the responsibility of entrepreneurs and their actions vis-à-vis their human and natural environment. European companies are today economic actors required to answer for their strategic and operational choices regarding the society in which they are established. The notion of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has gradually been consolidated at the regulatory level in Europe, and the member states have interpreted, transcribed, and adopted it in their respective administrations. In 2013, the CSR platform was established in France, and in 2014, the Minister of the Economy said in a speech, "The development of CSR, particularly in VSEs-SMEs, requires appropriate tools." In this panel, we explore the concept of "corporate social responsibility" from a textual analysis of the term, its variations, and its distribution, established on a corpus of specialized texts.

2nd speaker: Marco Cipolloni. Translating "Sustainable Development" in European and Latin-American Spanish. Equivalence and Competition in a Two-Target Collocation System (Desarrollo sostenible and/or Desarrollo sustentable), during the (early) '90s.

During the last 30 years and to manage Spanish and Spanish American translations and adaptations of the notion of sustainable development, lexicographers made their best effort to make clear the difference between "sostenible" and "sustentable." In the real world, spoken and written, of both European and Latin American Spanish, the complementarity they sponsored and recommended got few practical credits and even fewer real followers, because of the resistance offered by language history and by extralinguistic contexts. In Spain and Latin America, the reception of the Brundtland report (1987) and of the collocation "sustainable development" it revived has not been immediate. It relocated the problem to a post-Cold-War perspective. Growing out of the presence of two different target words for sustainable and from the use of different strategies to rephrase and or specify “desarrollo” (development), the presence of alternative translations into Spanish for the collocation “sustainable development” introduced into the Spanish and Latin American debate a peculiar level of lexical ambiguity, not easy to control and reduce.

3rd speaker: Viviana Gaballo. The Evolution of Corporate Discourse in CSR Reporting

CSR reporting has become an important activity of socially responsible companies. Through CSR reporting, companies present their efforts to reduce the negative impacts of their activities on society and the environment. At the beginning, reports were focused on environmental and ecological issues (Crane et al., 2008), which were gradually supplemented by other areas as society put additional demands on companies (Sharma and Kieran, 2013).

This paper explores the evolution of corporate discourse to highlight the changing terminology in use in the context of CSR reporting. The methodology applied combines critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989; van Dijk, 2001; Chilton, 2004) and corpus analysis (Sinclair, 1991, Tognini-Bonelli, 2001; Biber & Gray, 2015).

The research is grounded in the investigation of a corpus of 2022 CSR reports published by Australian, Canadian, British, and American corporations from various sectors (including transport, energy, technology, and education) and a collection of articles in the International Journal of Corporate Social Responsibility since 2016.

The outcomes of the research shed light on the shift from the concept of “corporate social responsibility” through “corporate social sustainability” to “corporate citizenship” with all the implications that this shift has at both the social and political levels.

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Crossing Language Barriers in Business Email Writing Collaboration with Machine Translation

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This paper discusses the implications of an experimental lesson in a small MBA class at a Japanese university to explore how to effectively collaborate with machine translation. The students practiced writing English emails, focusing on cross-cultural communication and machine translation.

Machine translation and other AI tools for English communication are already widely and frequently used by businesspeople. With their surprisingly fast evolution (Popel et al., 2020), such tools will undoubtedly become even more critical for businesspeople involved in cross-cultural communication in the real world.

Machine translation is a revolutionary tool, especially for non-native speakers of English. In international business, it is increasingly mandatory that every businessperson, regardless of their linguacultural background, use English as a business lingua franca (hereafter BELF). On the other hand, writing emails and other texts in English as a foreign language often takes much more time than writing in their mother tongue. Furthermore, if texts are formal, native speakers may be required to check them, often called a "native check." In short, non-native English users have faced the problem of lower productivity and less autonomy in using English for professional purposes, especially in writing. AI can be a game changer for these people, saving time and energy and increasing their autonomy in writing in English (Yanase, 2022). Because of this, more businesspeople need to acquire skills to work effectively by co-existing and collaborating with AI (Khodabandeh, 2022).

Machine translation essentially translates the original language directly into the target language sentence to sentence, so the translated sentence is usually strongly influenced by the culture of the original language. For example, when AI translates a draft of Japanese emails written in a Japanese business context into English, the English emails retain Japanese cultural aspects. Machine translation brings Japanese culture into the English text.

In this class, along with reading textbooks on cross-cultural communication, students learned how to write effective business emails in BELF. The goal was to write business emails in English that "are easy to understand, do not cause misunderstandings and are appropriately polite" in the global business community. Students first read "typical Japanese business emails" for several different scenarios. Since these emails were deeply rooted in Japanese culture, students needed to understand the content of the message to be conveyed, deconstruct the sentences, and reconstruct them into an appropriate English email as BELF.

Students then compared their English emails with "a sample email written by a native English speaker working in San Francisco," "a sample email written by a Japanese businessperson who has worked extensively in Asian countries using English," and an English translation by AI from the original Japanese email. Subsequently, the class discussed how to write effective emails for business communication in BELF. This paper analyzes students' discussion and reflections when they compared emails written by people from different linguacultural backgrounds and the machine translation.

Implications can be summarized in two main points. First, machine translation is confirmed to be an indispensable tool in global business. Students evaluated the quality of AI machine translations quite highly, including the accuracy of direct translations of each sentence, the consistency of the expressions as emails, and the flexibility of expressions using the function of choosing alternative vocabulary in English. All students judged the machine translations to be of great value as an aid to effective English writing. They all also agreed that they would definitely use machine translation when working in the field as a businessperson.

On the other hand, it was found that collaborating with machine translations in business requires a wide range of communication skills. The content of the original Japanese emails, not the translation, is often inappropriate in the global business context. Such issues go beyond the widely acknowledged cultural variations in writing, such as politeness (Murphy & Levy, 2006) and logical structures. The topics discussed include 1) the appropriateness of using emails; should these messages be delivered by email? 2) the appropriateness of senders and receivers; who should exchange these messages? and 3) the appropriateness of the content itself: should you invite your new contact for dinner before having a meeting? Furthermore, students discussed how they should adjust the cultural aspects of email writing to different business contexts and countries. Students concluded that using “grammatically accurate” AI machine translation from Japanese to English is not a panacea. Users must still pay attention to a wide range of cross-cultural aspects of business communication.

Metaculture Matters

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One essential component for training students in international business communication includes attention to culture and intercultural interaction. However, since the process of globalization has spread many common practices across the surface level of society, it is critical to consider the effects of globalization on our representation of culture and cultural practices.

This discussion is a reexamination of the cultural paradigms that have traditionally been taught. Specifically, I propose that certain global behaviors are apparent and frequent enough to constitute a collective of shared norms and practices, and I call this level of shared behaviors the metaculture. The metaculture provides us with a convenient way to look at how people act within a globalized context and helps us define certain traits or values that take on a more universally accepted nature. I argue that, by its very nature, the metaculture is constantly being redefined and offers us a unique paradigm through which to approach our experiences in the context in which they take place. Because of this, it constitutes a fundamental element of any business communication curriculum. Furthermore, I discuss major causes that have led to a metaculture, as well as certain interactional advantages but also pitfalls that students must consider.

Mindfulness and Leadership Communication in Asian Cultures

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Mindful living is practiced in several eastern cultures. The western world has now understood the importance of mindfulness and thus scholarly research has been growing. It has been conceptualized as a state practiced in mindfulness meditation and as a trait, in terms of one's predisposition to be mindful in daily life. We conducted a review of existing literature and found a good number of mindfulness studies in the domain of health sciences. However, the study of mindfulness at work appeared limited and thus we felt that research in the organizational context could provide useful insights.

The objective was to conduct an exploratory study to compare applications of mindfulness of corporate leaders who have either lived or worked in Asian cultures. An exploratory qualitative approach, grounded in thematic analysis was used in this study. Factors such as leadership roles, mindfulness experience, and cultural background were considered in interviewing corporate leaders. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 corporate practitioners from China, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India. Based on our findings, organizations may be able to modify their leadership development initiatives to promote mindful communication techniques that fit particular cultural contexts by understanding and appreciating cultural variations.

Introduction

The concept of mindfulness is in focus and gaining in popularity in today's increasingly challenging and complex world of business. Mindfulness is our ability to be fully present in the present moment, aware of where we are and what we are doing, without being overly reactive or overwhelmed by the environment around us.

To remain competitive, organizations are trying to do more with less. Employees are under constant pressure to deliver more and thus struggle to pay attention to detail. Prioritization becomes a problem with the information overload resulting from technological advancements.

The practice of mindfulness may positively influence a leader's style by increasing compassion, empathy, and ethical behavior, focusing on the "We" rather than the "I." Equanimity and stability are desired by all. However, with the fast pace of changes, achieving stability is difficult.

Humans have a natural instinct to seek connections with one another. On the one hand, they like to be acknowledged and appreciated for their accomplishments and comforted when situations are difficult.

They also endorse the "we-first" view of relationships, as they like to know about others and share their joys and sorrows (Chapman, 2012). However, when mindlessness occurs, humans become defensive and prioritize the "me first" way of thinking. Instead of remaining open-minded and respectful towards those with whom they communicate, they become distrustful and negative.

Chapman explains that human beings have three natural gifts: an awake body for paying attention; a tender heart for empathizing; and an open mind for being honest, curious, and insightful. The practice of mindfulness enables us to keep ourselves balanced and refrain from negativity even if things are not going right. She mentions that we can engage in mindful communication by adopting the five keys: mindful presence, engaged mirroring, encouraging listening, unconditional friendliness, and spontaneous response. Psychologist Rogers (1975) also talks of unconditional positive regard as the basis of healing communication. He states that merely listening attentively to someone is useful. One needs to listen with emotion and discern the pattern emerging from the spoken word.

Trait vs. State Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been studied from the perspectives of both trait and state (Hulsheger et al., 2014). The term "state mindfulness" is applied in the context of how a person pays attention to the goings-on in the present moment with an open, non-judging attitude. The average frequency and intensity with which individuals experience states of mindfulness vary depending on the individual "trait" or disposition (Jamieson & Tuckey, 2017).

Mindfulness is characterized by a non-judgmental awareness of and attention to moment-by-moment cognition, emotion, and sensation without fixation on thoughts of past and future. It has been conceptualized as a state practiced in mindfulness meditation and as a trait, in terms of one's predisposition to be mindful in daily life. Mindfulness results in both state and trait changes. Entering a mindful state and practicing mindfulness often can increase one's experience of trait mindfulness, which involves being mindful of one's thoughts, feelings, and actions, until it is incorporated as part of one's personality.

Buddhist Philosophy of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is at the root of Buddhist philosophy and traditions. Buddhist-based theories state that individuals can increase their propensity toward mindfulness in everyday life—i.e., trait mindfulness—by evoking the state of mindfulness repeatedly across meditation sessions. Core values of awareness, tranquility, and insight may be developed through meditation. In order to achieve lasting well-being and happiness, it is essential to understand the mind and emotions so that we can work with our actions and reactions effectively. Mindfulness helps us experience compassion and love, thereby ensuring the well-being and happiness of ourselves and those around us. The emphasis is on non-judgmental awareness of what one experiences in the present moment as one follows the breath and keeps the mind focused. According to Buddhist philosophy, there are four foundations of mindfulness (Baer, 2003; Brown & Ryan, 2003):

- The body, as in what is perceived by the senses right now?
- Feelings, as in how do we feel about those perceptions? Do we accept or reject them?
- Mind, as in what emotional reactions and thoughts are we experiencing based on this?
- Phenomena, as in what is the nature of our perception of things?

Mindfulness in the Vedas and Hindu Texts

Indian scriptures have always emphasized the importance of "living in the present moment." In Indian Vedic scriptures, there are discussions of practices related to mindfulness. From the Bhagavad Gita's discussions of yoga to Vedic meditation, the history of spiritualism reads in part like a history of mindfulness.

Swami Vivekananda (2020), in his treatise on Raj Yoga, explained the philosophy of mindfulness and gave five dimensions:

- **Attention:** holding awareness steady, centralized in only one area of the mind
- **Concentration:** single-pointed focus on the mind, beyond thoughts and emotions
- **Meditation:** slowing down multi-pointed thinking, removing negativity, and calming mind and body
- **Contemplation:** a state of divine observation or inner listening
- **Self-realization:** feeling the bliss of thoughts arising and disappearing, leading to ultimate peace

It is necessary to emphasize that mindfulness is not merely a form of meditation practice as per the spiritual traditions of Indian thought. Observation of the mind and moment-by-moment awareness are central to Vedic traditions. Meditation, self-inquiry, and mindful reflection are quintessential techniques for working towards attainment of enlightenment. Indian scriptures have always emphasized the importance of silence, acceptance, and being in the present moment through meditation.

Mindfulness and Western Thought

The popularity of mindfulness in mainstream American thought occurred through the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn (1996) and his mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program, launched in 1979 at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Several studies thereafter researched and documented the benefits gained from mindfulness and the MBSR program. Although most mindfulness research has been conducted in the field of health sciences, in the past five years or so, researchers are focusing on the role of mindfulness on leadership processes, though more empirical evidence needs to be built up (Arendt et al., 2018).

Two studies by Reb et al. (2014, 2018) concluded that leaders' high dispositional mindfulness resulted in their followers demonstrating higher levels of job performance and well-being. Mindfulness among leaders may result in behaviors that positively impact employee satisfaction. Communication from leaders fosters good relationship quality, leading to commitment and the satisfaction of followers (Abu Bakar et al., 2010).

Mindfulness and Leadership Communication

Arendt et al. (2018) state that "mindfulness in communication consists of three facets:

- Being present and paying attention in conversations
- An open and non-judging attitude
- A calm, non-impulsive manner

The comment that with the advent of technology, leaders are attempting to achieve more and more while paying less and less attention to details (Ehrlich, 2017) merits consideration. Multitasking, requiring constant switching from task to task, results in going slower and making more mistakes. The tendency to constantly check emails and messages to remain updated on information leads to continual interruptions and loss of focus. Overloaded leaders become irritable and lack empathy for their subordinates. Mindfulness can reduce this negative effect of information overload and help leaders be more inspiring and engaging.

Good communication from leaders helps in building team morale and provides proper guidance to team members about organizational expectations for meeting targets successfully. Dissatisfied employees are not beneficial for organizations. Mindful leadership through effective communication enables high productivity and, thus, organizational success.

In addition to the demands of the VUCA world, the post-COVID-19 scenario has increased the challenges faced by corporations. Practice of mindfulness is thus gaining traction. The six-factor model of Ehrlich (2017) combines the four elements of spirit, emotion, mind, and body for improving connectivity, leading to the more inspirational conduct of leaders. Knowing where we are going provides direction, and the ability to understand our feelings provides tolerance for anxiety and ambiguity. The ability to pay attention to our thoughts helps in being objective in decision-making, and we are able to relax and practice better self-care. Thus, the leader is able to build trusting relationships and provide vision and motivation to the employees.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this research is to conduct an exploratory study to compare the applications of mindfulness of corporate leaders who have either lived or worked in Asian cultures. We also wish to understand whether it is possible to achieve mindfulness without necessarily adopting meditation techniques. Is being mindful possible even if one does not practice yoga? Open-ended questions have been posed to corporate practitioners in China, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India to understand how they see the application of mindful communication practices to leadership across diverse cultures. The findings may help us understand how the individual well-being of leaders may impact organizational well-being.

Methodology

An exploratory qualitative approach, grounded in thematic analysis, was used in the study. Purposive sampling was used, considering factors such as leadership roles, mindfulness experience, and cultural background, to interview corporate leaders from China, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 corporate practitioners. These interviews allowed for open-ended conversations that captured rich insights into the leaders' understanding and practice of mindfulness.

Manual thematic analysis helped us identify recurring patterns, themes, and nuances within the data. It enabled a comprehensive exploration of the cultural, societal, and personal factors that shape mindfulness practices among leaders in these diverse Asian countries. This methodology not only contributed to the understanding of mindfulness within leadership contexts but also offered cross-cultural insights into the significance of mindfulness and its applications in business contexts.

Profile of Respondents

Interview requests were sent to 40 corporate executives on the basis of profiles shortlisted on LinkedIn. Positive responses were received from 15 executives: 3 from China, 4 from Nepal, 3 from Sri Lanka, and 5 from India. The respondents were from diverse sectors, namely banking, manufacturing, IT, and energy. All of them had over 10 years of experience and were in leadership roles.

Findings

At the Leadership Level, Mindfulness is a State or a Trait

All the leaders felt that in senior-level leadership, mindfulness is a trait they developed over time. However, mindful practices like yoga and meditation help them access that trait. Regular self-reflection, introspection, and contemplative practices allowed leaders to gain insights into their strengths, areas for growth, self-discovery, and continual improvement. Mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques helped leaders manage high-pressure complex situations, reduced stress levels, and improved overall well-being. “A balance therefore needs to be created between both approaches as they thrive on each other,” said a leader.

How Mindfulness Helps Leaders Across Cultures

Asian leadership styles are frequently characterized by collectivism, respect for authority, and a harmonious attitude. Leaders generally take decisions based on consensus and adopt a paternalistic authority attitude. By fostering leaders’ self-awareness, emotional control, and interpersonal abilities, mindfulness practices can support these leadership philosophies. Findings from the interviews suggest that across cultures, the core principle of mindfulness—to enhance individual well-being for the growth of the organization—remains consistent.

Emotional Intelligence and Self-Control

By encouraging self-awareness and self-regulation, mindfulness improves emotional intelligence. Leaders who engage in mindfulness practices are better able to recognize “their own emotional triggers,” control their stress levels, and respond calmly to difficult circumstances. Leaders may create “happier workplaces” and improve interpersonal connections by developing emotional resilience.

Strategic Thinking and Decision-Making

Mindfulness improves cognitive skills necessary for strategic and effective decision-making. Mindfulness practitioners are more likely to approach decisions with “a clear and focused mind,” which helps them solve problems effectively. Leaders can predict probable outcomes and think about long-term effects because mindfulness promotes a wider perspective.

Authentic and Compassionate Leadership

Mindfulness enables leaders to “connect with their true selves,” enabling them to match their actions with their “core beliefs.” These leaders create a culture of trust, purpose, and cooperation within their organizations. Mindful leaders can influence their employees favorably, which improves their interpersonal effectiveness and makes them compassionate.

Adaptability and Innovation

In complex and uncertain situations, mindful leaders foster adaptability and innovation. Leaders who practice mindfulness develop a flexible approach that enables them to accept change without resistance. “This flexible strategy may result in creative solutions and innovative business practices,” accepted one leader.

Empathy

“Empathetic communication is necessary for effective leadership,” according to one expert. Leaders who practice mindfulness are more likely to actively listen and respond with compassion. This ability is critical for closing gaps between various groups and ensuring that choices and policies are in line with the requirements of the people. Mindfulness helps leaders develop deeper relationships and understanding by engaging in active listening throughout interactions.

Developing Resilience

A leader’s path is frequently paved with difficulties. By guiding leaders to accept setbacks as opportunities for growth, mindfulness fosters resilience. This change in viewpoint helps them recover from failures, adjust to shifting conditions, and motivate their teams to keep going.

Distinctive Cultural Practices Related to Mindfulness

Apart from some commonly derived benefits, the research revealed the distinctive ways in which corporate leaders in different Asian cultures perceive and apply mindful communication practices. Several key themes emerged from the data, providing insights into the interplay between cultural nuances, communication styles, leadership expectations, and organizational outcomes. Cultural variations are evident in the strategies employed and the challenges encountered in the application of mindful communication practices.

China: The culture of mindfulness is deeply ingrained in Chinese society, as recognized by its leaders. A long history of mindfulness-inspired practices may be found in Chinese culture. Being mindful of the present moment is encouraged by Taoism, which places a strong focus on spontaneity and harmony with nature. Self-awareness, reflection, and moral behavior are encouraged in Confucian teachings, cultivating traits that help individuals be mindful. These philosophic tenets can help Chinese leaders negotiate complexity with grace and wisdom if incorporated into contemporary leadership methods. Leaders can gain a well-rounded viewpoint and a better awareness of their surroundings by practicing mindfulness.

Nepal: In Nepal, a country known for its Buddhist traditions, mindfulness is a transformative tool for leaders looking to negotiate complexity with wisdom and empathy. For Nepalese leaders, mindfulness is more than just a technique; it is a way of being that promotes self-awareness and thoughtful behavior. The practice of mindfulness, which entails concentrating on one’s thoughts, feelings, and surroundings by being present in the moment, is something that the philosophy of Buddhism teaches them. Nepal faces a wide variety of problems, ranging from political difficulties and socioeconomic inequalities to environmental issues. Understanding the complexities at play is essential for effective leadership in such a situation. Being in the moment allows leaders to interact more truly with their surroundings, which helps to develop bonds with their people.

India: In India, people have always sought to attain a state of connectivity—the consciousness of one's soul with the soul of the Supreme Being. The desire has been to gain liberation from the cycle of birth, death, and re-birth. Mindfulness is a way of life that brings about inclusivity with the environment, connectivity with nature, leading to a collective ecological existence. This is made possible by adhering to the five yogic pillars: right breathing, right intention, right nutrition, right movement, and right relaxation and thus holistic mindful living.

During India's recently concluded moon landing (Chandrayan-3), there was some hue and cry about the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)'s chief offering prayers at a temple before take-off. Indian thoughts on mindfulness support a convergence of science and spirituality. Particle physics or quantum theory principles can be found outlined in the Upanishads. Reality is not to be perceived only from the perspective of a time-bound, fragmented, linear manner. The Upanishads emphasize that the state of happiness begins by first dismantling the cognitive filters that veil reality and create perceptual illusions (Maya). The Bhagavad Gita (the most revered text in Hinduism) gives the philosophical concept of 'karma'--actions, deeds, and the consequences. It is our behavior that ultimately makes us what we become: the one who does good becomes virtuous, and the one who indulges in evil ends up as an evil person. If one wishes to cheat the system and avoid action, it is a potential loss of good karma. One needs to remain active and perform good deeds without focusing on the ultimate reward (Debroy, 2020).

Based on the Buddhist tradition and spirituality in Sri Lanka, a relaxed pace of living is frequently emphasized. Leaders follow this style in their organizational lives. They do not make judgments hastily and wait patiently for the outcomes. They want to achieve a healthy work-life balance with the aid of mindfulness. They connect with the community to learn about its needs and goals.

Conclusion

A lot remains to be uncovered about the practice of mindfulness in the realm of work. Our exploratory study enabled us to assess whether the corporate practitioners were indeed aware of the importance of being mindful of their daily endeavors in the workplace. In all four cultures, mindfulness has been a way of life without a conscious realization of its impact. Confucian teachings and Taoism emphasize harmony with nature and the ability to be self-aware and reflective. Buddhism, practiced in both Sri Lanka and Nepal, teaches leaders to be thoughtful and calm and not be hasty in taking decisions. The Hindu philosophy of India teaches leaders collective ecological existence and the concept of "karma"--undertaking good actions without being unduly focused on the rewards. Leaders in Asian cultures have to balance the diverse pulls of tradition and modernity.

Mindfulness has become a promising path for effective leadership in the complex and fast-paced world of modern business. The use of mindful communication techniques among corporate leaders in various Asian cultures was the topic of this exploratory qualitative study. The results show how cultural nuances affect the communication and leadership style of leaders. Although improving personal and organizational well-being is a goal shared by all cultures, mindful leadership takes on different forms depending on the cultural context in which it is used. This study highlights that the practice of mindfulness is still relevant for attaining success in the dynamic corporate landscape as firms manage problems in the VUCA world.

Implications

The study's findings have significant implications for organizational health, leadership development, and cross-cultural management. Organizations can modify their leadership development initiatives to promote mindful communication techniques that fit particular cultural contexts by understanding and appreciating cultural variations. This strategy could improve overall organizational success as well as leadership effectiveness. Mindful communication can influence organizational well-being by raising team morale, offering clear direction, and increasing productivity. Mindfulness as a technique for negotiating uncertainty and promoting resilience is especially important in light of the new difficulties posed by the VUCA world.

Challenges and Future Directions

Although incorporating mindfulness into leadership techniques in Asian cultures has its advantages, a number of challenges are involved: the conflict between custom and modernity, and the possibility of opposition to individualistic ideas. The role of mindfulness in crisis leadership in Asian contexts might be investigated in future research, and the long-term effects of mindful leadership on individual performance could be examined. Future research with a larger sample size may improve the generalizability of the results. Further research can delve deeper into the challenges of reconciling Western management practices with Eastern cultural values and creating a balance between the two approaches.

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Needs Analysis to Improve Course Design Communication Skills in the US Workplace Skills for Chinese International Students

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Business communication courses in the US are typically designed to address the needs of American graduate students who intend to work primarily in the US or for US-based organizations. Yet, international students may represent a large percentage in US graduate business classes. Some instructors argue that students studying in the US should adapt to US communication practices; however, students with English as a second language may struggle to adapt to these communication demands without additional instruction and practice. Not only do these students need a clear sense of the communication competencies needed to be successful in the US workplace, but they need opportunities to practice these competencies.

In this presentation, we describe needs analysis and outline a process for using needs analysis to better tailor a graduate-level business communication course for an international cohort consisting primarily of Chinese students. The original course included writing and presenting tasks where students had time to plan and prepare. The revised course included more interactive/less planned communication tasks. The audience will gain an understanding of needs analysis as a tool, learn about the process of using triangulation in needs analysis, learn about our outcomes, and see an example of how the results were integrated into the revised course.

Needs analysis is a commonly used research method to identify the language needs of a particular group of second-language learners (Swales 2001; Dai 2023) and often begins with student perceptions of their own needs (Belcher & Lukkarila 2011). This matters because when students have a pragmatic understanding of language use, their motivation to learn increases (Yang & Ren 2019). However, students often have limited insight into their own learning needs.

At its most basic, needs analysis is a method in which process gaps in learning can be identified. In a needs analysis, the focus is often on contexts in which interactions occur. Dai (2023) has argued that interactional competence – that is, students' "ability to manage interaction on a moment-by-moment basis" (p. 2) – is a better indicator of communication skill than are tasks prepared in advance, such as writing or presenting. A needs analysis can consider varying perspectives, including self-reported needs, employer needs, workplace-specific needs, and cultural needs (Songhori 2008).

To create a robust needs analysis, one strategy is triangulation of data (Long 2013). In this process, original ideas are verified across multiple sources. Youn (2018), for instance, uses data that is verified across students, administrators, and language instructors using both interviews and questionnaires. This provides a rich understanding of the needs of language learners. Such triangulation is valuable too since needs analysis can form the basis of curriculum development (Kaewpet 2009).

Following a process similar to that described by Youn (2018), here we triangulated data from multiple sources including students (questionnaire, interview, discussion posts); alumni; instructors (discussion); program administrators (interviews); and employers (communication skills competencies identified as important in the workplace).
The outcome of this needs analysis identified additional skills training opportunities for this group of Chinese students, including: small talk and networking (strategies and practice), self-advocacy (negotiating conflict), storytelling with data, speaking extemporaneously, and persuasion.

