Colloquy

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A Journal of the Department of Communication Studies

California State University Los Angeles

Editorial Statement

Colloquy is a journal of the Department of Communication Studies at California State University Los Angeles. Colloquy aims to represent the variety of scholarship conducted in the department as well as representing different types and levels of academic thought. Writing style varies with students' experience with writing as a scholarly enterprise.

The editorial board is comprised of students and supervising members of the faculty. Typically, the editorial board members change with each issue. The editors ensure that essays appearing in the journal are checked for consistency in style and clarity in writing. The editors subscribe to an ethic of inclusiveness and endeavor to treat all essays with this ethic in mind.

In the past a number of essays in Colloquy have been presented at national and regional conferences, including at the International Communication Association (ICA) conference, the National Communication Association (NCA) convention, and the Western States Communication Association (WSCA) conference. Colloquy highlights the achievements of students in the Communication Studies department while providing a forum for scholarly discussion and innovation.

The editorial board wishes to thank all those who contributed to this volume, including the authors who submitted essays, the faculty members who solicited materials and mentored students, and members of the production staff.

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Colloquy
A Journal of the Department of Communication Studies
Special Issue on including GIFTS & Showcase speeches
California State University, Los Angeles

Volume 19 Spring 2025

Articles ***page***

Caregiver Voices:Exploring Communication Dynamics in Cancer Care
by Alyssa Navarrete 1

Cancer Caregiver Interview: An Analysis of Communication Between Healthcare Providers and Patients
by Alexandria Palmeros 12

Racial Inequality in the U.S. Prison System
(Ken Lee Award Public Speaking Showcase Winner, Spring 2025)
by Michael Palomo Rojero 20

Special Section: GIFTS – Great Ideas for Teaching

"Don't get schooled!" Framing in Social Media News

By Rasha Hanouche

Learning and Applying Systems Theory Through Jigsaw Puzzles

Sarah Black

The Higher Regard Dating Network: Maximizing Rewards that Outweigh the Costs

Melissa Deleon

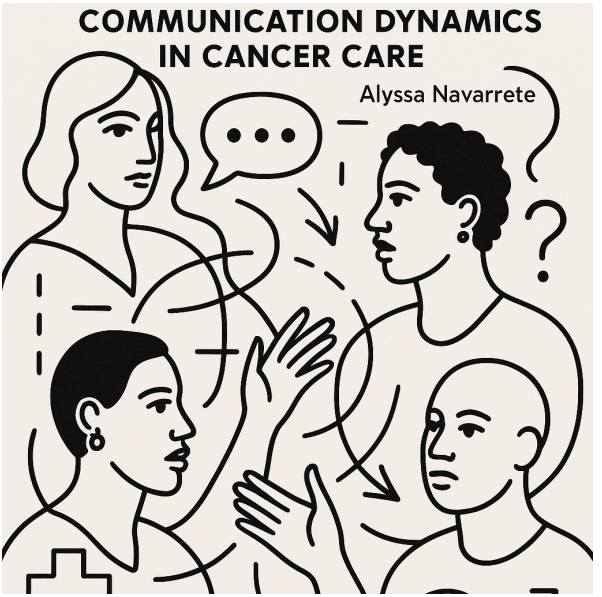
Call for Submissions

Caregiver Voices: Exploring Communication Dynamics in Cancer Care

Alyssa Navarrete

Bio:

Alyssa Navarrete is an undergraduate student majoring in Communication Studies with a focus on media and healthcare communication. Her academic interests include understanding the influence of social media on interpersonal connections, and how communication can enhance healthcare outcomes.



Abstract

Cancer impacts not only patients but also their caregivers, who play a vital role in providing emotional, physical, and medical support. Caregivers often navigate complex healthcare systems while managing the stress and emotional toll of their responsibilities. This study examines the communication dynamics between cancer caregivers and healthcare professionals, focusing on the themes of access, availability, and trust. Using qualitative interviews with 18 diverse caregivers, findings reveal significant challenges in timely access to healthcare professionals and the reliance on nurses for consistent support. Barriers such as delays in communication and exclusion from medical decisions contribute to caregiver stress and hinder effective caregiving. The study highlights the importance of caregiver inclusion in patient-centered care. This emphasizes the need for healthcare systems to address communications gaps and foster trust to improve caregiver well-being and patient outcomes. Future research should expand sample diversity and incorporate patient and provider perspectives to develop comprehensive strategies for enhancing caregiver support.
Keywords: communication, caregiver, patient, healthcare professionals, access, availability, trust, support, barriers

Introduction

Cancer is a disease that not only affects patients, but also significantly impacts their caregivers. Caregivers play a critical role in supporting the patient's physical, emotional, and medical needs. Caregivers often find themselves navigating complex healthcare systems while managing the stress of their loved one's condition. Their responsibilities include being advocates, decision-makers, and companions throughout the patient's journey, a role that can be both rewarding and overwhelming. According to Ullrich et al. (2017), caregivers are pivotal to the patient's quality of life, but often face significant physical and psychosocial burdens. These challenges can compromise their ability to provide effective care, further intensifying the stress and emotional toll of caregiving. Despite the vital contributions caregivers make, their experiences and needs are often overlooked in the healthcare setting.

Communication with healthcare professionals is one of the most crucial aspects in the caregiving experience. Effective communication can empower caregivers, enabling them to make informed decisions and provide better care. In addition, effective communication directly influences patient outcomes. According to Fakhoury, McCarthy, and Addington-Hall (1996), patient satisfaction is often regarded as the ultimate validator of quality care. Since caregivers are central to patient well-being, the quality of communication between caregivers and healthcare professionals is a critical factor in ensuring both patient and caregiver satisfaction. However, barriers such as limited access to healthcare professionals, delays in communication, or exclusion from key decisions can leave caregivers feeling isolated and

unsupported. These challenges not only affect the caregivers' well-being, but may also impact the quality of care that patients receive.

This study seeks to explore the communication dynamics between cancer caregivers and healthcare professionals, focusing on the themes of access, availability, and trust. By examining caregivers' experiences, this research aims to shed light on the areas where healthcare systems can improve support for caregivers, ultimately fostering a more collaborative and effective care environment. To present my findings, first I discuss the methods utilized to gather the data. Next, I cover the findings, highlighting key themes. Finally, I explain the findings in a comprehensive discussion, offering ideas for future research.

