

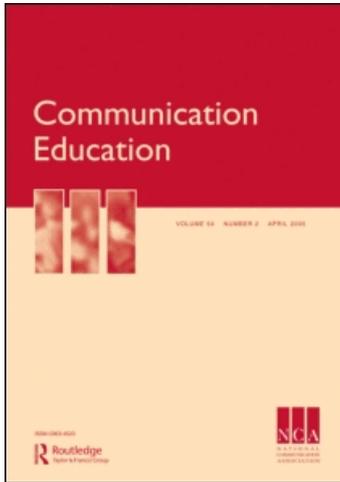
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Curriculum Planning: Trends in Communication Studies, Workplace Competencies, and Current Programs at 4-Year Colleges and Universities

Dale A. Bertelsen & Alan K. Goodboy

Many communication scholars recognize the need to regularly explore current communication curriculum and to evaluate its contribution to meeting the needs of students and the demands of the workplace. However, within the communication discipline, current curricular decisions are based on studies conducted nearly a decade ago. This study (a) analyzes current course offerings in communication department curricula in a random sample of 148 four-year colleges and universities, (b) contrasts these data with results from earlier studies to identify current curriculum trends within the communication discipline, and (c) contrasts these findings with employer demands for communication skills to meet workplace competencies. Ultimately, this paper identifies specific curriculum shifts and offers suggestions about specific course offerings to provide some guidance in curriculum development.

Keywords: Communication Curriculum; Curriculum Trends; Workplace Competencies; Curriculum Planning

The study of communication has been at the core of the academy for well over two-thousand years. Indeed, the study of communication significantly predates Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (Kennedy, 1963, 1972). Throughout history, scholars like Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and St. Augustine have extolled the virtues of communication and celebrated its value to their students (see, for example: Thonssen, Baird, & Braden, 1970). Not surprisingly, as the communication discipline emerged and took its place in the modern academy, contemporary scholars consistently held that the study of

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communication was an essential element in education (Benson, 1985; Cohen, 1994; Craig & Carlone, 1998; Morreale, Osborn, & Pearson, 2000; Phillips & Wood, 1990; Trent, 1998; Windt, 1990; Wood & Gregg, 1995). Few other disciplines may claim the same importance in preparing students for the demands of work, citizenship, and life.

Most recently, Morreale and Pearson (2008) have argued for the centrality of communication in the university curriculum, claiming “that communication instruction is critical to students’ future personal and professional success” (p. 224), and that “the communication discipline is viewed as central to the goals of the educational system” (p. 225). They identified six prevailing themes about communication education in 93 annotated articles surveyed: “vital to the development of the whole person; helps to improve the educational enterprise; encourages being a responsible participant in the world, socially and culturally; helps individuals succeed in their careers and in business; enhances organizational processes and organizational life; and addresses emerging concerns in the 21st century” (pp. 230–233). Morreale and Pearson contend that these findings simply “provide a rationale for studying communication” and “identify the skills and dimensions of communication considered socially relevant and important” (p. 236). Noting that their study provides little guidance for developing communication curricula, they ask: “What appropriate teaching strategies and curricula are in place, or should be in place, so we can ensure that communication education is helping to improve the quality of communication in society?” (p. 236).

In response to that question, the current study sought to identify national curricular trends at 4-year colleges and universities that might provide some guidance about specific course offerings to aid curriculum development. This study does not seek to establish a standardized curriculum for communication studies. Such constraints would be inconsistent with the continued growth and development of the communication discipline. Equally important, arguing for a central core curriculum would overlook the very real constraints inherent in all communication departments—the interests and resources of departmental faculty, and the demands of the local community. But some general curriculum guidelines might reasonably afford educators, prospective students, and employers a clearer view of the specifics and the value of communication studies.