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Virtual International Exchange: Survey and Best Practices

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Business communication, and business education overall, is experiencing a time of rapid change. AI-enhanced writing seems poised to become "normalized," but the strategic and cross-cultural communication decisions that successful business people make cannot be automated; adapting to offer positive and authentic first impressions for different audiences, building trust, networking, and contextual decision-making will not be addressed by AI. These areas are still the province for practical, relevant business communication course experiences. Yet it is too easy to "cheat the system." Many of our case studies and contextual assignments are shared online and can be completed with AI. Business communication professors must adapt. Virtual exchange offers a value-added pivot, particularly when using Best Practices. An exchange can sharpen a business communication course's focus on relevant cross-cultural communication experiences. This is impossible to complete via AI and translates into career-ready transferable job skills. This presentation reports the results of a survey of faculty who have participated in virtual exchange and identifies best practices.

SUNY pioneered a comprehensive virtual exchange, the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) model, as an international collaboration between two professors that is both cost-effective and accessible. Why is it particularly attractive for business schools and communication faculty? COIL requires no legal agreement between the institutions but can tighten a collaborative relationship, increasing research, student exchange, and faculty-led trips. The pandemic-spurred rapid adoption of online meeting tools across higher education has increased that accessibility for both students and professors. At the same time, students are entering careers in which online business meetings, particularly in large companies with overseas colleagues and partners, have also increased. Obviously, successful business students should be able to run meetings and network online with international partners.

The COIL model offers a relevant experience that tests students' career-readiness communication skills. Students anticipate the audience as they are asked to create a potential audience profile and introduction video for their team members at a partner school. Then, in the first meeting, an ice breaker allows the students to get to know each other more informally, and then they focus on the goals of the students' assignments. The students' collaboration and meeting scheduling process is often frustrating – which is a key aspect of the exchange. In their reflection video, students address their initial expectations and what they have learned from the exchange. This video is often shown in class and is always shared with the other team.

Great business communication, more than anything else, meets the needs of the audience. As a recent survey of faculty who have conducted virtual exchange, the COIL model of virtual exchange immediately and relevantly highlights the role of audience and how to approach multiple audiences, as businesses do today. The COIL model template with an initial video introduction, three meetings with set topics and a final video (which the professors, classmates, and international team members see) offer an obvious comparison to international business meetings, in which multiple audiences are common, each with unique viewpoints, goals, and perspectives.

A business communication COIL template also emphasizes the research and networking that is so critical for success with globalization. “Small talk” is mandatory – and students gather information and impressions as they do so. Yet there is a great formal research structure that underlies the COIL interaction. Before the exchange, students log initial expectations of their new partners from the other university (often stereotypes and assumptions). Then they gather quantitative data by doing some research about the country, city and institution where their new team members are located. During the exchange itself, students gather qualitative feedback (field research) through conversation and shared links, pictures, videos, etc.. The final reflection allows students to compare their assumptions and expectations with what they learned through research, conversation and comparing it with quantitative data gathered elsewhere, networking internationally, and completing a report and reflection video about the assignment.

Successful business school graduates should be able to communicate via multiple channels with diverse audiences, and those practical, relevant experiences that translate into career-ready resumes and job placement. Virtual exchange, particularly the COIL template, allows business communication classes to address the audience and give students unique international experiences without additional cost. Creating the exchange as an optional assignment is a method utilized by many surveyed to increase the honor associated with the exchange and reduce the professor's management role while still retaining the impact.

A "Swiss-Army Knife" of Audience Adaptation

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Since at least 1973, when Jeanna W. Halpern argued for “six general categories” of writing strategies that should form the backbone of what business communication courses should be teaching their students, business communication instructors have taken it as a central goal for our courses that students should learn how to adapt for different audiences. In most of our courses, we teach students concepts altogether identical to what Halpern argued for, which included identifying the primary and secondary audiences, understanding what elements to include for different audiences, and how to choose a tone and approach appropriate for different audiences. Our research since the 1970s has certainly augmented our approach, from detailed approaches to having student peers model audiences (Holst-Larkin, 2008), working with generational communication tendencies (Hartman and McCambridge, 2011), using social media as a data set to analyze audience communication (Lam and Hannah, 2016), performing interviews of organizational writers to update our expectations for the 21st century (Cyphert et al, 2019), and employing reflective metacognition to improve audience awareness (Schieber and Robles, 2019), among many others. Textbooks used across business communication and technical communication courses, like Mike Markel and Stuart Selber’s (2020) popular Technical Communication textbook, provide complex frameworks for recognizing and understanding the audiences for a text, with the Markel and Selber textbook providing a list of no less than eighteen different aspects to consider when performing audience analysis. These items include individual characteristics of the intended audience, developed through exposure or the use of personas, such as educational level, and also ask writers to consider cultural frameworks such as a culture’s general view of the nature of truth, their tolerance for ambiguity, and their deference to higher authority.

All of these are, of course, fundamentally important things that do affect how an audience will receive any message from a writer, but as we present ever more complex and nuanced lists of valid criteria to weigh, measure, and evaluate, we also run afoul of one of the most fundamental rules of user experience design: Hick’s Law. Also known as the Hick-Hyman Law, it was developed by William Edmund Hick and Ray Hyman, and explains a simple, very important rule of human cognition: the more choices and options someone has, the longer it takes them to act. Reducing the number of choices increases not only the speed by which someone can complete a task but also the perceived cognitive complexity of the task. Anecdotally, one might consider the experience of using a tax preparation software versus the actual IRS Form 1044. The software carefully guides the user through limited step-by-step, cutting down the amount of information asked, while the form’s overwhelming number of steps and options can feel simply impossible to someone unfamiliar with it. A complex restaurant menu may mean that a great variety is available, but a new customer will feel challenged rather than comforted by the range of choices that they must make to order. The same occurs for writers who are attempting to consider an ever-increasing number of permutations of their audience. Presented with too many criteria, they cannot process them all, and their analysis is flawed at best.

To address this, this proposal offers what the writer humbly refers to as their 'Swiss Army knife' framework, a reference to the concept of a utility that can be used to solve multiple problems. By drawing on the theory of Discourse put forward by linguist and literacy scholar James Paul Gee (2014) and combining it with fundamental philosophical frameworks of axiology and epistemology, the proposal will explain a method to teaching audience analysis that reduces the range of options students must consider when adapting for an audience without reducing the complexity of their adaptation. The presentation will introduce audiences to Gee's framework and why it is particularly effective in understanding contentious and complex concepts like "cultural fit." It will then provide examples of how the "knife" can be used to recognize where Discourse conflicts are likely to occur and how that recognition can inform an adaptive, shifting strategy for audience adaptation that is less rigid and more manageable than a list of criteria.

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Personal Values and Their Impact on Communication

Steve Berry
Anne Arundel Community College

Good communication, in all situations, begins with a healthy self-understanding and self-awareness. Whether it is a 'comfortable' or 'uncomfortable' communication, recognizing how it affects oneself is the first critical step in effective communication.

Participants will be guided through a very interactive value mining exercise in which they will explore on a deeper level their personal values and how their personal values impact how they communicate. This can be applied to their interpersonal communication as well as their business communication.

Part I
Participants work through an exercise in which they dive deeper into their personal values and how those values impact their lives. Questions such as: How is it when they are fully living their values and when they are not? What supports their values? What challenges their values? How do values affect communication, speaking and hearing, and writing and reading?

Part II
What are the challenges to our values? How do we know when that "little voice" is supporting or hindering our values?

Part III
Tapping into the 'wise' voice to live, and communicate, deeply in alignment with our personal values. What is the experience when we listen to this voice? What is the impact on our communication and on others?

During this workshop people will be expected to share (what they are comfortable with sharing) in small groups and explore how what they have learned about themselves impacts their communication with others in their group.

Understanding and Adapting your Communication Style to Improve Interpersonal Communication: Earn Accreditation in SOCIAL STYLE®

Daisy L. Lovelace
Duke University

Judy Tisdale
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Jana M. Seijts
Western University

David C. Collins
TRACOM Group

Here's your chance to become accredited in the SOCIAL STYLE® model, a communication skills program used by companies in over 100 countries around the world. Compared to other profiles typically taught in business communication, this model is unique. It focuses exclusively on observable communication patterns rather than personality traits or types. By achieving accreditation, you can integrate this communication profile into your undergraduate, graduate, or executive education courses to support student communication skills development.

You can leverage the SOCIAL STYLE® model to teach students or executives how to more efficiently and effectively:

· analyze an audience in order to craft more outcomes-oriented written messages or presentations,
· adapt to diverse audiences (demonstrate versatility),
· manage interpersonal conflict,
· demonstrate agility in interviews, and
· think more strategically about how to lead peers and managers.

Additionally, the model will help students and executives demonstrate confident versatility in today's multicultural, multi-national business environment. Organizations seeking to truly train and engage their employees on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) benefit from including social intelligence in their offerings.

In this experiential workshop, we'll provide ABC attendees with a deep dive into SOCIAL STYLE®, a deceptively simple, yet well-researched, communication style profile that allows students to heighten their social and emotional intelligence and become more agile and effective in influencing and communicating with others.

Workshop participants will work through their own self-perception profile and actively engage in an in-depth learning experience about SOCIAL STYLE® content and how to leverage it when teaching in any program. Participants will also receive assignment samples, a book, a certificate of accreditation at the end of the workshop, and access to online resources from TRACOM, Inc.

Each of our presenters brings a different perspective on SOCIAL STYLE® in the business communication classroom, ensuring the session provides maximum value for ABC attendees:

David Collins, President and CEO of The TRACOM® Group, will take participants through real-time accreditation in the SOCIAL STYLE Model®.

Challenging the "Founder Myth": How Small Business Entrepreneurs Use Stories of Community-Based Calling to Establish Credibility

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When it comes to deciding which new business ventures to fund, investors look in part to startup entrepreneurs' perceived enthusiasm and passion (Cardon et al., 2009b; Chen et al., 2009). One way startup entrepreneurs portray passion and enthusiasm is by telling "founders' stories" that show how their own personal experiences led to flashes of brilliant, visionary insight that inspired their startup ideas (O'Connor, 2002). Telling a story of strong, single-minded calling to a pursue disruptive, innovative vision is one way startup entrepreneurs can show their commitment to a new venture and help investors feel confident in backing a risky or potentially risky new ventures that can scale rapidly.

But the story is different for small business entrepreneurs who, instead of proposing lucrative and scalable startups, instead seek funding for small, main-street businesses. These businesses typically seek funding not from risk-embracing investors but from risk-averse bankers (Mason & Stark, 2004).

My research, a mixed-method study involving a rhetorical corpus analysis of 22 small business plans and interviews with two entrepreneurs and two small business lenders, suggests that small business entrepreneurs tell stories of "entrepreneurial calling." Entrepreneurs use these stories to explain how their professional skills, credentials, and prior work experience intersect with their personal experiences and their community's needs in ways that have motivated them to embark on a new venture. Stories of entrepreneurial calling frame a new venture as an inevitable step that arises not from an entrepreneur's own single-minded ambition and flashes of brilliant insight but from intrinsic and social forces that, together, almost compel the entrepreneur to start a new business.

During my interview with one small business entrepreneur, she confirmed that stories of entrepreneurial calling are particularly useful for helping readers understand why an entrepreneur's personal experiences and commitment to their community qualify them to start a venture, even if their formal credentials might not. She confirmed that she tells the story of her entrepreneurial calling often in her written business planning because it allows her to bring together the seemingly unrelated threads of her education, professional experience, personal interests, and deep community loyalty in ways that help funders understand why she is a credible entrepreneur, even if it might not look that way on paper.

Stories of entrepreneurial calling are useful in part because they help small business entrepreneurs show commitment and dedication to a business idea, which my interviews with small business lenders suggest are key to inspiring confidence and securing a loan. But they may also be a particularly useful rhetorical resource for female entrepreneurs like Rosie. Women are far less likely than men to start new business ventures, and research has shown that gender stereotypes are at least partly to blame (Greenberg et al., 2020). Put simply, men are stereotypically considered ambitious and self-reliant and thus more suited to excel in competitive professional environments, while women are stereotyped as being caring and interdependent and thus better suited to caregiving roles. Studies of new venture funding have shown that women who behave “entrepreneurially” (i.e., like men) raise less funding and incur more skeptical, resistant questions than women who act less entrepreneurially (Kanze et al., 2018; Malmström et al., 2020).

While this phenomenon is obviously unjust, research also indicates that female entrepreneurs who want to succeed must learn to work within this inherently biased framework, at least for now (Malmström et al., 2020b). Stories of entrepreneurial calling may provide a means for women to do that, since they position a new venture as responding to a community’s needs, thereby framing the entrepreneur partly as a community-minded caregiver.

More broadly, my study’s findings about stories of entrepreneurial calling have implications for the kind of instruction we offer students enrolled in many universities’ growing entrepreneurship education (EE) programs (e.g., 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 different ways of telling the stories of their own entrepreneurial calling.

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Optics and Implications: A Zoom Inc. Quarterly Earnings Webinar Case Study

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Quarterly earnings calls provide voluntary and carefully chosen portions of earnings reports to audiences of shareholders, stakeholders, and industry analysts. The calls include prepared statements by executives, providing impressions of past events, current positions, and forward-looking statements, with a subsequent question and answer session of executives by analysts. Some stakeholders have asked for changes in quarterly earnings calls and select companies have piloted changes in how the calls are conducted and presented. Technological innovations have made these changes simple to implement, yet corporations have been slow to adopt enhanced visual presentations for these calls. Some notable exceptions are Twitter, which used its streaming video app, Periscope, from 2015-16; Netflix, which began live webcasts in 2013; and Zoom, which started using its own webinar product for presentations in 2019. Visual communication has become a vital method of rhetorical engagement in business (Kernbach and Eppler; Lehtonen). Zoom's presentations of quarterly earnings provide a useful opportunity to examine visual and digital aspects of business communication. This project considers the Zoom fiscal year Q1 2021 earnings webinar by conducting a case study and approaches the intersection of professional communication and visual rhetoric within the merging media and tech spaces. Visual rhetorical strategies are explored and placed in context by considering the implication of audience(s) by rhetors as well as methods of directing attention (Burke, 1968).

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Teaching Transferability of Soft Skills with Rhetorical Memory in Business Pitches

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Transferable soft skills are valued by business leaders, sought after by hiring managers, and are often at the center of learning outcomes taught by business communication faculty. Business communication scholars have perennially studied which transferable soft skills are perceived as most important by employers (Coffelt et al., 2022; Robles, 2012), and while there is consensus that transferable skills are valuable, there is less consensus about how to best prepare business students to demonstrate and communicate that they have these skills. Beyond teaching soft skills as part of a business communication curriculum, the meta-skill of knowing how to communicate that one has relevant soft skills is an essential part of ensuring the efficacy of business communication education. This presentation focuses on teaching pitches as an opportunity to build students' ability to communicate their transferable skills.

This presentation identifies rhetorical memory, the ability of communicators to select which memories to share to achieve the desired communicative outcome, as both a pedagogical strategy for teaching oral communication and as skill that students can use to deliver situationally attuned business pitches more successfully. Rhetorical memory can be traced to rhetorical instruction in oratory in the canons of ancient Roman rhetoric (Cicero, 2001) and in the classical Chinese rhetorical tradition (Guiguzi, 2016). While memorization emphasizes internalization of a script for delivery on cue, rhetorical memory emphasizes a practice of accessing, recalling, and presenting relevant memories as anchored conversation points contextualized by the setting. Rhetorical memory is engaged when an interviewer asks a candidate for a position to describe a time when they overcame a challenge or to share an example of their ability to work on a team. In the space between hearing the question and deciding which example to share, the candidate practices rhetorical memory. Business pitches also rely on rhetorical memory, especially as presenters speak through talking points and adjust their content based on subtle audience feedback.

Pitch practice involves preparing a pitch and repeating it several times to notice how the message can shift slightly with each occurrence. There are numerous rhetorical options available to students including slide decks and visual aids (Williams, Spinuzzi, & Newbold, 2020), body language (Clarke, Cornelissen and Healey, 2019), engaging shared or organizational memory (Patriarca, 2019), and stasis-informed responses to common questions (Tomlinson, 2020). Among these options and others, students use rhetorical memory to make decisions about what to include in their pitch as well as how and when to deliver it, and through the deliberative aspect of rhetorical memory, business communication pedagogy can help students build the meta-skill of communicating that they have transferable soft skills.

Rather than positioning oral delivery as a summative presentation of a project, asking students to repeatedly present their pitches develops an embodied memory that connects oral communication to past experience and helps speakers who might be shy or anxious overcome communication apprehension (Cardon et al., 2022). Connecting the deliberation behind delivering a business pitch to previous experience is especially impactful when working with students who transfer from a 2-year college to a 4- year university because students who transfer between schools often develop soft skills such as persistence, resilience, and a refined ability to learn quickly by virtue of navigating the educational system. When business transfer students deliver business pitches or present themselves professionally, they can use rhetorical memory to draw upon their transfer experience as an asset and to communicate the transferability of their skills. The same factors that enhance a transfer student's likelihood of academic success, referred to as "transfer student capital," turn out to be highly valuable transferrable skills in themselves. (Mailiszewski Lukzo and Hayes, 2020; Laanan et al., 2010).

Business and professional communication has long been interested in identifying and teaching the transferability of soft skills from one context to another (Brent, 2011), both as they connect to genre studies (Morrison, 2017), and as they operate as the critical link between business communication courses and business communication as a professional practice (Coffelt et al., 2022). Pedagogical approaches for teaching business pitches and other genres grounded in rhetorical memory can help students enhance the value proposition of their transferable soft skills through techniques that demonstrate situational awareness and attend to audience needs and expectations.

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The Future is Now: Teaching Business Narratives in a First-Year Writing Course

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The potential of first-year writing courses for introducing students to the world of business and for exposing them to the fundamentals of effective business communication has often been overlooked. Rarely does one find business-related topics among the standard course offerings in a first-year writing program, not even at dedicated business colleges. And rarely does one find more than the occasional presentation about business topics at professional gatherings in the fields of composition studies or rhetoric like the annual Conference on College Communication and Composition – despite an increased interest in "teaching for transfer" (Wolfe et al., 2014) and a constant lament about the fact that students tend to fail at transferring skills from first-year writing across disciplines and to other courses they are taking in college (Beaufort, 2007; Wardle, 2009).

This presentation aims to make a compelling case for expanding first-year writing programs to incorporate courses dedicated to business topics and for widening the list of desired outcomes of required first-year writing courses to include the fundamentals of effective business communication. "New heights" in business communication, so I argue, cannot be reached without laying solid foundations early on, and the "future of business communication" (and of business education in general) starts with what is being taught and how it is being taught in mandatory courses at the undergraduate level.

My presentation draws on experiences and insights gained while teaching first-year writing courses on business narratives and, more broadly, on storytelling in business as well as writing-intensive first-year liberal arts courses on business topics at two different institutions of higher education. It will share educational practices, strategies, and selected assignments that have been successful in exposing first-year students to business content within the confines of a required writing course, in order to emphasize that "the future of business communication" starts here and now – with providing ample, current, and relevant opportunities for critical thinking and writing at the undergraduate level.

Business topics, I contend, are especially well-suited for enabling students to build bridges (or, in the parlance of composition studies, to "transfer" their writing skills) between first-year composition and other academic disciplines and to the "real world" beyond college. For instance, a first-year writing course on "Storytelling in Business" helps students realize that storytelling not only plays a crucial role in our lives as we draw on stories to make meaning of ourselves and others, to shed light on our experiences, or to express who we are or would like to be – but that the same also holds true for businesses as well. In a unit of this course dedicated to social entrepreneurship, students analyze the "stories" of college-age entrepreneurs (whom they can easily relate to) from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds who pursued an innovative idea to bring positive change to their communities. All of these entrepreneurs had been recognized as "changemakers" by the Ashoka Foundation, a non-profit organization which fosters social entrepreneurship as a tool for "shifting mindsets and reshaping how we learn, work, and live together to catalyze changemaking for the good of society." For one of their assignments, students analyze a "changemaker" of their choice through the lenses of social entrepreneurship and storytelling in business. Later in the course, we expand on the topic by discussing success stories of groundbreaking historical figures such as that of C.J. Walker, portrayed in the Netflix series "Self-Made," as well as the manifold challenges and opportunities contemporary entrepreneurs face.

Storytelling is not only a core competency of business leaders but an indispensable component of functional organizations. Successful companies take pride in compelling stories; troubled companies tend to lack institutional stories and a culture of storytelling. Capable business leaders are effective storytellers, and strategic storytelling has been a proven means of initiating change and of turning companies around. By analyzing texts from various media, first-year students discuss questions such as: What characterizes effective stories? What is the importance of storytelling and story-making in companies? How can storytelling bring about organizational change? Which traits do storytellers and business leaders share? What is the connection between storytelling and leadership?

Investigating the power of stories and storytelling is only one of many applications of "business" to first-year writing. Business contexts, so I will show in my presentation, are uniquely suited to help students understand the universality of writing and to demonstrate how writing and communication skills (including storytelling skills) can be applied across disciplines and to professional contexts beyond college. Business writing and communication skills are core competencies that can and should be built at the undergraduate level, and first-year courses provide unique and exciting opportunities to do exactly that!

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The Trail of Passions: Pedagogical Applications of Rhetoric

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It is intriguing, in a sense, that words can form opinions, modify them, and lead readers to think according to the intention of the writer; they lead crowds to vote for a certain candidate; they can induce the most diverse feelings, produce passionate responses, but they may not even achieve the speaker's objective or arouse interest. Aristotle, a disciple of Plato, was the philosopher who systematized, in the work Rhetoric Art, what had been commented and taught regarding the ability to convince and persuade through speech. Aristotle's Rhetoric Art is, in fact, a source of continuous discoveries, even after so many readings and more than 2400 years of research since its conception. The author saw great civic importance in rhetorical art and, in a way, therefore, criticized his predecessors who identified it as a persuasive art and reduced it to legal procedures, forgetting the political aspect. For the Stagirite, rhetoric had as its object the study of words and not things. He established a difference, for example, between poetics and rhetoric, the first defined as the art of producing narratives, while the second as the art of discourses, the art of producing persuasive speeches and speeches. The words "persuade" and "convince" imply the existence of the other: the one to whom the speaker is addressing.

This article seeks to apply rhetorical theory to the process of capturing students' adherence to the pedagogical discourse exercised in the classroom, in the case studied, at a higher education level. As a research question, we intend to verify how pathos is installed in educational discourse, and the objective is to verify the breadth of the "path of passions" concept (Figueiredo, 2018, 2019, 2020).

Conceptualizing passion is an eternal approach without a definitive answer, but despite knowing these limits, one must remember that many questions are not asked to be answered, but to serve as a stimulus to constant search for knowledge. The classical Greeks made important contributions to the understanding of pathos, hence, in this first moment, we approach the subject from these scholars and limit the research to the study of passion not in the psychoanalytic sense of its root – passio – suffering, but in the sense of being affected for something. Carvalho da Silva (2006) emphasizes that classical culture attributed great relevance to the issue of pathos, since the passions of the soul were implicated in personal and collective well-being, in lifestyle choices and in the very conditions of searching for truth – the core of Philosophy. Pathos therefore relates to a way of being and positioning oneself.

The Audience

For Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca (1996, p. 21) there is no doubt that "argumentation aims to obtain the support of those to whom it is addressed," that is, the speaker has in mind an audience to convince and persuade. To do so, he develops the argument with a certain quality, in other words, his ideas need to be expressed with such skill that it awakens the desire to listen. The speaker needs to provoke a response in the audience. What means that to be successful in his speech, he will use arguments that persuade or convince the audience to adhere to the proposed thesis.

These authors comment on the presumed audience, the one from whom the speaker presupposes certain beliefs or preferences; thus, they construct a systematized notion bearing sociological or psychological bases (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1966, p. 22). Whether the basis is sociological or psychological, the important fact is that, for the argument to be effective, the audience must presumably be as close to reality as possible. This includes avoiding inappropriate use of images that can, for example, cause “the most unpleasant consequences” (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1996, p. 22). To achieve such closeness to reality, prior knowledge of the audience becomes a condition for any argument.

If we consider that the belief, the doxa, the conviction of individuals is built based, in large part, on their social environment, we assume that this aspect of rhetoric has a sociological character. Another aspect is that audiences do not have impermeable, fixed, established beliefs, but they are susceptible to change, adaptable, manageable. This perspective of change is what makes audiences flexible and leads speakers to study them before choosing their arguments; after all, the intention may be to modify their beliefs. All this applies to the classroom.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1996) comment on some conditions of the audience: its homogeneous or heterogeneous character, its universality or particularity, the necessary link between the thought of the speaker and the audience, and here we recall Meyer (2007b), a Belgian philosopher, for whom Rhetoric consists in the discipline that studies the means used by man (speaker) to negotiate the distance that separates him from the other (audience).

Here we can see the reinforcement of the social that is echoed in the voice of Aristotle, for whom:

> Among the proofs provided by the speech, three types are distinguished: some reside in the moral character of the speaker; others, in the dispositions that were created in the listener; others, in the speech itself, because of what it demonstrates or seems to demonstrate. (Aristotle, 1998, p. 33).

If we think of the triad as the three supporting points of Aristotelian argumentation, if we highlight the audience as the object of persuasion by the speaker and if the same audience is the materialization of pathos, we can understand pathos as relevant in the argument. Aristotle, in fact, dedicates a book on rhetoric to passions and returns to the theme in Nicomachean Ethics. Emotions are essential in the argumentative clash, since, through them, some distances are negotiated (Meyer, 2007b). Aristotle understands that the speaker's objective is to persuade the audience and, to do so, he must present persuasive statements or evidence to the listeners, hoping to make them adhere to his speech. However, mastery of discursive demonstration is not sufficient for persuasion; it is necessary, according to the philosopher, for the speaker to inspire confidence in listeners through his posture, in addition to observing the disposition of those he is addressing and, then, using emotion.

While logos produces a conviction of truth through discursive organization and argumentative logic, evidence through ethos (of the speaker) and pathos (of the audience) lead to the same belief, as they present the speaker as worthy of credibility and awaken emotional states favorable to his speech.

In the pursuit of the capacity to awaken a desired emotional response, Aristotle helps understanding of how individuals are affected by passions: the condition in which the audience finds itself; for whom or against whom you feel a certain emotion; and reasons that awaken that emotion. Passions affect judgments, which is why speakers must study their audiences: how they are, what emotional state; the reasons that led them to be the way they are.

Passionate states normally have a cause and an essence, according to Aristotle, so if we want to change a passionate state, we must understand the cause and its essence. Let's think of an audience that is going to meet a new teacher and who does not have any favorable or unfavorable references. There will probably be some curiosity. There may also be some benevolence towards him or ill will, but there will be no causes of good or ill-being. On the other hand, an audience who already has prior information about that teacher, even if they have never actually contacted him, will form a value judgment based on comments or actions. Such understanding may affect the mood of the audience, and it is useful for the speaker to be aware of this mood even to know how to conduct his arguments.

Once the audience's state of mind and the speaker's purpose have been defined, he studies the cause and essence and, from there, establishes which passions he wants to awaken. Finally, it is important to clarify that passion, in this chapter, carries the etymological meaning of passivity, as recalled by Descartes at the beginning of the work The Passions of the Soul:

[...] after having considered how the passions of the soul differ from all other thoughts, it seems to me that we may in general define them by perceptions, or feelings, or emotions of the soul, which we particularly refer to it, and which are caused, maintained and strengthened by some movement of spirits” (Descartes, 1973, p. 237).

