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SPECIAL FEATURE

Selected Writings by Communication Studies Majors at California State Prison, Los Angeles County, City of Lancaster

Edited by Kamran Afary and Frances Chee

Editors' Introduction

In Fall 2016, the Department of Communication Studies at California State University, Los Angeles began offering classes inside a maximum-security prison facility in order to offer incarcerated persons the opportunity to achieve a Bachelor's degree in Communication. In this special section of *Colloquy*, we present a selection of writings by incarcerated persons in two classes offered during the Spring semester of 2017.

Cal State L.A. is one of 67 postsecondary institutions to participate in the Second Chance Pell Program, and the only one that offers a Communication BA. This one-of-a-kind degree program is the result of several years of creative collaboration by many participants across the university who are dedicated to abolishing the dehumanizing environments created by mass incarceration and the prison–industrial complex. Faculty and administrators combined efforts to create a learning community inside prisons to both enlighten and empower, as a form of activism for engaged citizenship. They had to create a department infrastructure, train instructors, develop sustainable funding, design courses to meet the needs of prisoners, and develop collaboration between campus and prison students.

Their work was also made possible in part by recent prison reform policies initiated by the state of California that moved away from "tough on crime" policies that gutted earlier rehabilitative programs, freeing up some of the state's budget for more educational programming (Widdoes, 2016). As the Vera Institute of Justice has suggested: "education is key to improving many long-term outcomes for incarcerated people, their families, and their communities—including reducing recidivism and increasing employability and earnings after release (diZerega, 2017).

As two faculty members in the department, we (Afary and Chee) were fortunate to receive offers to teach communication courses during the Spring

2017 semester. Afary taught a course in Interpersonal Communication using a textbook by Solomon & Theiss (2013) and Chee taught a course in Argumentation using a textbook by Hollihan & Baaske (2016). This was the first year (and the second semester) that a cohort of twenty-two students took two communication courses each semester.

We faced challenges and received much support from our colleagues to ensure proper arrangements for access to classrooms in a maximum-security prison and to bring teaching resources to a place where Internet access is not readily available. But once inside the classrooms, we found a new reality behind bars: We met face to face with incarcerated men who have lived "inside" for 10, 20, 30 or more years. Most of our students were sent to prison for life because of a crime they committed at a very early age, most during their teens. Here we found a welcoming, engaged, and deeply enthusiastic group of students who were eager to inquire, to pose questions about communication theories and practices. Many of them had already taken college courses and were building on knowledge and skills they had already mastered. Several of our students were social justice activists, working on some form of restorative justice project. Many had made their amends to victims long ago and were focused on contributing and being of service to other prisoners, and to the "outside" world.

The following student writings include several genres. The writings from Interpersonal Communication include excerpts from individual students' formal papers, film reviews, writing prompts, journals, and poems. The excerpts from the Argumentation class include several debate packets prepared by student groups. They are a testament to these students' readiness to engage with what the discipline of communication studies has to offer and to contribute to a dialogue on social justice.

There are so many individuals that both of us wish to acknowledge and thank. Afary wishes to thank the following for their inspiration, mentorship, encouragement, and support in this endeavor: David Olsen, Chair; Taffany Lim, Senior Director of the Center for Engagement, Service, and the Public Good; Bidhan Roy, English Department; Kristina Ruiz-Mesa; and Rob DeChaine. I also wish to thank Roy Underwood, J.D. Hughes, and Elizabeth Malone. Chee wishes to thank my colleagues who made this program what it is today, and for extending the opportunity for me to teach in this space. I would like to thank Luis R. for lending his time to be a sounding board. I would particularly like to thank our students for having engaged with the subject of argumentation with vivacity, and for challenging me to rethink some of the premises upon which I had previously built the course.

As we advocate for more college education opportunities for incarcerated people we also discover through these writings the unique ways in which those who are in prisons are ready to create more dialogic forms of social engagement. This special feature of *Colloquy* speaks to a more dialogic, two-way road of learning and growing!

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Poem

Clifton Gibson

From interpersonal communication, my mind began expanding
Family life and choices took on a whole new understanding
Back in the days, things appeared hunky dory
Chasing lizards and catching snakes is the beginning of my story
Poor country folk, was my subculture's foundation
Happy faces littered with internal tears of maladaptive marginalization
Behind one of our Joharis windows was pain and suffering
Hidden and under a closed system we were buffering.
What was disclosed and what was not
In a difficult situation I was caught
Coercive power was my predominant socialization
Arguments and fights linked emotions with communication
I became witty, sarcastic, violent with no empathy in place
Conflict became dominating and integrating with a negative face
Years of this behavior led me to jail
Morally and emotionally I was an empty well
Run-en and gun-en taking what I want
My victims piled up and me they began to haunt
I drug regrets behind me with secrecy rules
I was stuck in muck till I developed coping tools
Through inner and higher education
I began regulating my self-talking conversation
Emotional intelligence started to grow
My kindness and core-self began to show
I pushed away my old negative face self
Cleared drugs, trauma, and violence from my shelf
My ability to reason and compromise changed me from a jerk
Professor Afary taught me integrative conflict strategies that work
No longer is the solution violence or moping
I have been armed with problem and emotion-focused coping.
Seeking healthy solutions displayed by men
Now both parties may walk away with a win-win

Communicating Comfort and Support

Brad Arrowood

[Excerpt from a class presentation]
What can be said to comfort someone with cancer? How can you help someone? Your actions and words are important. I have learned today that support from friends and family help people fight illness. Solomon and Theiss (2013) argue that there are two types of coping processes: Problem-focused coping and Emotion-focused coping.

In prison, I think most of us are pretty good at the problem-focused task. We are good at volunteering data, deciphering data for others that do not understand it, and the rest comes from staff, such as medical data. Unlike the outside world, we do not have cancer support groups, online chat rooms, or the daily support of our loved ones. This makes it difficult to get the emotional support needed for a good fight.

The text shows that quite often people out there do not get to support they want or need. Friends stop calling, almost as if they think cancer is contagious. Now you think about here in prison. So many of us are closed off emotionally for self-preservation, thus creating a larger distance between an ill person and us. We see this in this very class. When was the last time you asked Marvin, "How are you feeling today? Can I help you with anything? Do you want to talk about it?" I am just as guilty of this. We see Marvin in a good mood or putting on a brave face, okay, we can go talk to him about legal stuff or whatever, not cancer though. Let's keep that hush. Let's keep that under the table. Then if he's having a bad day, let's just avoid him today. Yet this might be when he needs it the most. Cancer is not just a day thing; it's not just during the treatment times; it's the in-between times, too.

The text claims that we need to find ways to cope with our own reactions to someone's illness that does not further the cancer person's burden. We are a unique yard; where we are learning to open up our own feelings. Let's take advantage of it even if it's just a smile and a minute of your time.

This was a very informative class. The value of interpersonal communications is wide reaching and has affected me and my daily life as well as my other class with Professor Chee. Interpersonal Communication is ideal for prisoners in a confined setting, especially if they are trying to change and rehabilitate themselves. This prison has made great strides in changing our normal labels of

ourselves, that it takes us to change our view of others first not just ourselves. I have come to enjoy this class.

Interpersonal Communication as Self-discovery

Darren Robinson

[Excerpt from a paper]
Prisons have a menacing way of stripping you down to just a couple of identities. The guards require you to act a certain way as well as the inmates. These two authorities demand to be respected or you will be continuously transferred. However, once you're semi-comfortable and at least safe for now, men's dreams are subtly revealed as they start disclosing where they are from (identity) and where they would like to go "goals."

With the rate of substance or alcohol abuse and the high concentration of childhood traumas, people in here find trust to be the biggest hurdle. There is no neutral environment in prison except for school, and here is the theme I find most fascinating: Self– discovery on the path of just knowing who you are in the big picture of the world. I've always said (after learning about prisoners) that ex-prisoners should be our TSA agents in the airports. We have honed our visual acuity of survival to identify threats on the yard. We see the nervous energy under false sense of empowerment, hiding fear of the violent acts. We listen with not just our ears but pick up clues of human tensions. Navigating on a daily basis in the shark pool of humanity hones this skill.

Interpersonal conflict needs to be studied here in these prisons within the dynamics of power. It's a fundamental NEED of every person to feel safe and all communication strategies should lead to that safety. Understanding our cues and clues to these safeguards could prove to be a foundation for future evolving communication studies.

The Ripple Effect of Communication Reshaping Prison Culture

Allen Burnett

[Excerpt from a class presentation]
There are 33 prisons in the State of California. Each prison has its own culture, each prison is divided by facilities, and each of these facilities has a culture within themselves. The prisoners define these cultures; prisoners create the social rules and speech codes.

Traditionally, violence has always been the response to conflict in prison, and often rewarded by other prisoners ultimately encouraging more violence. A simple misinterpretation of a look or comment would result in an assault or worse. Prisoners combat a multitude of social issues, including stress, depression and anxiety where there are no available mediums or channels to deal with in a productive manner. Conflicts are inevitable as social rules are established to either prevent a person from becoming a victim or promote victimization as a self-defense mechanism to ward off any future harm.

Professor Afary introduced me to Interpersonal Communication study this semester. It didn't take long for me to understand just how important this study is, especially in a prison setting. Focusing on Conflict Management—this particular component of Interpersonal Communication would benefit the prison culture and aide tremendously in the rehabilitative process.

Conflict Strategy is defined as the overall plan for how people will communicate about their conflict. As I mentioned above, the end of conflict in prison is violence. Developing a comprehensive strategy would provide prisoners with an alternative to violence. For example, Interpersonal Communication offers a "win-win" solution to conflict called Integrative Conflict Strategy, where each party asks important questions to determine what is mutually beneficial, an ideal strategy for cellmates. It has been my personal experience that men living together in a room the size of a Honda Civic will develop negative emotions about one another, resentment, frustration, even jealousy. Prisoners need to have alone time (cell time). The problem is that prisoners try to avoid conflict and avoid uncomfortable conversations that may lead to physical conflict. However, avoiding exacerbates negative feelings and leads to hostile episodes.

Interpersonal Communication—Conflict Management offers an opportunity to improve your personal relationships by providing guidelines that help prisoners/people to restructure their activities, identify values in the person in

conflict, or finding points of agreement among other skills. The goal in any conflict is to find a "win-win" outcome, especially in an environment like prison. This study suggests as a solution to conflict that the focus should be on a specific behavior rather than the individual. This will prevent the person in conflict from feeling as if they are being attacked, thereby putting them on the defense.

I would like to see Interpersonal Communication offered to the population here on the Progressive Programming Facility (PPF). The majority of the men here are potentially returning home to their families and community. This study would not only improve their/our social rules here at the prison, but we will carry these tools with us when we are released, taking our newly acquired social rules into society.

As I stated above, the culture of the prison is determined by prisoners. Interpersonal Communication Studies would help provide the population with new social rules that would help quell violence, encourage self-help, higher education, reshaping the prison culture and prisoners' mindset, which will affect change in our communities as a whole.

Communication Theory, Within and Without the Walls

Dortell Williams

[Excerpt from a paper]
There were many new and intriguing themes offered in Interpersonal Communication that gave me more insight to the overall communication process. I will focus on listening and support strategies, with an emphasis on perspective-taking.

Personally, I make earnest attempts to listen to the communicator. Yet I find myself hearing, more than practicing active listening. On occasion this bad practice has resulted in misunderstandings on my part. On other occasions, I have listened to the communicator to an extent, but then found myself presupposing what they were going to say. Of course, this extracurricular mental activity distracted me from the communicator's message. Most of the time I was wrong in my supposition about what was to be said. These personal bad habits diluted the message and negatively affected the communication process.