Methods

To gather our data, we conducted qualitative interviews with caregivers of cancer patients. The interviews were carried out using Zoom, a video conferencing platform. There were 18 interviews conducted where the participants ranged in age from 21 to 60 years, with a mean age of 34.8. The group included 13 females and 5 males, representing a diverse mix of ethnicities such as Hispanic, Chinese, Pacific Islander, and African American. In particular, several participants identified as being of mixed ethnicity, which reflects the varied backgrounds of caregivers in the community. Additionally, most of the caregivers lived with the cancer patients they cared for, fostering close, day-to-

day interactions. The relationship between caregivers and patients were equally diverse, representing roles such as son, daughter, best friend, grandmother, and others.

During the interviews, we aimed to explore the dynamics of communication between caregivers and healthcare professionals. We posed various questions to understand their experiences and challenges. For instance, caregivers were asked if they had opportunities to speak privately with doctors or nurses without the presence of the patient. Another question focused on instances when they noticed the patient's condition worsening, which prompted them

to seek medical attention or guidance. Additionally, we delved into situations where caregivers felt excluded from important medical decisions, particularly those that might have negatively impacted the patient's well-being. These questions were designed to provide insight into the caregivers' perspectives and highlight areas where communication and inclusion could be improved in healthcare settings.

Findings

Access and Availability of Healthcare Professionals

Through the analysis of caregiver interviews, one prominent theme emerged: caregivers consistently strive to ensure that the patient receives the best care possible, which often comes with a significant emotional cost. In order to ensure the patient receives the best care, caregivers must advocate for the patient in addition to being actively

present throughout the whole journey. Their role as an advocate comes with an immense sense of responsibility, as caregivers are deeply invested in the patient's well-being and recovery. Central to their experience is the access and availability of healthcare professionals, including both doctors and nurses. These factors play a crucial role in addressing caregivers' concerns promptly and effectively. Within this overarching theme, two critical sub themes were identified: (1) the perceived reliability of healthcare professionals and (2) the level of trust caregivers place in them.

Perceived Reliability of Healthcare Professionals

The perceived reliability of healthcare professionals refers to how accessible and dependable they are in the eyes of caregivers. Many caregivers reported facing delays in accessing doctors, which often heightened their sense of anxiety and frustration. One caregiver recalled, *"It was about four days until I was able to talk to the doctor."* This delay illustrates a significant barrier to effective caregiving, as timely communication is essential for caregivers to

make informed decisions about the patient's care. These experiences underscore the importance of ensuring that healthcare professionals are readily available to address urgent concerns and provide critical guidance.

Level of Trust in Healthcare Professionals

The level of trust caregivers place in healthcare professionals emerged as another key factor influencing their experiences. Caregivers frequently expressed greater

reliance on nurses, who were often more accessible and present than doctors. One caregiver shared, *"I speak primarily with the nurses because the nurses are always there… So whenever I see something wrong or a change in condition, I go to the nurses."* This highlights the vital role nurses play, not only as a first point of contact, but also as a source of reassurance and support. Nurses' availability and attentiveness foster a sense of confidence in caregivers, enabling them to feel more empowered and supported in their caregiving roles.

Discussion

The findings from this study highlight significant challenges and opportunities in the communication dynamics between cancer caregivers and healthcare professionals. These insights emphasize the critical role of healthcare professionals in shaping the caregiving experience and underline areas where systemic improvements are needed to better support caregivers. By highlighting the themes of access, availability, and trust, the study showcases the complexities and challenges caregivers face in their roles as advocates and companions to their loved ones.

One of the most prominent findings was the challenge caregivers experienced in accessing healthcare professionals, particularly doctors. Delays in communication, as highlighted by the caregiver who waited four days to speak with a doctor, represent a significant barrier to effective caregiving. Such delays not only heighten

caregivers' anxiety, but also risk delaying

critical medical interventions for patients. Relating this to a broader concept of social support, caregivers require as much support as the patients themselves. From a communication perspective, communication is central to providing and receiving social support (Harrington & Record, 2024). Verbal and nonverbal communication within a caregiver's social network, and with healthcare professionals, is essential for enacting, receiving, and perceiving support. This highlights the need for healthcare systems to prioritize effective communication channels, ensuring that caregivers feel supported and informed as they navigate their roles. By prioritizing accessibility, healthcare systems can alleviate caregivers' stress and foster a more collaborative care environment, ultimately improving the overall quality of care for cancer patients.

The second theme, trust, reflects the strong reliance caregivers place on nurses due to their consistent presence and availability. Nurses serve as a lifeline for caregivers, offering guidance, reassurance, and real-time support in moments of uncertainty. This dynamic reinforces the need to recognize and elevate the role of nurses within the caregiving process. Patient-centered medicine emphasizes the importance of enhancing the patient-provider relationship. For this approach to succeed, communication must be the core. Key components include exploring health and illness concepts, understanding the patient as a whole person, finding common ground, and strengthening the relationship (Harrington & Record, 2024). These factors align closely with caregivers' needs for supportive, respectful, and

empathetic communication from healthcare professionals. For caregivers to feel confident and supported, providers must build a partnership that includes caregivers in the decision-making process and acknowledges their critical role. To strengthen trust and improve communication, healthcare institutions can implement caregiver-centered training programs for both nurses and doctors.
These programs should focus on empathy and strategies for effective communication.

Additionally, creating a more integrated care team approach could ensure that caregivers feel supported at all levels of the care process.

Using this research, there is room to grow and build to expand our knowledge on the topic. Future research could expand on these insights in several meaningful ways. First, the sample size was relatively small, and the experiences of caregivers may not be representative of all populations. Future research could explore these dynamics in larger, more diverse samples. Including a larger and more diverse sample could provide a comprehensive understanding of caregiving challenges. Furthermore, the study primarily focused on the caregivers' experiences without incorporating the perspectives of patients or healthcare professionals. By including their perspectives, it could provide a more holistic understanding of the communication dynamics. Understanding how healthcare providers perceive their interactions with caregivers, and whether they recognize the challenges caregivers face, could create strategies to improve collaboration. Additionally, patient perspectives could reveal whether caregivers'

communication concerns align with the patients' experiences and needs. Finally, future research could examine how specific interventions, such as caregiver training programs or enhanced communication protocols, impact outcomes for both caregivers and patients. By addressing these recommendations for future research, valuable evidence could be found to ensure that both caregivers and patients receive the support they need to achieve better health outcomes and overall quality of life.