The Path of Passions

Figueiredo (2018) proposed a possible trajectory of passions according to what she supposes to occur within the persuasive process. According to the author, the unprecedented contribution “initially rests on the first two stages 'availability' and 'identification', which will be continued in the three subsequent stages (awakening of passion, change of judgment and action), already present in Aristotle” (Figueiredo, 2019, p. 10).

The following illustration seeks to show how the trajectory of passions is structured.

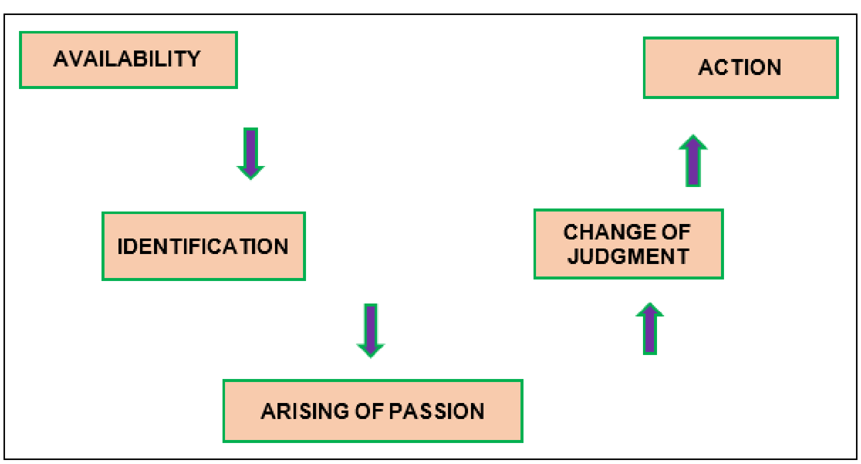

Figure 1 – The Path of Passions according to Figueiredo.

As already explained, awakening pathos in the audience is the task of the speaker who, to persuade them, in addition to building the rational (logos) from his character (ethos), outlines the emotions in a skillful and intelligent way and, with this, reinforces the argument. Once the public's goodwill has been won, the speaker needs to maintain it and maintain interest in his speech. Aristotle, in his treatise on the passions, part of Rhetoric, analyzes the passions in a way that allows the speaker to arouse or pacify them in his listeners.

According to what can be seen in Figure 1, the phases of the trajectory of passions, according to Figueiredo, are: availability, identification, awakening of passion, change of judgment and action.

The first of these, availability, refers to the emotions that the audience is capable of feeling. As mentioned before, the speaker, before presenting his arguments, needs to know who he is going to address, their characteristics – from physical to psychological – so he will be able to modulate his speech based on such peculiarities, the profiles outlined, the natures shown, the standards and beliefs. To accomplish that, it is not enough to know, for example, age, race, sexual orientation; it is good to have access to values, preferences, habits, so you, the speaker, will be able to move arguments forward. An important moment is the beginning of the dialogue between speaker and audience, which, as can be seen, needs to be predisposed and open to the passions that will be awakened by the speaker. If there is room, affections will be awakened, and the speech will find fertile ground. Showing himself in a favorable light transforms the speaker into an individual who will create a good mood in the listeners.

In the second phase, that of identification, the audience identifies with the portion of itself that finds echo in the speaker or in the propositions. This is the moment in which the speaker and the audience recognize each other, admit each other, and the occasion in which the audience accepts the speaker's initial propositions and the opportunity in which relationships of trust are established. Part of this stage is the understanding not only of the subject to be addressed but also the encyclopedic knowledge that structures knowledge, behavior, habits, intellect, level of education and the skills that go beyond the speech delivered. Part of identification, then, are the sensations described or allowed to appear and rational impressions. In other words, it is during identification that the speaker reaches the audience in the soul, "whether through a sensitive perception, a memory, an imagination" (Figueiredo, 2019, p. 13).

After identifying with the speaker, the audience is prepared for the most important phase in the trajectory of passions: the awakening itself. Considering that there is only persuasion when there is passion, this is the stage at which it is caused, as passionate experiences occur that affect soul and body: there is enjoyment, delight, and also painful experiences. It is relatively common for people to cry during religious preaching, especially about conversion and healing; feel anger in inflammatory speeches of a political nature; even choose to kill in cases of induction to terrorism. In war, some of those enlisted are led to this by patriotic speeches of a passionate nature. There is also the discourse to arouse guilt, which is relatively common in family contexts. In this way, passion is not limited to conducting discourses with an intellectual or epistemic function only, but, as Aristotle says, it is the essential rational content of being. To harmonize the passions, one should not rely on a moral law, according to Leibnitz (1973, p. 9): "I prefer to say that the passions are not contentment or displeasures or opinions, but tendencies, or rather, modification of the tendency, which come of opinion or feeling, and which are accompanied by pleasure or displeasure." The speaker's objective is not just to convince through arguments: he must touch the chord of affections and use the movements of the soul that prolong certain emotions.

The fourth phase is determined by the change in judgments based on what was constructed by the speaker's speech. Aristotle (2015) tells us that "passions are the causes that introduce changes in our judgments, and that are followed by pain and pleasure; such are anger, compassion, fear, and all other emotions, as well as their opposites" (p. 97). In other words, passions change, and for this to happen, the speaker must inspire confidence, which comes from three causes: prudence, virtue, and benevolence. If one of them is missing, the speech may be harmed, and the audience will stop believing.

Arousal of Passions in College Students: An Application

The conscious use of the path of passions in the speech of college professors, as seen so far, can help in the relationship between the speaker-teacher and the audience-student.

In addition to this first structure, some underlying processes were noticed during the analysis in a real situation, thus contributing to better argumentative negotiation: the strengthened construction of ethos, based on discourse, narratives, figures and other resources, use of common sense supported by memory, imagination and fantasy and three new stages, which occur after the change of judgment: deliberation, choice and disposition.

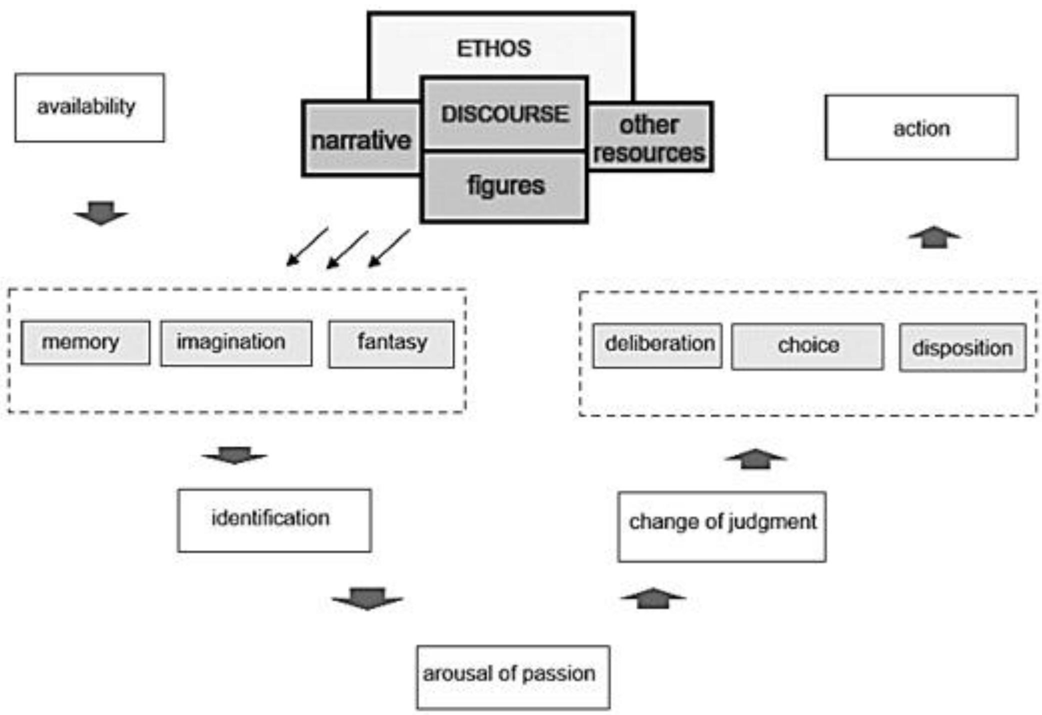

Figure 2 – arousal of passions in the grand rhetorical scheme

An application: In a college in Brazil, an exhibit was presented with vintage photos of the town the college is in along with a few dialogues that summarized old town stories. The teacher managed to get the students available to interest on the history of the college town: they became identified with it, even the students neither born nor raised in that particular town.

The teacher astutely proposed that their next assignment would be a continuation of the photographs project, yet much better. The students then changed their minds about the interest of recent town history as a subject worth pursuing. The action was a play, written and staged by the students, narrating the saga of a family since the arrival of grandpa in town.

Making a long story short, the play was staged in the city's historical theatre, with presence of the mayor, his head of Education Department, and many aldermen. It was a huge success.

Final Remarks

We gave an example of a well-conducted speech that has been directed in a positive way, but there are countless speeches that, as we know, lead to painful situations, cause disharmony, accidents, adversities, damages, misfortunes, unhappiness, losses, or disturbances. Pathos is not, in itself, correct or incorrect, good or bad. The speaker uses it for whatever purpose, for what is certain or uncertain, fair or unfair, and it is in this aspect that knowledge of the trajectory of passions becomes useful, as it guides, through speech, the audience on the desired itinerary.

This text sought to apply rhetorical theory to the process of gaining students' adherence to the pedagogical discourse exercised in the classroom, in the case studied, at a higher education level. We believe that the research question has been answered. That is, we have shown that pathos is installed in educational discourse and is capable of guiding students. The objective was equally achieved, that is, we verified the breadth of the concept of the trajectory of passions.

Here we understand that, unlike those who understand passion as something of lesser value, as mentioned, if properly used in speech, it has a lot of strength to lead the audience, and here we are not referring to good or bad but to the discursive strength of pathos.

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Writing to Connect: Freewriting and Community Building in Professional Communication

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The art of journaling is abundant and oft celebrated, as a stroll through a bookstore or quick online search would suggest. Journaling notebooks, courses, and workshops abound and seem attractive because journaling is a guided practice, available with or without a leader. The practice helps the writer engage in spiritual, emotional, or artistic self-discovery. Julia Cameron's The Artist's Way (1992) provides an example of a journaling guide that includes activities to develop creativity through journaling. Cameron (1992) invites readers to sketch out the good, the bad, and the ugly in "morning pages"—three pages of longhand writing. For Cameron, "morning pages are the primary tool of creative recovery" (p. 11).

The same is true for journaling's academic cousin, freewriting. Rhetoric and Composition classics such as Erika Lindeman's A Rhetoric for Writing Teachers (1982) and Donald Murray's Write to Learn (1984) suggest freewriting as a technique for generating ideas, writing fluidly and, eventually, producing polished drafts. Contemporary writing textbooks and handbooks offer the same advice. However, teachers encourage writers to freewrite independently as a prewriting activity, and rarely give valuable classroom time to the practice. Additionally, freewriting largely disappears after first-year composition classes; it rarely makes its way into upper-level writing texts or coursework, including professional communications classes.

In this talk, I will share what I learned about the connections between freewriting and drafting in an upper-level communication class. Specifically, I will demonstrate how freewriting impacts students' fluency in writing and how the more social aspects of freewriting help develop and foster students' wellbeing and a classroom community through survey data I collected.

In the Spring 2022—Fall 2022 semesters, I prompted students to write at the beginning of each class meeting, using various open-ended writing questions. Then, in two different surveys, I asked students questions about their writing in general and their thoughts about freewriting. The students' responses indicated that freewriting did help them in their writing fluency—but more importantly, these responses showed that freewriting helped build a community in our classroom.

Of course, fledgling writers need more strategies to help them write more and write better. But, it seems that the additional bonus of exploring freewriting in a classroom context is especially helpful given how COVID-19 disrupted and isolated students from their academic communities. After the pandemic, freewriting might be a way to continue to foster connection in all sorts of classroom communities, including online courses, large lecture sections, and smaller classes.

Active Grading:
Specifications Grading for Business Communication Courses

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Abstract

Many business communication instructors are aware of—and skilled employers of—active learning principles. Their classroom instruction, student activities, and assignments foster collaboration among students, encourage self-reflection, allow for individual choice and growth, and empower students to take charge of their own learning. It is difficult for many instructors, however, to continue the focus on active learning when creating processes for assigning grades.

As part of a fellowship focused on active learning, I have been researching an approach to active learning that I can implement in business communication courses. This approach—specifications grading—allows students to effectively choose a grade goal for the course, complete assignments based on that goal, and revise that goal as the semester progresses—while still meeting the learning outcomes designed for the course.

Background

Students often come to business communication courses with a hardened view of the nature and extent of their own communication skills. By employing active learning approaches in the day-to-day journey of the course, my goal is to show students that everyone can communicate and do it well, and that everyone has room to grow and learn.

In my courses, however, these student-centered activities and assignments have culminated in a not-so-student-centered method for figuring grades for major assignments and, ultimately, the final course grade. Each major assignment a student turns in is returned to them with a number attached. No matter the extent or depth of an instructor's feedback or the relevance of the rubrics used to arrive at that number, it's still a number, and it seems to carry more weight in the minds of students than any qualitative feedback they may get. Thus, as many researchers and instructors have found, grades do not always motivate students or lead to effective learning (Schinske & Tanner, 2014).

In addition, the numbers a student receives often determine the trajectory of their success in the course. If early grades are low, the student will have difficulty earning a high final grade in the course, even if their subsequent learning and growth are extensive. Likewise, high early numbers often lead to a higher final grade, regardless of the amount and extent of the student's learning, effort, or engagement in later assignments.

Finally, the evaluative nature of many grading systems does not reflect the actual process involved in workplace communication. Employees do not receive grades on, say, a report written for a manager or a presentation planned for a client. Instead, if their work is not considered up to par, they revise it until it is satisfactory. If the work is sufficient, then further work is not often needed. To put it in academic terms, their work either “passes” or doesn’t; the nuances of percentages, points, or letter grades are not relevant.

What is needed, then, is a grading system that 1) gives students more control over and engagement in their learning AND their subsequent grades; 2) more accurately mirrors the contexts and processes of business and professional communication; and 3) focuses on growth rather than evaluation. I believe that specifications grading may provide one solution to this issue.

Specifications Grading

In Specifications Grading: Restoring Rigor, Motivating Students, and Saving Faculty Time, Nilson (2015) compares this approach to grading to the process that programmers go through when testing software. The programmers have a set of specifications with which to evaluate the software, and “[e]ither a program meets all these specs, or it doesn’t. And if it doesn’t, it fails and must be revised or abandoned” (Nilson, 2015, p. 56).

The specs grading approach can be adapted to fit many different student and instructor needs as well as different disciplines and modalities (e.g., Darby & Lang, 2019; Malek, 2019; Nilson, 2015). Many have developed “bundles” of assignments linked to course learning outcomes that also track to final course grades. Others have added elements like optional or required revision for “not done yet” assignments, “get out of jail free” cards or tokens to allow for missed or late assignments, and other innovations (e.g., Elkins, 2016; Nilson, 2016).

For the purposes of the fellowship, I have chosen to create a system in which a student’s final grade is based on a certain mix of satisfactory or “meets specs” vs. “not done yet” assignments. An assignment can earn a “not done yet” designation if it doesn’t meet the criteria—or if the student chooses not to complete the assignment at all. A “not done yet” assignment can move to “satisfactory” through revision. This means that a student can choose a “grade goal” and complete/revise assignments (or not!) based on that goal; it also means that a student can revise their grade goal as the semester progresses.

Focus of the Presentation

This presentation will discuss a specifications grading plan implemented in two sections of a junior-level business communication course in Fall 2023. It will describe the assignments and specifications created, as well as the results of formative assessments conducted mid-semester. It will also discuss how the presenter structured assignments to ensure that learning outcomes are met for the course, regardless of the goals students choose for their performance.

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Beyond the "Community of Practice": A Case Study of Student Learning Processes in the Business English Communication Course in Japan

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This study aims to investigate the learning trajectories of Japanese students' experience in the English business communication course. Business communication research is interdisciplinary, (Bhatia & Bremner, 2012; Hyland, 2022), and gradually located within the scope of English for Specific Purposes (Hyland, 2022). While linguistic aspect is often featured, as Bhatia and Bremner (2012) suggested, the challenge of business communication in the academy is how to bridge the classroom and workplace.

To advance this discussion, one of the significant aspects is to consider the nature of learning. One of the influential theories is "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991), comprised of "shared repertoire," "mutual endeavor," and "expert-novice interaction," which are said to be the common ground of learning. However, recent literature in literacy studies questions that learning is highly situated and free-floating (Barton & Tusting, 2005; Burnett & Merchant, 2020; Gourlay, 2011), and such commonly referred features are insufficient. Given the critique from these research studies, the application of such new perspectives to business English courses in the academy will help our understanding of learning trajectories there.

This research, thus, examines students' learning trajectories in the English business communication course and discusses them based on how the current critique can be embodied.

Methodology

In July 2022, this research collected free descriptions via Learning Management System (LMS) in Japanese. Twenty-nine students answered this question at the end of the class: "What did you learn throughout this term?" Students were given a detailed explanation about the research and guaranteed their anonymity. We analyzed and interpreted the obtained descriptions qualitatively and translated the students' Japanese comments into English for this presentation.

For case context, one lecture is 90 minutes long. In the former part of the lesson (45 minutes), students work on a textbook to gain a general English knowledge of business communication. In the latter part of the lesson (45 minutes), they work on several productive activities in English:

- Research into chosen company's philosophy
- Writing emails, itineraries, and CV's
- Translation and interpretation of business documents

- Reading and summarizing business documents
- Learning English expressions in an online meeting

Results

This research found three tendencies drawn from the analysis of a close reading of the accounts. The first excerpt is about their learning process:

"I was at a loss for how to introduce myself in English. I found that very difficult. Then, I also felt working on interpretation was challenging. Every time I need to put English into Japanese, I fully spend time searching on the Internet."

Several students, then, wrote about the relationship between their prior knowledge and the business communication course.

"While I encountered familiar expressions, I often faced the situation where I cannot speak what I should learned. I sensed that I can assimilate what I learned during the class through pair work, output, or actual use as an activity."

Furthermore, those who already have got the job offer commented:

"I realized that using what I know, such as vocabulary and grammar, is significant in business communication. I also learned that I will learn terms used in specific business area when needed. By doing so, I can address the situation."

Discussion

Three emergent themes can be categorized into 1) the learning process, 2) reflection as metacognition, and 3) situated motivation. For 1), they clearly explain their learning process or metacognitive learning. This explanation is relevant to 2), as their account implies just beyond mere reflection; instead, they can identify their sense-making process, which is highly situated, social, personalized, and not applicable to the community of practice perspectives. In addition, for 3), they tend to develop their meanings of learning within their situation. Designing and enhancing the individual sense-making process should be prioritized in English business communication courses in the academy to connect learning with student needs. Learning takes place individually and personally as a highly situated practice.

Conclusion

In the English business communication course, students participate with prior knowledge of English and connect their individual motivation with learning. Although English business communication is the place for offering English skills for business environment, students have varying experiences in the classroom, which seem to be fully applicable to current perspectives of learning theories (Sawyer, 2014) beyond the existing community of practice framework. As Barton and Tusting (2005) suggest, the concept of learning trajectories should be reinterpreted to illustrate student learning further. Our future challenge is embodying their learning trajectory by applying what recent literacy studies propose.

Business Communication Skills in Different Occupations: Similarity and Difference

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Abstract

The purposes of this study are to recognize business communication skill needs that may be necessary regardless of major and pinpoint nuances unique to specific majors and career fields. Qualitative interviews of eight professionals each from seven different occupations were used to find similarities and differences in the typical communication skills they expected of college graduates. Implications for instructors will be discussed.

Purpose

Business and professional communication (BPC) courses include a variety of specific skills and concepts, some of which are very common and others are more specific to a particular professor or university. For example, 60% of faculty report comprehensive coverage of business writing, whereas 10% report comprehensive coverage of ethics, handling questions, or intercultural communication (Moshiri & Cardon, 2022). The assumed audience for BPC courses includes students majoring in a business field, but majors from other areas have been known to take these courses to prepare them for organizational life. With these varied audiences, BPC instructors may be challenged to identify relevant skills and concepts to include based on the student audience. The purposes of this study are to recognize business communication skill needs that may be necessary regardless of major and pinpoint nuances unique to specific majors and career fields.

Goals

One goal of the study is to find similarities in BPC skills expected from recent college graduates regardless of academic major. A study of 232 faculty members from various fields found that listening, appropriate language, organized ideas, ethics, group/teamwork, and engage in meaningful discussion were identified by 90% or more of the faculty (Broeckelman-Post et al., 2023). Similarly, Cyphert et al. (2019) found that 100% of employers in their qualitative study identified meeting participation, requesting information, and task-related interaction as expected communication skills of a recent college graduate. However, this study focused on oral communication skills, which overlooks written and visual communication skills often taught in BPC courses. The issue of emphasizing skills within a given mode of delivery has been documented by other scholars (e.g., Cyphert et al., 2019). BPC courses may include skills from multiple modes, and studies that analyze more than one skill provide a more robust understanding of what skills to teach. Indeed, people are estimated to spend 9% of their communication time writing, 16% reading, 30% speaking, and 45% listening (Perry & Schreifels, 2018).

Thus, a study that is receptive to many modes of communication would benefit BPC instructors and students.

Another goal of the study is to identify unique BPC skills that need to be emphasized or foregrounded for certain majors. Research studies have shown that employers recognize some skills as needed but not others. For example, coordinating a meeting was recognized by only 47% of employers (Cyphert et al., 2019). Leadership and teamwork are heavily emphasized in engineering fields (e.g., Hartmann et al., 2016; Shane et al., 2018), and nonverbal communication skills are highly valued among dieticians (Vrchota, 2011). Expanding the disciplines would benefit colleagues and students from across the academy.

Methodology

Qualitative research methods, specifically interviews, were used for this study. Each member of a team of six graduate research assistants interviewed eight professionals from an occupation of the RA's choosing. Participants had to have a college education and at least two years working in the industry. Students chose athletic trainers, communication specialists, sustainable/regenerative agriculturalists, software engineers, and transportation engineers. Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Each RA scheduled virtual interviews with participants at a time convenient for the participants. Interviews ranged from X to Y minutes and yielded Z pages of transcriptions. Data were analyzed by the first author using thematic analysis (Lindlof & Taylor, 2011). Members of the research team read a synopsis of the analysis and provided feedback to the first author based on their experiences interviewing participants.

Outcomes

Data were collected in the spring of 2023 as an assignment in a qualitative research methods class. The due date for interviews was April 4, but flexibility was given to students to accommodate participants' schedules. To date, 30 interviews have been conducted. Analysis will be completed over the summer months and a complete paper will prepared in August and September.

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Changing Perceptions from Dreaded Groupwork to Effective Collaboration

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Abstract

Many undergraduate classes in business schools require team projects so students learn how to work on teams. However, many courses do not teach the skills needed to work in high-performing teams. Students are often randomly grouped together and asked to complete tasks without first understanding how to communicate in teams (Hogan & Young, 2020). In this session, I discuss how tools originally used in an online graduate course on high-performing teams were adapted to use in an undergraduate Strategic Business Communication course improving student perceptions of group members and the experience of working in a team.

Purpose

Many online courses focus on teamwork since students are not meeting in person. However, many undergraduate classroom courses do not use the same tools to teach students how to work in teams. The purpose of this session is to discuss the implementation of team activities designed to improve teamwork to an undergraduate course, Strategic Business Communication. Tools such as team contract, team building and cultivating a team brand were tested in 6 sections of a Strategic Business Communication course to see if student perceptions of team projects and team members changed from previous terms.

Methodology

Due to short timelines with the quarter system and logistics of a team project with a live client, a Strategic Business Communication course did not focus much class time on building team skills. Students complained about working in teams and having to work with “slackers” (Hogan & Young, 2020). In contrast, an online course taught in a different school at the same university often achieved high praise from students for its focus on teamwork and the joy of the virtual team experience.

Although virtual teams are different than those meeting in person, many processes are the same. Some speculate that communication across virtual teams is more difficult (McCool & Mitchell, 2023). To see if the same tools would work in the undergraduate course, more time was spent instructing students on how to work on teams and how to communicate effectively using technology such as MS Teams. At the end of the quarter, the Groupwork Skills Questionnaire (Cummings et al., 2015) was used to measure perception of groupwork and group skills across three sections that did not change the course materials, compared to three sections that increased time and focus of group communication skills. The quarter is still ongoing, so results are not yet confirmed.

Discussion

Although the quarter is not yet finished, students in the sections focusing on group skills are using technology such as MS Teams more frequently than other technology.

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Co-constructing AI Authoring Using Ethical Theories

Brenda Jones
Franklin University

We must show ethical humility, historically contextualizing ethical standards, as we implement AI tools in courses. The pace of change requires agile approaches to defining standards for the ethical use of AI. We invited students to co-construct a model of ethical communication based on theory and experience. Join us for a conversation about using ChatGPT in a communication ethics course.

The rapid development of AI authoring tools requires us to reimagine instructional approaches in professional communication. As Juan Enriquez shared in his 2018 TED talk "Ethics in the age of technology," we must consider how we respond to evolving technology applications, acknowledging the limits of current ethical standards that may not align with future realities. He suggests that we teach a little ethical humility to our generation and the next as a collision between ethics and technology occurs.

This paper addresses a communication ethics course pilot using ChatGPT as a tool in one paper and one discussion post assignment. While many educators are experimenting with AI authoring tools like ChatGPT (Dagostino, 2023), we situate this in a course that provides students with theory-based models of ethical communication, inviting them to assess their use of ChatGPT using those concepts (Furze, 2023). Through the application of critical pedagogy (Sullivan, 2021), students engage in the process of addressing the "dirty hands" ethical dilemma, using the technology tool that has an inherent bias in order to improve it and its application in the educational context (Sætra et al., 2023, p. 39). In this pilot, students will use ChatGPT to locate and summarize information, including recent research. Students are guided on what elements of the assignments should use ChatGPT, examples of outputs, and citation formatting. The pilot will take place from April 2023 to August 2023, beginning with one section of the course in April and evolving the assignments based on student feedback for May and June sections.

The lead instructor for the course began this pilot by inviting students to vote on the proposed use of ChatGPT for two specific assignments. The students wanted to include the tool, and the instructor provided detailed assignment steps and examples of how ChatGPT might be used for the two assignments. Beyond deciding whether to use ChatGPT, students consider how the tool should be used within and outside the classroom.

Our course defines *communication ethics* as a broad topic that encompasses the intentions and conduct of a communicator, duties or responsibilities, and the consequences of a particular message. Foundational concepts are covered in the first two weeks of the course, including virtue ethics, utilitarianism, deontology, justice, stakeholder theory, and corporate social responsibility.

Students will leverage these theories as they use ChatGPT, considering how a sensitive application of the tool can support rigorous analysis of contemporary ethical issues while fostering critical thinking. Students will share how using AI helped or hindered their research process and apply any ethical theory in this course to explain their view that using AI authoring tools is ethical (or unethical) in assignments. Further, they will share their thoughts on the potential impacts of work-related authoring of analyses and reports.