Active listening helps me focus, like blinders on a horse. This concentrated focus helps me note subtle cues expressed by the communicator, and it helps me to interpret and attach meaning to their overall message more accurately.

Practicing these techniques have assisted me in being a more effective communicator and listener. For instance, nonverbal cues have helped me time an interjection, or ask for clarity without a mid-sentence interruption. Repeating, or as the text says, "paraphrasing" what the speaker just said helps me understand better and assures the communicator that their message has the necessary clarity. Paraphrasing also helps me remember what was said, as well as evaluating the message.

All of these individual techniques, like single threads, weave themselves into support strategies that also aid in the communication process. For example, the subtle, nonverbal cues mentioned earlier, that the speaker emits, can also signal the need for an empathetic response from the listener. A sullen face, for example, may signal the need for a pat on the back, the grasp of their hand, or to simply lean in closer. Eye contact and simply nodding my head can signal to the listener that I care without verbalizing it. Certainly, I knew some of these concepts, but in the aggregate, as the "tools" weave themselves together, I am made more conscious, and understand their effects more intimately.

Touching is another effective way of validating the communicator's feelings. This component of the process is officially referred to as "person-centeredness" in the text. Person-centeredness requires empathy, and there's no doubt that our apathetic world could use just a little more empathy. For me, the most insight offered was on perspectives. This chapter reminded me of, and put into context, the wonderful world of diversity we are now enjoying. In the past I have interpreted someone else's message from my own myopic worldview, not taking into account nuances in perspective such as culture, age or gender; all of which are important to consider. By broadening my perspective to include the worldviews and experiences of others, my understanding widens and the entire world becomes more relevant and relational to me. I found this profound because, in its simplest terms, by understanding the world as a whole, it is a lot smaller and less complex. Through this wider lens of culture, age and gender, misunderstandings are minimized; conflict is avoided and problem-solving increases. […] In the overcrowded world of confinement, where egoism and pride run men, interpersonal skills are the perfect panacea to conflict de-escalation, violence diffusion, and calming; making the world—inside and out—a more peaceful and civil place to live.

Interpersonal communication reminds me of how valuable collectivism and interdependence are as opposed to our culture of individualism. It was by these skills that individuals reached the collective success of Words Uncaged [WordsUncaged is a website hosted by Cal State L.A. that features writings of

prisoners housed at the Progressive Programming Facility in Los Angeles County], that translated into the collaborative success of our transformative journal, *Human*. [*Human* is the title of the transformative journal/anthology that prisoners produced in an effort to describe and demonstrate personal redemptive value.] In fact, in my opinion, Communication Theory, as a major, makes the world a better place, both within and without the walls.

Internalizing Communication Ethics

Jeff Stein

[Excerpt from a paper]
It is with gratitude and enthusiasm that I reflect on this course, what I learned, how I applied it, and the immediate benefits of doing so. Whether one's major is in theoretical physics or mass marketing, I recommend at least a course or two in communication studies. Having Interpersonal Communication skills has made me a better employee, scholar, friend, and family member. I am confident that I have not only the good intentions, but the valuable and much needed skills required to be someone's intellectual and emotional equal, a good lover, and a suitable mate. I owe a significant part of that to my study and application of the Interpersonal Communication skills. Today I understand my community and myself in a deeper way that allows me to appreciate the contexts we interact in. Interpersonal Communication skills helped me to develop consequential aspects of my character that were largely underdeveloped… I have become a much better communication partner and can also recognize a good communication partner more easily. These are skills that I lacked previously.

Since communication is the foundation of any collaborative effort, it puzzles me that the study and development of quality communication skills is not as strongly encouraged as subjects such as math, science, or other "core" courses. For example, I was taught to solve math problems that take up the whole blackboard—yet somehow, I went through life for decades with woefully inadequate interpersonal communication skills. I can only conclude that many of my personal and interpersonal difficulties such as substance abuse, deviant behavior, and poor relationship quality are directly linked to my lack of situational awareness and emotional intelligence—Interpersonal Communication concepts I learned and applied this semester. Although I was becoming a fully functioning, psychologically healthy person, I still lacked a few pieces to the puzzle. Therefore,

the new skills I developed over the course of the semester filled some of those gaps in my personal make-up.

Since I meant well but did not have the most ideal role models growing up, I would often start off great when it came to jobs, relationships with others, school, sports, or just about anything you can name. Yet because I "improvised" my way through life, I often compromised what few scruples I had. By internalizing Interpersonal Communication Ethics, I am more careful now to communicate (and think) ethically rather than say, "The end justifies the means." Not only does this have me feeling much better inside, but I can see how careful attention to my motives and techniques as a communicator now promote the health and wellbeing of others. I am conscious to promote and attend to values, which need to be protected rather than cast aside! Additionally, I consider the impact of my communication with others and preserve relations with them instead of see them as a means to an end. Finally, I help others and myself to make informed decisions instead of stubbornly clinging to old, worn-out positions out of pride and selfishness.

In Solomon and Theiss (2013), I found out that "emotional intelligence is revealed as a consequential aspect of people's personality" (196). Now that I have wrapped my head around that, I have well-founded confidence in my abilities as a communication partner.

With that, I truly enjoyed the text's description of one technique people employ to reduce relational uncertainty-Secret Tests (246-7)! So, in the past, before my enlightenment, I may not have appreciated any secret tests. Although I may have meant well, I was without the reference point of an enlightened Interpersonal Communication scholar, so I was too often a less-than-ideal relational partner because I misconstrued secret tests and other means of reducing relational uncertainty on the part of my significant other. However, knowing how vulnerable someone feels when they care about another, I can understand and even appreciate secret tests. In fact, I think they are totally cute—provided the person utilizing secret tests is not doing so in a maniacal manner. More generally, I now understand that the secret tests are simply a caring person's way of protecting their precious heart from unnecessary hurt. This world will chew us up and spit us out if we are not at least a little bit careful. Keeping that in mind, I am improved as an individual and as a communication partner.

Another key concept that I quickly internalized is the "win-win" Conflict Strategy. Also called the Integrative Conflict Strategy, this approach to resolving conflict involves cooperating with a conflict partner to reach a mutually satisfying solution. When I was younger, I had no definitive conflict orientation. I was all

over the place. Sometimes I would achieve a "win-win" with a conflict partner, but it was rarely a decided goal on my part. Often, I would damage the relationship at least temporarily over a relatively trivial disagreement—and more than half the time I was the problem, not the other party. And still other times, I would use the Avoidant Conflict Strategy, which left me feeling turmoil because I felt mistreated and had let something unpleasant happen to me.

This made me feel like I lacked voice and agency. Over time this led to resentment that manifested itself in many areas of my life that were unhealthy. In addition, I harmed others around me in various ways that they did not deserve; I lied when they deserved the truth; I was an addict when they needed me at my best; and I was selfish when they needed me to be considerate of their feelings. By making a conscious, informed decision to always find a win-win outcome, I will be a blessing to others who really need me to be at my best. What happens if there is no win-win outcome possible? Well, then I reframe the situation; at the very least, for me, a win-win is a result where I do not harm anyone in any way and do not use substances or break laws. While my main objective at that moment may not be realized, I can see someone else happy while I continue to have a life worth living. So, no matter what, a win-win is the result!

Recognizing the Consequences of Reification

Jesse Crespin

[Excerpt from a paper]
Studying Interpersonal Communications has influenced my life journey as an incarcerated individual, because I have a responsibility to demonstrate my rehabilitation, regardless if I will ever get out of prison or not. There are a few ways that interpersonal communication demonstrates this, such as managing conflict. It is crucial for an individual in prison to have the ability to recognize conflict. Knowing how to manage it is extremely valuable—especially when on the path toward rehabilitation.

The study of interpersonal communication has revealed some characteristics of managing conflict that allows an individual, including me, to reevaluate their position during conflicts.

This, therefore, provides them with a moment to figure out what is the expected outcome of this conflict, ultimately allowing a person to set some conflict goals, and the five that are examples in our interpersonal communication

textbook not only coincides with my walk as a Christian man, but also displays the growth of a person who has embraced rehabilitation.

Within the goal of managing conflict, it is important to overcome the obstacles of language, because there are consequences to language. This is a reality in prison, because people hold themselves to certain labels attributed to them, which, for some, purposely causes others to believe they are the accurate representations of the individual's reality. Recognizing the consequences of reification in this environment causes an individual to look beyond labels, so they recognize, for themselves, that there is value in all people.

Overcoming obstacles demonstrates an individual's embracement of rehabilitation, because it reflects how they utilize the tools of interpersonal communication's conflict management to de-escalate and promote healthy conflicts. One of these useful tools happens to be listening, where if an individual engages in active listening, which is rare in prison, they are not only able to look beyond a person's labels, but, in a sense, synergistically strengthen their own position as one who is rehabilitated.

Developing Emotional Awareness and Intelligence

Clifton Gibson

[Excerpt from a paper]
Interpersonal communication skills were (and are) vital to my survival. Without having the ability to recognize signs of anger, animosity, pain, and love, I would not have been able to survive in the dysfunctional household I grew up in or in the concrete sarcophagus of prison in which I now reside. The study of interpersonal communication has helped provide me with the insight to understand how I survived in an unhealthy environment and how I can thrive in a healthy one.

Growing up, the communication norms of my family dynamics were dysfunctional and on the dark side. I learned to instantly recognize the channels of nonverbal behavior and adapt my responses. For example, if my older brother Steve had a rigid stance, clenched fist, and teeth, he was upset. The snarl, growl, and narrowing of his eyes conveyed to me to tread lightly and keep a safe distance or I may suffer a beat-down delivered through verbal and physical force. These channels of kinesics, facial expressions, eye behaviors, paralinguistics, and proxemics communicated the message that in order to survive I needed to convey

to him that I was not a threat and to expand the distance between us. “Out of sight, out of mind” was the protective ploy I employed.

My family often solved our problems through force and violence. There were very few moments of immediacy. Hugging, kissing, or support was suppressed by anger and animosity. Eventually my unhealthy communication techniques led to choices that landed me in prison.

Within prison, I wore a mask of toughness and intensified my feelings of anger. I figured if I simulated being a “tough guy” and intensified my fear, then I would survive this arena, too. It worked physically, in juvenile hall and county jail, but I was hurting on the inside. Within my inner core, I did not want to be mean and tough.

I really started to listen to my emotions, becoming aware that my social emotions were being stymied and exacerbated in a fraudulent manner. I resolved my hostile feelings of anger, hurt, envy, and resentment through self-help and reflection. My melancholic emotions of depression, sadness, and loneliness were identified and addressed at the root. I was able to become a better person. The affectionate feelings of warmth, joy, passion, and love were found again and cultivated with the help of the love of my life, Julie.

It is through interpersonal communication that I was able to develop emotional awareness and intelligence. I now understand the physiology of my feelings. The elevated heart rate, sweaty palms, and flushed face are triggers, warning me that I am experiencing strong emotions. I also have new reliable and healthy coping tools to deal with conflict.

Open, honest, and assertive interpersonal communication has given me the ability to compromise and find healthy win/win/ solutions to disagreements. My ability to actively listen, empathize with my communicating partner, and read between the lines provides healthy solutions to complicated discussion. Instead of just surviving in this world through understanding interpersonal communication, I am able to thrive and make this planet a better and safer place to live.

No Longer Just a Conversation Like Every Other

Tin Nguyen

[Excerpt from a paper]
Perhaps it is difficult to believe that a sixteen-week course can have such an influence on an individual's life style that it changes the way he or she lives. In the beginning of this course, I felt arrogance for what a course in Interpersonal Communication could teach me that I have already known. I have survived nearly two decades of incarceration, and that takes a well-versed individual in Interpersonal Communication. In hindsight, I recognize my ignorance. Interpersonal Communication has taught me a wealth of information, techniques and tools that I have at my disposal when the occasion arises. However, the three most important aspects of Interpersonal Communication are perception, listening, and interpersonal conflict.