With everything considered, caregivers of cancer patients play a critical role in ensuring the quality of care and well-being of their loved ones. However, their ability to fulfill this role effectively is heavily influenced by their communication with healthcare professionals. Caregivers often face significant challenges in these interactions, particularly in accessing timely

support and building trust. These challenges not only affect the caregivers' ability to provide effective care, but also take a toll on their emotional well-being. The study highlights the critical need for healthcare systems to prioritize caregiver inclusion in the care process. By addressing barriers to access and availability and fostering trust, healthcare systems can create a more inclusive, supportive, and collaborative environment for caregivers.

Furthermore, caregivers' experiences are directly related with patient outcomes. As emphasized in patient-centered care models, healthcare providers must recognize the caregiver's role as a collaborator in the patient's journey. Efforts to improve communication have the potential to transform caregiver experiences and improve satisfaction.

By investing in strategies that reduce caregiver burden and enhance their well-being, healthcare systems can create a more resilient and inclusive care framework. Ultimately, this not only benefits caregivers, but also contributes to better healthcare outcomes and a more compassionate healthcare system overall. In conclusion, recognizing and addressing the challenges faced by caregivers is not just a matter of improving their quality of life, it is a pivotal step toward delivering patient-centered and equitable healthcare. Caregivers play a vital role in the healthcare journey, and it's critical that they are equipped, supported, and empowered to fulfill this role to the best of their abilities.

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Cancer Caregiver Interview: An Analysis of Communication Between Healthcare Providers and Patients

Alexandria Palmeros

Bio

Alexandria Palmeros is a Criminal Justice major and Communication minor at Cal State LA. In learning to appreciate and understand the importance of communication and building relationships, Alexandria is particularly interested in intrapersonal communication, diversity and inclusion in communication, and communication ethics.

Introduction

On average, over 21.3 percent of Americans are caregivers to an adult or child with a chronic illness or special need (May, 2022). Caregivers are unpaid individuals (i.e., friends, siblings, parents, etc.) who care for others suffering from an illness and help them through their medical journey. As caregivers are constantly around the patient, they commonly communicate with the healthcare professionals working to help the patient, such as referring to specialists or

discussing treatment options. However, caregivers may have difficulty being able to express concerns related to the patient's condition. It is important to understand how communication in healthcare, primarily related to cancer patients and care, can be impacted by the type of caregiver one may be and how the interaction can affect their healthcare perspective.

There are four types of caregivers that one may identify as: 1) *carrier*; 2) *manager*; 3) *lone*; and 4) *partner* (*Family Caregiver Communication — COMFORT Communication Project*, n.d.). The family caregiver categorizations explain different communication characteristics a person may express. This suggests that communication interventions and healthcare professional communication can and must be specific to the information processing needs of specific caregiver types. 'Carrier' caregivers are *low-talk/high-obligation* communicators, where they rely on the patient to make decisions related to care and assume all caregiving tasks are for family members. 'Manager' caregivers are *high-talk/high obligation* who act as family
decision-makers and will communicate with providers using healthcare terminology. 'Lone' caregivers are *low-talk/low-obligation* and will usually avoid discussions about "quality-of-life" topics, providing care with no family support. 'Partner' caregivers are *high-talk/low-obligation* who will initiate conversations about "quality-of-life" and are open about the burden of caregiving to patient and family, addressing decision-making conflict with patient/family (Wittenberg et al., 2017).

The purpose of this paper is to analyze transcripts of cancer caregiver interviews to discuss how different types of caregivers interact with healthcare professionals. We will be identifying themes of healthcare communication, such as patient-provider communication and uncertainty reduction theory, and analyzing how it is applied to caregiver communication (Harrington & Record, 2024). As well as conceptualizing the data collected from the interviews to identify themes of communication and describe connections between caregiver-provider communication.

Methods

Participants

Structured audio-video interviews were conducted with 18 cancer caregivers who provide some sort of care for a patient. Participants included 13 females and 5 males ranging between 21 to 60 years of age, with an average age of 34.8. Participants reflected a diverse mix of ethnicities, consisting of Hispanic, Chinese, Asian (Chinese), Pacific Islander, and African American, with several participants identifying as “mixed ethnicity”. All participants reported providing care to someone with a severe form of cancer, commonly known as Stage 3 or Stage 4. The positions most commonly held by the caregivers were of a brother/sister, parent, and friend, and providing care for someone older than they are.

Procedure

18 Zoom video call interviews were conducted with participants. They were made aware that the interview was to be recorded and gave permission to be interviewed. After collecting demographic information, participants were asked ten statements related to their communication

and caregiving personalities. They would provide a rating of how often each statement occurred, using a Likert scale of 1-4 (1 = lowest/Never; 4 = highest/Frequently) to describe how each statement related to their situation. Participants were then asked to describe their experiences when interacting with a healthcare professional/team. Three open-ended questions/statements were asked about private conversations with doctors, prognosis development and concerns, and patient care decision-making. At the end of the interview, participants were asked to identify a statement (A, B, C, or D) that they felt accurately described the communication opportunities they have had with healthcare providers. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

First, the transcripts were read multiple times to make sure all the data had been correctly identified and collected. Second, annotation of the statements regarding the caregiver's interaction with a healthcare professional/team was conducted to dissect and compare the statements from each interview. All eighteen interviews were annotated and compared to one another to find patterns of communication between caregivers and

healthcare professionals, as well as communication between healthcare professionals and patients.

Findings

Perceived Reliability of Healthcare Professionals

The topic of perceived reliability of healthcare professionals refers to the perception of accessibility and dependability of a provider to a caregiver. Statements collected from the interviews showed that many reported facing delays in accessing doctors, which would heighten their feelings of anxiety and frustration. One caregiver recalled, " I could not get an appointment fast enough when the patient was not doing well…they kept telling me 'We'll have a doctor call

you'… they kept ignoring my request and I ended up having to call 911". The delay in accessing a doctor at a crucial moment illustrates the barrier to effective caregiving. Timely communication is essential for the caregiver to be able to advocate for the patient and proper care, especially regarding urgent concerns, and provide guidance.