For the second assignment with ChatGPT in week four, students must select a focus for a research-based discussion post on current diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues. For this assignment, students are free to use ChatGPT as they like, as long as they are transparent about it. Students will describe how they chose to use the AI writing tool and use an ethical theory to argue their view of the ethical implications for using the AI tool for assignments addressing DEI. This DEI focus is vital to reflect learning outcomes for the assignment and connect this work to professional challenges. There is significant debate about the biases of such AI tools, which are partly trained by *common crawl*, a text-based database created by scraping content from the internet (Bender et al., 2021). Addressing DEI in professional communications requires awareness of bias in tools and sources and evolving social, political, and economic changes impacting the authoring context. Students will discuss implications for professional policies and communications addressing DEI issues. This approach provides an opportunity to unpack the potential for sexist, ableist, and racist AI results based on the internet source material and how we can mitigate this with better screening and mindful authorship. While steps have been taken to improve ChatGPT, some risks are still unmitigated (Equality Now, 2023).

In both assignments using ChatGPT, students will reflect on their experience using the AI authoring tool, applying theory as part of that reflection. In this way, we aim to decenter classroom authority and acknowledge that ethics are durable insofar as they can be applied to new contexts. Students are invited into this process. Student feedback on this pilot may also help inform academic integrity policies currently being considered at the institution.

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Driving Center Traffic, Propelling Student Outcomes: How a Business Communication Center and Business Communication Course Can Work Together to Improve Student Communication Skills

Jimmy P. Miller
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Temple University's Fox School of Business and Management has had a required, three-credit sophomore-level Business Communication course, and a robust Business Communication Center, operating in parallel for more than a decade. But beginning in 2017 or so, use of the Business Communication Center (BCC) began to decline, hitting bottom in Fall 2021 with 229 tutoring appointments (down from a peak of 1,941 in Fall 2014). While Fall 2021 was the first semester students were back on campus after more than a year of remote learning, the bottoming out of the BCC's use cannot be solely, or even largely, attributed to the pandemic. By Fall 2019, it had become clear that student use of the BCC was declining faster each year. A Fall 2019 survey of 185 students conducted by our student chapter of the American Marketing Association found that only about 12% of those surveyed were very familiar with the Business Communication Center. More than 44% were not familiar with the BCC at all, and another 27% were only slightly familiar with it.

The most likely reason for the decline in awareness is that the Business Communication faculty, beginning in 2015 or so, started failing far fewer students than we used to. Back in 2013, we had a 28% "no pass" rate in our required undergraduate business communication course. By 2019, the "no pass" rate was 3% – in line with any other undergraduate course in any other business school. And once students no longer perceived that they needed the BCC to pass, they stopped coming.

Meanwhile, Fox administrators and faculty are – like many business school administrators and faculty members – trying to improve student communication skills. Fox has tried using shared rubrics across core courses. This may be an effective way to measure student abilities across courses, but it doesn't do anything to improve those abilities (i.e., no teaching or learning necessarily occurs if a rubric is shared across courses.) Fox has also unsuccessfully tried hiring outside graders or its own Ph.D. students to give undergraduates "learning feedback" on their writing.

In Fall 2022, Fox piloted offering points – small points, 1% of the grade – to students in the Business Communication course if they had a tutoring appointment at the BCC. The points incentive was not tied to any particular assignment, which prevented a flood of students all trying to get appointments on the same day. Rather, students got the points if they had a tutoring appointment any time during the semester.

The results were striking. Of 61 students spread over three sections, 50 earned the points by scheduling and following through on a tutoring appointment. Of those 50, 24 had one tutoring appointment during the term, and a somewhat staggering 26 went to the BCC more than once. Eight students went three times, and six students went at least four times; three of them went to the BCC at least seven times. This means that they used the BCC for more than just the Business Communication course.

Student GPA in these three sections among the 50 who used the BCC was 3.8; GPA among the 11 who didn't take advantage of the BCC was 2.57. The overall GPA across all three sections was 3.57 – more than a third of a point higher than the historical Business Communication course average.

While the sample size is small, and while there are certainly other factors, including luck, involved in these numbers, they were enough to convince the Business Communication faculty to offer points for a BCC visit across all 28 scheduled sections of Bizcom (Business Communication) for Fall 2023.

This presentation will offer Fox's experience as a case study of what has happened so far, and will identify three next steps:

1.) Working with Fox's Analytics and Accreditation team to find ways to measure the vertical impact across the student experience. In other words, does this improve GPA in the core Business Communication course and in other business courses?

2.) Convincing faculty in a freshmen core course to offer BCC visit points in their courses. This would introduce a very high percentage of freshmen to the BCC and incentivize them to use it.

3.) Partnering with our Career Services office to survey employers in hopes of capturing whether undergraduate use of the BCC hits the ultimate target of improving writing and presentation outcomes beyond the undergraduate experience.

Exploring Virtual Public Speaking Applications

Emily Goenner Munson and Zhan (Myra) Wang
St. Cloud State University

Asynchronous business communications courses lack the same public speaking opportunities students in face-to-face or hybrid courses experience, but public speaking skills remain a valuable career skill. So how do instructors of business communication provide asynchronous students with effective instruction on public speaking? This study explores the use of artificial intelligence programs to improve students' public speaking skills in asynchronous business communications courses.

Students in asynchronous business communications classes were required to prepare and record 10 short (2-4 minutes) speeches over the course of a normal semester. In some semesters, students used the subscription-based PitchVantage platform; their speech videos were submitted to PitchVantage and scored using the artificial intelligence platform. In another semester, students used the PowerPoint Coach feature of the Microsoft platform. PowerPoint Coach provided students with an evaluation of the qualities of public speaking such as pitch and pace. Students had free access to PowerPoint Coach via the university.

The use of the two platforms was compared. Student performance was evaluated at the beginning and end of the semester using a rubric developed by the authors. In addition, metrics on student performance were received from both programs, and students were asked to comment on their perceived effectiveness of the artificial intelligence software in improving their public speaking skills over the course of the semester. Both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. Analysis of student reactions to both applications is discussed, and future directions for continued research and analysis are suggested

Data collection will be completed this summer, and data analysis will be completed before the conference. Initial indications suggest students are hesitant to use the artificial intelligence platforms, but once they become comfortable with the programs, they see value in the feedback provided. Both platforms have drawbacks, including cost and various levels of detail in feedback. However, both platforms seem to improve students' public speaking skills over the course of a semester.

Let's Talk about Peer Evaluations in Student Teams: Forming a Case for Formative Feedback

Katherine Ryan
Indiana University

If you require team deliverables in your business communication courses, it's likely that you also incorporate peer evaluations as part of the assessment of those team-based assignments. Most of us agree that doing so is an important part of the team-based learning process (Anson & Goodman, 2014; Cestone et al., 2008; Panadero & Alqassab, 2019). We see peer evaluations as an opportunity for students to provide voice in the team-learning experience. We believe they promote an equitable, productive division of labor and that they help develop a wide range of collaborative skills. Peer evaluations do have the potential to achieve these goals. Too often, however, they fall short, and they do so for two main reasons. First, many instructors over-rely on summative peer evaluations, particularly those using quantitative metrics, at the expense of formative peer evaluations. Second, students without sufficient experience in communicating performance feedback to (or about) others may be reluctant to authentically engage in the process or unable to defend their evaluations with clear, unbiased evidence.

The purpose of this session is to give participants the opportunity to appreciate the value of incorporating formative peer evaluations into the team-based learning experience while also providing space to discuss an activity to engage students in learning how to give and receive formative feedback. The goal of the session is to increase the use of formative peer evaluations in our business communication courses to strengthen learning outcomes associated with team deliverables.

Formative and Summative Peer Evaluations

Formative evaluations are generally used to identify performance or behaviors that are meeting/not meeting expectations, or to identify when an individual is not on track to meet prescribed outcomes prior to the conclusion of a project or assignment. They are developmental and designed to highlight the gaps between actual and desired performance, giving individuals an opportunity to address problems before negative consequences are applied. Summative evaluations also provide a form of feedback, but they do so by assessing performance at the conclusion of a project or assignment, usually in a high-stakes fashion (Dixson & Worrell, 2016; Topping, 2009).

Both formative and summative evaluations are an integral part of a student's learning experience. In an ideal performance evaluation system, there is some notion that everyone deserves the opportunity to benchmark against standards and expectations before their performance outcomes are assessed and some level of reward (grade) is assigned (Vickerman, 2009). In other words, students should expect instructors to provide formative performance evaluations prior to graded performance evaluations. Peer evaluations associated with team-based work should not be an exception. We should ensure that we are incorporating formative peer evaluations along with summative peer evaluations for all of our high-stakes team deliverables.

An informal review of our business communication instructors' grading schemes revealed that in many cases, peer evaluations, often quantitative, are routinely collected only at the end of the semester, or at the end of a high-stakes team project. These evaluations are then reflected in students' final grade calculations. In these cases, students do not receive developmental performance feedback that would give them an opportunity to improve their behavior prior to the very often negative, and sometimes significant, grade impact. We may not be alone in using this approach. Not only do we need to give space for formative peer evaluations in our team-based learning projects, but we also have to ensure that students are prepared to participate in that process, as both givers and receivers of developmental feedback.

Model the Process

Show, don't tell. While this guidance may apply to a range of classroom experiences, it is particularly applicable to the challenge of motivating students to provide high-quality developmental performance feedback to their peers. Students can be anxious about their ability to communicate their thoughts with empathy and professionalism so that their feedback elicits a positive response from their peers. In this session, I will introduce an active learning strategy that reinforces the principles of giving and receiving developmental feedback that participants may use to help students engage in the formative peer evaluation process. Learning these skills will be critical to their professional success, and experiencing the benefits of formative peer evaluations will help to maximize their team-based learning outcomes.

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Midway Upon the Journey: Finding Oneself in a Dark Forest of a Large-Scale Assessment

James M. Dubinsky
Virginia Tech

In 2018, Monster analyzed nearly 1 million job listings and found that "the ability to communicate effectively is one of the most in-demand soft skills" (Umoh, 2018, para. 6). Those findings echo those based on surveys conducted over the past two decades (Jones & Abraham, 2009; Stevens, 2005) and those in an article in the Journal of Education for Business (Lim et al., 2016). Despite schools and educators being aware of the premium placed on oral and written communication skills, employers frequently claim that students graduating from business schools are not competent communicators (Barid & Paryitam, 2019; Harum et al., 2017; Kleckner & Marshall, 2014).

Even more egregious: students often believe they are prepared. Data from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) indicate that "a high percentage of students indicated in almost every category they thought they were proficient. [However], employers disagreed" (Bauer-Wolf, 2018).

Students enter college with widely differing communication skills. A solution often adopted by business schools is a single communication course, which usually focuses on writing or oral communication skills, not both (Moshiri & Cardon, 2020). However, this "one-size-fits-all," single-course approach struggles to address the variability of skills among students. Further, developing competence is about learning and practicing basic skills with progressive, expert feedback. Standalone courses struggle to offer sufficient practice. As a result, students' communication skills are often not improved.

Developing the communication and analytical skills that employers desire is a complex process requiring a systematic approach. My presentation will focus on steps taken by a School of Business at a large, rural research university. These steps include putting together a small team of faculty with communication expertise and conducting a pilot project that assessed the communication skills (both oral and written) of an entire graduating class of seniors. Once that pilot assessment was completed, the team pushed forward with additional assessment work. A critical step in the process was helping the business school faculty create a new rubric.

During my talk, I will discuss the pilot evaluation results, the comprehensive, longitudinal, large-scale assessment, and the impact of the changing rubric. I will offer ideas about how such work might be conducted, focusing on our methodology, data analysis, and results. I believe our tentative conclusions will serve as foundational hypotheses for other longitudinal studies, and, in so doing, we will make a case for how our study could serve as a model that brings to bear equal emphasis regarding accountability to students, faculty, and those organizations that hire our graduates.

I place our work within a historical and disciplinary record of scholarship dedicated to large-scale assessment, beginning with some of the earliest researchers (Diederich, 1974) and taking into account work on portfolio assessment in the 1990s (Popham, 1999; White, 1994) that led to the development of what has become known as a “flexible and organic approach” (Broad et al., 2008; Debelius, 2016). This approach has several goals, including focus on writing-to-demonstrate-disciplinary knowledge and general writing competencies associated with business school graduates (Clokie & Fourie, 2016; Coffelt & Smith, 2019; Lucas & Rawlins, 2015).

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My Favorite Assignment #1 – Onsite

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Deidre Lee Kelly
Indiana University, Bloomington

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 each year from 2009 to 2023. If this proposed session is accepted, we will submit papers for B&PCQ reporting the 2023 Conference's papers.

My Favorite Assignment #2 (Virtual)

D. Joel Whalen and Charles Drehmer, Moderators
DePaul University

Springboard from Strengths to Star Communicator
Brenda Lynch Jones, Franklin University

Dinner Anyone? Strategies for Building a Heterogenous High Performing Team
Catherine Zizik, Seton Hall University

Increasing Student Engagement with Reading Logs and Discussions
Emily Goenner Munson, St. Cloud State University

A Minute for Your Thoughts: Thinking Like a Manager
Kayla Sapkota, Arkansas State University, Beebe

MFA Title: Using the Magical Science of Storytelling to Sell
Lynn B McCool, Drake University

Using TED Talks to Improve Presentation Skills
Carol S. Wright, Stephen F. Austin State University

What Did I Learn Video Presentation?
Liz Riley, Middle Georgia State University

Personal Branding and Elon Musk
Ann Springer, Brigham Young University, Hawaii

Adventures in Networking: A Choose Your Own Career Path
Alicia Clavell McCall, The University of Alabama, Birmingham

I bet I'm Right: A Professional Tone "Gambling" Game
Jill Huang, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Local Small Business $500K Team Competition
Cathleen D Donahue, Central Connecticut State University

Another Piece of the Teaching Pie: Team Communication and Your University's Favorite Pizzeria
Megan Flanagan Hill, University of Massachusetts, Amherst

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

Peer-to-Peer Learning: Is it Still Effective?

Susanna Shelton Clason
University of Cincinnati Blue Ash College

Geoffrey Clegg
Midwestern State University

Theresa Wernimont
Colorado State University

The purpose of this panel presentation, organized by ABC's Teaching Committee, is to explore whether peer-to-peer learning is an effective pedagogical approach following the COVID-19 pandemic. Panelists will explore various conditions necessary for effective peer-to-peer learning and whether students educated during Covid are prepared to engage in such activities. The panel will discuss their personal experiences and the modifications they have made to exercises and assignments to create a successful experience for students.

Peer-to-peer learning is a widely used and effective pedagogical approach that can improve students' academic performance and enhance their communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills (Mazur, 1997). Before Covid, peer-to-peer learning was a growing trend in education. Collaborative learning was often promoted through group work, in-class discussions, and project-based learning. In some cases, peer-to-peer learning also involved peer review and feedback on assignments.

The effectiveness of peer-to-peer learning depends on various factors, including the context and mode of delivery. Face-to-face classroom environments often strengthen peer-to-peer interaction and engagement. This rich channel fosters personal connections with added context from nonverbal cues and immediate feedback, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of peer-to-peer learning. Further, these personal interactions can create a sense of accountability and promote greater participation and engagement among students.

Out of necessity during the Covid-19 pandemic, faculty were forced to accelerate the adoption of technology to support peer-to-peer interaction through online discussion boards and asynchronous workspaces. Faculty experimented with synchronous platforms to encourage video conferencing and collaboration that emulate the classroom environment, but the reality is that the virtual experience is not the same. Virtual environments may create barriers to collaboration such as technical issues, lack of social presence, difficulty establishing trust and rapport, and relies on voluntary individual participation (Ahn, Weng, and Butler, 2013). However, online and hybrid courses have gained acceptance.

As students now return to the classroom, the impacts of the pandemic on their learning have yet to be fully explored. The pandemic disrupted traditional classroom learning and social interaction, which are critical components of developing the skills necessary for successful peer-to-peer learning. The success of peer-to-peer learning depends on the knowledge, skills, and maturity level of participants. The disruption presented by Covid-19 ultimately delayed many students' preparation for collaborative work as much of what current juniors and seniors had experienced were asynchronous courses where socialization was rare.

While online environments can provide greater flexibility and access to diverse perspectives, they can also increase feelings of isolation and reduce social presence, which can potentially exacerbate anxiety and stress among students. According to a study published in Psychiatry Research (September 2022), the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the mental health and well-being of students, including increased levels of anxiety and stress that may hinder students' ability to engage in collaborative work and reduce the efficacy of peer-to-peer learning initiatives.

Factors such as cultural background, language barriers, and individual learning preferences may affect students' willingness to engage in collaborative education environments. Learning and classroom performance may not be as high a priority for students faced with economic pressures, health concerns, family issues, and other lingering uncertainties intensified during the pandemic.

Some students may be hesitant to participate in peer-to-peer learning when they perceive their peers as more knowledgeable or experienced, and some students are disappointed when not all students are familiar with the subject matter. Many students were dissatisfied with the quality of instruction during Covid and reported that learning and comprehension were negative (Hamlin & Barney, 2021). Repercussions from declining test scores will continue to challenge the education system at all levels (Kuhfeld, Soland, and Lewis 2022). The lack of structure associated with asynchronous online learning has also resulted in poor time management skills and ineffective study habits for many students.

The panelists will discuss their challenges of integrating peer-to-peer learning opportunities when students may be lacking college-level writing and communication competence as well as experiencing increased anxiety and other mental health issues. Attendees will leave with a better understanding of what skills are best taught through peer-to-peer interaction and how to better prepare students to engage more effectively.

Students must experience peer learning to appreciate the benefits. Learning from their peers exposes them to new perspectives, and teaching others expands and solidifies their own knowledge. Plus, social interaction and connection can be fun and exciting!

Preparing Students for Real World Writing: The Ups and Downs of Assigning a Student-Led PR Campaign

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Scholarly literature argues favorably for the benefits of client-based projects because they increase student confidence and prepare students for workplace challenges (Addams et al., 2010; Cooke & Williams, 2004; Tomlinson, 2017). Business communication textbooks and teaching best practices also emphasize the importance of practicing collaboration skills (Fletcher & Thornton, 2023; Fredrick, 2008; Snyder 2009;). The purpose of this project is to determine if educators can promote higher orders of learning by relaxing the framework initially provided to guide collaborative, client-based projects. This study responds to the following research question: What happens when students in a business communication course are given autonomy to discern and research a client's messaging needs in a learner-driven environment?

For this pilot version of the project, the university library invited the class to develop wrap-around communications to support an upcoming overhaul to the traditional shelving system. The library was moving from the Dewey Decimal system to the Library of Congress system, and the librarians needed a range of messages to help ease stakeholders into the changes they would find in the stacks.

In response to Andrews's (2022) advice about design spaces or alternative classrooms that "foster collaborative composing," class time was restructured to function as a series of meetings—basically collaborative brainstorming sessions run by students. Students each became responsible for a genre of business writing needed for the campaign. They oversaw the brainstorming session tied to that genre, researched the criteria of the business communication genre, and composed the content. Students researched messaging styles. They created a shared archive of knowledge while practicing project management skills and applying basic messaging best practices. Additionally, each student produced social media posts to contribute to a social media portfolio related to the assignment.

This presentation shares the instructor's reflection of relinquishing much of the management of the client-based project in favor of student leadership. The research project uses survey data and coded student reflections demonstrate how student identified stages of learning in this less structured environment.

Outcomes

This presentation will provide instructors with 1. an understanding of the benefits of Andrew's (2022) "design spaces"; 2. an opportunity to reflect on the role of student autonomy in the client-based project; and 3. insight into the assignment design that will spark ideas about educators' own client-based projects.

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Self-Reflections as Metacognitive Elaborative Rehearsals: Investigating the Efficacy of Reflection-in-Action or Reflection-on-Action in the Business Writing Classroom

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Purpose

This study positions self-reflections as metacognitive elaborative rehearsals which involve "[…] the individual learner's purposeful manipulation of information as a means of deepening processing" (Roberts et al., 2014, p. 454). Dewey first introduced the importance of reflection in his 1910 book How we Think and identified five distinct steps in reflection: "(i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of possible solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief" (p. 72).

Contemporary pedagogues continue to acknowledge the importance of reflection; however, as Coulson and Harvey (2016) note, the lack of theory related to reflection diminished its credibility. In 1983, Schön's book The Reflective Practitioner filled the theoretical gap by introducing reflection-in-action (reflecting when changes can still impact the outcome) and reflection-on-action (reflecting after the experience has ended).

While numerous studies focus on the importance of reflection in the writing process, this research is primarily conducted within first-year composition courses (see Yan et al., 2022) or upper-division major courses (see Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019) and examines only reflection-on-action (see Schieber & Robles, 2019; Ono & Ichii, 2019). This study fills the void of exploring the impact and timing of reflective processes within undergraduate business writing classrooms.

Goals

The purpose of this study is to discover (1) if reflective practices enhance final drafts and (2) if reflection-in-action or reflection-on-action is more effective.

Methodology

Data were collected during the fall 2021 semester from three sections of a sophomore-level required business writing course taught by the same instructor at a large Midwestern university. In the first half of the course, students develop individual writing skills by composing Direct Claim, Bad News, and Good News letters as part of case created by the instructor. Each letter assignment is scaffolded to include a draft, peer review, and final draft.

Sections were randomly selected to have students (1) complete a reflection 48 hours prior to submitting final drafts (In-Action, n=24), (2) complete a reflection 48 hours after submitting final drafts (On-Action, n=24), or (3) complete no reflections (No Reflection, n=22).

To create the reflection assignment, Cathro et al.'s (2017) advice to provide guidance to enhance student reflection was heeded; Gibbs' six-step reflective learning cycle was adapted into an assignment template and rubric thereby introducing students to reflective practice, providing direct evidence of students' critical thinking skills, and offering insight into how students approached and completed each assignment.

Students completing reflections were asked to (1) describe the steps followed to complete the assignment; (2) explain how they were feeling before, during, and after the drafting and peer reviewing stages; (3) evaluate what went well and did not go well; (4) analyze why certain steps went well and others did not; (5) conclude by identifying knowledge or skills to develop; and (6) create an action plan to acquire those knowledge or skills.

In total, 180 final drafts and 116 reflections were analyzed. In addition to comparing the overall grades of the final drafts, a separate rubric focusing on critical thinking skills was used to assess each assignment. Reflections were assessed using a 3-point rubric based on Gibbs' learning cycle.

Outcomes

Reflections positively impacted overall performance on the final drafts, especially as assignments grew more complex. For the Direct Claim letter, In-Action Reflectors scored highest, then No Reflection, then On-Action Reflectors (SD .73). The Bad News letter, where students apply a new organizational structure, saw In-Action Reflectors score highest, then On-Action Reflectors, then No Reflection (SD .5). For the Good News letter, where students apply another organizational structure and ghostwrite as the company CEO to a hostile audience, On-Action Reflectors scored highest, then In-Action Reflectors; then No Reflection (SD 3.17).

Focusing only on critical thinking criteria of the final drafts, reflective practices bolstered student performance as well. Most notably, students who wrote Good News letter reflections significantly outperformed the control group (SD 3.67), emphasizing the link between critical thinking and reflection.

Turning to the reflections themselves, In-Action Reflectors scored higher in critical thinking sections (i.e., Steps 3-5) whereas On-Action Reflectors scored higher in planning sections (i.e., Steps 1-2, 6). These findings suggest educators can capitalize on Reflection-in-Action by having students complete the Evaluation, Analysis, and Conclusion prior to revising their final draft and Reflection-on-Action by having students complete the Description, Feeling, and Action Plan after submitting the final draft. This hybrid approach, assignment template, and rubric will be shared with participants.

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The Development of Students' Digital Communication Skills and the Use of Scenario-Based Assessment

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As Rapanta et al. (2020) note, in February 2020, many higher education institutions across the globe had a matter of days in which to switch all of their classes to an online format, with faculty and students having to hone their digital communication skills in order to facilitate and attend class through various digital platforms. In addition, as many parts of the world went into a strict lockdown, the business world also went digital overnight with an increasing reliance on email and messaging for written communication, and on Teams, Webex and Zoom, for meetings and negotiations. Furthermore, it has become increasingly clear that this reliance on digital communication skills will continue both in business and academia. Three years on from the beginning of the crisis, we consequently find ourselves in a situation where the skills our students need to excel in the classroom are progressively similar to those that they will need to communicate effectively in business, providing us with an unprecedented opportunity to refocus our teaching in business communication in order to improve our students' written and oral digital communication skills.

A number of studies have also identified the types of digital skills business people need in order to communicate effectively in the workplace. Darics and Gatti (2019) note, for instance, the collaborative, collegial, nature of effective digital business transactions, Albers et al., (2020) report authentic emails are often "characterized by intertextuality, informality and inaccuracy" (Albers et al., 2020; p. 56) and Gimenez (2014) shows business people need to multitask quickly while they are communicating, as well as being able to understand how to combine different media effectively and use them with different audiences. Findings like these provide an indication as to where the focus should be in the topics discussed and the materials included in online business communication courses, to provide students with an opportunity to develop the skills they will need on entering the workforce.

In our presentation, we will discuss how the use of scenario-based assessment (SBA) can provide students who have little or no work experience, with a means of developing the digital communication skills they will eventually need for the workplace. This is because SBA engages students in a real-life performance task in a situated context or scenario (Deane & Sparks, 2019) and it replicates an authentic, real-world task that students would likely be expected to perform in the workplace. For example, this could involve students writing a text message, participating in a meeting, developing a business plan, writing a press release, or working with a team to write a proposal. In addition, SBA is a type of learning oriented assessment which has a significant positive washback effect and facilitates learning for students (Davidson & Coombe, 2022) and it also mitigates against academic misconduct which has been identified as a growing concern in online assessment (Davidson & Coombe, forthcoming). For instance, a scenario-based group project that involves constant interaction among the group members, and multiple drafts and feedback from the teacher, is very unlikely to have been copied, plagiarized or written by someone else. Finally, a recent development in SBA is to have a number of tasks that are thematically linked, and for business students, this is particularly effective as it provides them with an opportunity to experience the intertextuality and interdiscursivity that is a common feature of communication in business contexts and the links between different genres (Albers et al., 2020; Nickerson, 2018). We will illustrate our arguments with examples of thematically-linked scenario-based assessments taken from our own experience as business communication practitioners working in the multinational, multicultural, context of the United Arab Emirates.

The COVID-19 crisis in March 2020 caused a major world-wide disruption in education, as teaching was abruptly moved online for many teachers and students with little or no advanced planning. We believe the transferable skills that students develop as a result of engaging in SBA are of relevance and importance for business communication practitioners around the world, most especially as many of us are involved with students who have limited workplace experience. Our hope is that our account of SBA will provide the conference attendees with a novel and interesting way of helping their students to develop the skills they will need to be effective communicators in a post-pandemic professional world.

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The Value of Reflection During the Writing Process

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When we teach students business writing, we want to equip them to write for their other business classes and the writing they will do on the job. This concern of whether or not students are transferring their writing knowledge to new contexts has been a recent subject of research and interest for more than 20 years. However, this topic has not been well-explored in the field of business communication. A Here is a brief definition of our research topic broadly:writing transfer is "writing transfer refers to a writer's ability to repurpose or transform prior knowledge about writing for a new audience, purpose, and context" (Moore, p. 2). If students successfully transfer their writing knowledge and skills to new contexts, they must transform or repurpose "prior knowledge (even if only slightly) for a new context to adequately meet the expectations of new audiences and fulfill new purposes for writing" (p. 4).

