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Title
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

You are not going to be a graduate student forever, so you should plan for the future as you work toward the completion of your degree. Beginning now to develop yourself as a professional in the speech communication field will make job-hunting more productive and will help to insure success in your first job. The following are suggestions that will help you in your professional development now.

Membership in Professional Organizations

An important part of professional development is membership in national and regional organizations concerned with speech communication. Membership entitles you to receive newsletters, convention information, and journals from these organizations, all of which will keep you informed about activities and new developments in our field. Membership in the Speech Communication Association (SCA), the International Communication Association (ICA), and the Western Speech Communication Association (WSCA) is a good place for you to start, and all three of these organizations offer special membership rates to students.

Brown Bag Seminars

The Speech Communication Department periodically sponsors Brown Bag seminars over the noon hour to which graduate students and faculty are invited to bring their lunches and participate. These seminars usually feature one or two speakers who briefly discuss research in which they are involved, conventions they have attended, or particular perspectives on speech communication and then invite discussion of the ideas by those in attendance. Participation in these seminars will acquaint you with ideas

and areas you may not encounter in your formal coursework and will give you additional opportunities to interact with other graduate students and the faculty.

Graduate Student Association

The Department of Speech Communication has a Graduate Student Association (GSA), which has three basic functions: (1) Intellectual: to provide for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of information; (2) Communication: to provide a channel for the flow of information between faculty and students and among students; and (3) Social: to insure that contact among graduate students is facilitated and increased. Attendance at GSA meetings, which are held every one or two months, offers opportunities for professional development in all of these areas.

Greater involvement in the GSA can come through the holding of offices in the Association. The following officers are elected annually: (1) president; (2) vice-president; (3) secretary-treasurer; (4) faculty representative, who attends faculty meetings and serves as a liaison between graduate students and faculty; and (4) newsletter editor, who compiles material for and writes much of the GSA newsletter.

Specialization in Course of Study

While acquiring knowledge in a number of areas in speech communication is important, making yourself more than a generalist will help you stand out at job-hunting time and will enable you to begin making contributions to the speech communication field earlier. Taking as many courses as possible in one particular area of interest within the Speech Communication Department is one way to develop a specialty. Perhaps interpersonal communication is your area of interest; you should take as many courses as possible

that are offered in this area. Another option is to take some courses in an area outside of speech communication that complements your study in the field. If you come to the program with a background in speech communication, art, philosophy, language development, education, sociology, psychology, or history, for example, could be developed as cognate areas, and courses from these departments would help you develop a particular specialization within speech communication.

Thesis or Dissertation Planning

Although the formal proposal for your thesis or dissertation will not be submitted until the latter part of your graduate studies, there is no reason why you can't be thinking about and working on the development of your dissertation before then. Start early in your graduate career to pursue ideas that might be thesis or dissertation topics. Even selecting the general area in which you would like to do your work--perhaps power in interpersonal relationships, talking behaviors associated with friendship, or the relationship between art and rhetoric--is helpful. In various courses, then, you can compile bibliographies, write papers on the topic, and gradually narrow it into something suitable for a thesis or dissertation.

The benefits of planning your thesis or dissertation project ahead of time are numerous. You develop a specialization early that makes possible convention papers and consulting opportunities while you are in graduate school and that facilitates future marketability. You also avoid the last-minute panic often associated with the completion of a thesis or dissertation. Because you have worked on the topic throughout your graduate study, your thesis or dissertation can be completed at a more leisurely pace, and you will be confident that it represents your best efforts in

scholarship and makes a definite contribution to the field.

Publication and Convention Participation

One good way to make yourself more employable when you complete your degree is to be able to list some publications or convention presentations on your resume. When a professor returns a paper you have written with comments such as, "This is an excellent piece of work" or "I hope you will revise this paper for possible publication," pursue it! During vacation, for example, re-think and re-work it. Then discuss with your professor what journal would be likely to be interested in the manuscript and submit it.

When calls for papers are announced for regional or national speech communication conventions, review the work you've done or are planning to do. Is there a convention paper there somewhere that you could submit? Many divisions of these organizations have debut programs specifically for individuals who never have presented a convention paper before. These types of programs make excellent starting places for graduate students.