Level of Trust in Healthcare Professionals

Caregivers place a great amount of trust in healthcare professionals, which can influence the experience and communication between caregivers and providers. Caregivers expressed a greater reliance on the nurses, who were more accessible than the doctors and specialists. A caregiver shared, "I speak primarily with the

nurses because the nurses are always there…So whenever I see something wrong or a change in the condition, I go to the nurses". The interaction highlighted the role nurses play on the healthcare team, and how they offer a source of reassurance and support. It is their availability and attentiveness that provides caregivers with a sense of calm and confidence, allowing them to communicate and advocate for the patient, as well as empower their roles as caregivers.

Access and Availablity of Healthcare Professionals

Analysis of the caregiver interviews showed that caregivers constantly strive to ensure the patient receives the best care possible. Caregivers must advocate for the patient while also being selectively present throughout the entire time they are fighting the disease. The role of a caregiver is one of great responsibility, as they are hands-on and deeply invested in the patient's well-being and recovery. Access and availability to doctors and nurses on the healthcare team play a crucial role in addressing caregiver concerns effectively.

Discussion

Two conclusions can be drawn from the study's findings. First, patient-provider communication is at the forefront of all caregiver and healthcare-provider communication. Patient-provider communication is the exchange of information and the creation of shared understanding between a healthcare provider and a patient (Harrington & Record, 2024). The interaction between patient

and provider is crucial for adequate healthcare to be administered, which can also be done through the caregiver if the patient cannot advocate for themselves. The focus of care is to ensure the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of the patient as they go through their journey. The other conclusion drawn is the emphasis on the uncertainty reduction theory, where people will reduce their uncertainty through interaction to calm themselves so future interactions will be more predictable or reduced (Harrington & Record, 2024). Uncertainty is lowered through transparency, where open and honest communication, without fear, can lead to mutual trust, collaboration, and sharing of best practices that ultimately benefit the patient (*Building a Culture of Transparency in Health Care*, 2018). This theory can be applied through attempts or successful conversations between caregivers and providers to discuss topics such as “quality of life”, prognosis development, and treatment options.

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Racial Inequality in the U.S. Prison System

Ken Lee Award Public Speaking Showcase Winner, Spring 2025

Michael Palomo Rojero

According to Alan Flurry and the University of Georgia, around 8% of the U.S. population has been convicted of a felony, and 1 out of every 3 African American men will have a felony conviction in their lives. This statistic showcases the magnitude of racial disparity in the U.S. prison system. Many people will see issues such as these and choose not to do anything because it doesn't harm them directly.

I wonder if this was the reasoning that played a role in the delay in the abolishment of slavery, or why segregation was a continued practice until the 60s, why African Americans weren't given true voting freedoms until the 60s, and why, to this day, people are still fighting for their equality. Change still has to be made, and everyone has the ability to make it.

My father was arrested and incarcerated multiple times as I grew up. So I saw firsthand the effects that this system can have on people and a community as a whole. The U.S. Prison system is racist, so there needs to be policy change that prohibits this, and as a society, we all need to be aware of this racism and fight against it in our everyday lives.

First, I will discuss the racial inequality in the prison system, then I will explain why this occurs, and finally, I will share some possible solutions to stop this. Black men are disproportionately represented in the U.S. Prison system.

In addition to the opening statistic, this graph does a good job of outlining the drastically different rates of incarceration. provided by Jeremy Travis and his colleagues in a book titled “The Growth of Incarceration in the us” and was published by the National Academy Press in 2014. As you can see, per 100,000 people, Black men are incarcerated at a much higher rate in every age range when compared to white men. In addition to inequality in incarceration rates, Black men are also overrepresented in the rates of people killed by police.

According to Robert Verbruggen of the Manhattan Institute in an article titled, “fatal police shootings and Race: A Review of the Evidence for Future Research”, around 1000 people are killed annually by police. A quarter of whom are Black. Remember that Black people make up 13% of the U.S. population, meaning they are represented almost double in this statistic.

These are all just numbers on a screen, it is important to know what this can look like in the worst of circumstances.

Michael Brown was an 18-year-old Black man. He and his friend Dorian Johnson were walking through Ferguson, Missouri, when they were stopped by Officer Darren Wilson. The 3 had an altercation through the open SUV window where Wilson fired 2 shots, the teens fled as anyone would, and eventually Wilson caught up to them and shot at Michael a total of 12 times, 6 of these bullets hitting him. Michael was unarmed. According to the Department of Justice, this was an act of self-defense, and the officer was justified in the killing.

This was the same Department of Justice that found the Ferguson police department had routinely violated the civil rights of its African American citizens. Why does this happen?

The plain answer is racism, both institutional and individual. In an article titled ‘Institutional Racism: Perspectives on the Department of Justice's investigation of the Ferguson police department', published in 2015 in the Western Journal of Black studies. Cassandra Chaney uses the following definition of institutional racism: “Institutional acts, decisions, habits, procedures, and policies that neglect, overlook, exploit, subjugate, or maintain the subordination of the individual or group.” As evidenced by the data I’ve provided, Black people are overrepresented in the U.S. prison system because no policy is in place to prevent this from happening. There is no in-between in terms of racism. Something is racist or it is not. A system that does not prohibit this blatant racism through anti-racist legislation is a racist system.

The racist policies that cause racial inequality were first created in the minds of racist politicians and policymakers who were put into a position of influence because of the racist voters who wanted them to make these decisions. Racist teachings are spread throughout generations. Racist police officers have a racial bias that leads to an unequal representation of Black people in the U.S. prison system, which leads to a multitude of other problems in Black communities. All this to say, racism has enough people fighting for it, but not enough people fighting against it, and this is why it persists. Now that I have covered some things that cause racial inequality in the U.S. Prison System, I will offer some solutions.