Review of Literature

Recognizing the difficulties inherent in curriculum planning, Redmond and Waggoner (1992) believed that a first step was to identify the nature and scope of the discipline. Their experience suggested that there was little information available about national curricular trends to assist the curriculum planning process. Much of the available information about curriculum planning and development in the communication discipline noted how little agreement existed about what students majoring in communication should be asked to study. Yet, some general suggestions about core courses for a curriculum in communication identified the importance of *Public Speaking*, *Interpersonal Communication*, *Small Group Communication*, and

Communication and Rhetorical Theory (see, for example: Smitter & McDaniels, 1985; Smitter & Buzza, 1987). Because of the clear focus on “speech communication” in early studies, Redmond and Waggoner argued that the communication major placed far too much emphasis on performance (see also: Burgoon, 1989). For them, identifying *Public Speaking* as the basic course constituted a “severe distortion” (p. 3) of the communication discipline, one that undermined “the academic integrity of our discipline” (p. 4). Indeed, the strong emphasis on performance in the discipline created a “skills’ perspective [that] encourages the perception that the discipline does not have a cognate body of theory nor lend itself to research and scholarship” (p. 4).

Although the tendency to elect a performance focus in communication curricula was seemingly embedded in the classical traditions of the discipline, that tendency was exacerbated by the demands of the university and the business community to prepare students for vocational success. As a result, Redmond and Waggoner (1992) proposed a communication studies program that emphasized a functional and theoretical approach to curriculum development over an approach that tied performance skills to communication contexts.¹ Ultimately, they encouraged a curricular focus on five areas of communication: communication theory, interpersonal communication, small group communication, organizational communication, and intercultural communication. The goal of each area would be to establish a hierarchy of courses that would sequentially develop the following learning principles: “understanding, convergent cognitive skills (explanation, drawing conclusions, and translation), divergent cognitive skills, (elaboration, synthesis, and problem-solving), and evaluative cognitive skills (judgment, criticism, and prescription)” (p. 8). Although Redmond and Waggoner offered some important suggestions about curriculum construction and course sequencing, they made little reference to the importance of community needs or outside interests in curriculum development.

In contrast, Smith and Turner (1993) compared communication course offerings at four-year colleges and universities in the United States with desired communication skills for professionals in business, education, and the social and health sciences to help develop a basic communication curriculum. They discovered that *Public Speaking*, *Introduction to Broadcasting*, *Interpersonal Communication*, *Survey*, and *Practicum* were the most frequently offered courses. They also noted that performance courses dominated lower level course offerings while theory and application courses were most commonly offered as upper division courses, thus concurring with Redmond and Waggoner’s recommendation about sequencing skills, theory and application courses in the curriculum (see also: Koester & Lustig, 1991). In addition, Smith and Turner emphasized that communication curricula needed to be responsive to the requirements of the workplace and proposed specific courses to meet those needs.

Recognizing that communication curricula seemed responsive to professional demands, Wardrope (1999) raised concerns about other potential influences on curriculum development such as culturally diverse student populations and the increasing importance of communication technology. He surveyed communication department chairpersons to ascertain the frequency of courses offered, expected to be

offered or desired in communication curricula. Wardrope's research on communication departments' course offerings served as an important resource for Morreale and Backlund's (2002) curriculum development essay. However, nearly a decade has passed since Wardrope's systematic investigation into the types of courses communication departments offer to help students meet the communication demands of the workplace and daily existence. Although Morreale and Pearson (2008) confirm the centrality of the communication discipline in meeting the communication demands for personal and professional success, they recognize the need to explore current communication curricula and to evaluate its contribution to meeting student needs.

For many students, searching the Internet and examining a department's website may constitute their first contact with that department. Indeed, beyond the first impression departmental websites might create for prospective students and their parents, the specific curriculum illustrated on a website may offer considerable initial inducement and guidance in student selection of what major to adopt, which university to attend, and which department to choose. Searching communication department websites then, might serve at least two significant functions. First, researchers might more closely recognize the initial introduction prospective students receive to the communication discipline at four-year colleges and universities. Second, an analysis of the curricula offered on these websites will provide a baseline for exploring current curricular trends in the discipline, how these trends have changed over the past decade, and how well these trends recognize the changing demands for communication skills and competencies to meet the needs of students and the demands of the workplace.

Method

This study was conducted in two phases. First, a list of NCA departmental members was downloaded as a sampling frame.² This list was consulted in an effort to preserve content validity. Specifically, colleges and universities included as NCA departmental members represent a wide array of 4-year learning institutions ranging from small private colleges to research one universities. Additionally, the list provides institutions from 48 of the 50 states (sans Wyoming and Vermont). This sampling frame of 403 institutions allowed us to collect comparative data using Wardrope's (1999) typology of communication curricula which consists of 30 course offerings (see Table 1). Because Wardrope (1999) used the NCA Directory ($N = 420$) as a sampling frame and only sampled four-year institutions, we used the same sampling procedures for replication purposes.