I have found that in perception and interpersonal communication, understanding attribution biases has influenced my thinking, decisions, and actions when I engage in a conversation with a friend or family member. For instance, a friend and teammate of mine has not cleaned the dog crate for quite a while. In the past, I would assign this behavior as internal, for his laziness, which is a fundamental attribution error. However, I now would consider the external factors that cause his actions, and that are his long work hours and academic obligations. Another element of attribution biases that has influenced my thinking is the actor-observer effect, which is defined as "explaining one's own behavior in terms of external, rather than internal, causes" (Solomon and Theiss 107). When I fail an exam, I no long place the blame on the instructor using ambiguous and vague questions, but instead evaluate if I had put enough time in on my study. These two elements have increased my understanding of perception and interpersonal communication.

The chapter on listening has altered my style of communication. From this chapter, I realize that through my life, I hear more than I listen. By recognizing the barriers to effective listening, my interpersonal communication has improved immensely. As I begin a conversation with a friend, I would observe my internal and external environments for noise, any obstacles that impede our conversation would be addressed. During the conversation, I would attempt to comprehend the feature of the message and evaluate my thought and feeling to consider factors that might influence our conversation. I would make effort to be engaged in our conversation and be aware of all of the forms of non-listening, such as

pseudo-listening, monopolizing, selective listening, defensive listening, ambushing, and literal listening. Awareness of barriers to effective listening has made me an effective interpersonal communicator and appreciate and value the conversation.

However, interpersonal conflict has the most impact on my life, for now I know how to dispel my conflict, which is always a plus. By understanding the conflict strategies, I would recognize the strategy I am using. If my strategy were distributive conflict (win-lose), which is always the case, I would make every attempt to guide my conflict strategy to a more integrative conflict strategy where everybody can win, a "win-win." In most situations, I would not use an avoidant conflict strategy, unless the circumstance is unique. For instance, a partner that is extremely hot tempered and violent, I would use the "lose-lose" approach. Using these interpersonal conflict strategies, I can resolve my conflicts; it is especially significant in a prison environment.

In conclusion, I have found this course to be very resourceful. Beside the benefits that I have stated above, interpersonal communication has not only mended many of my relationship with family members and friends, but also, it has improved my relationship with those current relationships that I love and value. Interpersonal communication is no longer just a conversation like every other, but I take a more personal and positive attitude toward my interactions with the people I value. To be concise, interpersonal communication has taught me to be a better communicator; thus, I am a better man.

The Importance of Communicating with Competence

James Cain

[Excerpt from a paper]
Throughout this Interpersonal Communication learning process, I have reflected on my life, what I have learned, and how different my life could have turned out had I learned how to communicate properly, understand and manage my own feelings, recognize the moods and emotions of others, and apply these to form healthy and lasting relationships.

Life is a learning process, yet I didn't learn the skills associated with Interpersonal Communication early in life, and instead created a lot of wreckage along my life's journey. I shudder at my part in unfulfilling romantic relationships, and I wonder just how positively I could have enriched my partners' lives if I had

learned the skills of a competent communicator, been an emotional rock, and nurtured relationships through thick and thin. I imagine that my quality of life as well as those I have come into contact with would have been so much better, and so much more fulfilling had I not made so many immature and unethical decisions. I wish I had not minimized the feelings of others, as I am sure I would probably have lived a higher quality of life and experienced more fulfilling friendships and relationships. My life would have been so much more meaningful and successful had this class been required in high school.

With hard work and dedication, I have learned the importance of communicating with competence, how to adjust the way I relate to my circumstances when experiencing emotional highs and lows, and how to communicate and cope with my emotions rather than resorting to destructive behaviors as I had in my past. I have learned the importance of listening and the important differences between listening and hearing. I have learned how to develop healthy relationships, as well as how to work through the steps of dissolution if the relationship loses takes its course and its gratifying feeling.

It is these learning experiences and more that have helped me develop into a thoughtful, understanding, ethical, empathetic interpersonal communicator, able to cope with my feeling as well as understand and help others cope in a healthy, mutually gratifying way. The most important thing to keep in mind about interpersonal communication is that as your skills improve, so does your quality of life and your relationships. Although the academic material that I have learned about communication competence, communicating my emotions, developing and ending relationships is all in theory, I understand the mistakes I have made in my past by recognizing the behaviors, and now I am able to label them with the terms I have learned in Interpersonal communications. Therefore, as I encounter previously misunderstood feelings and behaviors with an understanding of how or why I had made bad choices, I am now able to competently cope with my feelings and with all friendships and relationships.

What the Future Holds for Me

Thomas Wheelock

[Excerpt from a paper]
When I came to prison, I found myself wanting to change who I was and wanting to repair all of the damage from my past. It all seemed to stem from my school

experiences. So, I decided to teach myself and develop my education in meaningful ways. I soon became complacent with my education. It was not until the daily prodding of my best friend, Charlie Praphatananda, that I finally gave in and enrolled in Community College. I was so terrified because I still felt that I was not smart enough for higher learning. My parents could not believe that I enrolled in College. I think that they just assumed that I would give up soon after I enrolled in school. I was really fortunate to have a really great support group around me that kept me motivated and focused. As the semesters passed by, my self-confidence increased and I felt really proud about my grades. My parents were so happy and proud of my accomplishments. I told them that I wanted one of my majors to be a Math and Science Degree because those where my two worst subjects. My Dad would always talk to me about the benefits of school and he would say that it doesn't matter where you are at the moment; the only thing that matters is what you do in that moment. I began to get A's and B's in college, and I realized that maybe I really am smart enough for school. My parents were so happy that I was going to college. When the Cal State L.A. Communication Studies Bachelor's program became available to the prisoners on this yard, I had doubts that I could handle being a part of the program and take junior college classes. Once again, Charlie Praphatananda was there to prod me to go with him into the Bachelor's program. So, while I am in the Bachelor's program, I am also finishing up my degrees at Junior College. I just wish that my Dad could have seen me graduate from college. He passed away last December from cancer. I was so devastated when he passed away, I wanted him to see me graduate and I wanted to show him the four degrees that I have earned at junior college. I wanted to prove to him that I was somebody; I wanted him to be proud of me. His passing is something that I am still trying to work through. I know that he was proud of me, I hope, at least he knew that I was trying to become a better person and student. This summer I will be graduating with four degrees, and yes, one of those degrees is a Math and Science Degree. Now I cannot wait for what the future holds for me. I want to continue my college education and I really hope that I will be able to get a Master's Degree after the Bachelor's program is ended. In going to college, I discovered that I could succeed in whatever I try to do. I also learned that it is no big deal to ask for help when I really need it. College has changed my life immensely and for the better.

Rules of Language: Making Conversations

Daniel Whitlow

Q: *Have you ever communicated with someone who didn't seem to share your goal of advancing that conversation? How was their lack of cooperation evident and how did it make you feel?* (Solomon and Theiss 139)

I doubt I can count high enough to keep track of all the times a conversational companion sighed or rolled their eyes as I continued rambling on and on about whatever it was I thought interesting. To say I am verbose is an understatement. I acknowledge my loquacious manner; I embrace it, actually. I believe that if you wish to say something, or speak your mind, you should (ethical and moral exceptions). Whether it takes you two minutes or two hours is a completely different problem. Suffice it to say, I have experienced passive toleration by a listener many times.

Body language is an important sign of someone who has essentially "checked out" of a conversation. When they roll their eyes (as I mentioned) or sigh, or fidget, like picking at their nails or fiddling with a fraying edge on their shirt. Looking away as if searching for an exit—desperately pleading with their eyes, intensely staring, casting nets with their gazes, telepathically summoning an interruption of *any kind—anything* that would free them from the constricting confines of my let loose, half-coherent, interminable ranting. I notice the gestures; I see the signals of their friendship-obligated discomfort. If I am in a good mood, I release them like a bored angler returning an unnecessary catch, done out of sport—if in an ill humor, a silent, fiendish cackle erupts, reverberating in the cavernous depths of my mind, and I continue my bombast fully aware of the listener's distress.

I am only joking, of course, about all that—just being creative for the assignment—but the body language is something I encounter quite often. I suppose it depends on who I am talking to when considering the effect it has on me. If I were talking to an acquaintance about something mundane, their disinterest probably would not affect me; I would ignore it. If I were addressing someone I care about and were speaking about something I care about, then the effect would be much more profound, obviously. Their indifference has the ability to puncture our fragile spirits, with jagged barbs, tainted tips dipped in poisonous avoidance and toxic triviality.

The job of a listener is not easy. If someone enjoys or is interested in a subject, then listening is no problem—it is not a chore or an inconvenience. On the other side, when confronted with an undesired social situation, politeness and social onus, either positive or negative, compels us to listen to each other but the habitual superficiality of how we listen and what we listen for (during those awkward conversations) has led to the practice of quasi- attending, or whatever you would call it. People catch buzzwords, listen for notable terms or shifts in vocal pitch denoting emotional or contextual importance. We do it all the time, regardless of how hard we try to listen genuinely, for a slew of reasons, perhaps most prescient being the influence technology and the art of convenience has on our family life and upbringing. It is much easier to listen when you want to, as opposed to when you need to, and people fail to listen properly because they simply do not want to.

As I said, I have experienced innumerable situations where the other person in a conversation has detached—I understand why and try to not let it get to me. Unfortunately, that is a hit and miss, coin toss, random sort of thing; either way, I am going to keep talking.

Culture, Emotions, and Communication

Terry Don Evans

Q: *Think about a family story told within your family and shared with others. What does that story reveal about your family's speech community?* (Solomon and Theiss 53)

My family's history is orally iterated concerning Tribe Wolof (Senegal, West Africa) and Tribe Falasha (Ethiopia, Africa). Our speech code consists of religious rites, symbols, rules, and other sacred stories about heroes and villains. These myths communicate culturally in core themes and significant events ranging from important moments in my familial history to the weddings performed through scripted performance values.

Q: *Think of the last situation that made you feel anxious. How was your increased vigilance an advantage or disadvantage as you coped with that situation?* (Solomon and Theiss 188)

My vigilance proved to be advantageous because instead of pleading guilty to a crime I did not commit, in order to receive a lesser sentence, I pleaded not guilty. Although I was found guilty in a trial by jury, I can at least find solace knowing that my faith is unwavering in existence of a higher power. I will one day walk out of prison a free, exonerated man.

"Positive" Stereotypes

Marvin Johnson

Q: *Consider a positive stereotype you might hold, for example, that Asian Americans are intelligent or that first-born children are ambitious. Can you think of any downsides of being the target of such "positive" stereotypes?* (Solomon and Theiss 118)

I will go beyond this—consider the "positive" stereotypes that a culture possesses. In American culture, the stereotype is that anyone can be anything they want to be. The stereotype for Roman Catholic priests is that they are all celibate and trustworthy. Both of these positive stereotypes are false/have been proven false. In a similar way, cultural stereotypes affected my family and me. The pressure to be everything I could be, to succeed as a college student (the first college student in my extended family), to prove that I was a smart as I "tested," to prove that I was gifted simply because I was in gifted classes—but in truth, I did poorly in these classes, I shouldn't have pushed myself to live up to these wholly arbitrary stereotypes.