There needs to be policy change that prohibits racism from existing within the prison system. For example, Cassandra Chaney cites Corrine Bernstein Gilarsky, “the police can't be fixed in a vacuum…changes have to be made in conjunction with changes in education, job training, addiction assistance, and employment opportunity.” Additionally, according to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, “The average annual cost for CDCR was $133,000 per [imprisoned] person…”A lot of that could be put toward developing other U.S. Institutions to help prevent crime instead of punishing it. This would limit crime as a whole and would limit racial bias in policing and sentencing, particularly in drug-related crimes.

An example of policy that attempts to fight against racial disparity in the U.S. Prison System is the First Step Act, which made efforts toward rehabilitation accessibility, reintegration into society, and lowering racial inequality in the prison system. While it didn’t solve everything, it is a step in the right direction and an example of what can happen if the right people are elected, so we must research and vote for the people who will make anti-racist legislation. Racism is rooted in America's foundations, and it pervades almost every aspect of our society. To live oblivious to this fact allows it to foster, so it cannot go unrecognized. To spark change in this society, change must first be made from within.

So, we should be consciously thinking about the ways we can be anti-racist in our personal lives. To be anti-racist is not just to be “not-racist” but to actively look to fight racism. Since racism is so embedded into America's being, we have to be consciously looking for signs of it in our lives and

confronting these racist attitudes when we see them. Remember, to not challenge racism is to allow it to exist.

Now that I have offered some solutions, I will conclude this speech. First, I discussed the racial inequality in the U.S. Prison System, then I explained some causes for this, and lastly, I offered some solutions for this problem.

The U.S. Prison system is racist, so there needs to be policy in place that prohibits this racism, and as a society, we need to all be consciously anti-racist to stop this from persevering. Imagine all the young Black men who have had their futures stripped away from them, either from death or incarceration, imagine the pain they must have felt, and feel that rage bubble up in your chest, let it stir throughout your body and ultimately channel it into your voice, make yourself heard and *let it be known* that you are angry, *let it be known* that this is not okay, and you will not sit back and watch as people are trampled upon, *let it be known* that this makes you angry and that you *will* do something about it.

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Great Ideas for Teaching
"Don't get schooled!": Framing in Social Media News
Rasha Hanouche

Topic/Purpose/Learning Objective:
For use in upper-level undergraduate courses with Communication Studies majors, especially those taking Mass Communication, Public Relations, and other media-related Communication Studies courses. Bain (2004) describes the importance of creating a critical and active learning environment, where students can compare, analyze, and evaluate existing information, and then synthesize new information of their own. In conjunction with this teaching approach, this activity's purpose is to provoke students to think about international issues and evaluate their own responses to information that is circulating about these issues. Through evaluation of media narratives and discussions in group work, students can focus on important questions, grapple with major world issues, and have the opportunity to construct their own understanding. By transforming narratives surrounding international realities

portrayed in media, students not only better retain the theoretical frameworks, but also engage in the act of producing knowledge.

Topic: Examining the framing of major world events in journalism

Purpose: To help students learn how to:

COMPARE the ways different social media outlets frame events that impact the narrative

ANALYZE different rhetorical choices that lead to either inaccurate and sensational or ethical and accurate reporting

EVALUATE written work against a set of criteria to improve information literacy

ARGUE the reasons why narratives in various media are framed for a particular effect

SYNTHESIZE their analysis and DEVELOP a new narrative about a major event, or re-frame the existing narrative to transform the story being told

Procedure/Steps:

Instructor needs:
-Timer
-Select slides from previous lectures that will review theoretical principles driving their research

Total time for activity: Activity is split up according to the schedule for a biweekly, 75-minute class, but can be rearranged based on the type of class taught

Day 1: Students will need either a smartphone or laptop (can share with their partner if they don't have their own)
-Entire class period for first part of the assignment: Twenty minutes will be dedicated to reviewing prior class lecture information that will assist students in completing this assignment, and 45 minutes will be provided after lecture review for group work

20 minutes: Before proceeding on to the activity, the instructor will lead a discussion or present a lecture to teach students the communication studies concepts for this activity. This may include:
-An overview of Agenda-Setting Theory and Framing
-Corporate agenda's control over the majority of U.S. media
-How To Spot Fake News infographic by the International Federation of Library Associations
-A variety of news outlets on social media, including left-leaning channels such as CNN and MSNBC, and The Washington Post, right-leaning organizations such as Fox and Newsmax, and more neutral or independent journalism including Wired, Reuters, Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) and Vice News

Instructor will then:
-Divide class into pairs
-Provide time for students to choose any one of three current international events presented to them by the instructor to research (subject to change based on the contemporary events during which this activity is administered; typically

surrounding narratives of war, elections, and/or civil unrest due to social justice issues)
Example: If this activity was administered in 2020-2021, topic options might include:

. The "conflict" between Azerbaijan and Armenia
. The COVID-19 pandemic
. Oppression of Uyghur Muslims in China

Steps to administer activity: Think/pair/square/share method

45 minutes: Think on the topic, spend time with a partner engaging in reading and research with the following prompts in mind:

Part I: Analysis Have students answer the following questions as they compare and evaluate information:

- Are there conflicting accounts of the same event/issue?
- Provide at least two written differences and one visual difference found in the narratives given between the different sources
- Do the stories appear one-sided, or did it do the event justice by trying to remain objective?
- Does the report appear to put down one individual or group over another?

Part II: Transforming the Narrative Have students synthesize information according to their understanding

- How would you frame the narrative?
- Would you give it a different title? If so, what title would you give it?

- What are the potential political and societal implications of inaccurate framing of this story?

(Above questions are meant to engage critical thinking skills, as it relates to mass media and journalism)

5 minutes: Square up with another pair and share findings for one another thus far

Day 2: Students will need notes on paper or notecards to bring to the front of the class when presenting, no presenting off electronics
-Discussion of findings and group presentations of re-written narratives: Pairs of 2 or groups of 3 will be invited to share their topic and findings with the entire class. This may include answers to the above questions and prompts, as well as any additional thoughts and insights found

Scholarly Support:

Bain, K. (2004). How do they conduct class? What the best college teachers do (pp. 98-134). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bain, K. (2004). How do they prepare to teach? What the best college teachers do (pp. 48-67). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Assessment Recommendations:
Assessment will not be based on right or wrong answers but rather, whether students demonstrated an understanding of the differences in rhetorical choices and how framing

narratives can impact individual beliefs, confirm biases and ultimately, influence entire societies.
After the activity, assess by asking the following:
-In your own words, what does framing mean to you?
-What have you learned about media ownership, and how that impacts framing?
-What are one or two common, unethical practices that you see social media news outlets committing?
-What areas of further inquiry should we address in the course, to further expand this project?
-How did you feel about engaging in this type of active detection?