Second, simple random sampling was used to select 148 colleges/universities³ from this sampling frame (the exact sample size Wardrope collected in 1999). All 48 states were represented in the random sample. One hundred and forty-eight communication studies departments' websites were examined to record course offerings. Most course offerings were directly displayed on the department's website; direct to consumer. However, several departments did not display the course offerings on the department website. In these rare cases, the university course catalogs (across several

semesters) were consulted for data collection purposes. Frequency counts were calculated from each website to record current course offerings from each institution using Wardrope's typology as a checklist and guide for data collection. However, two common course offerings (i.e., *Nonverbal Communication* and *Conflict Communication*) were added to the typology. Courses were rigidly categorized according to Wardrope's typology and most current course offerings had the same name or label as in 1999. Additionally, course descriptions were consulted for each course so that offerings with different or unusual names (but identical content) were not overlooked. After all 148 randomly selected websites were consulted, frequency counts were totaled and percent distributions were computed.

Results

The frequency and percent of current course offerings, along with rank and trend data are presented in Table 1.

Discussion

An analysis of the data from Table 1 offers important information about curriculum trends in the discipline at four-year colleges and universities.⁴ These trends highlight the responsiveness of the discipline to demands of students and workplace, and suggest areas where the communication discipline might take a more proactive approach in curriculum planning. Within that context, it is possible to identify some fundamental communication competencies that might help students more appropriately meet employer expectations.

Precisely which communication skills are most needed by today's students is certainly open to debate, and may be as difficult to locate as the proverbial needle in the haystack. Indeed, there is considerable discussion, and often disagreement, about relevant communication skills among academics, students and employers (Dierdorff & Rubin, 2006; English, Manton, & Walker, 2007; Handel, 2003; Morreale, Rubin, & Jones, 1998; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2007; Rubin & Morreale, 1996, 2000; Rynes, Trank, Lawson & Ilies, 2003; Shivpuri & Kim, 2004; Siebert, Davis, Litzenberg, & Broder, 2002; Wardrope, 2002).⁵ Nevertheless, there is a level of consistency among employers about desirable workplace competencies. Interpersonal communication, teamwork, leadership, intercultural or multicultural communication, and some level of reasoning, critical thinking or analysis are regularly listed as highly desirable workplace communication competencies (Curtis, Winsor, & Stephens, 1989; Dierdorff & Rubin, 2006; Eberhardt, McGee, & Moser, 1997; English et al., 2007; Handel, 2003; Kelley & Bridges, 2005; Liptak, 2005; Hart, 2006, 2008; Rynes et al., 2003; Shivpuri & Kim, 2004; Winsor, Curtis, & Stephens, 1997).

As the data in Table 1 indicate, since Wardrope's (1999) survey of communication department heads there has been a dramatic increase in the number of departments nationwide offering courses in *Interpersonal Communication* (+25%). In fact, nearly every department surveyed offered a course in *Interpersonal Communication* (96.6%).

Table 1 Current Departmental Course Offerings at 4-Year Colleges and Universities