To this end, researchers have investigated what strategies teachers can use to empower students to transfer their writing knowledge to new tasks. Researchers have pinpointed "threshold concepts" that instructors should integrate into their classes to facilitate writing transfer. One of these concepts is that writing involves a constellation of rhetorical choices, and another is that writing improves and grows best through reflection (Adler-Kassner & Wardle, 2015). As a result, writing instructors often assign students reflection assignments before, during, and after their writing tasks to promote writing transfer.

Reflection for writing transfer is the specific focus of this research project. Often, when students reflect on their writing and the class, they gush about the hobby horses of the instructors or how much they loved their class or assignment. However, Gorzelsky et al. (2017) have called on instructors to "shift students away from the teacher-pleasing often associated with reflective assignments and into concrete discussions of specific metacognitive moves" (p. 242). This project aims to create such a discussion about metacognitive moves students make when they write reflection assignments. This project also seeks to answer whether a reflection assignment writtencompleted during another assignment writing task can promote deep metacognition, which improves students' assignment performance on the writing task. We believe this research project could be helpful for instructors in deciding whether it is beneficial to have students reflect during the writing process. Further, exploring what aspects of metacognition students engage in when reflecting is an exciting area of new research to add to.

We seek to answer two questions:

To what extent does a reflection assignment during the writing process enable students to address essential rhetorical concerns?

What metacognitive subcomponents do students use when they reflect during the writing process?

The participants are Business Communications students at two large universities, one private and one public. In the spring of 2023, the two instructorspresenters from different universities will have a synchronized prompt that all their students will answer to complete their bad news message assignment. Both instructors of us will teach two classes each as the experimental group; this group will be required to complete a reflection worksheet answering audience, purpose, and genre questions about their bad news message. We will also teach one class each as the control group; this group will not be required to writecomplete thea reflection worksheet explaining the strategies they used in their bad news writing assignment. They will teach two classes each as the experimental group; this group will be required to write a reflection worksheet answering audience, purpose, and genre questions about their bad news message. We plan to use the same rubric (created for this project) and grade the students' bad news message assignments without noticing which sectionclass each assignment comes from and then make simple grade comparisons (in total and in each category of the rubric), control to experimental group, to see if the students who wrote reflective worksheetsreflections during their writing process performed better in certain categories of the rubric and/or earned a higher total grade (implying greater rhetorical skill and mastery of writing strategies to fulfill their specific communication purposesthe content). We will use the Canvas feature to grade anonymously so that we won't know which students completed a reflective worksheet and which ones did not. To assess our second research question, we plan to code students' reflective worksheets using the taxonomy of metacognitive subcomponents from Gorzelsky's (2017) study and label each category as shallow, middling, or deep.

We hope this experiment will demonstrate whether and to what extent assigning reflection during writing strengthens students' rhetorical skills and performance. We also expect the coding to shed light on the quality and depth of students' metacognitive subcomponents in their reflections.

This spring version of the study is our pilot, and we hope to share our initial findings with our colleagues at ABC this fall to promote discussion on researching this important topic and to receive feedback on our next semester's iteration of the experiment.

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Traditional and Nontraditional Students' Anxiety in and Preference for Online and Face to Face Classes

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The COVID-19 pandemic marked a shift in higher education with the forced move to online learning. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the number of students enrolled in at least one online course increased by 97% and the number of students exclusively enrolled in online courses jumped 186% (NCES, 2022). In 2023, it appears the shift to synchronous and asynchronous online learning is here to stay. While the impetus for this move was the safety of students and faculty, many universities are making a permanent move to a higher percentage of classes being online or in another format beyond face-to-face.

While the pandemic no doubt led to increased stress for many students, Babb et al. (2021) specifically found that nontraditional students indicated an "increased number of life stressors during the pandemic compared with their traditional peers." Although, what constitutes a nontraditional student has been the source of discussion, some common markers of nontraditional status include being over 25, having spouse/committed partner, being divorced/widowed, being a parent, and/or working full-time (e.g. Choy, 2002, Kim, 2002, NCES, nd). Research suggests that students who take classes part-time are less likely to graduate with their intended degree (NCES, 2019). This means that flexibility in course offerings would benefit non-traditional students who may have family/job obligations stopping them from attending solely during on-campus, daytime hours, which could lead to remaining full-time and completing their degrees. In addition to issues with scheduling, burnout and work-life-school balance, nontraditional students also may experience higher levels of anxiety in the classroom.

Classroom anxiety refers to a student's anxiety in educational situations and has been explored in a variety of situations, including physics classes, public speaking and foreign language acquisition (e.g. Alamar & Almulhum, 2021; Prentiss, 2021; Taibu and Ferrari-Bridgers, 2020). This study explores classroom anxiety in regards to course delivery method.

Individuals were recruited to participate through snowball sampling from students in an introductory communication research methods course. A total of 267 participants completed the online questionnaire. Respondents ages ranged from 18-69 (M = 23.33, SD = 5.84) and 60.3% of identified as female whereas 36.3% identified as male and 3.4% identified as another gender category. Regarding traditional or nontraditional student categorization, 52.8% of respondents indicated meeting at least one criterion for nontraditional status.

Respondents were also asked to complete Richmond, Wrench, and Gorham's (2001) Classroom Anxiety Measure. Respondents completed the scale twice, reporting on both their experiences in face-to-face classes and online classes. The scale obtained acceptable reliability in this study with a Chronbach's alpha of .94 (M = 2.57, SD = 0.62) and .93 (M = 2.54, SD = 0.57) for online and face-to-face.

Participants also completed two revised versions of Fortune, Shifflett, and Sibley's (2006) Online vs. On Campus Measure. Again, respondents completed the scale twice, both on their preference for face-to-face classes and online classes. The scale obtained acceptable reliability in this study with a Chronbach's alpha of .95 ($M = 2.70$, $SD = 1.02$) and .95 ($M = 3.78$, $SD = 1.01$) for online and face-to-face.

Research question one asked if there is a difference in preference for online classes. Results of an independent samples t-test found significant differences in preference for online classes ($t (247) = -2.81$, $p = .003$), with nontraditional students ($M = 2.84$, $SD = .09$) preferring online classes more than traditional students ($M = 2.48$, $SD = .10$)

Research question two asked if there is a difference in anxiety in online classes. Results of an independent samples t-test found no differences between the traditional and nontraditional students ($p = .29$).

Research question four asked if there is a difference in preference for face-to-face classes. Results of an independent samples t-test found significant differences in preference for face-to-face classes ($t (252) = 2.98$, $p = .002$), with traditional students ($M = 3.99$, $SD = .97$) preferring face-to-face classes more than nontraditional students ($M = 3.62$, $SD = .10$).

Research question four asked if there is a difference in anxiety in face-to-face classes. Results of an independent samples t-test found significant differences in anxiety in face-to-face classes, ($t (251) = -2.34$, $p = .01$), with nontraditional students ($M = 2.62$, $SD = .05$) reporting more anxiety in online classes than traditional students ($M = 2.45$, $SD = .05$).

This data suggests that nontraditional students prefer online classes more than their traditional peers, and experience more anxiety in face-to-face classes. Further research will explore the reasons for these differences as well as ways that faculty and administrators can use this information.

VBP Plenary and Symposium

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Each semester over 600 students from an average of 14 different universities from 7 countries participate in the Virtual Business Professional project (VBP). All participating students are enrolled in a business communication class at their home institutions. For six weeks, students plan and hold virtual meetings, co-author and collaboratively revise documents, use project management and the latest AI collaboration tools to work on a business challenge. This year, the project is celebrating a 10-year anniversary and is holding the VBP plenary and symposium at the annual ABC conference to bring a corporate project sponsor and celebrate the winning teams and their professors. Most participating professors are ABC members.

Join us for this 2-part event to learn more about the project, hear from participating faculty and their students, and celebrate the project winners. The event consists of a plenary talk by our 2023 corporate partner Uma (a Strategic Advisory & Consultancy that specializes in gender, race, workplace culture, and belonging) and a moderated panel that will include students and professors from spring 2023 semester winning teams and VBP sponsors, Jolanta Aritz (University of Southern California), Peter Cardon (University of Southern California, and Carolin Fleischmann (Rosenheim Technical University of Applied Sciences, Rosenheim, Germany.

Plenary

Speaker: Rita Kakati-Shah is the Founder and CEO of UMA, a coaching, mentoring and training platform built with 25+ years of expertise across gender equality, diversity and inclusion strategy, and workplace culture.

Join us to hear about Rita Kakati-Shah's (the Founder and CEO of Uma) fascinating journey navigating equality and workplace culture on a global level, her accomplishments as a Finance Executive at Goldman Sachs, entrepreneur, bestselling author, popular TV host, and advisor to Fortune 500 companies, policy forums, and academic institutions. From UNESCO to European Parliament to Women in Politics and Finance, her work touches international business leaders, veterans, survivors of domestic violence, school age children, university students, women, and under-represented groups around the globe. Rita will talk about her consultancy company Uma (an international platform that partners with organizations to attract, retain and develop women and minorities in the workforce) and her consulting challenge for the VBP students.

VBP Symposium

Join us for a moderated panel that includes students the winning VBP teams, their professors, and a corporate sponsor Rita Kakati-Shah. This year, VBP consulting challenge consisted of a collaborative business writing competition "Conscious Capitalism: Making Money and Still Doing Good." Students selected an industry they want to work in and identified a company they were interested in. They worked in virtual global teams and had to choose one of two topics: a. Planet (environmental sustainability) b. People (social impact / diversity and inclusion).

Teams gathered and analyzed relevant facts and data to generate ideas about what the company is doing and how it is addressing the pressing issues to meet its responsibility to the Planet or the People. Students explored the company's online presence on their web page, Facebook page, Twitter feed, Instagram page, blog, and so on. They had to evaluate the company based on at least three of the UN sustainable goals, provide evidence for your conclusions, and offer recommendations how the company can improve its efforts.

Learn what it was like working in global virtual teams. What were their biggest challenges and successes? What strategies they used to come together as a team? What made it possible to write the winning report? Do you want to join this project with your students? VBP accepts new participants for the fall and in the spring rounds.

Who's Afraid of ChatGPT? Comparing Model Documents in Top Textbooks to Those Produced by a Large Language Model

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There has been much recent talk about the impact that ChatGTP and other large language model AI platforms will have on writing in general and business writing in particular (Surovell, 2023; McMurtrie, 2023). In particular, teacher-scholars of writing have expressed concern about the reduced impact and relevance of their work in a world where machines are making composition choices that were previously made by human writers (POV, n.d.).

One of the key tools that business communication teacher-scholars use to teach students how to make smart writing choices are model documents included in textbooks. These are fictional but realistic examples of the sort of actually-existing documents one would find in a real business setting. These model documents are powerful teaching tools because they synthesize textbook teachings and SHOW (rather than DESCRIBE) effective writing (Tomlinson, 2023; Mabrito, 1997).

In this presentation, I share what I found when I compared/contrasted model documents from 3 of our field's most-assigned textbooks with documents produced by ChatGPT 4.0.

After walking the audience through several paired model documents, I will address the following questions:

1) What are differences between the model documents provided by our field's most used textbooks and documents produced by ChatGPT? Are the differences meaningful?

2) What are similarities between the model documents provided by our field's most used textbooks and documents produced by ChatGPT? Are the differences meaningful?

3) What might it mean if our model documents in textbooks are more or less identical to the documents produced by ChatGPT? How might this impact our view of the value of large language models for our role as writing teachers?

In this presentation, I will provide attendees with some interesting textual artifacts and important questions to consider as they seek to improve their relevance and impact in the classroom and beyond. This research is part of a larger project I am working on and I am excited to get feedback and good ideas from my colleagues. I appreciate your consideration.

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Workplace Readiness: Learning Assessment of Communication Skills in Business Graduates

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In today's competitive job market, career readiness is a crucial aspect of a college education. Students who major in business, in particular, must be equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in their chosen profession. The ***purpose*** of this research proposal is to identify career-readiness and gaps in learning of business students as they prepare to complete their collegiate programs and transition to a professional career.

One of the most important skills for business students to develop is effective communication, as it is essential for building relationships, networking, and advancing in the workplace. This paper will explore the importance of career readiness for college business students as it pertains to communication skills. As educators, we have a responsibility to ensure that students are most prepared, especially as it relates to communication of information, appropriate communication with peers, and listening to others' communication.

It is commonly understood that effective communication is critical in any business setting, as it facilitates understanding, collaboration, and decision-making (Aaker et al., 2017). Business students who develop strong communication skills are better positioned to succeed in the workforce, as they can effectively convey their ideas, build relationships, and negotiate with colleagues and clients (DeCicco & Vélez-Pastrana, 2018). In fact, a survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that the ability to communicate effectively was the most important skill sought by employers in college graduates (NACE, 2021).

To prepare college business students for success in their careers, universities must provide them with opportunities to develop their communication skills. This can be done through coursework that emphasizes writing, speaking, and listening skills, as well as through experiential learning opportunities such as internships, case competitions, and leadership programs (DeCicco & Vélez-Pastrana, 2018). Additionally, students can seek out extracurricular activities such social organizations where public speaking can be practiced or volunteer work that require strong communication skills.

Specifically, the research ***goals*** associated with this research project are to answer the following questions regarding student preparedness in communication skills:

1. How prepared are students to communicate through writing, spoken word, reading/responding, and listening?

2. How prepared are students to encounter critical thinking situations including examining differing viewpoints, analyzing assumptions in reading and writing, and analyzing data?

3. Are students able to recognize and appropriately respond to ethical situations, including plagiarism?

4. How important do *students* perceive communication skills to be for overall future career success?

Methodology

This proposal (and the study, continued) examines data collected via an online survey (Qualtrics) of undergraduate business students at a southeastern AACSB-accredited business school as the primary data source. Students are asked to complete a self-assessment survey at the completion of an upper-division professional communication course with a heavy emphasis on research and writing. Demographic information is also being collected (age, gender identity, major). Students anonymously answer the 22-question assessment near the completion of the term, and although involvement is not required, most all students participate.

Data collection is currently ongoing with 323 responses thus far from August 2021 through present day. Data collection will continue through May 2023, although not currently available for this written proposal. Data also exists for prior terms and comparative analyses between differing academic years and the current data will examine trends in progression of skills.

Present Day Outcomes

Although the data collection is still ongoing, initial analyses suggest good fit and validity of the applied survey instrument (overall Cronbach alpha = 0.94). Individual questions have been categorically grouped together for analysis including Sustainable Innovation (research, analyzing data sources, and writing; 9 questions), Interactive Communication (speaking, presenting, summarizing; 4 questions), Critical and Systems Thinking (diversity, drawing conclusions; 4 questions), Ethical Issues (including plagiarism; 3 questions); and Future Success (perceived importance of writing and communication to future career; 1 question). Further, comparative analysis will also be conducted to examine potential differences between gender, age, and major.

Moving forward, this researcher hopes to solicit input and feedback from peers attending the 2023 Association for Business Communication Annual Conference. If invited, initial data and analyses will be presented at the conference.

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DIY Air Filtration: Citizen Science as Tactical Technical Communication

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This presentation complicates the relationship between tactical technical communication and citizen science by analyzing three open-source instruction sets for Corsi-Rosenthal boxes: DIY air filters that reduce the spread of COVID-19.

What happens when experts go rogue in order to solve wicked problems (Blythe et al., 2008; Wickman, 2014)? Shifting power to citizens is enabled by the democratization of technical information. This creates a liminal space—the term "gray literature" (Lindeman, 2013, p. 65) implies this space between academic literature and popular writing. Throughout COVID-19, many huge systemic decisions and materials have been outside the control of ordinary citizens: availability of testing, returning to face-to-face learning, whether the people around them choose to protect themselves by wearing masks, and the emergence of new variants of the virus. As such, air filtration specialists and public health experts have dedicated themselves to reforming air filtration to stop the spread of COVID-19, the common cold, and influenza viruses (Allen & Ibrahim, 2021).

Over three years into the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, many practices such as keeping six feet away from one another or sanitizing door handles are based on the wrong scientific paradigm: COVID-19 mainly spreads through aerosol droplets in the air, which was contested earlier in the pandemic (Randall et al., 2021). Thus, preventative health behaviors such as sanitizing hands or standing six feet away from other people matter less than air ventilation and masking to reduce airborne exposure (Allen & Ibrahim, 2021). Paying attention to and acting on systemic issues such as air filtration creates opportunities to engage with rhetorical health citizenship, connecting citizen science with tactical technical communication.

Tactical technical communication is technical communication that occurs outside of institutional boundaries. For example, a group of citizen scientists have used "gray literature" (Lindeman, 2013, p. 65) about Corsi-Rosenthal boxes to shift conversations around air filtration as an additional way for people to protect themselves and their loved ones from contracting COVID-19. Colton, et al. (2017) describe the social justice turn's attention to accountability and to repairing existing injustices and inequalities as a place for tactical technical communication to intervene.

Throughout the uncertainty and communicative lapses during the COVID-19 pandemic, tactics and strategies used by individual communicators outside of institutions have filled the communication void: "Tactics call attention to the unsanctioned or unpredictable communicative activities that users caught up in these strategic systems can manifest as forms of everyday resistance" (Colton, et al., 2017, p. 61). The pandemic prompted user-producers to fill communication gaps with their own science communication about the pandemic (Mattingly, 2020). Tactics further serve marginalized communities (Alexander & Edenfield, 2021): "individuals who are marginalized can appropriate strategies of control to suit their own ends" (Colton, et al., 2017, p. 59). Because COVID-19 disproportionately affected African American, Latinx, and Asian/Pacific Islander people in New York City (Do & Frank, 2021), using tactics to communicate the importance of mask wearing took on new significance for those communities. Tactical technical communication is not without its limits: while "the ethics of tactics as an art of the weak" (Colton, et al., 2017, p. 59) tactics are ethically neutral, their use complicated by groups like Anonymous or jihadist terrorists using tactics (Sarat-St. Peter, 2017). "They [user-producers] are not, however, necessarily anti-institutional; they are willing to work within institutional strategies when it suits them, and to step outside those strategies when the occasion warrants" (Kimball, 2017).

Corsi-Rosenthal boxes resulted from a conversation between Jim Rosenthal, the CEO of Tex-Air Filters, and Adam Rogers, a reporter for *Wired*. According to the *Wired* article (Rogers, 2020), Rogers contacted Rosenthal for his subject-matter expertise on air filtration during the summer of 2020, based on pre-existing work by Richard Corsi, Dean of Maseeh College of Engineering & Computer Science at Portland State University. Based on Corsi's decades of experience in indoor air filtration (for example, Zhang et al., 2011) and their friendship, Rosenthal then experimented with air filters attached to a household box fan, to see how household materials might be used to filter air in classrooms or workplaces (Rosenthal, 2020). Rosenthal found that creating a cube of filters and cardboard puts less strain on the box fan's motor due to greater filtration area.

This presentation analyzes the metaphors, technical visuals, and readability used by citizen scientists when sharing three DIY instructions for Corsi-Rosenthal boxes: a 2020 article in *Wired* magazine (Rogers, 2020), an instruction set from Encycla.com (Neustrom, n.d.), and from Cleanaircrew.org (DIY Box Fan Air Filters – Corsi-Rosenthal Box - Clean Air Crew, 2021).

For Students, By Students: Enhancing Storytelling Practices via Social Media

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For years, flourishing universities and institutions have adopted new recruitment and retention efforts, while eliminating others. Following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, enrollment strategies were re-evaluated, which includes efforts for recruitment and retention. Some examples include leveraging personal SMS messaging, investing in search engine optimization (SEO), and developing student engagement opportunities via social media.

Time and again, social media strategic planning efforts have been enforced, but these thriving universities and institutions remain to struggle with managing their accounts. What is often forgotten is the impact of establishing a story via social media. Without digital storytelling, audiences are not fully engaged, causing a decrease of overall engagement over time.

Learning the interests and satisfaction levels from enrolled students, could provide insight to consider when developing novel enrollment initiatives. If the content being curated and shared across social media platforms is not tailored to the target audience, students may become uninterested in the university or program, and inclined to invest time in learning more about other universities, with similar programs.

If You Do Not Establish Your Brand, Someone Else Will Define It

Tushar Unadkat

Personal branding involves maintaining your reputation in an era of misinformation, disinformation, and long-lasting Google records, even if you are not a business owner. If you are going out on a date or attending a job interview, your potential partner or employer has probably searched for your name online.

Today, personal branding has become increasingly important for individuals looking to establish themselves in their respective fields. Personal branding refers to creating and maintaining a unique and recognizable image or identity that reflects one's skills, values, and personality. In other words, personal branding is all about showcasing who you are and what you have to offer.

In the social media and digital communication age, personal branding has become an increasingly important aspect of career development and self-promotion. Another critical factor of personal branding is that it can help individuals build a dependable and loyal following. By consistently sharing high-quality content and engaging with their audience, individuals can cultivate a sense of trust and credibility with their followers. Doing this can increase visibility, influence, and impact within their industry.

However, building a strong personal brand requires excellent effort and strategic thinking. It involves defining your values, goals, and unique selling points and crafting a consistent and compelling narrative across all your communication channels.

There are several benefits to building a substantial personal brand. First and foremost, it can help you stand out in a competitive job market. Second, showcasing your unique skills, experiences, and accomplishments makes you an expert in your field and increases your visibility to potential employers and clients.

Personal branding can also help you build credibility and trust with your audience. You can establish yourself as an industry thought leader by consistently delivering valuable content and showcasing your expertise. You can increase opportunities for speaking engagements, media interviews, and other professional collaborations with your expertise.

Another key benefit of personal branding is that it can help you build a strong network of contacts and connections. By consistently engaging with your audience and sharing your knowledge and insights, you can attract like-minded individuals who share your interests and values. You can now attract new business opportunities, collaborations, and partnerships to help you achieve your professional goals.

So, how do you go about building a trustworthy personal brand? The first step is identifying your unique value proposition (UVP) - what sets you apart from others in your field. These values could be your expertise in a particular area, your experience working with a specific type of client, or your ability to deliver exceptional results in one industry.

Once you have identified your unique value proposition, the next step is to develop a consistent brand message and visual identity that aligns with your values and goals. The brand message can include creating professional marketing collateral for social media profiles, a website, and other outreach material showcasing your skills, accomplishments, and personality.

It is also important to consistently engage with your audience and build relationships with other professionals in your field. Relationship building involves:

- Sharing valuable content.
- Participating in online communities and forums.
- Attending networking events and conferences.

Furthermore, personal branding requires a commitment to ongoing learning and professional development. Establishing a strong brand and then resting on your laurels is not enough. Instead, individuals must continuously work to stay current on the latest trends and best practices in their industry and actively seek new growth and development opportunities.

In conclusion, personal branding has become increasingly important for individuals looking to establish themselves in their respective fields. By creating a unique and recognizable image or identity that reflects one's skills, values, and personality, individuals can increase their visibility, credibility, and opportunities for professional growth. With the right strategy and consistent effort, anyone can build a reliable personal brand that helps them achieve their goals and stand out in a crowded marketplace.

Instagram Travel Blogging: A Mixed-Method Analysis

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According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2023), the tourism industry has expanded steadily over the last few years, thus becoming one of the largest and most lucrative business sectors in the world. In fact, cheaper and more rapid means of transportation together with new communication technologies have transformed tourism from an exclusive activity to a mass phenomenon (Chambers, 2010; Richards, 2013).

Generally speaking, the aim of tourism discourse is to prompt people to travel to and visit given destinations; the specialized texts which fall under this umbrella term fulfil a promotional objective, as they seek to convince their audience to purchase a service (Franceschi & Hartle, 2022). The professionals who produce these texts are well aware that today's tourists are better informed and have greater expertise than in the past (Maci, 2020). Social media have been playing a crucial role in this respect, as they contribute to shaping the strategies for promoting tourism destinations. Today's tourism discourse goes well beyond travel guides, brochures, and advertisements, to name a few examples, but it accounts also for all those contents generated by tourists themselves, addressing their fellow travelers. These contents are perceived as more authentic and reliable than traditional, commercial genres (D'Egidio, 2014). However, these texts are often produced by travel bloggers and influencers who use their social media as a source of income which can be generated via advertising, paid partnerships, and sponsored posts (Willment, 2020). These contents creators belong to the category of digital nomads (Muller, 2016), which is comprised of all those professionals whose job enables them to work flexible hours and travel globally, since their workplace is no longer linked to traditional office environments (Nash et al., 2018). Travel bloggers and influencers can therefore be regarded as entrepreneurs competing for social media users' attention with a view to establishing their unique brand and generating profit.

By presenting the preliminary results of a mixed-method pilot study conducted on a small scale-corpus of Instagram posts, this presentation aims at highlighting the linguistic strategies that characterize five among the most successful travel influencers according to Forbes (2017): Bryan Kelly (The Points Guys); Kiersten Rich (The Blonde Abroad); Eric Stoen (Travel Babbo); and Kate McCulley (Adventurous Kate), who come from the US; and the pair Dave Bouskill and Debra Corbeil (Planet D), who instead come from Canada. Specifically, by relying on Aaker's (1997) five dimensions of brand personality, namely sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness, the research aim is to pin down those linguistic patterns that seek to establish an emotional connection with their followers.

For each of the Instagram profiles selected, which represent five sub-corpora within our sample, the captions to 60 posts published between September 2021 and June 2022 were manually collected. These textual contents, totaling 38,763 tokens, were uploaded to the online software Sketch Engine, where quantitative information about the corpus (number of tokens and types) was obtained. A frequency wordlist and keywords were generated as well, which were useful to identify interesting areas for investigation, as for example the use of pronouns "you," "I," and "we," and the presence of words and phrases that are unique to the Instagram account of each influencer; these, in most cases, refer to the destinations they visited. In order to better understand the context in which these items occur, concordance lines were used as well, which provided information about the way in which the five travel influencers approach their audiences and the type of story they tell about their travel experiences.

This information, although insightful, was not considered completely satisfactory for gaining an understanding of the brand personality with which the travel influencers infuse their social media communication. Therefore, the quantitative findings were complemented by qualitative analysis carried out via the Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) NVivo. Deductive thematic investigation was carried out by coding the Instagram posts using Aaker's (1997) five dimensions. By doing so it was possible to delve deeper into the communicative choices adopted by the Instagram influencers in our dataset. Cross tab queries were conducted too, in order to look at the distribution of the five dimensions across the five sub-corpora.

The preliminary findings indicate that all the dimensions of brand personality are present across the five sub-corpora, although excitement and competence seem to be the most significant ones, while ruggedness and sophistication account for a smaller portion of the dataset. Overall, the travel influencers construct their message by blending different personality traits depending on which aspect of their travel experience they are writing about. For example, posts about transportation may show traits related to the dimension of competence and sophistication, while accommodation may be presented using traits belonging to excitement.

In conclusion, this study proposes a model for analyzing tourism discourse on Instagram that can be exported to other social media in order to unpack the communicative choices deployed by successful travel influencers. These insights can assist other professionals in the field in devising their own strategies to increase the number of their followers and thus consolidate their brand.

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Relational Communication on Facebook: The Effects of Visual Politeness Cues on User Engagement

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Theme

The importance of visual imagery for organizational communication on Facebook has been long acknowledged. It is well documented that the mere inclusion of a photograph increases the extent to which users engage with a post by liking, commenting, or sharing it (Brubaker & Wilson, 2018; Kim & Yang, 2017; Saxton & Waters, 2014).