Assessments will be based on course learning outcomes: Did they work collaboratively with others, engage in research, weigh multiple perspectives and ultimately, identify the nature of problems associated with how narratives in media are framed (Bain, 2004, p. 66)?

HANDOUT for Rasha’s article
FORTHCOMING

Great Ideas for Teaching
Learning and Applying Systems Theory
Through Jigsaw Puzzles
Sarah Black

Topic/Purpose/Learning Objective:
This activity is one that I use to bring the organizational communication concept Systems Theory to life. The purpose is for students to have a visual and kinesthetic representation of the theory through an interactive game, whereas students move through the initial steps of viewing the game as a competition to understanding that fostering gteater regard for each other through collaboration and interdependence is critical.

Procedure/Steps:
Pre-steps: Obtain enough distinct jigsaw puzzles for students to be placed in groups of 3-4 with each group being given one puzzle. I've found 100-piece puzzles work best. Smaller puzzles are solved too quickly and larger puzzles are too frustrating and left unsolved.
If purchasing secondhand, test puzzles to ensure all pieces are there.
Take a few pieces from each puzzle and sprinkle them into other puzzle boxes. Students should not know you have done this, but should learn this information organically as they're assembling their puzzles.

You should also have access to a standard 6-sided die or if technology permits, have a virtual die on a classroom screen,
Timeframe: 45 minutes to 1 hour

Step One: Teach the major components of Systems Theory Approach To Organizations
Step Two: Spit the class into groups of 3-4 students each (if groups are larger you could give a larger puzzle like 200 pieces). Ideally, no more than six groups per class. Attempt even spacing. While rooms with flat surface desks or tables are easier, a 100-piece puzzle will also work on a small standard classroom desk.
Step Three: Distribute one puzzle to each group.
Step Four: Students may begin working on their puzzles at the same time. Man
Step Five: Every few minutes roll your actual or virtual die and students must follow the instructions associated with that roll. Two examples that have been fun and effective are a) even (or odd) groups must stop working on their puzzles for 30 seconds and b) one person from each group must move to the next group. Be as creative as you like with these. The goal is to approximate examples of real life chaos that happens in systems and groups.
Step Six: Usually about halfway in or so, students will start noticing their puzzles include pieces that aren't theirs or that they are missing pieces they need. They might ask questions. Let them know that no errors have been made and to practice good communication skills to resolve their issus.
Step Seven: At this point students will start collaborating with other groups to obtain their missing pieces.

Step Eight: Some or all groups will complete their puzzles. Instructor's discretion as to when to end the activity.
Step Nine: Debriefinf the activity. You may use the formal attached worksheet. Or may design this according to the concepts you're teaching.

Scholarly Support:

According to Forbes (2021), the cofounder of Professors at Play, "traditional education excludes and devalues some learners but play, in my experience, allows for more inclusivity and ability to better engage students who typically feel marginalized in learning." Play opens up opportunities not only for creativity but to foster greater regard for one another in the classroom, as the student who may be quiet during most class discussions is often the one who will demonstrate great aptitude for puzzle-making or interpersonal team-building. This activity also incorporates Universal Design Learning principles by offering multiple means of engagement through an active simulation that incorporates aspects of real-world scenarios (UDL, 2018). For example, when a student moves to a new group it approximates the fluid nature of organizational work teams in corporations in a low-stress low-stakes way. And, puzzles are tactile, fun, and provide an alternative to text-based learning Furthermore, puzzles foster visual-spatial reasoning and critical thinking skills (Rodenbaugh et al., (2014), and this particular activity helps students to make and test predictions, and troubleshoot in real time

References

CAST (2018). Universal Design for Learning Guidelines version 2.2. Retrieved from http://udlguidelines.cast.org

Forbes, L. K. (2021). The Process of Play in Learning in Higher Education: A Phenomenological Study. Journal of Teaching and Learning, 15(1), 57-73.

Rodenbaugh, H. R., Lujan, H. L., Rodenbaugh, D. W., & DiCarlo, S. E. (2014). Having fun and accepting challenges are natural instincts: jigsaw puzzles to challenge students and test their abilities while having fun!. Advances in physiology education, 38(2), 185-186.

Assessment Recommendations:
I recommend having enough time in class to return to the concepts and/or theories you've taught earlier that week or in class that day prior to the activity. This is a low-stakes assignment, usually for participation credit.

Other Related Information, Notes, Etc.:
While this activity is used to teach Systems Theory, it also works in any class, such as Small Grouo, Interpersonal, or Conflict Communication, where students practice communication styles like competition, collaboration, synergy, task completion, etc.

Great Ideas for Teaching
The Higher Regard Dating Network: Maximizing Rewards that Outweigh the Costs

Melissa Deleon

Topic

Interpersonal Communication and Social Exchange Theory

Goal

The goal of this activity is to encourage higher order thinking skills by having students practice and identify how we form interpersonal relationships with people who can offer us the maximum rewards while outweighing the costs.

Learning Objectives

1. By the end of this activity, students will be able to define Social Exchange Theory and identify their own comparison levels and comparison level of alternatives
2. By the end of this activity, students will be able to model relationship formation using concepts from the theory (comparison level/comparison level of alternatives)
3. By the end of this activity, students will be able to analyze motives for building/maintaining interpersonal relationships through communication choices.

Purpose

The activity is designed to get students familiarized with the fundamental concepts of Thibaut and Kelley's (1959) Social Exchange Theory (SET). Specifically, this activity will accompany lecture that focuses on Interdependence Theory where students will learn about relationship formation as it pertains to comparison levels (CL) and comparison levels of alternatives (CLalt). With this activity, students will identify their own values in interpersonal relationships and evaluate how they engage in interpersonal relationships in their own lives.