Rank	Course	Currently offered	Wardrobe (1999)	Difference
1	Interpersonal Communication	143 (96.6%)	106 (71.6%)	+25.0%
2	Group Communication	138 (93.2%)	101 (68.2%)	+25.0%
3	Organizational Communication	137 (92.6%) ↑	98 (66.2%)	+26.4%
4	Persuasion	135 (91.2%) ↑	95 (64.1%)	+27.1%
5	Public Speaking	129 (87.2%)	95 (84.1%)	+3.1%
6	Intercultural Communication	125 (84.5%) ↑	81 (54.7%)	+29.8%
7	Communication Research Methods	124 (83.8%) ↑	74 (50.0%)	+33.8%
8	Communication Theory	121 (81.8%) ↓	98 (66.2%)	+15.6%
9	Argumentation and Debate	119 (80.4%) ↓	90 (60.8%)	+19.6%
10	Gender Communication	97 (65.5%) ↑	60 (40.5%)	+25.0%
11	Introduction to Communication	87 (58.8%) ↑	63 (42.5%)	+16.3%
12	Political Communication	70 (47.3%) ↑	59 (39.8%)	+7.5%
13	Business and Professional Speaking	66 (44.6%) ↓	68 (45.9%)	-1.3%
14	Rhetorical Criticism	65 (43.9%) ↓	71 (47.9%)	-4.0%
15	Interviewing	59 (39.9%) ↑	45 (30.4%)	+9.5%
16	Health Communication	55 (37.2%) ↑	20 (13.5%)	+23.7%
17	Advanced Public Speaking	47 (31.8%) ↓	67 (45.2%)	-13.4%
18	Language and Communication	43 (29.1%) ↑	38 (25.6%)	+3.5%
19	Family Communication	41 (27.7%) ↑	27 (18.2%)	+9.5%
20	Oral Interpretation	30 (20.3%) ↓	59 (39.8%)	-19.5%
21	Communication and Society	25 (16.9%) ↓	39 (26.3%)	-9.4%
22	Voice and Diction	24 (16.2%) ↓	45 (30.4%)	-14.2%
23	Speechwriting	22 (14.9%) ↑	11 (7.4%)	+7.5%
24	Teaching Methods for Speech (tied)	21 (14.2%) ↓	34 (22.9%)	-8.7%
25	Public Address History (tied)	21 (14.2%) ↓	37 (25.0%)	-10.8%
26	Listening	19 (12.8%) ↓	30 (20.2%)	-7.4%
27	Instructional Communication	12 (8.1%) ↓	26 (17.5%)	-9.4%
28	Coaching Forensics	10 (6.8%) ↓	30 (20.2%)	-13.4%
29	Communication and Aging	9 (6.1%) ↑	4 (2.7%)	+3.4%
30	Sales Communication	6 (4.1%) ↓	6 (4.0%)	-0.1%
Additional courses				
	1 Nonverbal Communication	86 (58.1%)		
	2 Conflict Communication	76 (51.4%)		

Note. $N = 148$ four-year universities/colleges. ↑Increase in rank since 1999. ↓Decrease in rank since 1999.

Although there has been some minor growth in the number of departments offering *Public Speaking* (+3.1%), the increase in *Interpersonal Communication* suggests that the emphasis in communication studies curriculum clearly has shifted from a concern with the “individual’s relation to society to individual’s relations with other people” (Morreale & Backlund, 2002, p. 5). Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that in this regard, communication curriculum planners at four-year colleges and universities have responded well to students’ personal and professional needs, and have anticipated and appreciated the demands of the workplace.

Further evidence of this trend may be seen in the decline in the number of departments offering skills courses such as *Advanced Public Speaking* (-13.4%),

Business and Professional Speaking (−1.3%), and *Sales Communication* (−0.1%). Although the decline in offering these courses is not overwhelmingly significant and may simply be a reflection of the inevitable constraints of departmental resources, as faculty are moved from speech related courses to interpersonal communication courses, it does signal a potential change in curricular offerings in the discipline. Equally important, the movement away from skills courses has some support in the workplace (English et al., 2007). English et al. reported that, among human resource managers surveyed, “organizing and delivering effective speeches’ .. scored lower than most other competencies” (p. 413). Interestingly, the reduction in skills courses may be offset by the major increase in departments offering courses in *Persuasion* (+27.1%), a content area that might easily substitute a theoretical foundation for advanced skill training.

There also has been a substantial increase in the number of departments at four-year colleges and universities offering courses in *Group Communication* (+25%). As the primary area of study that would enhance student competency in teamwork, communication curriculum planners have long understood the importance of group interaction. At the same time, students’ abilities to negotiate and resolve conflicts play an important part in coalition formation and the maintenance of productive working relationships. With 51.4% of departments surveyed offering courses in *Conflict Communication*, these corresponding communication competencies seem to be adequately understood and addressed within the communication studies discipline.

A third trend in communication curricula may be noted in the number of departments offering *Intercultural Communication* (+29.8%). Increasingly, students are being asked to compete in a global environment where sensitivity to the often substantial differences between peoples may be an important element of successful interactions (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007; Birchard, 2007; Hart, 2006; Howard, 2007; Jones, 2005; Kaufman & Johnson, 2005). *Gender Communication* (+25%), another course that emphasizes the enhancement of co- and cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity, was also offered with increased frequency in communication curricula.