Studies focusing on visual content further suggest that user engagement can be boosted through the inclusion of images depicting people (Bakhshi et al., 2014; Li & Xie, 2020; Thomson & Greenwood, 2017). However, images are poorly understood when it comes to the persuasive influence of relational features. One of the most fundamental, yet unaddressed questions refers to how the depicted people should relate to the viewer. Given that research on this matter is not only sparse but findings are also mixed (Dhanesh et al., 2022; Valentini et al., 2018), we believe that much is yet to be learned about the effects of visual relational features in the context of organizational Facebook communication.

Purpose/Goals

The purpose of this study is to advance current understanding of visual relational cues and their impact on user engagement. Adopting a multimodal lens, we will also consider aspects related to the image-text interplay.

Our project is predicated on the idea that images are associated with greater user engagement to the extent to which the depicted people address the viewer in a polite manner. Drawing upon politeness theory, we argue that being polite means to acknowledge people's need to be autonomous and their need to be liked (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

We further posit that there are five basic relational features through which images appeal to people's need for autonomy and their need for approval – that is, through vertical camera angle, physical distance, horizontal camera angle, gaze, and facial expression of emotion (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Whereas eye level and high angle shots (vs. low vertical angle shots) acknowledge people's desire to be autonomous by suggesting a relationship of equality and viewer power, medium and long-distance shots (vs. close-up shots) do so by respecting people's private space.

Frontal (vs. oblique) angle shots support people's need for approval by signaling inclusion, images featuring a direct gaze (vs. averted gaze) do so by addressing the viewer personally, and images of faces with positive expressions (vs. negative facial expressions) resonate with people's desire to be liked by suggesting that the depicted person is sympathetic toward them.

The use of these visual politeness cues is hypothesized to be associated with greater user engagement (i.e., more likes, comments, shares).

Methodology

The present study will examine Facebook posts of the largest 50 nonprofit organizations in the United States. Our choice of nonprofit organizations is motivated by the fact that these organizations face fierce competition for donations and volunteers, all of which accentuates the importance of successfully engaging with users (Suh, 2020).

The sample will be taken from the 2022 listing of the “Nonprofit Times 100,” the 100 largest non-university affiliated nonprofits in the U.S. based on revenue (Lovejoy et al., 2012; Wang & Yang, 2020).

The data collection will be conducted in April and May 2023. Facebook posts along with the number of associated likes, comments, and shares will be collected and coded by the authors and a research assistant. We estimate to gather approximately 2,500 Facebook posts from the nonprofit organizations’ Facebook pages over a three-week period from mid-January to mid-February 2023. Posts will be included if they contain one photo (not multiple) and if these photos depict a person (and not just a landscape or a building).

A series of negative binomial regression analyses will be performed via SPSS to test our hypotheses.

Outcomes

The study will lend support to the idea that Facebook posts receive significantly more likes, comments, and shares when they use visual politeness cues that support the viewer’s need for autonomy and approval. Our main practical implication will be that nonprofit organizations should select photos in which the viewers 1) look at the depicted people from above or at eye level (high or eye level vertical angle), 2) see more of the depicted people’s bodies than their head and shoulders (medium or long shot), 3) are positioned parallel to the depicted people (frontal horizontal angle), 4) are able to make eye contact with the depicted people (direct gaze), and 5) are exposed to smiling faces (positive facial expression).

We will also present preliminary findings on the influence of verbal politeness cues (e.g., indirect requests) on Facebook engagement and discuss approaches to analyze image-text interaction effects.

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Social Media Users' Evaluation of Organizational Credibility: Key Determinants

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We no longer live in a society that exists with the media: "society now operates within the media" (Holtzhausen, Fullerton, Lewis & Shipka, 2021). Social media, specifically, have grown exponentially as information sources over the past decade. It is the most popular information platform for individuals who seek information or who would like to alter information to foster relationships (Yuan & Lou 2020). Social media are also known as platforms where misinformation flourishes and cannot easily be refuted (Vraga & Bode, 2017). In addition, information on social media suffers from a lack of professional gatekeepers to monitor the content, as the gatekeeper function moved from content creator to the user of the content (Westerman, Spence & Van der Heide, 2014). This has caused the credibility of information to become a burning issue for the consumers of information that is made available through the social media (Li & Suh, 2015), as they need to evaluate the credibility of the content and to become gate-watchers themselves (Bruns, 2008). Moreover, the concise nature of social media messages invariably leads to the credibility assessment of the messages involved, becoming increasingly problematic (Keshavarz, 2021). Jamal and Bakar (2017) argue that the impact of credibility on organizations must still be fully understood. As the way in which individuals assess a source's credibility on social media has become a pertinent area of inquiry which requires exploration (Westerman et al., 2014), the current paper is specifically concerned with exploring the building blocks of organizational credibility in the social media context. The purpose of this study is to identify the determinants of social organizational credibility, to build towards a formal conceptualization. Such an exploration and conceptualization of social organizational credibility could guide organizations in devising strategies to enhance their credibility in the social media context. It, in essence, provides organizations with an understanding of how their credibility is being assessed in the social media context.

Various preliminary social organizational credibility determinants were identified from the literature. Trustworthiness, qualification and dynamism (Berlo, Lemert, & Mertz, 1970; Westerman et al., 2014; Li & Suh, 2015; Jamal & Bakar, 2017; Kreegimäe et al., 2019) were identified as foundational source credibility determinants. Homophily, personable interaction, invitational rhetoric, high issue involvement and recency of information (Tandoc, 2018; Ismagilova et al., 2020; Kim & Brown, 2015; Westerman et al., 2014; Bone, Griffin, & Scholz, 2008) were recognized as organizational credibility elements in the social media context. An organization's connections and followers and social word-of-mouth (sWOM) (Enke & Borchers, 2019; Leite, Pontes, & Baptista, 2022; Ismagilova et al., 2020) were considered as additional social media determinants.

A quantitative research design employing a web-based survey, hosted on SurveyMonkey, was used to measure the pragmatic relevance of the preliminary social organizational credibility determinants. As credibility is a perceived quality, it was important to explore the proposed determinants of social organizational credibility purposefully among active social media users. The survey was shared via the researcher's Facebook and LinkedIn social media accounts, to enable the requesting of active social media users to complete the survey. The survey was also purposively shared on selected communication and management association platforms, as it was deemed necessary that the members of the associations concerned should actively use social media, due to the nature of their disciplines (communication, marketing, advertising, public relations, strategy and management).

An exploratory factor analysis confirmed the pragmatic relevance of previously identified determinants, namely trustworthiness, homophily and personable interaction to the building of social organizational credibility. The results, however, did not support the credibility determinants outlined in the literature, like qualification and dynamism, invitational rhetoric, recency of information and high issue involvement. Instead, this study has extended existing credibility literature in terms of the social media context, by means of showcasing the relevance of the determinants to the building of social organizational credibility as reciprocal relationships, in the form of qualified resonance (dynamism and qualification), informed conversation (invitational rhetoric and high issue involvement) and apt sWOM (recency of information and sWOM). In addition to recognizing the importance of sWOM, this study also confirms that the newly identified determinant, SMIs and experts, plays a significant role in building social organizational credibility.

The conceptualization of social organizational credibility facilitates learning about how social media users evaluate an organization's credibility in relation to their performance as reflected on social media. Studies, such as this, which aid in providing an understanding of organizational credibility assessment in terms of the social media, are indispensable to addressing the lack of professional gatekeeping and misinformation that tend to be associated with social media as an interactive information platform.

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The Impact of Insult Ad Reads on Podcast Listeners

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Audio podcasts have grown in popularity. Forty-six million Americans tune into an average of six podcasts each week (Nielson, 2020) and ad revenues are projected to top $4 billion by 2024 (IAB, 2022). To enhance the appeal of ads, many podcasters use humor in their ad reads. Although humor can be effective (Weinberger & Gulas, 1992) and reinforce the parasocial relationship between podcaster and audience, are there times when that humor has negative consequences? In this study, we are concerned primarily with the use of insult advertising in which the podcaster uses humor that targets the brand/product being endorsed.

To test our hypotheses, we conducted an experiment in which respondents (N = 324) were randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions. In one condition (humor), participants were exposed to the audio of a humorous advertisement for a product called Butcher Box that aired on the podcast Lovett or Leave It. The humorous advertisement included multiple humorous comments that made the product the target of the joke. Participants in the second experimental condition (no-humor) were also exposed to the audio of an advertisement for Butcher Box that aired on Lovett or Leave It. The advertisement did not contain any jokes nor any derogatory language about the product itself. Prior to exposure to the advertisement, participants were provided context about the podcast to help the participants understand that the content was from a podcast and that the podcast was irreverent.

The results in this study have specifically identified the potential risk for advertisers who purchase ad reads on podcasts. What matters here is that the straight ad read proved to have more positive impact, overall, than the humorous, or more specifically, the insulting ad read. Of course, when dealing with humor, context matters. In this case, the podcasters struggled during the insulting ad read to get through their humorous ad read as they continuously lampooned their subject. However, the straight read, which was the same brand information from another episode, was more positively associated with word-of-mouth, purchase intention, attitude toward the podcast and attitude toward the ad.

For the podcast host, the humorous, insulting advertisement resulted in lower attitudes toward both the podcast and the ad itself. In this way, it appears as though consumers don't appreciate when podcasters make fun of the products they promote. Although podcasters may have strong parasocial relationships with their listeners, and those relationships can be bolstered through humor, the listeners are also being targeted by the brands promoted in podcast ads. Perhaps audience members may themselves feel insulted by the ad because it breaks the bond between the podcaster and the audience. In other words, the podcaster is selling a product or service to their "friend" that the podcaster then makes plainly obvious that they don't like and would not purchase. Does that make listeners feel mocked and let down by their "friend?" From the parasocial interaction perspective, it is not hard to imagine the harmful impact that an insult ad may have on listener attitudes toward the podcaster and the ad. Further, as balance theory would argue, listeners exposed to an insulting ad may find themselves needing to rebalance their attitudes toward the product and the podcast host.

For the brands, humorous, insult ads have a mixed influence on consumers. The results of the present study suggest that when exposed to the humorous ad read, consumers reported being less likely to share information about the product via WOM and less likely to purchase the product than those consumers exposed to the no-humor advertisement. Brands may not want to purchase ads that reduce WOM and purchase intentions. To do so may be a waste of advertising revenue. These conclusions should be tempered because the impact of advertising is not so simple especially when considering the impact of advertising in a medium like podcasts. Podcasts are different from other mainstream audio media in terms of format, audience, content, and the way they engage their audience. The consumers did report, however, that the humorous ad did not influence their attitudes toward the brand. So, the silver lining for brands is that humorous insult ads do not appear to tarnish the brand reputation, at least in the context of the present study.

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"1st C.L.A.S.S. Communication": Sharing Your Story with Data Visualization

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Purpose

The MS STEM program at CU Leeds offers a fast-paced, highly analytical/technical program that focuses on MBA/MS Business Analytics and a Supply Chain management degree. However, technical expertise is not enough for success in this field. Effective communication is crucial for professionals to communicate their message using their data to facilitate decision-making. To help bridge this gap, the communication program developed by Smith and Swisher supplements the education of students to improve their ability to communicate technical information to non-technical audiences.

Goal

The primary goal of the communication workshop is to teach students how to tailor their message to their audience who may not have the same technical and analytical expertise. The value lies in sharing data in a way that creates understanding of the important conclusions to facilitate decision-making. The specific goal of the ABC presentation is for Smith and Swisher to share our six step process to facilitate the use of data visualization for effective communication, which we coined "1st C.L.A.S.S. Communication."

Methodology

Smith and Swisher developed a six-step process that is highly implementable for success.
This model focusses on the audience and how one's message must be tailored to your audience. We dive deep into how to craft your visual aids to tell the story clearly, effectively, and powerfully. This approach arms our students with how to set up their presentations to open with impact, to clearly share a story using data visualization that is geared towards the audience, and to use data to visualize results.

The first step is to identify the goals of the presentation to understand the desired outcome. Students need to determine a clear goal for what they want the audience to do with their information; this changes their emphasis on sharing the analysis they did to explaining what next steps the analysis supports. Understanding the goals will help the students focus their presentation and tailor it to their audience. The six steps of the 1st C.L.A.S.S. communication model include:

C: Competence & Warmth. Using the research of Dr. Cuddy and Dr. Fiske, competence and warmth are essential to build trust with the audience. Students need to demonstrate their expertise while also creating a connection with their audience. This helps to build credibility and trust, which is essential for effective communication.

L: Logic: The third step is using logic to support your arguments. Students need to present their data in a way that makes logical sense to their audience.

A: Audience Analysis. Understanding the audience is essential to tailor the message to their needs. This step is the gem for success. It elevates the presentation to ensure the message lands properly (again "1st C.L.A.S.S. Communication").

S: Storytelling: Storytelling is an effective way to engage the audience and communicate the message. The workshop emphasizes this step and details how to tell a story using data visualization. The story needs to be clear, concise, and compelling; and effective data visualization is key.

S: Structure: Organizing the presentation in a logical manner geared towards the audience and with an eye on the goal ensures that the communication is coherent and successful.

Outcome

In conclusion, effective communication is essential for professionals. The communication program developed by Smith and Swisher helps students take a step back from their analysis to understand what they want their audience to do with their analysis. Then, the approach equips them with a framework to organize and communicate their message using their data to achieve the desired outcome for their audience. By using this approach, students can become better communicators, which is essential in today's business world. Smith and Swisher's memorable and highly implementable six step approach arms analytical speakers to share their data and their message successfully with any audience.

The A.S.C.E.N.D. Method for Data Visualization: A Workshop on Teaching Others to Tell Their Data's Story

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Acquiring skills in data visualization is no longer optional for professionals in business, technical, and scientific fields. Since 2016, there has been a steady increase in the number of job postings that require data visualization (Asamoah, 2022). Recently, LinkedIn reported that of the ten most in-demand hard skills of 2023, "data analysis," ranked sixth while "communication" ranked second overall (Southern, 2023). Dong and Triche (2020) further suggest, in reference to a study published in the *Harvard Business Review*, the "ability to communicate the results of analytics is more important than the ability to use sophisticated deep learning models" [emphasis added].
The challenges of teaching and learning data visualization, however, are many. In addition to requiring learners to have analytical and data interpretation skills, they must be proficient in concepts related to visual communication, information design, color theory, usability, and accessibility. They must acquire skills in visualization software programs like Excel, Tableau, or Power BI; and they need to understand fundamental data design principles like aspect ratios, starting baselines at zero, using tick marks and labels, and so forth. Because data visualization has such a profound impact on how people interpret information, learners also walk a fine line between emphasizing key points and creating mis- or dis-information. As data visualization expert Stephanie Evergreen (2017) put it, "We must keep in mind that any alteration to the graph to change its shape can also alter the conclusions that can be drawn."

To compound these challenges, many business communication educators and professional consultants—who don't have the luxury or expertise for teaching semester-long courses in data visualization—must squeeze instruction into brief lesson plans or workshops.

So, how do we teach data visualization to students and professionals who have limited experience in design? Is there a simplified but effective method for teaching such a complex skill? Yes! In this 2-hour workshop, I share a training model I developed and delivered for professionals at Indeed.com and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In this model, I first approach data through storytelling, a concept popularized by author and data viz consultant Cole Nussbaumer Knaflic (2015). I then walk us through what I call the A.S.C.E.N.D. model for data visualization: Analyze, State, Choose, Emphasize, Narrate, Design.

- Analyze the data, its purpose, and audience
- State the key message
- Choose the best chart for the data and message
- Emphasize for clarity and accuracy
- Narrate the purpose and details of the data's story
- Design for user experience and accessibility

In this hands-on, conversation-driven workshop, participants will learn a new approach to teaching data visualization as they:

- Learn and discuss the eight roles of data visualization and its challenges
- Work with simple data sets to shape messages through a storytelling lens
- Apply the A.S.C.E.N.D. method as a heuristic for structured learning
- Practice choosing the right chart by asking six primary questions
- Identify common dos and don'ts of data visualization

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Visual Communication from Your Back Bumper: License Plates as Information Design

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Motor vehicle license plates play an important role in society, supporting functions such as law enforcement, data collection, traffic safety, all-electronic tolling, and more. In addition to these more tangible purposes, license plates are also rhetorical devices. They reflect the desired image of the issuing state. They are used for advertising, celebrating historical milestones, and even supporting various organizations or efforts. More recently, license plate personalization has provided opportunities for individual expression from our back bumpers. In many ways, the effectiveness of a license plate at communicating its desired message(s) depends on visual information design choices.

In 1901, New York became the first state in the U.S. to require owner-provided license plates on vehicles. Massachusetts was the first state to provide state-issued license plates to its residents in 1903. As early as 1928, plates began to integrate advertising messages, such as iconic symbols, tourist slogans, and anniversary celebrations. Over the years, some U.S. license plates have become high-profile examples of the pitfalls of poor visual design, including ineffective font choices and color schemes, illegible graphics, poor contrast, cluttered backgrounds, poor balance and arrangement, etc. One recent example from Canada is the 2020 rollout of a new Ontario general issue plate, which was scrapped after only 3 months of use because law enforcement could not read the serial numbers at night. Though we do not often think of license plates as rhetorical artifacts, their design history provides important lessons about the intersection of function, design, practicality, aesthetics, marketing, consumer preference, and even advocacy.

License plates have not been the subject of much scholarship from the fields of business communication and visual information design. James Fox (1994) aggregated the most well-known pictorial history of U.S. license plates, documenting plates issued from 1903–1994. Jon Fricker (1986) examined the extent to which states were applying basic principles of human information processing in license plate design to communicate their visual message, including recommendations for size, shape, color, and character format. More recent studies of license plates as visual tools have focused primarily on how their design choices can support plate recognition for information collection in intelligent transportation systems.

We will discuss the findings from a comprehensive examination of license plates issued by North American municipalities from 1903–present, including examples of visual design missteps that resulted in necessary adjustments, reissues, and even legal action. We will also consider those plates whose designs have become “classics,” prompting a very recent movement by some U.S. states to start reissuing older designs. We will foreground this research by considering what visual information design principles support effective license plate design in relation to their multilayered communication goals.

We will demonstrate for attendees how this unique look into vehicle licensing can be used in the business communication classroom and the practitioner community to illustrate both effective and ineffective design practices. Our presentation will reflect practical applications of visual information design for an (often overlooked) communication tool we use every day.

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AMZN6 – Genre and Utility of the Amazon Six Pager

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Of the ways in which Amazon is unique among American multinational technology companies, two related aspects recently garnered media attention: the absence of PowerPoint and the emphasis on writing in high-level decision making. In his 2017 letter to shareholders, founder and then CEO Jeff Bezos put it bluntly: “We don’t do PowerPoint (or any other slide-oriented) presentations at Amazon.” Instead, the focus is on the production of a narratively structured six- page memo, which is then read in silence at the beginning of a senior team meeting.

This practice has been in place since at least 2007, but news outlets including *Business Insider*, *CNBC*, the *Financial Times*, and *Forbes* have recently made note of Amazon’s “six pager” as related to the company’s ongoing successes. Business and technology bloggers and even some smaller companies have also highlighted the Amazon six pager for its “beauty” and “evil genius” as well as its utility. While some speculated on the document’s actual construction, others shared perspectives from prior years employed at Amazon. Quora.com has a number of standing inquiries related to actual six pagers and calls for templates. Working Backwards, a 2021 book by two former Amazon executives, devotes an entire chapter to breaking down the six pager into its constituent parts and advocating for its adoption across a wide range of industries.

These calls for attention as well as attempts to implement the six pager beyond Amazon are significant in emphasizing a specific, written document as key to how one of the biggest companies in the world by market cap gets things done. That may be reason enough for other companies to take note and adopt a similar practice. However, it is also worth considering the six pager as a unique genre within the field of business communications. Though similar in structure to the standard memo as described by Willey (1974), Clark (1998), and Crossman (2003), the Amazon six pager holds greater significance in content and context as well as in the public’s curiosity, if only because forgoing PowerPoint in favor of six pages of writing runs contrary to established belief and practice in the corporate world.

Therefore, in acknowledging the Amazon six pager as a unique genre with a particular utility, panelists will:

- Identify the specific moves and steps involved in the document’s construction.
- Describe the document’s function within Amazon as well as its adoption elsewhere.

- Highlight the specific actions of close reading and innovation this genre facilitates.
- Suggest frameworks for implementation in a variety of classes as well as the early results of doing so.
- Invite participants to not only consider AMZN6 in other contexts but also seek out additional company-specific writing practices.

An Examination of the Work-Related Outcomes of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: Active-Empathic Listening as a Mediator

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Purpose

In the workplace, the "quiet quitting" movement has taken place post-COVID-19 pandemic. Employees may be showing at work, but only putting minimal work effort and without putting their full attention to their work duties and work relationships (Ng & Stanton, 2023). Employees across industries are avoiding putting additional work hours or accepting larger unrewarding tasks (Harter, 2022). To overcome this "quiet quitting" phenomenon, it is important to examine the underlying motivation of employees in relation to their work-related experiences. Maslow's (1943) "hierarchy of needs" is a motivation theory that explains human motivation at the core level using a pyramid. The needs include physiological needs (i.e., food, sleep), safety needs (i.e., safe home; safe neighborhood), belonging (i.e., relationships, connection), esteem needs (i.e., respect, control), self-actualization (i.e., achieving full personal potential), and transcendental needs (i.e., achieving collective fulfillment through higher purpose) (Maslow, 1969). Studies have shown that fulfilling the needs of employees leads to positive outcomes such as employee well-being, job satisfaction, and performance (Hale et al., 2018; Rahimi et al., 2016; Stefan, Popa, & Albu, 2020). A relevant construct that can explain the relationships between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and employee outcomes is active-empathic listening, which focuses on the listening process including sensing, processing, and responding (Bodie, 2011). As such, this study has two important purposes that will contribute to literature. First, this study examines the positive interrelationships between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs on outcomes such as active listening, innovation, organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), organization-employee relationship (OER), and productivity. Second, this study examines active listening as a mediator of the interrelationships between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and work-related outcomes such as innovation, OCB, OER, and productivity. With these findings, active-empathic listening can be the key to explaining the relationships between fulfilling employees' needs and their work-related behavior.

Goals

The first goal was to examine Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in relation to work-related outcomes (i.e., active-empathic listening, innovation, etc.). The second goal was to examine active listening as a mediator of the interrelationships between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and work-related outcomes (i.e., innovation, OCB, OER, productivity).

Methodology

Upon IRB approval, work employees were recruited via email, listservs, social media, and digital flyers using a cross-sectional and convenience sampling approach. The sample included 158 employees (men = 27.8%, women = 70.9%, non-binary = 1.3%) with an average age of 30.87. Participants were employed full-time (58.6%), part-time (36.9%), seasonal (2.5%), and some were currently unemployed (1.9%). Participants' rankings included employee (66%), entry-level manager (10.9%), middle-level manager (11.5%), upper-level manager (7.7%), and executive/CEO (3.8%). The average years worked at their job was between 3-4 years.

Results/Outcomes

Hierarchical multiple regressions found that Maslow's safety ($\beta = .22$, $p < .05$), belonging ($\beta = .32$, $p < .01$), and self-actualization ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$) positively related to active-empathic listening. Maslow's physical ($\beta = .28$, $p < .001$), and esteem ($\beta = .24$, $p < .01$) positively related to employees' innovation. Maslow's safety ($\beta = .20$, $p < .05$), belonging ($\beta = .26$, $p < .01$), esteem ($\beta = .37$, $p < .001$), self-actualization ($\beta = .28$, $p < .01$), and self-transcendence ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$) were positively related to employees' OCB. Additionally, Maslow's safety ($\beta = .22$, $p < .05$), belonging ($\beta = .21$, $p < .05$), and self-actualization ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$) were positively related to OER. Maslow's physical ($\beta = .20$, $p < .01$), belonging ($\beta = .27$, $p < .01$), esteem ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$), self-actualization ($\beta = .34$, $p < .001$), and self-transcendence ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$) positively related to productivity. Lastly, mediation analyses confirmed that active-empathic listening served as a mediator between Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in relation to employees' innovation, OCB, OER, and productivity.

Implications

This study yields several implications relevant to organizational communication. First, this study demonstrated that the theoretical framework of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs continues to demonstrate positive organizational outcomes in a post-pandemic working society. Second, this study is the first to provide evidence that active-empathic listening is a crucial skill in strengthening the relationships between employees' hierarchy needs and their work-related outcomes such as innovation, OCB, OER, and productivity. Active-empathic listening serves as a mediating bridge between employees' needs and their citizenship behavior and relationships at work. As such, the development of active-empathic listening skills at work through seminars, exercises, and workshops may help employees maintain their motivation at work.

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Applying Positive Communication in Business Training and Coaching Interventions

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This workshop reflects a positive turn in organizational and communication research and practice (e.g., Cameron & Spreitzer, 2012; Socha & Beck, 2015; Muñiz-Velázquez, & Pulido, 2018). In this view, organizations and their people have immense and (often trapped) potential to be virtuous, foster learning and growth, create meaningful, purpose-driven work, support high-quality relationships, and stimulate flourishing (Cameron & Spreitzer, 2011). An essential, although often taken-for-granted, component to unleash this trapped potential is through communication. Positive communication refers to any verbal or nonverbal behaviors that we would model to others that function to achieve good or beneficial outcomes (Mirivel, 2014), such as facilitating human needs (Socha & Beck, 2015). It includes behaviors "that reflect our best, that produce personal and relational happiness and satisfaction, as well as those that challenge our self to move in the direction of others and to act ethically" (Mirivel, 2014, p. 7).

Organizations may engage internal or external communication professionals (trainers and coaches) to deliver communication interventions for employees' (including leaders and non-leaders) professional development (Beebe, 2007; Rettinger, 2011). Yet, a barrier for professionals is to find a concise, comprehensive model with specific behaviors that adult learners (trainees, mentees) can implement across a variety of relationships (peer-to-peer, leader-member) and circumstances (sensitive/normal) to make a positive difference in their workplaces.

In this workshop, the authors draw on Mirivel's Model of Positive Communication (see Mirivel, 2014; Mirivel & Lyon, 2023), which was developed to help anyone of any age or career stage improve their interpersonal interactions in a variety of contexts. The model focuses on micro-behaviors that function positively in human interaction, and includes: greeting, asking, complimenting, disclosing, encouraging, and listening. The focus on micro-behaviors is significant because these can be easily observed, evaluated, and improved. Moreover, they are concrete and manageable for adult learners in group training and one-to-one coaching. These behaviors then serve personal and organizational functions and enable individuals to inspire and influence others.

Participants will learn more about Positive Communication Research that gave rise to the development of the model, and the nature of positive communication. The authors will describe the Model of Positive Communication and engage workshop participants in interactive activities to illustrate its principles – all of which can be applied in training and coaching. According to Beebe (2007, p. 250), communication trainers "...facilitat[e] discussion, provid[e] helpful feedback to others, and presen[t] content in an engaging manner. Communication trainers "teach people how to perform skills rather than only identify and describe concepts, ideas, principles, or theories" (p. 250). Cox et al. (2009, p. 1) define coaching as "a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders." The authors will show how communication professionals can apply the model in their practice, including meaningful activities developed and tested by the authors.

Intended Learning Outcomes

This workshop will foster a deep learning environment through which participants will learn (a) the nature of positive communication, (b) how to model positive communication practices; and (c) design and implement positive communication interventions in their training, and coaching.