The following are samples that may be useful guides for submitting proposals for entire programs--which sometimes are easier to get accepted than individual papers. Both proposals were accepted--one for the Speech Communication convention in November 1981 and the other for the Western Speech Communication Association convention in 1982. With a proposal for a program, submit the resumes of all the program participants with the proposal to assure the selection committee of the professional competence of the participants. Of course, the proposal also should be accompanied by a cover letter in which you state the title of the program and the conference or division to which it is being submitted.

- N. S. ...
- ...
- O'Rourke, Sean P
- Foss

Program Proposal
 Dimension Series
 1981 SCA Convention

winning members

"The Primacy of the Spoken Mode: Research Findings"

"The intellectual treatment of any datum, any experience, any subject, is determined by the nature of our questions,"¹ and the nature of our questions is determined by the nature of our assumptions.² The state of theory and of research in a given discipline thus depend on the assumptions held by that discipline's scholars, assumptions reflected not only in the questions that are asked, but also in the questions that are not asked.

One such assumption in the speech communication discipline appears to be that of modal equipotentiality: the potential significance of the fact that speech is the primary mode of human communication seems rarely to have been acknowledged as a question, and the little modal research that has been done remains relatively recent and unexposed. The program proposed here would present some of that research.

The value of the program would lie first in its questioning of modal equipotentiality. Given the fact that speech is the unifying core of our multifaceted discipline, it seems that a thorough treatment of our subject matter should include consideration of the triviality or nontriviality of the spoken mode. Second, and more specific, consideration of the question of modal significance is important because new areas and avenues of research follow the formulation of new questions. The building of theory in the discipline thus is strengthened as theory that grows out of assumption yields to theory that is informed by research.

Each of the research studies proposed for this program investigated

the postulated relationship between the primacy of the spoken mode and an important dimension of human development: temporality, self-concept, conceptualization, and interpersonal constructs. Each of the papers thus addresses directly the theme of the 1981 convention.

Each of the papers also addresses diverse audiences within the discipline; the study of speech communication phenomena from any divisional perspective might benefit from attention to research findings in regard to the potential impact of speech on human development.

The program, as proposed, would be opened with a brief introduction by the program chair, followed by the presentation of the four papers within twenty-minute allotments of time. The remainder of the 90-minute program would be devoted to questions from the audience, moderated by the program chair.

Program Participants

Chairperson: John R. Johnson, Ph.D., University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Julie M. Yingling, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate, University of Denver
 "Infant Speech Timing: The Temporal Aspects of Speech Praxis Toward Language"

A current theoretical proposition suggests that individual human temporality, a "sense of time," arises from the developmental speech process. This paper reports the results of a study that examined infant speech patterns before and after a postural milestone in the first year of life. Descriptions of temporal speech patterns in the developing infant suggest increasing control of speech timing with increments in the physiological skills affecting speech. The oral/aural experience found in the normal speech process is implied as the operative mode in the development of speech-timing control, and ultimately, for the elevation of this control to the conscious level.

Carol Zak-Dance, Ph.D., Arapahoe Community College
 "The Relationship of a Child's Primary Mode of Human Communication to the Child's Self-Concept Development"

The specific purpose of this research was the examination of the

relationship between a child's primary mode of human communication and the developmental level of the child's self-concept. It was predicted that normally hearing preschool children (oral/aural mode users) would be at a higher level of self-concept development than would be deaf preschool children (gestural/visual mode users). The argument was advanced that a child's self-concept development has a positive relationship to the child's ability to decenter, and that the oral/aural mode is the more efficient mode leading to such de-centering ability.

Susan L. Sharpe, Ph.D., Hope College

"The Relationship of Primary Mode of Human Communication to the Development of Complex Cognition"

Of concern in this study was the relationship of primary mode of human communication to the development of complex cognition, as measured by analogical reasoning. The study focused specifically on a possible modal relationship as distinct from a language relationship. It was argued that the development of complex cognition is linked to the perception of hierarchical levels of contrast, and that the perception of contrast is best facilitated by the oral/aural mode. It was predicted that oral/aural subjects would successfully solve more analogies than would gestural/visual subjects.

Kurt E. Nordstrom, M.A., Ph.D. Candidate, University of Denver

"The Relationship of the Primary Mode of Human Communication to an Individual's Cognitive Complexity"

The specific purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between the primary mode of human communication used by an individual and the number of interpersonal constructs used by that individual in perceiving his/her world (cognitive complexity). It is predicted that normally hearing high school students (oral/aural mode users) are more cognitively complex than are deaf high school students (gestural/visual mode users). It is suggested that the oral/aural mode serves to develop the student's ability to use more constructs in the perceptions of the world.