Each of these trends reaffirms the notion that communication studies curriculum planning is attuned to desirable workplace competencies, and, in some cases, anticipates students’ personal and professional communication needs. However, there are at least two significant areas where communication curricula seem to inadequately address desired workplace competencies: leadership and critical/analytical ability.

Many employers note that college graduates entering the workforce are poorly prepared for professional success. This is particularly true of leadership skills “such as motivating others, coordinating groups and tasks, [and] serving as a representative for the group” (Shivpuri & Kim, 2004, p. 40). In fact, both employers and college department heads rank leadership as very important, while fully 88% of employers acknowledge that leadership is used in employee selection, only slightly less important in hiring decisions than interpersonal skills and knowledge. Because the current study employed the same course categories Wardrope (1999) used to more

carefully identify trends in curricular offerings, no category existed for leadership courses. More importantly, despite the availability of leadership textbooks within the discipline (see, for example: Hackman & Johnson, 2003; Northouse, 2007), few courses devoted to leadership could be identified.⁶ In future, this particular area should be examined with closer scrutiny.

Another workplace competency most in need of improvement is graduates' critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical skills (Hart, 2006, 2008). In many cases, critical thinking or reasoning skills receive great emphasis from employers when choosing potential new hires (see, Hart, 2006). Communication departments provide some schooling in this area in courses that might be listed as *Argumentation and Debate*, where the analysis of audience and argument might be emphasized. If that is the case, Table 1 suggests that there has been a solid increase in the number of communication departments including a course of this sort in their curriculum (+19.6%). Yet historically, courses in *Rhetorical Criticism* are equally suitable for helping students improve their critical thinking, reasoning, or analytical abilities. Unfortunately, courses in *Rhetorical Criticism*, offered by approximately half of the departments in the discipline in 1999 (47.9%) have declined (-4%) in contemporary curricula since then.

Although these two workplace competencies may not rest exclusively within the domain of communication studies, the history of the discipline does emphasize both in a long educational tradition. The works of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian are heavily focused on developing leadership skills and critical abilities (see, for example: Kennedy, 1963, 1972; Thonssen et al., 1970). Despite this rich tradition, the apparent lack of course offerings and/or the decline in course offerings that might help meet student needs and workplace demands for these skills and abilities suggest an area of curriculum development requiring additional exploration.

Beyond trends in communication curricula that are readily tied to workplace demands, other shifts in communication curricula are also evident. These trends are important as they reveal significant changes in how communication educators at 4-year colleges and universities perceive the appropriate focus of the discipline.

Performance courses, many of them grounded in the Elocutionary period in the early 1900s, during the formative years of the communication discipline (Cohen, 1994), have shown a marked decline in curricular offerings. As Table 1 indicates, there have been rather consistent declines in *Oral Interpretation* (-19.5%) and *Voice and Diction* (-14.2%). The continued movement away from skills courses has marginalized performance courses and diminished the rationale for their inclusion in communication curricula.

In contrast, theory and research courses such as *Organizational Communication* (+26.4%), *Communication Research Methods* (+33.8%), *Communication Theory* (+15.6%), *Introduction to Communication* (+16.3%), *Interviewing* (+9.5%), *Health Communication* (23.7%), and *Family Communication* (+9.5%) are increasingly offered in communication curricula. This tendency might be appropriately understood as a response to calls for the discipline to more adamantly articulate its academic identity, thereby affirming its academic integrity. Such self-reflective correctives are not

uncommon in communication studies (see, for example: Burgoon, 1989; Gouran, 1989; Redmond, & Waggoner, 1992).⁷ The data in Table 1 seem to indicate rather clearly that calls for the discipline to ground its academic identity and integrity in theory instead of performance have been heard.⁸

The data collected in this study also suggest that instructional communication may be a less significant focus for communication departments at 4-year colleges and universities. Courses such as: *Teaching Methods for Speech* (−8.7%), *Instructional Communication* (−9.4%), and *Coaching Forensics* (−13.4%) show considerably less popularity than they did in 1999. This decreasing emphasis on preparing teachers of speech and forensics coaches, combined with the enhanced concentration on theory courses suggests that, in general, communication curricula are increasingly concerned with preparing communication practitioners and more competent communicators.

Conclusion

Communication studies curriculum development at four-year colleges and universities has been largely responsive to private and professional demands for communication skills and competencies. The analysis of market demands employed in this study was not intended to be exhaustive, but simply to offer some preliminary guidance in curriculum development. Certainly the curricular trends and marketplace demands noted here will differ based on geographic location and workplace conditions.