Just because someone has the benefits of being a wholesome, all-American does not mean that he or she will be able to be anything that individual wants to be. Just because you are the first-born son of a devout Roman Catholic family doesn't mean that you have to be a priest or you fail your faith (better to fail your faith rather than molest a child because of the frustration of the vow of celibacy). And just because I was given some IQ test which said I was "almost" a genius doesn't mean that I should have been pushed into upper-division classes, had the demands of college placed upon me at the age of 15, forcing my whole family to live beyond their means as I "needed" to participate in all the extra-curricular activities, like Academic Decathlon, the Debate Team (all the groups that require expensive trips if your group does win, and carry the pressure to win, to show that you are smart, especially since you are only getting B's or C's or good God

D's! in a "gifted" class) and to perform beyond my abilities.

I have slowly developed my intelligence over the years, but I have been incarcerated for 27 years and the one thing that a person does in a cell is read and absorb information. This was a slow process for me. I am proud I remember so much of the material I have been exposed to, but this occurred based on a firm foundation that I developed over ten years, not after being thrown into "gifted" classes in 8th grade, more than halfway through my first twelve years of schooling. Being thought of as smart was a terrible detriment for me in reality.

[Excerpt from a paper]
My paternal grandfather was a Grand Wizard in the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). He was an old Texan, a racist, and participated in at least one lynching that he personally bragged about to me. Seeing his robes hanging in the closet, with that classic KKK hood, but in red, was a shock. I was a 5-year old and was revolted by this information.

When I came to prison, though, I discovered I was a racist. A huge majority of the individuals incarcerated in prison are people of color. Because of the interactions with various races, because of racial tensions, I found inside me a well of racial bias and hatred that I wasn't aware existed. It dismayed me, but even with my understanding of the underpinnings of Psychology, I haven't been able to break this pattern of thought. Yet, in looking at the general model of stereotypes and intergenerational communication, I have been able to pinpoint conversations that created these underlying thoughts and judge the communications clinically so that I have reduced the effect of my grandfather's stereotypes on me. This required reducing thoughts regarding my grandfather, but becoming a better person makes me realize the effectiveness of communication theory.

Communicating through Nonverbals and Emotions

Duncan Martinez

Q: *Reflect on your life and identify one experience that was especially important to vou. How did that experience make you feel? How important were your feelings as a part of that experience?* (Solomon and Theiss 183)

I am thirteen years older than mv sister, which means I was old enough to understand that her coming meant more work for me and less attention/stuff. I would have to babysit and there would be fewer perks. I got that, and I was therefore not very excited for her birth. I wasn't against her, but I wasn't excited, either.

When she was born I was taken to the hospital, but unable to go in because she was born premature, and that section of the hospital had age requirements. I didn't mind, but my uncle did, and he dragged me there to see her through a window. What's the hurry, right? But, when our eyes locked for the first time, something in me changed forever. I went from antipathy to extreme love. The emotional shift was the greatest I have ever felt. Understand that I went from a rational place of understanding: I would have to be the babysitter, do more chores, and get (essentially) nothing out of it. I went from that to a bond that was so deep I would have done anything for her immediately. Whenever I would pick her up, she would smile, even if she was crying. To this day, and she is almost 35, we have never had an argument. Seriously, not one!

My love for her is deeper than the word, a thing that is more than the word emotions can express. We share something intangible and it is amazing.

I wish everyone could understand something so intense.

Q: *Have you ever had a feeling you couldn't fully express through words? How did the emotion reveal itself through your body? How does your voice change when you're feeling happy, angry, or sad?* (Solomon and Theiss 163)

Recently, I was speaking to my sister on the phone and I started to feel wrong. Not sick or anything, but off, as if I had done something wrong—something akin, I thought, to guilt. The feeling of "off" stayed with me for a few hours until I realized what it was: in a sense, it was guilt, but it was deeper than that, as my sister had started to ask me a question and I cut her off "so I wouldn't forget to ask something."

We never got back to her thing. There are so many layers to this that I feel I must walk through them slowly. From in here we have a different relationship with everyone, because everything depends on them making a huge effort, and/or spending money (calls only come collect). She is my kid sister, one of the most amazing people on the planet, and the single most important person to me. I have one odd quirk: when I have something in my head, like a question, I can get stupid until I get it out (almost like an OCD).

So, I was in part ashamed that I had been selfish, frustrated that I had failed to go back to her question, and guilty for having cut her off when she so clearly needed to ask whatever it was.

I felt that way until I was able to talk to her about it. She, of course, hadn't even noticed.

As for vocal changes, my voice gets higher, faster, and trilly when I'm happy, and quieter when I'm scared. It gets deeper and louder when I'm angry, and timid or tremulous when I'm sad.

On Communicating Changing Identities

James K. Heard

Q: *In what ways did your identity change—or how has it been changing—between the ages of 18 and 25?* (Solomon and Theiss 89)

As a bi-racial child, I initially wrestled with my identity. I was averse to self-disclosure to others. By the age of eighteen, my self-concept had greatly changed from high self-esteem to very low. I was a young person whose goal was to work in pharmaceutical research in an effort to find a cure for breast cancer or HIV/AIDS. My self-worth changed in part because of the deterioration of my family unit, as I knew it, and without the proper coping skills, I began to question my identity, socially comparing myself to others because my norms had transformed.

As I learned more about family history and myself, my standpoint began to change. I sought to enhance my self-esteem by recognizing my strengths and weaknesses. One strength I came to learn was my ability to deliver a speech effectively. This newly found strength enabled me to discard negative labels, which were attached to my self-concept. The personal layers of identity varied depending on the environment. At home, I was a studious young person focused on my goals and dreams. In addition, depending on whom I interacted with, be it my fellow college classmates (prior to prison), or members of our track and field team. The characteristics formed during this time have to do with the relational layer of identity.

Intimacy and Communication

Jimmie Gilmer

Q: *Have you ever been "head over heels" in love? If so, what impact did your feelings have on your communication with your beloved partner?* (Solomon and Theiss 283)

This is a textbook question for me because I have been married for over 25 years. There have been times when I could not only finish my wife's sentences, but I could tell her what she was thinking. I remember this one time when I asked her to do something for me, and right away, I knew that she did not do it. I do not know how I knew, but I did and I told her so. She looked up at me and she said, you know me too well. She gave me the song and dance that she wanted to do this and that before she took care of what I asked her to do for me.

Being in a relationship as long as I have, there are bound to be times when your prediction of what your partner will say or do can go awry. There was a time when I made the mistake in thinking that my wife knew about a friend of mine's wife and the relationship that she and I shared. We were very acquainted with this couple, but my wife did not know that I called my friend's wife "my girlfriend." I had been calling her that for years and never realized that my wife didn't know it. I could see the light in her eyes dim. She looked at me; at first, I missed it. But then I saw it, and I knew that look, but I waited just to make sure that I saw what I thought I saw in her eyes. My wife was upset with me immediately. But she held her cool, which is one of the things I love about my wife. Her eyes said it all. Later that day, I knew that this talk was coming. She said, "So when did Kim become your girlfriend?" I knew that she was going to say it. I knew it.

But this was one of those times that I could not finish her sentence for her; she had to say it and you had to let her say it. After that run-in of miscommunication, I had to change the way I address my female friends. My wife and I still have fun finishing each other's sentences and knowing our thoughts. Maybe one day it may become frustrating. But for now, it's ok, because I love the ice queen.

We Need Less Technology and More Human Contact

Richard Fontes

Q: *What proportion of your interpersonal interactions calls for the use of technology? How much of your personal work relationship would be different if you didn't have technology to help you stay connected?* (Solomon and Theiss 15)

I chose this question because a person in prison is uniquely isolated from all forms of modern communication devices (cell phones, computers. the internet. etc.)—sans the phones on the wall that allow us to make collect calls.

People in the real world have forgotten how to write a personal letter. Inmates rely almost exclusively on letter writing ("snail mail") to communicate with friends and family. However, those in the "real world" rely almost solely on technologies (e-mail, text, etc.) to communicate. Obviously, there is a tremendous chasm between inmates and their ability to communicate with loved ones in society.

Technology has created the unintended effect of impersonal, robotic societies incapable of meaningful relationships. Personally, I have lost contact with many friends over the twenty-plus years of my incarceration simply because I lack access to social media. The convenience of all forms of social media made sending a letter an antiquated process, heavy on the physical burden beyond merely pressing "send" *(*stated with great sarcasm). Prior to the introduction of the Internet, I went from receiving 15 to 20 missives a week to four or five a month. While I'm not the biggest fan of C.G. Jung, his prophetic words foretold of the effects of the Internet: "Reforms by advances, that is by new methods or gadgets, are of course impressive at first, but in the long-run they are dubious and in any case dearly-paid-for. They by no means increase the contentment or happiness of people on the whole. Mostly, they are deceptive sweetening of existence, LIKE SPEEDIER COMMUNICATIONS [emphasis added] which unpleasantly accelerate the tempo of life and leave us with less time than ever before" (Jung 236).

To answer the second part of the question above: The fact is, I think society as a whole suffers from the effects of technology. An inmate's utter isolation is partly defined by his/her lack of access to social media, but I would argue that society has isolated itself by relying so heavily on social media. A hug has been replaced by a silly emoji, and heartfelt words have been replaced by Internet colloquialisms (LOL, etc.).

My proportion of interactions based on technology is zero; perhaps, society would be more civil if they relied on less technology and more on actual human contact...

Communicating Emotions

Stephen Houston

[Excerpt from a review of the film *Oleanna*]
As I reflect on the interaction between the student and the professor, I can see a whirlwind turbulent relationship. The movie starts out with a discussion between them both with the professor explaining to Carol a question: "What is a term of art?" It is a very uncomfortable situation for them both as the conversation is lopsided and unconventional. The plot and scenario of the movie is focused on sexual harassment, dominance, manipulation and the apathy that leads to resentment.

The professor displayed an alpha male-type prowess throughout all of the one-on-one meetings that he had with the student, a format for him to feel superior to the student. Little did he know that the tables were about to turn very ugly for him. Communicating emotion is a primary function of nonverbal messages to let the other person know how you are feeling (Solomon and Theiss 163). She is completely confused at this point. The "favors" he said he would do for her was mainly because he said he liked her. They proceed on to the subject of higher education. Carol brings out an excellent point, that college is instructive. She then goes on to tell the professor she doesn't understand him. The phone rings, and the caller and the professor get into a heated argument about the house. But, before it is all said and done, he finds out his close friends are throwing a surprise party for him. All of the professor's facial expressions while engaged with the student and on the phone clearly channeled the full energy of all of his emotions (Solomon and Theiss 163).

Although much of nonverbal behavior is natural and automatic, one can be considered as a learned response to different social situations, as stimulation, intensification, de-intensification, and masking in all these instances as an example. Because the voice is more difficult to control than facial expressions, it can be a more reliable indicator of a person's feelings.

Signs of deception flowed strategically throughout the entire movie (Solomon and Theiss 173). Patterns of the professor's unconscious inconsistencies signaled

the inconsistencies in the contractive and underlying motive of deceit he embellished. He emphasized that he refers to the status quo. Carol has become very upset and confused. She agrees to meet the professor at his office for the third time. Firecrackers were about to erupt. She hits him hard, like a ton of bricks, threatening to ruin his life and career. She tells him she's going to the authorities and accuses him of rape. The professor snaps. Carol is manipulating everything the professor is saying now. He expresses to her that her plan will never work. She fires back, telling him that he exploits the people that helped him sustain. Like in the scene from the movie *Gone with the Wind*, with Clark Gable and Catherine Hepburn, he backhands Carol and then slaps her over and over again and finally told her he doesn't give a damn. The movie finally ends in disarray with neither side winning.

Our examination of the relationship between emotions and interpersonal communication reveals four distinct links. Because emotions involve action tendencies, they can motivate communication to address the conditions that produce her feelings. The dynamics are that you might use communication to describe your feelings to others. You can also make them feel guilty or evoke feelings of love. Finally, your own feelings bring how you interpret the message you receive from others. In these ways, emotions permeate both the creation and conception of interpersonal communication.