Structure of Workshop

Part 1: Positive Communication Research and the Model of Positive Communication

After providing background on positive communication research, the authors will introduce Mirivel's (2014) model of positive communication and the concrete behaviors it suggests for everyday practice.

Part 2: How to Model Positive Communication in Training and Coaching Interactions

The second part of the workshop focuses on coaches and trainers' communicative competencies. The authors will draw here on our range of experiences in group training and one-to-one coaching that demonstrate the behaviors from the Model of Positive Communication.

Part 3: Activities to Implement Model

The third part of the workshop will focus on designing communication interventions that demonstrate the principles of the Model of Positive Communication. The authors will focus on how to structure training and coaching interventions and how to create engaging activities that will promote adult learners' positive communication skills.

We conclude the workshop with an assessment, questions and answers, and a guide for the future.

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Are Power-Holders Afforded Moral Credentials to Engage in Sexual Harassment? A Language Production Experiment Exploring Responses to Sexual Harassment

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Despite sexual harassment being unethical and often against formal organizational policies, the phenomenon persists. Between FY 2018 and FY 2021, 27,291 charges alleging sexual harassment were officially filed with the EEOC (EEOC, 2022). While 27,291 charges of unsolicited and undesirable sexual conduct is a substantial number, it must be acknowledged that many instances of sexual harassment go unreported (Hart, 2019). Studies suggest that figures like this one account for only about 5 to 30 percent of individuals who actually experience these behaviors in the workplace (Dobbin, 2009).

While there is a gamut of reasons victims of workplace sexual harassment may forego reporting their experiences (e.g., fear of retaliation, feeling of hopelessness that nothing will come of it), the EEOC nevertheless stresses the critical importance of speaking up—indicating that victims must express through complaints and/or protests that the conduct is unwelcome, undesirable, or offensive (EEOC, 1990). The study at hand is concerned with that expression of unwelcomeness and aims to develop a message-based understanding of responses to sexual harassment. Specifically, how and when do working adults confront sexual harassers in the workplace? What do responses to instances of sexual harassment look like and sound like communicatively?

This study will leverage moral licensing theory to better understand possible differences in working adults' responses as victims of sexual harassment. Moral licensing theory asserts individuals strive to balance any unethical actions with sufficient ethical ones in order to hold a consistent moral valence (Effron & Monin, 2010; Dinh et al., 2022). In other words, the theory asserts individuals give themselves leeway (or, license) to act bad if they have previously acted good (Merritt et al., 2010; Ploeger-Lyons & Bisel, 2021). Individuals can grant themselves moral license, and individuals can also grant others license to act unethically or immorally—a phenomenon called *third-party licensing* (Effron & Monin, 2010; Polman et al., 2013). Third-party licensing can occur through granting others moral credits (which serve as tokens of sorts) that allow others' bad deeds—like sexual harassment—to be balanced out by their good deeds. Individuals can also grant others moral credentials, whereby "the bad deed is reframed perceptually such that an unethical behavior is perceived as less unethical—perceptual reframing that may manifest communicatively as conflict avoidance or softened social sanctioning" (Ploeger-Lyons & Bisel, 2021, p. 5). While any organizational member can engage in morally dubious behavior, high-status individuals are given more moral credentials than lower-status wrongdoers (Polman et al., 2013). Hierarchical power was evident as a source of third-party moral credentialing in a recent study of idea stealing, in that supervisors were essentially granted license to steal credit for subordinates' ideas (Ploeger-Lyons & Bisel, 2021). Further, when people "perceive themselves, or who are perceived by others, to embody laudable, communal power in which they have demonstrated responsibility toward others may be morally licensed to sexually harass" (Dinh et al., 2022, p. 294). In other words, workers let even “good people” (Dinh et al., p. 294)—if they have appropriate power and status—get away with sexual harassment.

In order to identify differences in responses/confrontation to sexual harassment based on the transgressor-victim hierarchical relationship, the type of harassment (verbal, nonverbal, or physical), and the ambiguity of the sexual harassment, the study will proceed as a language production experiment. Specifically, I will employ a three (hierarchical relationship: supervisor-subordinate, peer coworker-peer coworker, subordinate-supervisor) X three (type: verbal, nonverbal, physical) X two (ambiguity: blatant, ambiguous) factorial design. Participants will complete an online survey, beginning with demographic questions, before being randomly assigned to one of the 18 possible conditions. Scenarios will vary based on the variables described above—hierarchical relationship, harassment type, and the ambiguity of the sexual harassment. Each scenario will conclude by asking participants to respond to the transgressor as though it were a real situation. After responding, participants will be asked to assess the extent to which they perceive the scenario as unethical. Participants will also be asked if they have been a victim of sexual harassment in their own working lives. If they have, they will be prompted to recount the situation and describe their response. Participants’ open-ended responses will be coded for confrontational (in)directness, using a coding scheme that ranges from 0-no confrontation/highly indirect confrontation to 4-highly direct confrontation. Directness will be assessed by coding for the presence (or absence) of face protection and face attacks. Hypotheses and research questions will be answered with a variety of statistical tests, including a factorial ANOVA, a one-way ANOVA, and independent samples t-tests.

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Combating Misinformation with a Small Nonprofit Budget: In-Depth Interviews Reveal Actionable Insights

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Misinformation – information that is purposefully presented as true, yet is false or deliberately intended to deceive – often influences memory and reasoning even after being corrected. Obviously, this can be a point of contention within organizations that are consistently trying to maintain an authentic and transparent brand. Misinformation can affect many different tasks and parts within our daily lives—from our finances, to our environment, to our health and fitness. If we can't agree on a set of foundational facts, how can we make well-informed decisions to propel us forward in society? Misinformation through a variety of channels is becoming an increasing problem for many organizations to combat. While increasing our understanding of the role of misinformation in everyday occurrences can be useful, the strategies that we can learn to be most useful in combatting the spread of misinformation can be just as fruitful.

Much of this misinformation came to a head as the pandemic locked us within our homes with the only communication coming from gatekeepers of both traditional and social media (Ali, 2022; Dennis et al., 2021; Xiang, 2021). Some argue this served as a litmus test of the true character of organization, attempting to match the authenticity and transparency of the brand to the leaders of that same organization (Yohn, 2020). Large organizations are often able to counter "fake news" because of dedicated staff, money, and legal counsel to change the narrative. Yet nonprofits don't always have this luxury. Instead, nonprofits attempt to find niche ways to approach the spread of misinformation that are cost effective and need more grassroots efforts that go beyond just key communicators internal to the organization. Instead, many call upon brand advocates to help spread controlled messages that are targeted to correct the misinformation spread.

To fill a gap in the literature, the current study explored a national sport nonprofit where the focus of key communication could be found on a national, regional, or local scale through leaders of the organization. Interviews revealed an uptick of misinformation post pandemic, particularly on social media channels. Furthermore, key communicators within the organization spoke to how misinformation affected the organization both internally and externally. As a nonprofit with a modest budget, combating the misinformation took a coordinated and pre-planned strategic communication plan that stemmed from a multi-pronged approach. In addition to key findings of the study shared, a practical and actionable plan that other communicators tasked with combatting misinformation can adopt and put into practice is advanced.

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Communicating Organizational Vision: Learn How to Apply the Jim Collin's "Good to Great" Vision Method for Extracting and Defining an Organization's Vision

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Purpose

To instruct and teach others how to employ the methodology of identifying and elaborating on an organization's key vision as outlined by Jim Collins "Good to Great" in various fields of business. Business communication instructors, consultants, and facilitators are often tasked with helping students or clients communicate an organization's core values, purpose statements, and guiding missions. Organizations that feature clearly articulated and aligned visions are more likely to experience a harmonious culture and/or a re-energizing of business. By learning to utilize this method, clients will gain trust and confidence in your service, ultimately increasing your reputation in the business consulting space.

Goals

Individuals who participate in this workshop will be able to:

- understand the key elements of the vision process and how they work together to culminate in a guiding vision.

- define key terms and concepts, including core ideologies, core values, purpose statements, and missions.

- differentiate existing organizational vision statements from one another by comparing them to Jim Collin's vision approach which thereby allows individuals to assess and evaluate the applicability and effectiveness of those given vision statements.

- apply the vision extraction and identification process.

Methodology

This workshop will take a step by step approach to teaching participants why the vision extraction method is critical for organizational success, what the vision identification process includes, and how to apply and define new vision concepts for an organization. The workshop will allow participants to learn in a hand's-on manner as each individual works through a real-life case study of examining the vision process from their own personal (business) perspective. By going through the exercise themselves, participants will have empathy on what their clients struggle with, whether the clients themselves can identify it or not.

Outcome and Application

Business communication specialists and consultants will have acquired the ability to apply the Good to Great vision extraction and identification method. This allows business communication facilitators to share this knowledge with their learners and allows business communication consultants to utilize this method as part of their services.

Culture Change and Communications: Reaching New Heights Using Positive Communication Strategies during Organizational Culture Transformation Projects

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Culture change within and across an organization, institution or company begins with “a movement, not a mandate” notes a 2017 article in the Harvard Business Review. It is predicated on a sea-change in actions and behaviors from leaders and employees grounded in an optimistic outlook for the future (Sayers & Smollan, 2009), high degrees of internalized trust rather than simply compliance, and guided principles and collective values that are collectively lived “as the bedrock of organizational change” (Branson, 2007) rather than mandated. Organizational transformation “demands new behaviors from leaders and employees that are often antithetical to corporate cultures, which are historically focused on operational excellence and efficiency” (Walker & Soule, 2017).

This is particularly relevant given the continuing decline in levels of employee trust in organizations and low success rates in organizational transformation initiatives to credibly influence cultural change. Indeed, most culture transformation programs fail due to a lack of leadership investment, little clear linkage between the demonstrated behaviors of change, and missed opportunities for communication that allows the change to “be real” and transparent to the organization.

Communication is a foundation for success of change management programs. Therefore, this study begins with the question, “What elements of strategic communication are critical in driving an effective culture change program?” and extends the inquiry by asking, “How do elements of positive communication influence organizational change?” from a case study perspective. It presents an overview of the launch and initial two years of a culture change organizational transformation program and communication strategy at a top-tiered U.S. research/teaching university (75,000 faculty, staff and students). More specifically, the communication program is explored through the lens of positive communication theory and application.

Positive communication is the systematic and rigorous use of communication practices intended to foster interpersonal connection, individual and organizational well-being, receptivity to generative change, and mutually desirable organizational outcomes. Elements of positive communication include message transparency, disclosure of information to build rapport, active listening (Mirivel, 2021), with the objective of uplifting an organization to evolve into a positive community, or “groups that inspire their members in ways that promote a sense of self-discovery and group connection, encourage members to express their beliefs and values and build relationships with others” (Celestine, 2016). I contend that utilizing positive communication practices can further enhance the success of said programs.

The following elements are examined through the lens of positive communication: the high-level communication strategy employed in the initial two years of the change program, message content for various stakeholder groups, the culture change champion engagement approach, and the leadership communication plan. Metrics on the efficacy of the communication programs are also discussed.

In summary, this study contributes to the growing body of research on positive communication and its impact on organizational change, and serves as real-world evidence of the role of positive communication in facilitating organizational change.

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Developments in Crisis Communication

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Organizational crises affect the management of an organization, employees and stakeholders, and the society in which the organization operates. Technical accidents, security breaches, environmental disasters, product recalls, financial failure, managerial corruption, and information leaks are some situations that require effective and ethical communication to internal and external stakeholders. Recent cases have shown that the communication aspects of a crisis determine how an organization continues to function after the crisis.

Crisis communication engages both practitioners and scholars in terms of ethics, use of technology, problem solving, strategy, and effective interpersonal communication. How organizations manage crisis, and how they deal with risk are important concerns for both professionals and academics who research organizational communication. From an organizational perspective, managing a crisis effectively is paramount in re-establishing control of the organization, in restoring the company image, and in re-gaining stakeholder trust. From an academic perspective, examining the strategies employed during a crisis sheds light on how values, assumptions, and intentions are performed in communication practices.

This panel will explore the state of the field and discuss recent developments in crisis management. Especially, it will invite discussion and viewpoints on different methods used in examining organizational crisis communication and issues management. Although crisis communication is generally classified as a public relations subject, its themes encompass issues in business communication, applied linguistics (discourse analysis), management, technical writing (instructing information, checklists), and media theory, among other disciplines, making it an interdisciplinary subject. Crisis communication research employs a number of theories, notably, situational crisis communication theory, renewal theory, and image repair theory, and is dominated by a case study approach and social media analysis. This panel aims to explore these and alternative ways to approach crisis communication by bringing together different methods, identifying their weaknesses and building on their strengths.

Helping Clients Comply with Federal Plain Language Requirements

Sandra Dean
Jacksonville University

The focus of this interactive presentation is the Federal Plain Writing Act of 2010. The goals are to help participants develop an approach to helping clients comply with the current Plain Language standards.

After working with city, county, and state government organizations for the past thirty years, one of the most requested training topics is Business Writing. This workshop will introduce participants to the Plain Language Act of 2010, as well as review the current standards, and ultimately apply what is being learned by using actual documents to recognize and correct errors. A checklist of 14 standards will be reviewed.

Incorporating Critical Perspectives on Corporate Reporting

Milena Nagengast
University of Economics and Business

This presentation demonstrates how to design a university course that enables students to take a critical perspective on the use and misuse of both quantifiable and non-quantifiable accounting information for strategic communication. It showcases a course titled "Accounting Meets Linguistics: Critical Perspectives on Corporate Reporting". The course was designed and taught at Vienna University of Business and Economics by a lecturer in Business Communication and a lecturer from the Institute of Accounting and Auditing. The course was piloted with students in the Bachelor's program and is also recommended for those pursuing a Master's program. Although most participating students had prior knowledge of accounting, the course can be adapted for students with no or little knowledge of it.

Incorporating Planetary Sustainability in Business Communication: How and Why to Play a Role in Fostering a More Environmentally Friendly Future in Business

Marie Moreno
Western Michigan University

Sustainability in business is increasing in popularity across college curricula. However, business students struggle with what to say about a business's impact on the environment and how to avoid greenwashing in various fields. This presentation will explore how instructors of business communication can play an important role in introducing college students to radically transparent sustainable business concepts with problem-solving communication activities that are practical, engaging, and relatable for students in all majors.

This session will discuss current business communication students' perspectives on taking a course that meets a university's essential studies on global perspectives and planetary sustainability. Students will describe their experiences taking the course and how they could apply lessons to their own writing and presentations. This session will also call for further studies on how instructors could improve business students' communication skills in more modern and realistic ways, given how certain cultures and generations are hesitant to communicate about planetary sustainability in their businesses.

Attendees will take away practical strategies and insight on how we can incorporate sustainability in current business communication courses, add activities in future courses, and/or create a new course that fulfills objectives for other interdisciplinary courses such as humanities or essential studies.

It is More than "Dual Demands": Reflection of Working Moms' Pandemic Experiences

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Purposes and Goals

In response to the coronavirus outbreak, nearly all the states in the United States had declared states of emergency by mid-March 2020 (Perper, Cranley, & Al-Arshani, 2020). Following the stay-at-home order, non-essential businesses were suspended or adapted to a remote model, schools and childcare centers were closed, and people were asked to reduce outdoor activities. Social distancing, quarantine, remote work and online learning have become the new social norms. In the midst of heighted concerns for safety and health, home has become an area that serves multiple functions: work, childcare, homeschooling, playing, shopping, recreation, and others. This drastic and sudden change adds more burdens on the working parents who now have to handle two full-time jobs (work and childcare) in one place.

Professional life and family life have often been considered as two separate domains. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the configuration of work and life (Shafer, Scheibling, & Milkie, 2020). Working parents are facing unprecedented challenges in the time of a global pandemic. In particular, moms have been hit harder than dads. A large number of women left the workforce due to childcare demands (Carrazana, 2020). Moms who chose to stay in the labor market reported taking on more childcare responsibilities and experiencing more distress than men (Lyn & Brendan, 2021; Miller, 2020; Power, 2020), as well as encountering more professional challenges than working dads (Igielnik, 2021). Therefore, this study aims to examine the experiences of working moms during the COVID-19 pandemic. To be more specific, the study addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1: What challenges do working moms face during the pandemic?
- RQ2: How do working moms manage the dual demands of working from home and parenting during the pandemic?
- RQ3: What kind of impact do these challenges have on their personal life and career development?

Methods

In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the journey that working moms have gone through during the pandemic, I chose qualitative interview for data collection. Participants were working moms who met the following two criteria: 1) have at least one child (less than 13) at home during the pandemic, and 2) working from home full time during the COVID-19 pandemic (at some point). I started recruiting participants after obtaining the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from my university.

Participants were primarily recruited via social network sites (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn) and referral. Each potential participant signed a consent form before proceeding to the interview. I conducted 13 interviews via the HIPAA compliant version of Zoom. A semi-structured interview protocol was used which allows the researcher to ask follow-up questions. The interviews ranged from 45 to 65 minutes. Participants were from different regions of the United States and working in different fields. Seven participants were in their 30s and six were in their 40s. All of them have received a master's or a doctoral degree.

All the interviews were recorded with permission from participants. The audio recordings were transcribed and verified for accuracy. I used the thematic analysis method to identify common themes in the data and then organize them according to the posed research questions.

Outcomes

Work-life balance has been an ongoing challenge for working moms. The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly disrupted this balance. In the midst of the uncertainty and anxiety of health risk, working moms have taken on increased professional and domestic responsibilities. Nonetheless, they came up with various ways to tackle those challenges on a daily basis. In my presentation I will explain in detail those challenges and ways to cope with them. In addition, almost every participant said that the pandemic experience took a toll on their mental and physical health. In terms of career development, many reported that they had to slow down, while some managed to thrive during this trying time.

This study has both theoretical contributions and practical implications. Working moms play an increasingly important role in the workforce. This study documented and analyzed the survival experiences of the working moms during an unprecedented time (the COVID-19 pandemic). It will also help organizations further understand the challenges faced by working moms and make policies accordingly.

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Lessons in Institutional Communications: How Faculty Members Helped to Replace a University's President—and its Board of Regents

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Background

The session will focus on both a timeline of key events, provide the context behind those events, and delimit the lessons learned regarding how to navigate the tricky waters of advocating for high-level changes at a public institution. The current conservative backlash against universities and against faculty members (including assaults on course contents and the tenure system, among others) place faculty in a difficult position when arguing for improved working conditions, academic freedoms, and increased compensation. Moreover, those arguments have to be directed not only towards administrators inclined (based on institutional experience and, in the case of Board members, off-campus corporate experience) towards "at will" notions of employment—and have to be made within the context of a general lack of trust between state governments and institutions of higher education. Comments along the lines of "who do those liberal SOBs think actually runs this university?" were recorded both in the university's executive suite and in the halls of local business and the State Capitol.

Takeaways

The paper's findings suggest that successful faculty lobbying can make a difference in fostering significant change, especially it faculty members attempt in their communications to take the high road, avoid scandal, and remain objective and professional in their communications efforts.

Multimodal Discourse Perspectives on Leadership

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In today's professional world, teamwork has become a necessary asset for any organization, and the role of the leader as a facilitator is becoming more and more important. Of the many characteristics and skills that leaders need to possess to gain people's support, communication is definitely one of the most important ones as they aim to interact clearly, directly and concisely with – among others – co-workers, customers, shareholders, media and the general public (Jiang & Shen, 2020).

A large part of leaders' communicative success is based on trust: if there is no trust with the leader, that leadership will dissolve over time (cf. Pelsmaekers, Jacobs & Rollo, 2014). Thus, leaders should be seen as an example: to be followed, they must first commit and contribute to the cause, just like everybody else. They should show empathy towards their audience, as knowing and understanding others' situations can be relevant when trying to get the best out of them.

Leaders also draw on other resources to communicate positively. Among those, it may be important to focus on the need to offer security and certainty in decision-making, something highly perceived by society. The higher the degree of confidence shown, the greater the reach the leader will have, and that is something especially interesting when dealing in business. Additionally, good leaders try to motivate the audience, to uplift them: when we hear motivating and optimistic words that allow us to face life from a positive point of view, the leaders' impact and influence on people increases (see, e.g., Riordan & Glikson, 2020).

Considering all these aspects, it is easy to understand that any leader will try to enhance the communicative power of their words, and they will use any possible device to do so. Social media, in particular, are serving as the new agora, where leaders perform their digital oratory (Rossette-Crake, 2022). In today's rapidly changing and highly digitized mediascape, leaders are increasingly drawing on a wide-ranging multimodal repertoire, including prosody, body language, gestures or edited images, among others. Any mode used in order to convey a message implies a thorough analysis of all the different ways that a person might have to engage their audience in that communicative process.

In this panel we set out to explore, from different angles and perspectives, how multimodality can help and support leaders to communicate information in different situations and throughout diverse means. In doing so, we hope to continue and strengthen emerging scholarly efforts towards multimodality in the business communication literature (Maier & Ravazzani, 2021) as well as contributing to on-going research on leadership.

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Navigating the New Normal: Faculty Perspectives on Remote Learning, Zoom Meetings, and Work-Life Balance

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching and long-lasting effects on nearly all occupations. This panel will specifically explore the unique impacts on college and university faculty. Issues related to teaching, research, service, and work-life balance will be explored by panelists who have a variety of backgrounds, experience, and expertise.

During the pandemic, Zoom became a ubiquitous part of college life for students and faculty alike. U.S. Department of Education statistics indicate that pre-pandemic in 2019, the number of students enrolled in at least one distance education course was 6 million. That number increased 97%, up to 11.8 million in 2020 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Further, the number of students *exclusively* enrolled in distance education courses went from 2.4 million to 7.0 million between 2019 and 2020 (a 186% increase; National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). As such, this panel will explore this "new normal" classroom and the implications for course design, flexibility, student engagement, and effective learning strategies.

Classes were not the only meetings to move to Zoom during the pandemic (and beyond) –faculty and committee meetings also moved to digital spaces, and for many, have stayed in these virtual formats. The panel will also discuss how this impacts community, collegiality and the ways we do "service" in a post-pandemic academic world. Similarly, impacts can be seen in research as well, ranging from issues related to in-person and online data collection to challenges with collaboration and cohesion.

Finally, the panel will discuss issues related to work-life (im)balance created by the pandemic. For many, the move to online was not only for their own organization, but also spouses, partners, and children. For many, the line between work life and home life became even more blurred, leading to additional burdens on many faculty members, especially those who hold the role of caregiver or "default parent."

Women in particular experienced increased demands - a new form of the “second shift” (Casey, Childs, & Huq, 2022). These implications affect women in particular ways that are not yet entirely apparent, but include impact on lifetime earnings, delays in research productivity and publishing, and the ability to progress toward promotion and tenure (Medden, 2021).

In discussing these important issues, the panelists will also attempt to look to the future to answer the questions of “where are we now?” and “where are we headed?” This will include some reflections on what can be learned from faculty experiences during the pandemic in terms of pedagogical approaches, negotiating career expectations in this landscape, and managing new challenges at home.

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Out of the Fog, Into the Sunshine of Clear Plain Language: Effectively Communicating Financial and Technical Information

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When Thomas Arthur Rickard took the lectern before an assembly of engineering faculty and students at the University of California in 1916, many of his listeners were familiar with his work. During the previous decade, he had edited three of the world's premier mining journals. In 1908, he wrote the first notable textbook focused on technical writing. Some of those listeners may even have already heard his introductory words; he frequently used the same amusing quip in speeches before professional groups. "It has been stated," remarked Rickard slyly, "that the man of science appears to be the only man who has something to say, just now—and the only man who does not know how to say it" (Rickard, 1920, p. 1).

For the next few days, and over the course of five lectures, Rickard expounded upon his favorite topic: The difficulty of communicating technical information so that readers can readily comprehend complex content. He was particularly adamant that writers avoid jargon:

> It [jargon] deals in periphrasis instead of going straight to the point, it loves the abstract rather than the concrete, it dabbles in words of sound rather than meaning. Avoid it, despise it, if you purpose earnestly to write well. (p. 134)

He concluded his lecture series with a pithy metaphor: "Amid the distortions of English and the uncertainties of rhetorical doctrine, we shall not cry despairingly 'Wither are we drifting?' Rather let us ask hopefully 'Whither shall we steer?' The answer is prompt: 'Out of the fog, into the sunshine of clear plain English.'" (pp. 172,173)

But even after listening to these words from a celebrated editor and author, Rickard's students may have had little confidence in their abilities to "steer" writing into that desirable "sunshine." Students and practitioners of business communication are still required to express complex information and data in ways that are comprehensible—even engaging—for intended audiences. Although business and technical writing are frequently discussed as separate fields, business communicators are often required to discuss information that includes technical content. Presentations of financial and accounting information, analyses of data, descriptions of issues related to hardware and software, and explanations of legal or managerial decisions and strategies all require writers and speakers to come "out of the fog" and express meaning in ways that are appropriate for readers and listeners.

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Principles for Success in International Virtual Communication: A Corpus-Based Investigation of Spoken Language in Virtual Teams in the Irish Technology Sector

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The overarching goal of this research study is to develop a set of international virtual communication principles, scaffolding the creation of experience-based intercultural communication training for higher education and professional learners. The Irish technology sector has been selected for this research due to its significance as an employer in Ireland. 16 of the top 20 global technology firms and 9 of the top 10 US Information and Communications Technology (ICT) companies have strategic operations located in Ireland (The Department of Education and Skills, 2022). The present researcher's professional experience also confirms that for this sector, virtual meetings have been the norm for several decades. This is further supported by the results of a survey of technology sector professionals (N=113) in the initial research phase where it was determined that participants spend an average of 3.5 hours a day in virtual meetings, conversing with up to 13 different nationalities in a single meeting.

While the afore-mentioned survey results included significant qualitative data around communication behaviour in International Virtual Teams (IVTs), it is recognised that asking participants to self-report their own communicative successes and challenges can introduce an inherent research participant bias. Engaging in a corpus-based analysis allows us to determine whether key perceived communication successes are evidenced in real world virtual meetings.

This study introduces the International Virtual Team Corpus (hereafter the IVT corpus). This corpus consists of approximately 80,000 words of transcribed speech gathered from 30 web-based recordings of meetings, which include colleagues of 13 different nationalities speaking in English. The meetings were recorded by 2 teams in a single participant company (anonymised as Company A) over a 2-week period in June 2022. Company A is an international software company with employees based both in Ireland and in satellite and home offices around the world. Both participant teams can be categorised as software development teams who work on iterative stages of software application development, driving towards a full software product launch or a version update release. It is worth noting that the relatively small size of the IVT Corpus should not be seen to hamper data analysis. Koester (2022, p. 49) posits that smaller corpora, citing the ABOT corpus with just under 34,000 words (Koester, 2006, p. 31), provide more contextualisation on discourse specifics in targeted settings.

Both quantitative and qualitative corpus-based results are presented in this paper. Sketch Engine (https://www.sketchengine.eu/) is the online software used for the quantitative analysis in this study. It facilitated the identification of significant word clusters and speech patterns which IVT participants deploy to mitigate against potential language-related and conversational management issues. This also supports the established view that word clusters operate as "important structuring devices" that identify a specific spoken genre (McCarthy & Carter, 2019, p. 33).

Focus has been given to the spoken language nuances of online meetings, when compared to face-to-face meetings, through a comparison with the Cambridge and Nottingham Business English Corpus (CANBEC). Sample speech extracts from both corpora have been analysed to support the quantitative findings. Findings in this regard include differences in the use of traditional politeness markers in the online environment.