Notes

¹ Susanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key, p. 16.

² Langer, pp. 16-17.

The Rhetoric of Symbolic Events:

Shaping a New Decade

Program Proposal Submitted to the
Rhetoric and Public Address Interest Group
1982 Western Speech Communication Association Convention

Rationale

The notion that language creates a particular reality is widely held in the field of speech communication. Bormann's concept of rhetorical vision, for example, is based on the development of social reality through rhetoric,¹ and Campbell notes in her review of the foundations of various rhetorical theories the concept that language or rhetoric influences one's perceptual framework and thus creates meaning.² Cassirer more fully develops the idea that symbols create their own reality, and he explains the process as one in which symbols such as art, language, and science are "forces each of which produces and posits a world of its own. . . . Thus the special symbolic forms are not imitations, but organs of reality, . . ." ³ Cassirer asserts that symbols create reality because of their capacity to introduce form and law into a disordered sensory experience. The chaotic and disorderly sensory world is organized and made manageable by the symbols that are devised to dominate it.⁴

Despite recognition of this reality-creating function of language, few studies attempt to discover the kind of reality being created by rhetoric and the means by which this process of creation occurs. We study the effects of symbols on audiences and the variables that contribute to effectiveness in symbolization, but we often ignore the broader and underlying implications of that symbolization--i.e., that it is in fact establishing a particular reality. Information about this process could contribute to

our understanding of the total communicative experience as well as provide guidelines for contemporary rhetoricians and rhetorical theorists seeking to design and study rhetorical acts that are a part of, come from, and help shape that total experience. The discovery of such knowledge seems particularly appropriate at the beginning of a new decade with the election of a new President and the development of patterns and directions unlike those that characterized the 1960s and 1970s.

Methodology

In this program, four symbolic events that occurred in America in 1980--at the start of the new decade--will be examined in an attempt to discover the reality or world view they helped to create. Each event will be viewed as rhetoric that is organizing the complex system of ideas and events that comprise life in the United States into a particular vision.

Each paper will consider the following:

- (1) What are the substantive themes raised by the event?
- (2) What stylistic elements are evident in the presentation of the event--i.e., elements of setting, timing, and form?
- (3) What effects did the event have on the American public's world view or reality?

The respondent will attempt to synthesize the findings of all the papers by dealing with the following questions:

- (1) Do these symbolic events play a role in the creation and organization of reality for Americans in the coming decade?
- (2) What is the reality created by these symbolic events?
- (3) One function often attributed to rhetoric is the inducement of cooperation; do these symbolic events induce cooperation among Americans for the coming decade?

(4) What can be predicted about the nature of the rhetoric that will flourish and be most effective in the reality of the new decade?

Participants

Chair: Sonja K. Foss, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado

Dwight Conquergood, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois
Topic: "The Making of Heroes: The Rhetoric of the Return of the Hostages"

Karen A. Foss, Humboldt State University, Arcata, California
Topic: "The Day the Music Died: The Rhetoric of the Death of John Lennon"

David Henry, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
Topic: Seeking an American Renewal: The Rhetoric of the Election of Ronald Reagan"

Sonja K. Foss, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado
Topic: "Perpetuation of the Industrial Dream: The Rhetoric of the Government Bailout of Chrysler Corporation"

Respondent: Barry Brummett, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Method of Presentation

All participants on the panel will summarize their papers in a lively, conversational manner. No papers will be read. Copies of the complete papers will be available for the audience at the time of the program. Time will be allowed for questions and answers at the end of the program.

Notes

¹ Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 58 (December 1972), 396-407.

² Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "The Ontological Foundations of Rhetorical Theory," Philosophy and Rhetoric, 3 (Spring 1970), 104.

³ Ernst Cassirer, Language and Myth, trans. Susanne K. Langer (New York: Harper, 1946), p. 6.

⁴ Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Form, Vol. I, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 87.

Community Involvement

An excellent way to gather additional experiences for a resume and to develop your presentational skills is to become involved in speech communication activities outside of the University. Watch for and take advantage of any opportunities to speak to community groups or to present communication workshops for business, educational, or community organizations. Letting professors in the department know you are interested in these kinds of experiences is a good idea, since they may be able to direct you to possible opportunities in this area. This kind of involvement also can be profitable--many organizations are willing to pay for information about effective communication.