The application of various strategies in this activity will encourage students to critically think about how disclosure and perceived rewards in a relationship influence our communication choices and how we cultivate greater regard for ourselves and others by being thoughtful in our interpersonal communication choices.

Procedure

Before the lecture

1. The instructor should first distribute 8 half-size index cards, also known as mini-index cards, to each student. For a class of 25 students, 200 half-size index cards are needed.
2. The instructor should prompt each student to answer the following question: "What is most important to you when it comes to dating? For example, personality, attractiveness, beliefs, occupation, financials, lifestyle, family dynamics, etc.".
    1. Responses can be gathered by calling on each student and the instructor write their response on the board, having students take turns coming up to the board in small groups to write

their own responses, or using an interactive online platform such as Google Jamboard or Padlet, or any other creative method that the instructor prefers.

2. Once the responses are gathered, the instructor will guide the students to examine them, and group the responses into larger broader categories.
3. The instructor will take the top 4 categories with the highest responses (for example, communication, lifestyle, personality, and occupation) and note them down to reference later in the activity.

3. The instructor should prepare a lecture on Social Exchange Theory, specifically focusing on the Theory of Interdependence and the comparison level (CL) and comparison level of alternatives (CLalt).
4. The instructor should prepare a slide with directions for the activity.

After the lecture

5. The instructor should provide the class with the following oral and written instructions
    1. On your first notecard, write one quality/trait/characteristic that you find <u>desirable</u> about when it comes to (insert category 1 of 4 from step 2 above – for example: communication) A student response might be “Someone who communicates openly about their needs.”
    2. On your second notecard, write one quality/trait/characteristic that you find <u>undesirable</u> about when it comes to (insert

category 1 of 4 from step 2 above) A student response might be “Someone who shuts down during conflict and refuses to communicate.”

3. On your third notecard, write one quality/trait/characteristic that you find desirable about when it comes to (insert category 2 of 4 from step 2 above – for example: lifestyle) A student response might be “Someone who enjoys engaging in physical activity in nature.”
4. On your fourth notecard, write one quality/trait/characteristic that you find undesirable about when it comes to (insert category 2 of 4 from step 2 above) A student response might be “Someone who spends money excessively or irresponsibly.”
5. On your fifth notecard, write one quality/trait/characteristic that you find desirable about when it comes to (insert category 3 of 4 from step 2 above – for example: personality) “Someone who always does the right thing when no one is looking.”
6. On your sixth notecard, write one quality/trait/characteristic that you find undesirable about when it comes to (insert category 3 of 4 from step 2 above) A student response might be “Someone who consistently engages in harmful or dangerous activities.”
7. On your seventh notecard, write one quality/trait/characteristic that you find desirable about when it comes to (insert category 4 of 4 from step 2 above – for

example: occupation) “Someone who works in a field that helps animals and wildlife.”

8. On your eighth notecard, write one quality/trait/characteristic that you find undesirable about when it comes to (insert category 4 of 4 from step 2 above) “Someone who has a job that lacks work/life balance.”

6. The instructor will gather all 8 of each student’s notecards. Combine the desirable and undesirable notecards for each category so that there are 4 piles of notecards, one for each category.
7. Mix up the notecards in each category and distribute only 1 notecard from each category to each student using the method of your choice. It is feasible to have each students form a line at the front of the classroom where the notecards are placed on a table, and have them grab the notecards themselves.
8. After each student has their 4 notecards (one from each category), the instructor will tell them that these notecards are their new “identity” for the remainder of the activity.
9. Instruct students to mingle around the classroom to network with other students, keeping in mind that the objective is to find someone who they would like to “date”. Emphasize that this part of the activity is asking them to recall their comparison level (CL), or the minimum standard of what they find acceptable.
10. If students find multiple people that they would like to “date” during the activity, remind them to evaluate their comparison level of alternatives (CLalt) and to compare what is happening in their current relationship to what could be gained in another relationship.

11. Debrief at the end of the activity. See “Assessment Recommendations” below.

Assessment Recommendations

During the activity, the instructor should check for understanding by walking around the classroom and observing the student interactions. The instructor should also help spark conversation among the classroom regarding the components of SET. To help students see the relevancy of SET in their own lives, have students reflect on their interpersonal communication choices in the activity and compare them to their interpersonal communication choices in real life. Do their choices align? If not, what changes can be made in their lives so that students build and maintain interpersonal relationships the way that they want to?

Scholarly Support

Wrench, J. S., Punyanunt-Carter, N. M., & Thweatt, K. S. (2024, January 24). *Interpersonal Communication: A mindful approach to relationships*. Milne Open Textbooks. https://milneopentextbooks.org/interpersonal-communication-a-mindful-approach-to-relationships/

Great Ideas for Teaching
Freedom of Expression in Audience Analysis
Melissa DeLeon

Topic/Purpose/Learning Objective:

Examining identities to aid in audience analysis in public speaking.

The purpose of this activity is for students to understand that they have the freedom to make choices as a communicator and the freedom to break the bounds of how identities have been expected to present. They will analyze identities of a hypothetical speaker and a hypothetical audience, and reflect on values that certain groups may hold. The activity is designed to get students familiarized with preparing for a variety of communicative interactions, but mostly public speaking situations. The application of audience analysis and intersecting identities will encourage students to critically think about how their presentation and word choices have power in influencing the communication process and how others might perceive them as speakers. This thought process will aid in strengthening their message framing skills so that their communication is "more salient" (Entman,

1993). Doing this activity in groups immediately after lecture allows students to apply what they learned and create and construct work together. The best teaching creates a sense that everyone is working together (Bain, 2004). This in-class activity is meant to enhance lecture on audience analysis and/or intersectionality. It can be completed in one class period.

Learning Objectives:

1. Examine how identities influence communication
2. Understand the relationship of self-presentation to audience perception
3. Practice effective verbal and nonverbal delivery

Procedure/Steps:

This activity should be implemented after the instructor has lectured on audience analysis (and intersectionality), or as a supplement to the lecture.

Before the class lecture, the following steps should be taken.

A. Take blank sheets of paper and cut them into 32 equal pieces to yield small slips of paper. This can be symmetrically achieved by folding the paper in half three times horizontally, and two times vertically. The instructor has the discretion to determine the quantity of slips used for this activity, but it is recommended to prepare between 3-5 slips per student. For a class of 25 students, about 75-125 slips are needed, or 3-4 sheets of cut paper. These slips will be used in step 1 of the activity.