Forming Social Bonds, Reflecting on Our Identities

Charlie Praphatanada

[Excerpt from a review of the movie *Crash*]
When Officer Ryan (the character played by Matt Dillon) realizes that his relational layers and communal layers of identity don't overlap, he begins to question his self-conception. This makes him see the identity gap that exists within him and causes Ryan to look at his behavior with new insight.

When we analyze our interpersonal communication skills, we get an understanding of our strengths and weaknesses. The more we understand about what shapes our identities, the better communicators we can become. But, we can only become better communicators if we work at it.

Interpersonal communication is how we form bonds with each other; it's how we navigate our society and the world we live in. The way we bond and the people we bond with all shape our identity. Our intercultural communication, self-

conception, and standpoints all play roles in how we go about practicing Interpersonal communication.

The unique qualities that make me "me" play a role in how others will interact with me. It's the way in which I present myself, which will draw or rebuff people from interacting with me. Those who choose to practice interpersonal communication with me have interpreted some symbols or actions that draw them to believe we have something in common. This could be a T-shirt that voices a point of view ("Trump Sucks") or some cultural symbol that's only understood by people of my culture. This leads to interpersonal communication.

We as humans are irrational beings. Our interpersonal communications shape our identities, morals, and values. But, if we don't practice self-reflective acts or at least become aware of who we are, and why we do the things we do, then we squander potential opportunities for new friendships, lovers, and understanding of ourselves. This squandering also stunts our growth as individuals and human beings, as Ryan finally learned.

Poem: On the Paradox of Knowledge

Robert M. Mosley IV

I, Robert Mosley IV, am over 63 years of age and incarcerated for more than 20 years. I have been striving to complete a bachelor's degree since 1970. Along the way, one thing keeps presenting itself. I have summarized it in the following poem.

Do You Know?

The more you know, the more you know you do not know
So many times, one has decried, from the wishful state of ignorance
That things observed
With nouns and verbs
Do not really make a difference
Contrary to that train of thought
Which leads to lengthy damnation
Is the truth of years of proof, brought in by a summation...
As you know, you grow
And
The more you know
The more you know you do NOT know.

Does the Designated Hitter Make Sense?

Marvin Johnson, Darren Robinson, Duncan Martinez, and Jimmie Gilmer

In the Macropædia article on baseball, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* quotes Walt Whitman concerning its place as the American pastime. "'It's our game,' exclaimed Whitman more than a century ago, 'that's the chief fact in connection with it: America's Game.'" (qtd. in Peterson 724). Moreover, the same article quotes from a 1911 edition of *Everybody's Magazine* that called the World Series "the very quintessence and consummation of the Most Perfect Thing in America." Every element of the game of baseball, all of it, brings out a love of not only the game but of the idea of America itself. As one saying relates, "America, Baseball, Mom and Apple Pie!" Baseball has woven itself into the national experience.

This advocacy paper intends to address the American League owners, American League players, and American League fans by discussing the history, values, and definitions of Major League Baseball. Next, a chain of reasons will be formed from these common principles that sets out ills in the current situation in American League baseball and the cause of these harms—a structural inherency in the American League system itself. Lastly, a proposed cure will be proffered for the issue.

History of MLB

The history of Major League Baseball (hereinafter MLB) traces its roots back to 1865. A convention of the original amateur associations called a meeting that year and set out the first rules of baseball. Two leagues were subsequently developed in order to use professional (paid) players: The National League (the NL), which originated from the National Association of Professional Baseball Players, founded in 1871; and the American League (the AL), a merger of various teams from out of the Western League, originally established in 1893. These two professional leagues continued to use the 1865 rules. Then, in 1903, the leagues adopted noteworthy additional rules—one that prohibited single ownership of two clubs in the same city, and a second designed to allow for the transfer of players from one league to another (Peterson 725-6).

As the professional sport of baseball grew and matured, its "Golden Age" emerged. The Golden Age of baseball in the 1920s included the premier hero of the age, George Herman Ruth, aka Babe Ruth. As discussed in his biography in the *World Book Encyclopedia*, Ruth, originally a pitcher for the Boston Red Sox, set a record of 60 home runs in a single season in 1927. Babe Ruth also set the record

for career home runs (totaling 714), which would not be broken until 1974 (Lang 568). Ruth, playing for the Yankees, would with these records represent the peak of offensive ability for over three decades. "The House that Ruth built" was in fact Yankee stadium. Ruth was also a part of the unwritten historic tradition of baseball with the Red Sox "curse." Babe Ruth, originally a pitcher for the Red Sox, was traded to the Yankees (a league and divisional rival for the Sox). This curse hypothetically blighted the Red Sox from ever winning or even entering the coveted World Series. This curse would last 90 years. Tradition plays such a significant role in baseball that fans earnestly believe in the reality of a curse to this day.

As baseball approached its 100th year, there appeared an overall offensive sputter in the game as a whole. This inability of teams to earn runs resulted from the continued development of pitching prowess, which not only impaired a team's offense, it also caused overall attendance to seriously fall. Buehler and Calandrillo explain that pitching began to dominate the game in the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s because of rules changes that included, in 1962, an enlargement of the strike zone; and the development of new pitches by some of the all-time greatest pitchers like Sandy Koufax and Don Drysdale. Team managers also learned to make better use of relief pitchers in games, forcing batters to contend with multiple pitching styles (2089).

In order to answer the concerns of worried owners, angry players, and dissatisfied fans, and to stop the drop in attendance at the ballpark, the MLB Rules Committee met in December 1968 and adopted rules to counteract the power of the new breed of pitcher. Three rule changes were adopted: (1) reducing the height of the pitcher's mound from 15 inches to 10 inches; (2) changing the size of the strike zone back to the 1950s dimensions; and (3) ensuring that umpires would strictly enforce rules regarding illegal pitches. These illegal pitches consisted mostly of putting foreign substances like spit or Vaseline on the ball, or scuffing or cutting the ball with a sharp object like a tack hidden in the glove (Buehler and Calandrillo 2089-90).

These three rule changes would work well for the National League, but the American League, after a brief respite, once again saw fan interest and attendance stall. In response to the problems with attendance, the American League would implement, on a trial basis, the designated hitter rule in 1973, as explained below (Buehler and Calandrillo 2088). With a fear that low attendance would become a permanent condition, the AL's then president, Joe Cronin, proposed to the leagues the designated hitter rule (Buehler and Calandrillo 2091). The *designated hitter rule* (DH rule) itself states in essence that the pitcher may

have another player substituted to hit for him, without affecting the pitcher's place in the game. President Cronin likely felt that offense brought fans to the ballpark because of the wild popularity of Babe Ruth who set the record of 60 homeruns in '27, which was thought impossible to break. Yankee Roger Maris brought in droves of fans as he worked to and ultimately did surpass Ruth's home run record with 61 in '61. As such, after much lobbying by Cronin, the AL chose in 1973 to adopt the DH rule. The NL, however, refused to do so. Although the AL initially stated it would only use the DH rule for a trial run of three years, because of extraordinary fan response the AL voted to make the rule permanent prior to its expiration in 1976.

The Dangers of the Designated Hitter Rule

Moral Hazard. The DH rule abounded with controversy from its inception. Even within the AL, players and managers initially split on the effects of the rule. Ted Williams, the "Splendid Splinter," who formerly played as a Red Sox and later a manager for the AL teams the Washington Senators (now Minnesota Twins) and Texas Rangers, is arguably the best all-time hitter in MLB (Nightingale 312). Williams argued that the DH rule would result in specialist players that would undermine baseball's fundamental strategy, altering the essential fabric of the game (Buehler and Calandrillo 2092). The DH rule has changed the game significantly. First, the DH rule created what is termed a "moral hazard" for AL pitchers (2095-2102). A moral hazard exists when some type of insurance protects an individual from the repercussions of his reckless acts. In baseball this means that, because the pitcher will not bat (he is "insured" against having to bat by the DH rule), he may hit a batter on the opposing team without fear of retribution to himself—the reckless behavior/moral hazard. The Buehler and Calandrillo article proves this point clearly (Buehler & Calandrillo 2103-7). As such, the DH rule drives reckless behavior and even violence in the sport of baseball.

This issue has empirical proof. This season, as recently discussed on *The Rich Eisen Show*, a series of games in late April 2017/early May 2017 took place between AL teams Boston Red Sox and the Baltimore Orioles. A bad slide by player Manny Machado of the Orioles prompted pitchers on both teams to start throwing beanballs (Eisen). Beanballs are pitches thrown with the intention of hitting the player at bat. Moral hazard presents a perilous ill to baseball—Hall of Famer Kirby Puckett suffered a severe head injury while playing for the Minnesota Twins that ended his career. It also perverts the "Most Perfect Thing" (Peterson 724) into something ugly and reprehensible.

Loss of Strategy in Baseball. A second serious ill to consider when examining the DH rule is the loss of strategy in baseball. While the DH might "knock the ball out of the park," hitting a home run, there is no guarantee that this will win games. Even on AL teams, strategy is necessary. Baseball fans who are true fanatics of baseball love a well-played game with well-rounded, superior players. As stated in the Williams' quote (Buehler and Calandrillo 2092), specialists result in a loss of skilled players. The *World Book Encyclopedia* describes the four broad, basic skills of baseball: (1) Pitching; (2) Batting; (3) Fielding; and (4) Base Running (Honig 127-8). Because a designated hitter is just that, a designated hitter and nothing more, he lacks the three other fundamental skills that are necessary to a truly skilled baseball player. An otherwise weak player, that would not last in the NL will, by virtue of a single ability, continue in the AL for years past his prime. Some of the older designated hitters cannot even run the bases, meaning that if he does not hit a home run, the opposing team has ample time to tag him out at first.

The choice of stealing a base (advancing when the ball is live, but prior to it being hit) is another element of strategy affected by the DH rule. The NL on average earns more stolen bases in a season than the AL does. AL players hit without the finesse of a skilled batter, and then wait on base for the team's fêted designated hitter to bring in the runs. If this fails to happen, the team's ultimate result is men stranded—left on base without having scored—whereas a careful stolen base may result in a runner advancing to scoring position who can then run home on the next successful hit ball.

The Myth of Higher Interest and Attendance for the Stadium. Finally, this paper will address the axiomatic reason for the original implementation of the DH rule. As discussed in Part I.A, supra, the DH rule was created for the express purpose of increasing attendance. However, when teams in the same or similar markets are considered, NL teams inevitably have higher attendance per home game than AL teams, as shown in the following table:

MLB TEAMS IN SIMILAR MARKETS AVERAGE ATTENDANCE FOR HOME GAMES (2015)					
TEAMS WITHIN 75 MILES OF EACH OTHER			TEAMS WITHIN 500 MILES OF EACH OTHER		
Ex. #	Team (League)	Attendance	Ex. #	Team (League)	Attendance
1	Washington **(NL)**	**32,344**	1	Cincinnati **(NL)**	**29,870**

	Baltimore (AL)	29,246		Cleveland (AL)	17,361
2	L.A. Dodgers **(NL)**	**46,479**	2	Miami **(NL)**	**21,557**
	L.A. Angels (AL)	37,195		Tampa Bay (AL)	15,254
3	San Francisco **(NL)**	**41,678**	3	Milwaukee **(NL)**	**31,390**
	Oakland (AL)	21,829		Minnesota (AL)	27,408
4*	N.Y. Mets (NL)	31,725	4	St. Louis **(NL)**	**43,468**
	N.Y. Yankees ***(AL)***	**39,430**		Kansas City (AL)	33,439
5	Chicago Cubs **(NL)**	**36,039**			
	Chicago W. Sox (AL)	21,677			

Figure 1. Team Attendance (Source: *Sports Reference*, "2015 MLB Attendance & Misc.")