Curriculum development is largely an exercise in adapting the fundamental knowledge base of a discipline to the needs of its constituents. In this context, communication curricula should continue to be responsive to workplace demands. As Jones (2005) proposes, there is a need for “ever more intimate connections between higher education and the larger society. .. [to] align higher education curricula and outcomes with the escalating demands of the surrounding environment” (p. 32). Indeed, a report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America’s Promise suggests that: “educators and employers have begun to reach similar conclusions—an emerging consensus—about the kinds of learning Americans need from college” (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007, p. 2). Similarly, English et al. (2007) note that curriculum revisions should value the contributions of business practitioners, managers, and educators. Many departments have responded to this by including an advisory board, made up of business and nonprofit professionals, to offer some suggestions during the curriculum revision process. However, there is a concern that too much focus on workplace demands might relegate the discipline to vocational instruction—a valid concern and one that should be carefully considered when adapting the discipline’s knowledge base to workplace demands.⁹

Because curriculum planning is an ongoing process, flexible and responsive to the changing needs of students and the workplace, some fundamental directions for curriculum change seem apparent. First, as technology and other forces continue to change the communication landscape, communication competencies may shift from

relational communication to more technology-based, global perspectives. Accordingly, courses such as *Conflict Communication*, *Strategic Communication* and *International Communication* will become increasingly necessary. Second, the need for careful analysis, clear reasoning, and critical evaluation seems likely to increase rather than abate. In that case, communication courses like *Rhetorical Criticism* and *Argumentation and Analysis* that help students develop these capabilities may experience a renaissance of sorts.¹⁰ Third, as nations and peoples enter into commerce and conversation with each other the inevitable discord of competing wishes and views will need to be addressed. To that end, it seems reasonable to presume that courses in *Audience Analysis* might be offered with more regularity. Fifth, workplace and citizenship demands will continue to place a high premium on leadership capabilities. The communication studies discipline should make a concerted effort to include more courses such as *Leadership* that emphasize the role of communication in influencing, motivating and guiding concerted human effort. Finally, as employers maintain their interest in hiring employees with real-world capabilities, helping students gain those capabilities can be addressed through courses such as *Communication Internship* (see, for example: Marklein, 2008).

In all, curriculum planning constitutes an ongoing process of adjustment and amendment to avoid intellectual stagnation and calcification. Simply, a curriculum ebbs and flows continuously with the demands of life and the dictates of nature. Communication studies programs are uniquely positioned to guide students to the skills, abilities, and experiences that will be required for success in the workplace, to satisfy citizenship responsibilities, and for personal fulfillment in the years ahead.

Notes

- [1] Beyond its role in the discussion about curriculum development, the thrust of Redmond and Waggoner's argument also reflects the continuation of an important historical transformation in the communication discipline. For a further explication of the place of skills training in communication studies, see Benson (1985), Burgoon (1989), and Cohen (1994).
- [2] The list of NCA departmental members was obtained through the following URL: <http://www.natcom.org/departmentsmemberslist/>
- [3] The following 148 colleges/universities were sampled: Alma College, Arizona State University, Arkansas State University, Auburn University, Asuka Pacific University, Ball State University, Baylor University, Bloomsburg University, Boise State University, Bowling Green University, California State Polytech University—Pomona, California State University—Fullerton, California State University—Long Beach, California State University—Los Angeles, California State University—Sacramento, Canisius College, Cleveland State University, College of Charleston, College of New Jersey, Colorado State University, Concordia College, Cornell University, Denison University, DePaul University, Duquesne University, East Carolina University, Eastern Michigan University, Emerson College, Florida State University, George Mason University, George Washington University, Gustavus Adolphus College, Hofstra University, Hope College, Humboldt State University, Indiana State University, Iowa State University, James Madison University, Kansas State University, Kent State University, Lehigh University, Louisiana State University, Loyola Marymount University, Marist College, Marshall University, McNeese State University, Merrimack