B. Prepare 1 3x5 or similar sized notecard for each student. These notecards will be used in step 2 of the activity.

C. Prepare 2 paper bags and on the front of the first bag, write "identity". On the back of the first bag, write "audience". On the second bag, choose any side and write "product". (If this activity will be administered remotely via Zoom, you can replace the bags with an online spinning wheel generator such as spinthewheel.io/en).

D. Create activity slides that explain the pupose, goals, and directions of the activity, in addition to an example slide of the expected final outcome.

E. Ensure that students are familiar with Google Slides and understand how to use it.

After the class lecture, the following steps should be taken:

1. Distribute between 3 to 5 slips of the precut papers to each student and have them think about their intersecting identities. Give them about 2 minutes to write down each identity on a separate slip of paper (for example: woman, student, Asian). When the students have completed this task, pass the bag labeled "identity/audience" around the class and have students deposit their slips inside. Bring the bag to the front of the class when it is filled.

2. Give each student a notecard and ask them to think about and write down their response to the following prompt; "What is an item that you think should be invented? Be specific in your description of this item." (For example, my students have given me solar-paneled apparel that can wirelessly charge small devices like phones and

headphones. or bluetooth enabled hardhats with visors for construction workers)This should take about 3 to 5 minutes to complete.

Once time has elapsed, distribute the "product" bag around the class and have students deposit their completed notecards into the bag. Bring the bag to the front of the class when it is filled. (If this activity will be administered remotely via Zoom, you can have students type this in a discussion post beforehand, or in a Zoom chat. You can also create these products on your own and have them ready to go on the spinning wheel generator to save time).

3. Explain and demonstrate the activity by providing verbal instructions and displaying the activity slides.

4. Create groups in the amount of your choosing. Groups of 4 are recommended, but can be adjusted based on attendance/time. Larger groups work better if you are pressed for time.

5. Shake up each of the two bags to ensure that the slips and notecards are randomly distributed. Have 1 student from each group retrieve 3 slips and 1 notecard. The content of their selections should remain a secret from the other groups. The first 2 slips they choose from the identity/audience bag will be the groups shared intersecting identities for the activity, or their hypothetical speaker. For example, if a group selects "woman" and "athlete" from the bag, they need to all consider how a woman athlete would be percieved by the specific audience. The third slip they choose from the identity/audience bag will be the groups hypothetical audience. The notecard seleced from the

product bag will be the product that the group must sell to the hypothetical audience. This process will take about 3 minutes.

5. The group will work together to analyze the intersecting identities of their hypothetical speaker. They should focus on predicting how this speaker will be percieved by the hypothetical audience, and identify the best method(s) of verbal and nonverbal delivery that will be needed in their 1-minute sales pitch. Students should be encouraged to critically think about this, and should be reminded that they have the freedom to collectively express their identities.

6. The groups will then work together to create a 1-minute sales pitch that they will deliver to the class. They should use Google Slides to create a slide of their hypothetical product. Other slide deck creations could be utilized, however Google Slides allows for easy group collaboration in real time. The slide can just display the image of the product, and it can also contain some text as well. The groups should rely on their creativity rather than set standards for the visual.

7. Once each group has completed their slide, they can submit the link to the instructor via Canvas or other learning management system, or email. As each group comes up to deliver their sales pitch, the instructor should display the group slide on the board using the projector. Steps 5-7 should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

8. After each group has presented their 1-minute sales pitch, the rest of the students must guess who the target audience was, and what the intersecting identities were. This can be done by having students raise their hands or

shouting out their guesses. When a student correctly identifies the audience and/or identities, the presenting group should confirm the response. If after half a minute of guessing, students are unable to correctly identify the audience and/or indentities, the presenting group should disclose the correct answers to the class. This should take about 5 minutes to complete

9. After all groups have successfully presented their 1-minute sales pitches, the instructor should debrief (see Assessment Recommendations below). The debrief should take about 10 minutes to complete.

Scholarly Support:

Bain, K. (2004). What the best college teachers do. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Entman, R. M. (1993). Framing: Toward clarification of a fractured paradigm. Journal of Communication, 43, 51-58.

Assessment Recommendations:

After the activity has concluded, the instructor should check for understanding by first asking the students what they learned from the activity and what connections were made between the lecture and the activity. Secondly, the instructor can have the students reflect on the following questions. What was challenging about this activity and why? What did you learn about how identities would be percieved? How can you tackle these challenges when they arise in actual public speaking situations? How did this activity challenenge traditional notions of identity expression?

Other Related Information, Notes, Etc.:

After several implementations of this activity, some students struggle with not wanting to submit to biased assumptions about identities. For example, if their selected identities are "woman" and "athlete", they might look to exaggerated forms of stereotypical feminine expression instead of examining how women typically have less respect from audiences compared to men, etc. Through the activity, they were able to see how some of their perceptions of certain identities have changed.

Call for Submissions
Colloquy
A Journal of the Department of Communication Studies
Next Deadline: December 1, 2025

Colloquy invites you to submit manuscripts related to student scholarship conducted in the Department of Communication Studies representing a variety of academic approaches. The journal encourages submissions using any appropriate methodology for the question being investigated. Articles focus primarily on communication studies related issues.

Manuscripts submitted to *Colloquy* should subscribe to the National Communication Association (NCA) guidelines for publication: (*https://www.natcom.org/academic-professional-resources/research-and-publishing-resource-center*). These guidelines require that the authors use inclusive and non-defamatory language. Submissions should be original work by the author(s) that meet requirements for informed consent from research participants.

Manuscripts may use any style (APA, MLA, Harvard, Chicago).. Article manuscripts should be under 20 double-spaced pages. Shorter pieces and multimedia presentations are encouraged. The submission may be an excerpt of a longer work (for example from a capstone paper or an MA thesis), but it should stand alone.

Papers submitted will be reviewed following a blind peer-review protocol. All submissions should be accompanied by a cover letter including a 75 word biographical statement for the

author(s) and full contact information including an email address.

Please send manuscript submissions via email to:

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