As shown in Figure 1, with the exception of the starred example (No. 4), the AL team the N.Y. Yankees, every NL team in a comparable market attracted more attendees than did its market-similar AL team. The Yankees exist as the sole exception because they are a storied franchise that has stayed in the same market for over 100 years, and because the team is one of the original teams in baseball. The very reason that the DH rule was implemented, to increase attendance that rivals NL teams, has shown no change. AL teams still lag behind NL teams in terms of attendance. The boost in attendance from the new home run record breakers, Mark McGuire, Barry Bonds, and Sammy Sosa all benefited specific NL teams—respectively, the St. Louis Cardinals, the San Francisco Giants, and the Chicago Cubs. While home run hitters will create a bump in attendance in a single season, the overall data supports the claim that NL teams have a larger overall number of attendees at each game. The DH rule did not even accomplish the greater attendance numbers hoped for when it was instituted.

Who Controls the Rules of Baseball? Creating a Cure

As covered at the start of this paper, the principal rules for the MLB were codified in 1865. However, rules have been modified and added over the years, including the DH rule. The present system created the DH rule using the voting power of the AL league. The owners of each league and the collective bargaining association for the players vote on a proposed rule. In the case of the DH rule, then AL President Joe Cronin proposed the rule, and with heavy lobbying, a

sufficient number of AL team owners voted for it. Then, a similar majority of players in the AL voted for the implementation of the rule. Finally, the AL fans chose to embrace the change. This did not happen in the NL, resulting in the current split in the leagues. The AL bears the blame for the ills previously described: the moral hazard and the loss of strategy with AL teams creating an overreliance on a player with only one trick—hitting home runs. The AL also will never achieve the same number of attendees at games that similar NL teams have while chasing the myth that a home run hitter brings in fans. If the AL fails to vote to abolish the DH rule, then (1) the moral hazard will continue to exist because pitchers will never pitch; (2) the AL coaches will maintain an overreliance on DH hitters to make home runs and bring in base runners in order to win games; and (3) the AL will also never achieve the number of fans NL teams have because their popularity rests on a single player who must have a good game every time—a statistical impossibility. The AL system must solve its structural inherency in order to stop reprehensible acts like beanballs, to create opportunities for strategic plays, and to prove or disprove the myth of DH popularity.

The cure is simple: the AL should abolish the DH rule with all expediency. AL teams will adapt, coaches will use more strategy, the payroll spent of expensive DH players will be freed to spend on other players who increase strategic possibilities, and AL teams will be able to attract fans of baseball. The All-Star Game holds a home run derby each year. Fans are able to see which player is the best home run hitter then. While home runs help teams of baseball, home runs do not constitute the complete game of baseball, and should not be the focus of any team, much less an entire league.

Do not let the AL be the league that leaves Hall of Famers like Kirby Puckett injured, suffering from a serious brain injury that results in his death two years later. Do not let the AL be the league that fails to achieve greatness because it places an overreliance on a single player for a team's greatness. Do not let the AL languish in the shadow of the NL, a result of a relatively recent rule that most people do not even understand in a historical context.

With this advocacy paper, the authors have shown that the DH rule is a blight in baseball. The rule creates a moral hazard for pitchers, it reduces the effective strategy used by AL team managers, and it doesn't even solve the original problem it was meant to address: the inequities in attendance between NL and AL teams. The authors hope that the AL will realign itself with the more traditional and more preeminent NL and rise to its own greatness.

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The Best Argument in Baseball: A Refutation

Duncan Martinez

In 1973, the American League (AL) began the Designated Hitter (DH) experiment to boost offense, and thus—they hoped—increase the popularity of their league. Not only did it spark popularity, but it began perhaps the greatest ongoing debate in the history of sports, because the other half of Major League Baseball (MLB), the National League (NL), chose to *not* adopt the DH. While the DH became official in the AL in 1976, the debate continues today. The culture of baseball is evenly divided between those who love the DH and those who hate it; in the past two seasons, it has come to the forefront as pitchers retaliated for conduct on the field. The conversation continues. Having the DH in the AL is not only good for baseball, it is great for the growth of the game: not because it is better than the lack of a DH, but because it foments this argument. It forces fans to take a side. The controversy keeps baseball relevant—it gives fans something else to root for, to be fanatical about.

Points of Contention

Tradition. Tradition is the first argument for most NL fans, the idea somehow that the game of baseball has not changed, but for the DH. This is a ridiculous notion; baseball, like most things in this world, is evolving constantly. Gone are the short

pants with sanitary socks and stirrups, seasons are longer, mounts are lower and uniform, performance enhancing drugs are regulated, with more changes every year (Peterson 726, Dougherty 10).[1] The DH has been around for 40 years and is now entrenched in the AL, and "the AL isn't going back. Their fans love having that extra bat. They think it makes the game better" (Justice 2). Tradition is great, but the DH does not violate some obscure rule about what can and cannot be changed. The DH is simply, to some, an improvement.

Loss of Strategy. Opponents of the DH claim that it affects the strategy of the game: "The DH rule robs managers of a key bit of strategy: the double-switch" (Nilsson 2). The idea that the DH eliminates strategy is absurd. It absolutely changes baseball, and changes the required strategy, but it does not eliminate it. In fact, by having two styles of play it makes for more complicated discussion about strategy. How does an NL team prepare a roster when they have to play with a DH some of the time? What changes need to be made from stadium to stadium? Every element of the game creates strategy, so the fact that the DH changes some things is well taken, but it does not hold any real weight: It *is* different, meaning different complexities, not less important ones.

As for the loss of the double-switch, which is a real loss, it is traded for the DH. The idea from 1973 was to increase offense. They traded one strategy for a better bat, and it worked: according to Nilsson, "the batting averages for the AL have been better than the NL every year between 1973, when the DH was instituted, and 2008" (3). The 2010 article also points out that while the NL had a better average in 2009, the best hitting teams were in the AL (3). The double switch was traded for better hitting, and AL fans seem to like that.

Not Hitting as a Benefit. Some argue that pitchers benefit in the AL because they do not have to bat, but this is, on the surface, moot. No matter the league, both teams play by the same rules, and thus, whether or not the pitcher gets to rest is meaningless. If NL pitchers had to bat against AL teams while AL pitchers did not, that would be unjust. Many AL pitchers have argued the opposite, that not going to the plate left them feeling "like I'm not part of the game" (Buehler and Calandrillo 2092). As long as the rule is the same, therefore applied evenly, nothing else matters.

Moral Hazard. In the case of the DH, the pitcher in AL games does not himself go to bat, so if he hits an opposing player, he cannot be retaliated against by the opposing pitcher—he does not face getting hit. While it is true that more batters are hit in the AL, the point is irrelevant for several reasons: first, the custom is to hit the opposing big hitter in response (and thus force the opposing team to police itself); second, this is a business, not a kindness convention—the hitting of batters

is good for revenue, especially if there is controversy attached; third, the fallout of the feuds so-created drives ratings; and finally, the increase is effectively trivial, where "the AL hit batsman rate exceeds the NL by [only] 7.5 per 10,000 at-bats" (Buehler and Calandrillo, citing Trandel, White, and Klein 2102).

Fewer Stolen Bases. "[T]he stolen base is not a strategy that most teams use with any regularity. This year there were all of 3538 attempts across the majors: the fewest in a full season since 1973" (Tayler 82). The DH may be a factor in decreased steals, but it is not the major factor: "there are many reasons for the decline of the stolen base. Foremost is the sabermetric revolution, which emphasizes the value of not making outs" (Tayler 84). The stolen base has become an "antiquated weapon" (84). The DH may have hastened this along, but the math speaks for itself. The stolen base will continue to be a fading commodity.

Cost

Baseball is, first, and foremost, a business; it is important to remember that fact. "Let's face it, NL fans think their game is better…[a]nd the AL isn't going back" (Justice 2). If the DH were added to the NL or removed from the AL, an entire group would be alienated. The game cannot afford such a move. The costs of adding and losing the DH would be tremendous, as both revenue dollars would go away, but so would the controversy. The latter is the key: this debate makes baseball relevant in months when it is often ignored. In the average month of May, the NFL has their draft while both the NBA and NHL have playoffs. Baseball is just starting a slow grind, with numbers that don't mean a whole lot for months. But, when the Red Sox and Orioles go at it, and pitchers throwing at hitters comes to the forefront, every baseball fan chimed in with their take on the DH. It has been called, "[b]aseball's most divisive debate" for a reason (Justice 3). When Sports Center starts with Chris Sale throwing behind a batter without hitting him before they get to LeBron and the NBA Playoffs, that says something.

Conclusion

The DH is now a part of baseball, and, despite the fact that it is not liked by everyone, belongs in baseball. Having differences makes for all sorts of fun, and having the DH allows for arguments and discussions that we would lose without it. Baseball is better for having the DH, as long as it stays in the AL; if it is lost or adopted in both leagues, then all of the positives, in reality, go away.

Endnotes

1. Before standardization, groundskeepers would change the mound height each day, depending on the home team's pitcher (Buehler and Calandrillo 2090).

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Be it Resolved: That the State of California Should Eliminate the Sentence of Life Without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP)

Daniel Whitlow, Richard Fontes, and Robert Mosley

An Independent Auditor's Report indicates that for the 2016 fiscal year, the operating expenses for Los Angeles-area St. Jude's Children's Hospital totaled $943,934. In the same fiscal year, the entire St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital organizations' total functional expenses covering patient care, research, education, training, community service programs, and administrative and general expenditures from dozens of facilities across the country, added up to $1,179,594,998. By comparison, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) reported that the State of California spent a staggering $2,748,001,284 to house prisoners for the 2013 fiscal year, which would effectively cover St. Jude's annual functional expenses, for every hospital incorporated in their organization, 2.3 times over.

Such spending disparity seems symptomatic of a state of dysfunction within our justice system and is suggestive of California's elected representatives'

problematic disconnection from reason—choosing to spend more money to permanently incarcerate prisoners than giving sick children a chance at life. This uneconomical misappropriation of funds must be solved, particularly given a prison population that continues to grow. According to the previously cited report, the total inmate population is projected to reach 131,092 inmates by the year 2020 (CDCR). These advocates will show there is a better, more efficient, way—by affecting positive economic and restorative change. Be it resolved, that the State of California should eliminate the sentence of Life Without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP). This paper will begin with an examination of the problems at hand.

Financial and Moral Insolvency

The perpetual nature of LWOP is propelling the State of California into a haze of financial and moral insolvency by ensuring a constant, expanding fiscal obligation and a hopeless death sentence for its populace. According to a state-compiled January 2016 report, there are 5,012 LWOPs in California, making up 3.9% of the overall incarcerated population. California's Legislative Analyst's Office (2017) determined it costs $70,812 a year to house the average inmate. That would mean the state of California spends $354,909,744 a year to permanently house the current LWOP population. Furthermore, the State of California reports that the cost per inmate has increased at an average of $4,000 a year. This trend assures that more money will drain into a faulty mechanism, producing continued economic strain. The ever-inflating cost for housing LWOP inmates continues to take away much needed funding from other important facets of California's budget, including medical research, educational needs, and much needed infrastructure projects. The money that California spends to confine LWOPs would keep the aforementioned Los Angeles Children's Hospital expense-free for 375.9 years.