College, Michigan State University, Mississippi State University, Montclair State University, Muskingum College, New York University, North Carolina State University, North Dakota State University, Northeastern University, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Ohio University, Oregon State University, Otterbein College, Pace University, Penn State University, Purdue University, Radford University, Rhode Island College, Robert Morris University, Rutgers University, Saint Mary's College, Salisbury University, San Francisco State University, San Jose State University, Shippensburg University, Slippery Rock University, Southeast Missouri State University, Southern Illinois University—Carbondale, Southern New Hampshire University, St. Cloud University, St. Louis University, SUNY New Paltz, Syracuse University, Texas A&M University, Texas Christian University, Texas State University—San Marcos, Texas Tech University, Trevecca Nazarene University, Tulane University, University of Alabama—Huntsville, University of Alaska—Fairbanks, University of Arizona, University of California—Santa Barbara, University of Central Florida, University of Central Missouri, University of Cincinnati, University of Colorado—Denver, University of Connecticut, University of Dayton, University of Delaware, University of Georgia, University of Hartford, University of Hawaii—Manoa, University of Illinois—Champaign-Urbana, University of Illinois—Chicago, University of Iowa, University of Kansas, University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, University of Maine, University of Maryland, University of Memphis, University of Minnesota—Duluth, University of Montana, University of Nebraska—Lincoln, University of Nevada—Las Vegas, University of New Hampshire, University of New Mexico, University of North Carolina—Charlotte, University of North Dakota, University of Oklahoma, University of the Pacific, University of Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh, University of Puget Sound, University of Rhode Island, University of Richmond, University of San Diego, University of Southern Alabama, University of South Dakota, University of South Florida, University of Southern Mississippi, University of Texas—Austin, University of Texas—Pan American, University of Toledo, University of Utah, University of Washington, University of Wisconsin—Madison, Valdosta State University, Virginia Tech, Wake Forest University, Washburn University, Weber State University, West Chester University, West Virginia University, West Virginia Wesleyan College, Western Michigan University, Wilkes University, William Jewell College, Wittenberg University, Youngstown State University.

- [4] General trends in the communication curriculum at community colleges seem consistent with those identified here, with some notable distinctions. Communication curricula at the community colleges traditionally support general education requirements rather than a specific major program. Coursework at the community college is primarily designed to enhance skills needed for “a broad educational base . . . rather than a narrow preparation . . . [which] is one of the major distinctions between community college and proprietary schools” (Brawer, 1999, p. 21). Indeed, reports on curriculum trends in community colleges suggest that the majority of them do not offer a full range of communication courses, with curriculum offerings varying according to enrollment. Of the courses related to communication at the community college, most are basic skills courses listed under English subject areas such as *Speech Communication* and *Business English/Communication*. For additional information about curriculum trends in two-year institutions, readers are encouraged to consult Brawer (1999), Ediger (2002), and Schuyler (1999).
- [5] For additional general information on curriculum objectives and possible course content areas, readers might also wish to explore the U.S. Department of Education Institute for Education Sciences (IES) “Classification of Institutional Programs” at four-year institutions from the National Center for Education Statistics, which may be found at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2002/cip2000> and the general curriculum guidelines provided by the National Communication Association at <http://www.natcom.org>.
- [6] The lack of *Leadership* courses identified in this study may simply be the result of methodological constraints mentioned earlier. That is, a larger sample may have identified

more *Leadership* courses. Or, the matter may be more systemic, with Business departments encroaching on this area because of their recognition of, and their attempt to fulfill through curricular offerings, the unmet need for this competency in the workplace. In either case, it seems reasonable to encourage additional effort to include courses of this sort in communication curriculum planning.

- [7] Calls for greater emphasis on theory and research in communication studies are not limited to a particular time period. In fact, since the inception of the discipline, appeals of this nature appear with some frequency. For additional background on this matter, consult: Benson (1985), Cohen (1994), and Windt (1990).
- [8] There is a degree to which the emphasis on theory driven courses might be understood as an over-reaction to the perceived over-emphasis on skills and performance courses. However, such fluctuations seem intellectually healthier than the constant maintenance of hegemonic views.
- [9] The possibility of over-reacting to workplace demands seems very real, particularly when funding and staffing decisions are made. As the communication studies discipline looks to the future, and to helping students build real-world capabilities, careful introspection and circumspection might reasonably accompany curriculum planning.
- [10] The addition of courses in this area might be more justifiable if curriculum planners employ a degree of creativity in naming such courses. Adhering to traditional nomenclature will do more to confuse than enlighten prospective students.

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