The IVT corpus has also been manually tagged with pragmatic level markers, thus allowing for identification of relational talk in established IVTs. Conversation Analysis (CA) techniques have been used to deep dive into selected corpus extracts. Sample extracts are presented to support the pragmatic level findings and include humour, sarcasm and creative language being subtly deployed as linguistic devices to underpin team relationships.

In summary, the bottom-up word level investigation, supported by the qualitative speech pragmatics analysis and scaffolded by the qualitative survey results, all provide solid foundations for the international virtual communication principles which are presented in the closing discussion. These principles encompass the highly structured nature of successful online communication, aligning with the extant virtual communication literature. They also drill down to specific linguistic devices such as modality, in-group terminology and nomination discourse markers being used to clearly and concisely transmit information, thus avoiding language-related issues. Finally, it is also put forward that pragmatic speech patterns, for example the humour displayed in bantering in online conversation, contribute to successful virtual communication. Small bursts of relational communication allow the participants to verbally re-charge and continue with the rapid transactional talk that is necessary in time efficient online meetings.

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The Murderer Who Became a Business Communication Pioneer

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Most historical analyses of the origins of business communication as a field of study have focused upon writers of textbooks who developed rhetorical principles—such as the "you-attitude" and the five "C's" of business writing (Clearness, Correctness, Conciseness, Courtesy and Character)—that are supposedly unique to our profession. Francis Weeks, for example, maintains that George Burton Hotchkiss, who (together with Celia Drew) enshrined these principles in their co-authored *Business English, Its Principles and Practice* (1916), is the person "most responsible for establishing the modern teaching of business writing in American colleges and universities" (Weeks, 1985, p. 201). Subsequent studies of the evolution of business communication as a discipline have done little to confirm, modify, or question this view. But were Hotchkiss and Drew the first to formulate these principles? Or did they borrow these ideas from the rhetorical theories of other teachers and professional business communicators?

This presentation seeks to broaden historical research concerning the evolution of business communication by examining voices external to college classrooms and textbooks. Specifically, this study proposes that Louis Victor Eytinge also contributed significantly to the shaping of business communication as a discipline.

Slightly more than 100 years ago, in January 1923, newspapers throughout the United States reported the pardon of a convicted murderer—who, not incidentally, was also considered one of the country's most skilled writers of business correspondence. Louis Victor Eytinge had been convicted of murder in Arizona 17 years before, all of them served in state penitentiaries. During this time, while occupying a prisoner's cell, he developed a global reputation as a master writer of sales letters and business correspondence. When he left prison, he travelled triumphantly to New York City with his newlywed bride and immediately took a position as lead copywriter for a major advertising agency at an annual salary of $6000—double the income of an average American.

In the 1913–1923 decade, Eytinge developed a national reputation as an effective writer of sales and collection letters. In addition, he co-founded a large association of business writers and also established and edited the first journal devoted to the study of business correspondence. Also, Louis Victor Eytinge popularized many of the classical business communication principles prior to the publication of Hotchkiss and Drew's 1916 milestone text.

In 1917, a journalist wrote: "Romance and tragedy intermingle in the life of Louis Victor Eytinge" (N.C.F., 1917, p.308). The romance was the stuff of newspapers and national magazines—a forlorn, tubercular prisoner in his cell who overcame great hardship and injustice and at last found a wife, a calling, and his freedom. The tragedy, ironically, occurred after his pardon.

In 1927, Eytinge's wife discovered that he was stealing funds from her accounts. Shocked and disappointed, she separated from him. He left New York and drifted to Detroit, then California. In each location, he gained the trust of wealthy women and then defrauded them. Finally, he was convicted on charges of fraud in California and served several years in the San Quentin and Folsom prisons. Released in 1937, Eytinge died one year later in Kane, Pennsylvania. His years of freedom were shorter than his sentence in the Arizona penitentiary.

Perhaps we, his professional heirs, can find space—between romance and tragedy—to recognize the accomplishments of Louis Victor Eytinge and their significance for the field of business communication.

In 1915 he was instrumental in creating an organization—the Direct Mail Advertising Association—a direct predecessor of the American College Teachers of Business Writers, now ABC (Locker, 1995). One year later, he co-founded and edited—from a prison cell—the first journal, Postage, devoted to the study of business correspondence. During his productive years, while serving his sentence in the Florence, Arizona, penitentiary, he wrote more than ninety articles for the most influential business communication periodicals in the United States—including Postage, The Mailbag, and System. The content of these articles included hundreds of examples of sales and collection letters which were made available to practitioners and to business correspondence students throughout the English-speaking world. From prison, he also wrote a book *Writing Business Letters Which Get the Business* (1914) that was referenced in major business correspondence texts during the first quarter of the twentieth century (Barnes, 1916; Hotchkiss, 1917).

Eytinge's 1914 book, a popular how-to text written for practicing business writers, focuses on the rhetoric of sales letters. In the course of thirty-nine pages, he colorfully discusses many of the issues that would later become the so-called major principles of business communication. For example, Eytinge exhorts his listeners to write with the reader's interests being of utmost concern:

> Your [sales] argument must be built on the putting-yourself-into-the-other-fellow's-office-chair principle. The letter must see things from his viewpoint, the YOU angle…. You may have a dozen arguments that seem mighty strong to you—but they are worthless if they do not fit the needs of the other fellow. The only theme that amounts to a snap is YOU. (p. 21)

Hotchkiss and Drew, in their 1916 text, also emphasize the "you angle" in writing business letters: "There used to be a rule of letter writing that no letter should begin with I…. And although the rule is no longer strict, it is wise to subordinate I as much as possible and emphasize you" (p. 159)

In the first chapter of his book, the title of which admonishes his readers to *Get Into the Envelope and Seal the Flap*, Eytinge insists that sales letters must reflect the character and personality of the writer:

> Enthusiasm, faith, confidence, courtesy, truthfulness, all qualities needed in business building may be conveyed through sales-letters as easily as in person…. It is the voice of your character as applied to your business…. The letter that harvests the heaviest, baits with human heartiness its hidden hook. (p. 7)

In their classic presentation of business communication principles, Hotchkiss and Drew (1916) similarly call attention to the need for demonstrating character in writing:

> The last essential of the business letter is character. Courtesy requires sympathy with the reader; character requires expression of the writer. It is the element of his own personality that shows him as a real person talking through the medium of words on paper. (pp. 160– 161)

In his first chapter Eytinge explains that the character, or personality, of a business writer is best expressed with a conversational tone:

> The so-called “snappy business tone” has been overdone. The pendulum is swinging to the more natural human way of talking one’s letters. You would not tolerate the salesman who thumped his fist on your desk with every breath. Why, then, expect your prospect to permit you to punctuate every sentence in your sales-letter with a mental sledge-hammer blow? (p. 5)

Hotchkiss and Drew, two years later, concur that a writer’s character is most effectively communicated in “language that might be used in everyday conversation” (p. 10).

These comparisons are not intended to demonstrate that Hotchkiss & Drew simply borrowed their business communication principles from Eytinge, although Hotchkiss was familiar with Eytinge’s book and recommended it to students of business writing (Hotchkiss, 1917). Indeed, as Hagge has demonstrated, the so-called “principles” of business communication have many sources, including Aristotle’s Rhetoric (Hagge, 1989). However, it seems that Eytinge was one of the early and influential advocates of these principles in the twentieth century.

So, what do we learn from the story of Louis Victor Eytinge? Well, we know that one of our professional progenitors was a pardoned murderer. Also, we learn that our first professional journal was edited from a prison cell. These historical details are interesting, if also perhaps somewhat discomfiting. But, more broadly, how does Eytinge’s life, and his accomplishments, serve as a lens through which we may better understand the evolution of our profession and “the future of business communication,” to quote our conference theme?

First, as we survey the academic and professional landscape occupied by Eytinge, Hotchkiss, and their early twentieth-century peers, the prevailing concept of business communication seems very narrowly focused on written text. In fact, “business correspondence,” sometimes called “business writing,” was the predominant concern. Although Eytinge did understand, and often discussed, the persuasive value of visual rhetoric, even he devoted his primary efforts to the study of text-based discourse. Obviously, in the past hundred or so years, we have evolved to embrace a more expansive notion of “communication,” with its concomitant inclusion of visual, verbal, and physical expressions of language and emotion. It has been many years since our textbooks dwelt upon the writing of business letters.

But, as we continue to examine the motivations and concerns of that first generation of professional business communicators, we can discern that they valued relationships that, for various reasons, we often choose to forget or ignore. In this regard, our concept of business communication is less expansive, more exclusionary, than the mindset shared by Eytinge, Hotchkiss, and others of that period.

For example, that first generation of professionals believed that marketing was a form—a very ubiquitous form—of business communication. And it remains so today. Yet our ABC journal articles, and our conference presentations, only infrequently attempt to apply our panoply of research methods to issues related to the study of marketing. Perhaps this is an artifact of business communication courses often being situated within departments or schools of management, rather than marketing. But, if we adopt an expansive concept of communication that excludes marketing, it seems that our future suffers a loss.

Also, the generation that produced Eytinge and Hotchkiss understood that the academic study of business communication must be in continual conversation with business practitioners. When the Association of Teachers of Business Writing—now ABC—was founded in 1936, this collegiality was also respected. For several decades, the bulletins produced by our organization included articles written by practitioners, and books authored by professional business writers were discussed as recommended reading for students. Numerous practitioner-members attended our conferences, and they delivered addresses at these gatherings. Today, however, collegiality between academics and practitioners is infrequent within ABC. Our journals and conference programs rarely feature, or even mention, the work of practitioners.

Lamar Reinsch, in his 2022 autobiographical essay, commented that "…identifying the emerging communication practices of business practitioners—from basic human abilities to the cutting-edge technologies—should be one of the perpetual themes of business communication research" (p. 97). But how do we identify the "emerging communication practices" unless we are in conversation with those practitioners? Perhaps, the "future of business communication" also involves an occasional examination of its past.

This study is based upon examination of all the published writings of Louis Victor Eytinge. In addition, articles and books from his contemporary colleagues and journalists were consulted to establish historical background. Also, the study incorporates later twentieth-century assessments of the evolution of business communication as a discipline. Using the methodology of historical triangulation, data derived from these multiple sources are analyzed to verify facts, identify patterns, and formulate conclusions. Primary sources include newspapers, letter-writing manuals, popular magazines, textbooks (concerning business correspondence, business English, and advertising), and specialized periodicals (related to sales, advertising, printing and publishing, office practice, and business management).

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The Slap Heard Round the World – Crisis Communication Strategies by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

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What happens if you present an annual event and two of the more prominent participants engage in a physical altercation? What happens if that occurs during a television broadcast aired to millions of viewers across the world? What strategies, especially communication strategies, during the next time the event is scheduled. Those are all questions the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences faced in the wake of Academy Award winner Will Smith's slapping comedian Chris Rock on the 2022 telecast of the Academy Awards.

"The slap seen round the world" occurred during the Oscars telecast on March 27, 2022. Comedian Chris Rock was joking onstage about several actors, and then addressed Jada Pinkett Smith, wife of Will Smith, who was a nominee for Best Actor for his portrayal of Richard Williams – father of tennis stars Venus and Serena Williams – in "King Richard."

Rock joked about Pinkett Smith "Jada, I love ya. G.I. Jane 2, can't wait to see it." Rock was referencing the movie G.I. Jane, starring Demi Moore, who was featured with a shaved head in the film (Jada Pinkett Smith has a shaved head).

The problem with the joke is, beyond it referring to a film produced 25 years before, is that Pinkett Smith suffers from alopecia, which can cause baldness. A number of members of the audience were clearly uncomfortable with a joke about a person suffering from a medical condition.

At first, Will Smith laughed, while Pinkett Smith obviously was annoyed. What happened next was that Smith got up from his front row seat and started walking towards Rock. When he got to Rock, Smith slapped him in the face, then turned and walked back to his seat. The crowd was stunned.

Following the slap, Rock declared, "Will Smith just slapped the shit out of me." Smith responded with "Keep my wife's name out of your motherfucking mouth." Rock regrouped and joked, "This is the greatest moment in television history."

Minutes later, Will Smith won the Academy Award for Best Actor. During a long, rambling acceptance speech, Smith apologized to the Academy, but not Rock. Smith claimed during the speech that love makes you do crazy things.

The Academy noted the following in a letter to its members:

> "Sunday's telecast of the 94th Oscars was meant to be a celebration of the many individuals in our community who did incredible work this past year. We are upset and outraged that those

> moments were overshadowed by the unacceptable and harmful behavior on stage by a nominee."

To be clear, we condemn Mr. Smith's actions that transpired Sunday night.

As outlined in our bylaws, the Academy's Board of Governors will now make a determination on appropriate action for Mr. Smith." (Murphy, March 29, 2022).

Following the Oscars telecast, the Los Angeles police department issued a statement, noting that Chris Rock had to press charges.

"LAPD investigative entities are aware of an incident between two individuals during the Academy Awards program. The incident involved one individual slapping another. The individual involved has declined to file a police report."

During late afternoon on Monday, March 28, Will Smith issued an apology for his actions.

On Wednesday, March 30, the Academy noted that security had asked Smith to leave the building, but he refused, likely because he was a favorite to win the Academy Award for Best Actor later in the show.

Three hours later, Chris Rock, doing a show at the Wilbur Theater in Boston, was greeted with two back-to-back standing ovations. When they ended, Rock responded, "Let me be all misty and shit" in acknowledging the audience's reaction. He then continued, "How was your weekend? I don't have a bunch of shit to say about that, so if you came here for that, I had written a whole show before the weekend. I am still processing what happened, so at some point I will talk about that shit." Rock then continued with his original show (Melas, March 30, 2022).

After nearly two weeks of deliberations, on April 8, 2022, the Academy banned Will Smith from attending any Academy events for 10 years. The most immediate effect would be that Smith would not be allowed to present the award to 2023's best actress winner, a time-honored tradition at the Oscars.

This paper employs a case study method to analyze the crisis the Academy faced. It is important as this case study illustrates entertainment organizations manage crises. Unlike many organizations, entertainment organizations generate more press attention, largely focused on the image of the organization as well as its principals. This is even more critical when there is no precedent for the type of crisis the Academy faced.

Uncertainty in Technology-Mediated Communication: Emoticon and Emoji Usage as Efficient Markers of Intent

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Among the several areas that have witnessed a tectonic shift due to advancements in digital technology, communication perhaps tops the charts. Digital interaction was a preferred mode of communication over face-to-face (FtF) much before the Covid 19 pandemic, especially among young adults (Hsieh & Tseng, 2017) but with organisations shifting completely to the digital mode during the pandemic years, the dependence on technology-mediated communication (TMC) and digital platforms has peaked significantly. FtF communication is considered to be the richest medium because it includes nonverbal elements of facial expressions, gestures, voice inflections that play the critical function of conveying intent. These social cues provide contextual information that simplifies the understanding of verbal messages. The receiver also learns about the personality traits and the mental state of the sender (Hall et al., 2019). Text-based interactions provide little scope of contextualisation with nonverbal expressions. Emoticons, and now Emojis, have, to a great extent, served as means to resolve this drawback. Amidst these changes, the central question continually facing TMC scholars is "how and whether new technologies affect the utility of theories that were developed in the context of somewhat older technological contexts" (Walther, 2011, p. 470). The paper aims to study the perception of emoji/emoticon usage by the graduate-level, business school students in the context of business communication.

The theoretical underpinning of the study is the Uncertainty Reduction theory, which is of particular relevance to contemporary, postmodern society (Berger & Bradac, 1982). The theory posits that human beings are not comfortable with uncertainty because they want to envisage others' behaviour, and therefore, seek to reduce uncertainty by obtaining information about others. The paper argues that reduced availability of social cues in digital interactions increases communication anxiety about the recipient's reaction and usage of emojis helps in its reduction. Uncertainty causes anxiety and stress for employees, consumes their mental energy, and, ultimately, damages their job performance (Cullen et al., 2014; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). Our research reflects that the young workforce is comfortable in using emojis to contextualise their verbal messages. They also found the managers using emojis are more approachable and easy to deal with than the ones who don't.

The paper also draws from the Uncertainty-Identity Theory (Hogg, 2012, 2017) which states that when the uncertainty is about one's self-concept and identity, the motivation to reduce uncertainty is particularly strong. People strive to reduce feelings of uncertainty about themselves, their social world, and their place within it; they like to know who they are and how to behave, and who others are and how they might behave. Uncertainty management plays a key role in human behaviour and this paper investigates how the usage of emojis/emoticons in professional communication contexts helps people significantly in managing work stress in current times, as dependence on digital communication increases and work relationships are increasingly built and nurtured online.

Methodology

The data for the preliminary study were collected from 28 graduate students enrolled in a business management program at a reputed Indian University, through three Focus Group Discussions between the months of October 2022 and March 2023. Our sample contained more men (57%; n = 16) than women (43%; n = 12). Participants were adults who ranged from 21 to 28 years of age with average work experience of two years.

We conducted three over 1-hour focus groups, and each session was composed of nine to ten people. The same author served as the moderator for all of the group discussions. The moderator introduced the topic of discussion and encouraged participants to share their opinions, even if they contradicted the views of others in the group. Participants were instructed to speak directly with each other and to discuss their responses as a group. The focus groups responded to seven open-ended questions that pertained to the usage of emoticons and emojis in formal and informal communication in business/ professional communication context. Our overarching goal was to learn about business students' perception of and apprehensions about usage of emojis and emoticons in business contexts. At the end of the session, the participants were directed to a link to an online questionnaire designed to collect demographic information.

Initial Findings

Each focus group was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The data from the preliminary study sensitized us to (a) the types of communication technologies that college students use in their communication, (b) the interconnections and interferences among TMC and FtF communication, (c) the points in the relationship at which certain modes of communication are more or less prominent, and (d) the role that socialization plays in apprehension to use certain modes of communication in business context.

The analysis will follow an interpretivist approach, using content analysis to draw implications for curriculum design for Business Communication courses in the sphere of technology-enabled communication.

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"We Let You Down Today": A Discourse Analysis of the 2022 Rogers Communication Outage Crisis Response Open Letters

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Purpose and Background

The purpose of this study is to contribute to the understanding of crisis communication, the discourse of apology, and image repair by analyzing four crisis response service outage messages from Rogers Communication CEO Tony Staffieri. These messages appeared on the company's corporate website between July 9 and July 24, 2022, and were simultaneously published as open letters in Canadian national newspapers.

On July 8, 2022, a one-day telecom outage left over 12 million users of Rogers' internet, cellular and cable services across Canada without access to banking, law enforcement and healthcare services, including 911 services. According to the nation's telecom regulator, the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), "events of this kind paralyzing portions of our economy and jeopardizing the safety of Canadians are unacceptable" (CRTC, 2022). By July 11, after several attempts at apologizing and soothing public anger, Staffieri had still not fully explained why and how the outage had occurred, blaming only a failed maintenance upgrade, an admission that prompted that the CRTC to demand a crisis plan from Rogers to mitigate future outages as well as a full accounting from Staffieri at a July 22 parliamentary hearing. Staffieri told MPs that Rogers "had failed to deliver on its promise to be Canada's most reliable network", the second time in less than two years an outage had left its customers without services (Major & Evans, 2022). Media coverage noted Rogers leaders had likewise failed in their communication with customers and government officials (Dobby, 2022). The cost to the Canadian economy for the outage period was estimated at $142 million (Zadikian & Poshnjari, 2022). Beyond the obvious harm to company reputation, Rogers suffered losses through plummeting stock prices, customer attrition, payouts of over $70 million in customer rebates, and a $250 million plan involving enhanced management and A.I.-based service monitoring. To avert further outage crises, the government of Canada enacted policies requiring all telecommunications carriers to establish plans for communicating service disruption to the public and to provide assistance to each other during outages by offering emergency roaming services to competitors' affected customers.

Research Questions

Communication is essential to crisis management. Research on crisis communication focuses considerably on rhetorical strategies used by organizations in managing and rebuilding their reputations following crises (Bentley, 2018). Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT) (Coombs, 2007) points to the need for an organization to alter its crisis response based on how much responsibility it bears for the situation. Image repair activities are needed when an organization's key stakeholders or publics blame them for misdeeds (Liu, 2007). A strategic apology response increases the propensity for victims to forgive in a corporate crisis (Patel & Reinsch, 2003) and helps to protect organizational reputation after a crisis (Coombs & Holladay, 1996). Apologies in crisis communication therefore function to fix the problem and rebuild damaged relationships (Bentley, 2014). For this study, the following research questions were addressed:

- RQ1. How, as viewed through the lens of image repair and image restoration theory (Benoit, 1995, 1997; Coombs, 2006) and situational crisis communication theory (Coombs & Holloday, 2007, 2008) are the routinized expressions associated with apologetic utterances (Boyd, 2011; Deutshmann, 2003; Kampf, 2008; Lazare, 2004) constituted rhetorically and linguistically in the dataset?

- RQ2. What were the most frequently occurring words and collocations in the dataset at each stage of the crisis?

- RQ3. How did Rogers' crisis communication and image repair strategies change at the discoursal level over the two-week crisis peak in relation to crisis severity and other situational factors?

Methodology

This study relied on a combination of quantitative corpus-linguistic and content analysis and qualitative discourse-analytical techniques. A hand-coding approach was used to identify corporate image repair and crisis communication strategies, and taxonomies of apology in the four-letter (1182-word) dataset. Corporate image repair strategies often change as a crisis progresses through various stages (Jaques, 2007) so each text was coded separately according to crisis stage severity and other situational factors (Coombs, 1999). Automated content and linguistic analysis of each message was performed, using Voyant Tools to identify the most frequently-occurring words and collocations.

Results

This study found that taxonomic elements of apology and image repair did appear to varying degrees in the dataset; however, the organization's initial responses evaded responsibility (not having information or control) (Benoit, 2014) and lacked the accountability of a full explanation. Subsequent responses contained elements that both diminished and minimized the crisis (for example in referring to it as an "interruption") and bolstered the company's reputation through ingratiation and concern (Coombs, 2007, 2008).

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Writer's Workshop: The Top Twelve Strategies to Help Researchers and Authors Get Their Manuscripts Published Towards Tenure

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Dr. William T. “Toby” Holmes, Associate Editor of Business and Professional Communication Quarterly, a publication of the Association for Business Communication, presents an interactive workshop for conference attendees looking to bring their manuscript ideas to publication in his workshop titled “Writer's Workshop: The Top Twelve Strategies to Help Researchers and Authors Get Their Manuscripts Published Towards Tenure.” In this workshop, participants will learn and work in the following twelve areas using graphic organizers, thought-provoking questions, and small-group sharing opportunities:

1. Be clear on your line of research. What are your guiding questions? How do your questions translate to your one or two research streams?

2. Find the right mentor. What is your intention? Your goal? Are you looking for a teaching, research, or service mentor? What do you need in a mentor? Who would be the greatest mentor in the world for you? Have you asked them?

3. What is your job description? Is your job 40% teaching, 40% research, and 20% service? Do you spend 40% of each day spent on research? How much time do you spend each day writing? How much time do you spend reading in your field to keep current?

4. Find your journals and figure them out. Participants will be exposed how to search for journals using various methods, including Scimago, Google Scholar, Databases, etc. Participants will explore looking at different journals and the unique characteristics of each journal. Participants will learn how to examine each journal and begin to develop a database/spreadsheet of journals most favorable for their research.

5. Become a reviewer. The greatest way to learn about journals and publishing in them is to become a reviewer for them. It is not a quid pro quo relationship but one in which you understand the journal’s voice, how the editor operates, and what the journal looks for. Therefore, you can better write your manuscripts to fit the journal. Remember, your audience is not scholars. Your audience is the editor who decides whether your manuscript gets published.

6. What is your research and writing plan of action? As a researcher, you should always have data and something to write on. What do you have in press, in revise and resubmit, under review as a submission, in draft development, data collected and study completed ready for writing, and at IRB/study underway?

7. The Book of Awesome. This is your research and writing idea book. This is your “Audit Trail.” One page for each piece of writing or research that comes into your mind from conception to

completion. The book where you write down your research and manuscript ideas, conversations, notes, thoughts, connections, keywords, associations – in short – everything having to do with the project from beginning to end.

8. One dataset / one concept – multiple perspectives. The participants will be exposed to the idea that one dataset/one concept can lead to multiple manuscripts and avenues of distribution. For example, authors could write a research article for IJBC and a SoTL article for BPCQ on the same set of data/concept, present each of those perspectives at national and regional conferences, and potentially even write a trade or book chapter on the material thus leading to six different outlets for one research dataset/concept.

9. Who are your writing and research partners? What considerations do you give to your writing and research partners? When are you the first author, and when are they the first author (Get this is writing.)? What is the division of labor? What is your timeline, and what are your output(s)/outcome(s) goals? What is the nature of your partnership (short-term or long-term)? What to do if you need to get a divorce? Is it okay to have an affair and work with someone else while in this partnership? Is it okay to have multiple partnerships?

10. Experts. Develop a list of "Experts" to review your final draft before submission. Work diligently to develop a list of experts in the following four areas: out-of-your-field experts, in-your-general field experts, research line one experts, and research line 2 experts. Before you submit, try to have your manuscript reviewed by an expert in your out-of-the-field, in-your-general field, and in your research line, and use the feedback they provided to improve your manuscript before submission. Make sure that you offer to review their manuscripts as well. Realize that you are asking for something you may not get, but feedback here may improve your manuscript and streamline the submission process later.

11. Aim high and pray for acceptance or a rich letter of rejection. Pick a Q1 or a Q2 journal and tailor your writing to the journal – make your writing fit the journal, not the other way around. Acceptance is great! If not accepted, take the feedback and submit it to a lower Q3 or Q4 journal.

12. Cover letter. Write a very detailed cover letter. In your cover letter, include why the article matches the journal, including the fact that you have already had it peer-reviewed, and suggest new peer-reviewers.

If you get the opportunity to resubmit, be humble and thankful in your response, include a table of how you addressed the feedback, be detailed, and make it easy for your reviewers to find your corrections. The goal of the session for participants will be to increase their ability to:

1. gain more control of their research activities,
2. submit more manuscripts for publication, and
3. generate more submissions to BPCQ.

Writing Across the Lifespan: From Relaxed Text Crafting to High-Speed AI-Based Text Production in the Financial Sector

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The future of business communication is here: what used to be diligent text crafting with relaxed deadlines has turned into high-speed text production based on artificial intelligence with texts that are outdated within a few days, hours, or even minutes. At the same time, the ongoing multiplication of regulations in the financial sector has become a straitjacket for professional writers that impacts their writing context, their text products, and their writing process. This calls for new approaches to analyze text products in business communication in general and in the financial sector in particular.

In my presentation, I discuss the consequences of these shifts for professional writers in the financial sector and the impact on society at large.

Part 1 outlines the working situation of financial analysts in an AI-based setting and explains the communication issues in finance and their consequences on the financial community. 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 2 analyses the writing situation in the financial sector 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 2023.

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 in coaching interventions with professional writers in the financial sector.

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 the writing situation in the financial sector and the 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 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4.6.1 Proficiency in Functional Numeracy (United-Nations, 2023) 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.

Especially in times of a looming next financial crisis and uncertainty about the influence of artificial intelligence on our lives, we should analyze how pieces of information and recommendations are generated in the financial sector and how writing in business communication is impacted by artificial intelligence now and in the future.

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