More significantly, LWOP as a sentencing policy offers no means or motivation for the prisoners to better themselves, corroborating the general presumption that those sentenced to LWOP are worthless, and incapable of redemption. In the minds of LWOP prisoners, this systemic neglect and disregard gives control to self-hating opinions of uselessness, anger, and despair, which often leads to bitterness, depression, and violence. Without the impetus to grow, thousands of LWOP men and women deteriorate in stone cells, with no incentive to understand their crimes and take steps towards developing a healthier understanding of how they can make amends for their actions and restore their humanity.

Failure in Design and Attitude

Responsibility for the dysfunctional state of affairs falls on two fundamentally flawed structural and attitudinal inherencies within the prevailing system. If the current system is allowed to continue without change, the problems will certainly persist, along with the growing prison population and its corresponding cost.

First, the current system focuses solely on housing the incarcerated population, providing facilities and beds for the ever-increasing number of inmates. It fails to address its moral and financial responsibilities by not removing antiquated and inequitable mandatory sentencing laws. Dow notes, "China and Pakistan, hardly exemplars of progressive criminal justice policy, allow prisoners serving life sentences to come up for parole after twenty-five years. Meanwhile, the United States imprisons wrongdoers for sentences that are five to seven times longer than sentences for comparable offenses in, say, Germany." It also fails by not offering adequate resources to programs designed to encourage rehabilitation for prisoners to reduce the overall prison population.

Second, in addition to structural flaws with existing laws, political efforts to fight legislative attempts to change the "tough on crime" paradigm California maintains suggests an inherent attitude that remains flawed. According to Dow, "sending a prisoner to die behind bars with no hope of release is a sentence that denies the possibility of redemption every bit as much as strapping a murderer to the gurney and filling him with poison." While there has been judicial progress in the form of the recent passage of senate bills affording approximately 300 juvenile LWOPs potential sentence relief, the problem exists and will continue to exist until failures in sentencing laws and attitudes toward said laws are addressed.

Low Recidivism Rates

There has been progress creating reform for Juvenile LWOPs, namely *Miller vs. Alabama* (2012) and California's Senate Bill 9 (2012), which allows Judges to consider the juvenile's post-conviction rehabilitative efforts in the process of applying their discretion and resentencing the youth offenders to a 25-to-Life sentence, effectively removing the juveniles' LWOP. While this is a step in the right direction for California, as mentioned, it only pertains to a small percentage of the total LWOP population.

According to the CDCR's website, during Governor Brown's term in office over 4,000 Lifers have been granted parole. The current recidivism rate for those 4,000 is under an astonishing 1%. Recidivism rates for non-lifer parolees varies and is as high as 48%. Weisberg et al. found the recidivism risk of recently released

California lifers to be minimal (364). If the Lifers are able to reenter society and pose a minimal risk to their communities, as the recidivism numbers indicate, LWOPs are just as capable. The only difference between "Life With" and "Life Without" is generally a result of legal technicalities, though both sentences are still indeterminate by nature.

With the removal of LWOP, the number of prisoners with the present *lowest recidivism rates* would potentially expand by over 20%, allowing the Board of Parole Hearings to do their job and give the prisoners the chance to earn their release, which over time would begin to relieve the fiscal burden permanent imprisonment imposes on the state. If the LWOP population were fixed at the amount given by the January 2016 CDCR report referenced earlier—5,012—after 20 years, the state would spend a minimum of $7,098,094,640 to house them. After 30 years, over $10.64 billion, and that is not taking into consideration the consistent population increases already mentioned, or the ever-increasing medical costs of an aging LWOP population. CDCR also suggests that "state officials looking to reduce prison expenditures can get only so far by trimming per-inmate costs. Far bigger savings can come from proven steps that reserve incarceration for those who most warrant it and reduce prison populations by developing lower cost alternatives for others."

Conclusion

The elimination of LWOP will not be a "quick fix". There is no easy, instantaneous solution for California's prison-based financial gridlock. State Legislators need to enact policies aimed at utilizing restorative justice reforms *in addition* to abolishing draconian sentencing laws, like LWOP, that seek to minimize rehabilitation and restorative reform and maximize the continuation of mass incarceration and population inflation. By comparison, countries like Croatia, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain have "no legislative provision for life imprisonment at all" (Appleton and Grover 601). Dissolution of LWOP would potentially lighten the persistent financial burden imposed on the penal system and the State budget by reducing overcrowding, resulting from the permanency of LWOPs. Additionally, by increasing the number of parole-eligible Lifers, and offering more rehabilitative opportunities to supplement their development, more prisoners that are capable of reentering society will have the ability to prove they deserve another chance to contribute to their respective communities.

Refutation to the Refutation: An Op-Ed

Richard Fontes

The availability of copious evidence for a specific, even intimate topic, blinds the prison-group to the obstacles of writing a refutation paper. For example: Life Without the Possibility of Parole (LWOP) is a sentence that produces a great deal of articles in the con (no pun intended), and the emotional response of a college cohort, most of whom are serving LWOP, is undeniable. Also, a college student who is personally impacted by LWOP is understandably inspired by the prospect of highlighting the plethora of flaws surrounding such a draconian law. However, this tunnel-vision approach omits the second half of the assignment: the refutation.

An argumentation course includes teaching "two of the most important objectives for the use of arguments: effective decision making and the desire to achieve social harmony," but the group setting in a college cohort—in prison, no less—diminishes an individual's creativity and desire to expand understanding beyond the low-hanging fruit of legal policies. Additionally, the goal of social harmony is unavoidably ridiculed by the individual writing the refutation on his or her obligatory (LWOP) policy. Clearly, another objective for the course is to develop a skill set to effectively argue from either side of the policy, using the communication skills and understanding of argumentation derived from the course. It stands to reason that the individual student (without the unwanted influence of the group's binding decision) would enjoy a great deal more satisfaction from the opportunity to argue, in earnest, from either side of the policy, thereby creating a more constructive process during the refutation paper.

A group's selection of LWOP for a proposed policy change has limited resources to support claims in the refutation paper. The primary argument, as indicated by limited resources, made it in favor of LWOP and stems from the notion that LWOP is a humane alternative to the death penalty. However, according to Wright, as cited in an Oxford journal article, "LWOP prisoners 'vehemently disapprove of their sentences' and would prefer to be executed rather than kept alive behind bars for the rest of their lives" (Appleton and Grover). The vast majority of inmates serving on death row would rather be serving LWOP due to better legal assistance and compassion. So, how does a writer of a refutation paper argue realistically for the support of LWOP? Albeit rhetorical, such questions support the claim for the need of freedom to write independent of a group's influence (under these unique circumstances), pro or

con. Once again, the ability to write from either side of the policy is recognized as one of the primary objectives for argumentation, and, indeed, this is not lost on the arguer. Nevertheless, the pursuit of meaningful evidence to support the sentence of LWOP in a refutation paper is an offense to anyone serving LWOP.

Those who rely on extreme cases (i.e. Charles Manson, etc.) as justification for the policy, incorrectly apply the facts. In suggesting that the heinous nature of Manson's crimes is a prime example for the need of LWOP, the proponent fails to acknowledge that Manson was not sentenced to LWOP once he was convicted. The "life" sentence Manson received several decades ago has provided the Board of Prison Terms (BPT) with sufficient tools to keep him behind bars in perpetuity. Furthermore, anyone arguing for the benefits of LWOP while serving the inhumane sentence does so at their own peril. If LWOP remains a viable sentencing option, the potential for abuse and inconsistent applications of LWOP remain very real possibilities. Worse yet, an argument in favor of LWOP requires the proponent to dismiss the idea of a path to redemption and fails to recognize some of the questionable benefactors of LWOP. A few of the primary examples of the benefactors of LWOP and who would wish to remain anonymous: The Correctional Officer's Union (CCPOA)—life sentences provide job security and an ever-expanding budget for CDCR; and victims of violent crimes—LWOP serving as a form of revenge, without the moral burden of taking the offender's life. It also serves as a cover-up for the clandestine ambitions of political groups such as the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). If you think it's odd that crime victim advocates and law enforcement professionals would champion a cause with a slogan, "Sign up to Help End the Death Penalty," your suspicions would be warranted. PPIC's true agenda was revealed, and it turned out to be an effort to rewrite the LWOP law in such a manner to exclude a path of redemption, no matter how much time an individual has served. Knowing this, a writer's effort to complete a refutation paper on LWOP requires that they (as a person of LWOP status) must sacrifice their integrity to achieve this goal. Arguably, the students are merely demonstrating a required skill for the course, but this attempt to satisfy the professor is executed with great dissatisfaction to this writer.

In the final analysis, members of this cohort will provide, ostensibly, plausible arguments for their refutation papers in favor of LWOP. In doing so, they will have unwittingly contributed to an egregious platform for misinformation. Yes, they will have satisfied the assignment, but at what cost? Ethos must not be sacrificed to satisfy any assignment. Furthermore, some in this cohort are made unwilling participants, by virtue of majority rules, for LWOP's deceptive benefits. The arguments *against* LWOP has the potential to produce powerful rhetoric; the

argument *in favor* of LWOP is fertilization for deception. There are two options to rectify the problem of LWOP as a refutation paper: (1) eliminate the mandatory groups for this particular assignment; or (2) eliminate the option of LWOP as a potential policy challenge. Either way, a person serving LWOP will not be asked to argue for their demise…unless they chose that option.

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Be it Resolved: The United States Federal Government (USFG) Should Ban Smoking in All Public Places

James Cain, Jimmie Gilmer, James Heard, & Jeff Stein

[Excerpt]
Thomas Jefferson once said, “one person’s rights end where another person’s begins.” Today we know that millions of Americans have died from second-hand smoke as a result of others who exercised their rights to smoke (Center for Disease Control). While there exists a patchwork of ordinances banning smoking in public places at the local and state level, such as the city of Solana Beach in San Diego, California, which has passed ordinances creating smoke-free beaches to improve public health, no comprehensive regulation exists nationally that would protect non-smoking citizens from health dangers inherent in second-hand smoke. These dangers include heart disease, stroke, cancer, respiratory problems, and death. Such significant harms should be addressed at a national level to ensure the health of all Americans. As such, the United States Federal Government should ban smoking nationally in all public spaces. We will examine the existing problems within the status quo, the roots of the problems, and what can be done to mitigate the problems.

A Well-Established Problem

There is no question that prolonged exposure to smoke from burning tobacco products as well as exhaled tobacco smoke is dangerous. Researchers suggest that there are 7,000 compounds in cigarette smoke, 250 of which are known carcinogens such as cyanide, carbon monoxide, and ammonia (National Cancer Institute). In fact, the same study notes that 7,300 lung cancer deaths and 34,000 heart disease deaths per year can be attributed to the harmful effects of smoking and second-hand smoking. The American Lung Association suggests that involuntary exposure to cigarette smoke increases the risk of stroke by a whopping 20 to 30 percent. Moreover, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports that approximately 2.5 million nonsmokers have died from health problems attributed to second-hand smoke since 1974. This habit also affects the most vulnerable amongst us. DiFranza and Lew found that 53,000 babies required intensive care at birth because their mothers smoked during pregnancy.

Lack of Holistic Approach*.* Simply put, there is no federal law that protects Americans in public spaces from the harms of cigarette smoke. At present, it is

left in the hands of local and state agencies to implement policies that outlaw smoking in public spaces. However, such ordinances leave many citizens unprotected and at risk of health issues related to involuntary smoking.

Efforts to address the issue are tempered by big business and those who profit from cigarette sales, and are leading factors why such a risk to public health exists. The United States Government and the Big Tobacco business have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, regardless of the number of citizens affected. Maloney reports that 42 percent of an average pack of cigarettes in the United States costing $6.42 went to taxes, thus creating a mutually beneficial situation for the federal government in collecting taxes, and Big Tobacco who continue to profit despite a drop in the number of smokers. The sales are enormous, and influence from the tobacco industry has resulted in woefully inadequate regulation that fails to keep nonsmokers safe.

Conclusion

Evidence overwhelmingly shows that second-hand smoke or involuntary smoking results in negative health consequences for those subjected to it over time. Over 2 million non-smoking individuals have died since the 1970's while the federal government has failed to create a national policy to address this problem. The extent and impact of inhaling second-hand smoke in public places far outweigh whatever costs, real or imagined, that may or may not be incurred by various interests opposed to a national ban, and should be remedied by the United States Federal Government.

Local Control Lets Us All Breathe Better

Jeff Stein

[Refutation Excerpt]

Individual citizens, businesses, and states have been protected from the overreach of the United States Federal Government by the Constitution since the founding of our democratic republic. Local governments already work with their citizens to create desired public smoking bans—provided that the constituency votes in favor. This paper will argue that the proposition as stated by the advocates is unwarranted given existing local ordinances, the actual magnitude and extent of the problem that remains unknown, and the prohibitive costs that such policy would incur.

Although the idea of protecting non-smoking citizens from the health hazards of exposure to smoke is worth considering, there are a number of ways in which the advocates' position fails. First, while a causal correlation between second-hand smoke exposure and health implications such as cancer, stroke, and death are undeniable, the advocate does not maintain that exposure occurs solely in public spaces rather than private homes or individual vehicles (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention). The advocate fails to differentiate in data provided, and unless the numbers are clearly delineated, creating a national ban makes little sense as we do not know the actual extent and impact of second-hand smoke exposure to citizens while they are in public in *every* part of America. Second, the proposed ban will carry costs that outweigh the advantages. Costs include a loss of tax revenue, jobs, and the states' rights to self-regulate. The British Broadcasting Company reports that Big Tobacco pays a significant portion of the United States' bills through federal taxes paid on tobacco sales. They write, "the U.S. Treasury is estimated to have pocketed $118.6 billion in U.S taxes" over 10 years. Even with a modest decrease of 10-15 percent in tobacco sales annually to drop in smokers or with the proposed ban, it would lead to a loss of billions of dollars that our Treasury can ill afford. Third, the proposed ban would also lead to job losses (CorpWatch). Lastly, a nationwide ban on smoking in public spaces is an unnecessary and possibly unconstitutional overreach of federal authority. Local communities such as Solana Beach, California and many others have enacted their own smoking ordinances based on votes by their respective constituents. High-minded and well-meaning laws such as the proposed ban creates more Big-Brother like intrusion into the lives of millions of Americans.

Instead of relying on the federal government to resolve issues, we can advocate and build communities locally. In the end, whatever cure we enact to remedy an ill must not create more problems than it solves. A national ban on cigarette smoking in public will have many unintended consequences and may not effect much of a cure, as this paper has illustrated. Let us think globally, but act locally.

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Be it Resolved: That California State University Make Mental Health Screening Mandatory for its Students

Tin Nguyen, Clifton Lee Gibson, Dortell Williams & Stephen Houston

On May 2, 2017, at approximately 2pm, Kendrix J. White viciously attacked four students on the University of Texas campus. Armed with an army knife, White left one dead and three wounded and an entire campus community paralyzed with fear (Chavez and Sanchez 1). White reportedly suffered from an unspecified mental illness, with comparison drawn to the perpetrator of the 2007 Virginia Tech shooting, who also suffered from mental challenges. Studies reveal that most college students with mental issues do not receive treatment, and existing policies that rely on self-diagnosis are inadequate. The prevailing stigma around mental health issues further dilute the effectiveness of policies with this approach, as is the case with the California State University system-wide policy. While CSU campuses have been incident free, it is precisely due to the possibility of a violent attack by a student suffering from mental distress that we propose that CSU make mental health screening mandatory for all students.

Untreated Problems

College campuses are grounds for unique stressors that can cause or worsen mental health issues such as separation anxiety, binge drinking, poor nutrition, chronic stress, and financial strain (White 1). In fact, Mistler, Reetz, Krylowicz, and Barr report that roughly 42% of college students suffer from anxiety, and 36% of

college students suffer from depression. More significantly, from the same study, 347 out of 363 university and college counseling center directors believed that the number of students with significant psychological problems was a growing concern on their home campus as they observe an increase in a student population who experience mental distress (174). Yet the most recent data from large multi-institutional studies indicate that most students with mental health problems do not receive treatment. While suicide is the second most common cause of death among college students (Henriques 2), a study by the National Research Consortium of Counseling Centers in Higher Education reports that fewer than half of the students who had seriously considered suicide in the year prior did not receive professional help (Eisenberg 224). These statistics paint the portrait of a college population with members who are struggling silently, with the potential for their mental distress to escalate if left untreated.

Flawed Policy

In 2010, three years following the Virginia Tech shooting, the CSU system implemented Executive Order No. 1053. Designed to "maintain and enhance the academic performance of matriculated students and to facilitate their retention in state-sponsored programs of the university," services provided are to include "professional mental health care; counseling, outreach and consultation programs; and educational programs and services" (Reed 1-2). However, the policy itself is structurally unsound for a few reasons. First, the order itself is wholly inadequate given its voluntary nature, putting the onus on students to self-diagnose. This is not a population that is equipped to recognize the signs of depression or risks of suicide; thus, to expect self-diagnosis with follow-up to treatment is unlikely. Next, it offers inadequate protection for a population that is otherwise occupied by classes, assignments, meetings, social gatherings, and other activities (Eisenberg 229). There is no significant attempt to create a space for students to seek counseling given these preoccupations. Finally, this executive order does not adequately address the cultural stigma associated with mental health, whether it is shame or denial by family members, judgment from peers, or shame experienced by the students themselves. This policy assumes that students are able to recognize and to navigate the subtle nuances of mental health and its surrounding issues.

To its credit, the CSU Mental Health Initiative of 2015, a product of Proposition 63, reaches a population of nearly 300,000 individuals. The proposition itself provides an additional $7.1 million to increase mental health awareness and to respond to students experiencing issues (Chapin 1). However,

the report fails to distinguish whether the number of individuals reached represent that of the study body, or what protocols are in place to ensure that those who need help are taken care of. While it acknowledges that 19 percent of CSU students report impaired academic functioning due to mental distress, assuming there are 30,000 CSU students enrolled on a given campus, the percentage of students *known* to be suffering from mental health would amount to nearly 6,000 students (Chapin 1). It only takes one mental break and one gun to turn these inadequacies into tragedy. More drastic measures need to be implemented to address the policy issues.

Refutation [Excerpt]

Tin Nguyen

Imagine a student relying on a scholarship for their education, where they must keep a certain GPA and work a part time job to maintain a sustainable living, in addition to fulfilling other requirements that pertain to the scholarship. The stresses that these elements produce can be overwhelming for a middle-age individual with a fully developed and mature brain, and yet with the present proposal, students are expected to be screened for mental health issues or face repercussions. These challenges will place further burden and stress on a mind that is not fully developed. Therefore, this paper will demonstrate that the proposed proposition is not only unnecessary, but is detrimental to the student body of California State University system. This paper will begin by showing how mandatory screening can be detrimental to students, followed by a demonstration that the current policy is adequate and sufficient without the need for additional policy change.

Points of Contention

Detrimental for Students. In January of 2015, an undergraduate Yale student committed suicide as a result of her depression. White refers to this incidence as justification for mandatory screening. White believes that had the student's mental disorder been caught in its earlier stage, the student's life could have been saved. Yet, the student herself had expressed fear of being expelled from Yale as a result of her depression (1). This is a prime example of how stressors can lead individuals to develop mental disorders. There are numerous studies that suggest that the reason for youth to take risks and act impulsively is that their minds are not fully developed. Dobbs exclaims, "they act that way because their brains

aren't done" (3)! Researchers suggest that the brain between the age of 15 and 25 "undergoes extensive remodeling, resembling a network and wiring upgrade" (2). The brain's growth during this period is at its slowest, and since the growth begins from the back and works its way to the frontal area where most of the exclusive decisions are made, the students—by nature—are wired to be reactive, impulsive, and risk-taking. This period "brings peaks in all sorts of risky ventures and ugly outcomes" (4). As such, the additional mandatory mental health screening with a risk of repercussions may not only push the young minds beyond their capacity to handle stress, but it may also lead to undesired consequences where they hurt themselves or others.

Executive Order No. 1053. California State University's Executive Order is voluntary, and therein lies its potential. It provides sufficient services and channels for students to seek mental health help without placing additional stress factors on the individual student. For instance, it mandates that all CSU shall provide at the minimum: (1) counseling and psychotherapy; (2) suicide and personal violence services; (3) emergency/crisis services; (4) outreach; (5) mental health consultation; and (6) referral resources (Reed 1-2). While students with anti-social tendencies are less likely to seek help, there is no reason to believe that the range of services offered are inadequate.

Proposition 63. Proposition 63 provides $7.1 million to CSU to fund mental health programs that have increased "awareness of student mental health issues and campus resources—as well as effectively responding to student distress" (Chapin 1). Furthermore, the initiative has introduced a collaboration between the CSU system, the University of California (UC) system, the California Community College (CCC) system, and local agencies to train police officers to "recognize health illnesses and effectively de-escalate dangerous situations" (1). In conjunction with the Executive Order, the current policies render mandatory screening moot, unnecessary, and with the risk of becoming a source of stress for students—potentially harmful.

Refutation [Excerpt]

Dortell Williams

In this, our "Land of the Free," no one should be compelled to do anything against their will. The very notion of a mandatory proposal to screen young citizens for mental health is, in and of itself, unpatriotic. Mandatory screening is intrusive and has no place in voluntary institutions such as on a college campus. It should be

emphasized that California has not experienced the type of violence cited as a catalyst for the mandatory screening proposal. The advocates focus narrowly on issues of mental health in the CSU system, but according to the CSU Mental Health Initiative, CSU has trained nearly 500 vigilant campus police officers to quell the rare occurrence of an insidious attack (Chapin, p. 1). Furthermore, to implement such a screening process in response to two tragic, though out-of-state incidents, opens the door for other institutions to use compulsion in medicine as a means to their own ends.

It is wrong to propose to hold hostage the very education students need to better understand themselves through a mandatory screening. Consider, for decades past, that the cigarette industry concealed the harmful effects of smoking. When government subsidies finally ceased and the legislature acknowledged the truth of smoking's effects, the government responded not with mandatory requirements, but an aggressive educational campaign to challenge the attitudes of Americans. Today, it is unlikely for a person to be unaware of health hazards associated with the use of cigarettes. As an educational institution, the CSU should follow suit, and aim to educate students at the fullest breadth and depth, and teach them to be well-informed, independent thinkers. Mandatory screening fosters handholding, and risks paternalizing young adults, who may come to depend on institutions to tell them what they can and cannot do, what is good and what is not, thus failing to promote the free thinking that has made American universities the premiere institutions they are today. As such, the advocates' push for an awareness campaign will more than satisfy this particular agenda, by alerting students of the signs of mental distress, symptoms of depression, and risks of suicide so they can learn to take independent action.

Furthermore, whether an educational institution should be so deeply involved in medical services provided to students should be questioned. As a result of the wide array of medical advances and the growing efficacy of medical service-providers, most people who experience mental challenges can be treated in short termed outpatient facilities. These local facilities already focus on the type of mental health challenges the advocates cite and provide services such as visits with health professionals, counseling and therapy sessions, and annual depression screenings (Medicare). By leaving mental health care and medication distribution to the institutions that regularly practice this care, our institutions of higher learning can focus on what they do best: educating our future generations. As it is, the current policies as delineated in Chancellor Reed's 2010 memorandum are more than adequate and should not undergo costly changes.

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