Is RuPaul Enough? Difference, Identity, and Presence in the Communication Classroom

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Forum: Diversity and Scholarship on Instructional Communication

Editors' Introduction

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The following essays comprise the second installment of a two-part forum on diversity and instructional communication research. A more comprehensive introduction can be found in the January 2016 issue, where the first set of essays appears. Should you lack access to that issue, however, the background you need can be summarized in the following paragraphs.

This forum rose from the recognition that instructional communication scholarship is too much influenced by perspectives arising from and speaking to dominant cultural groups, whether those groups are defined by race, gender, culture, socio-economic status, sexual orientation, or anything else. This forum was designed to facilitate change through essays that offer: (1) a vision for what can be and (2) guidance for action.

To move from monologue to dialogue, we asked scholars who have been addressing diversity (or *difference*, see part 1) in their scholarship and professional engagement to offer their responses to the essays selected from the open call for papers. For this part, Gust Yep, Jo Sprague, Katherine Hendrix (also a guest co-editor of the forum), and Ronald Jackson provided these responses.

We hope this forum inspires you with both vision and your plan of action to move the field forward in this crucial manner.

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Expanding the Landscape of Diversity in Instructional Communication Research through the Intergroup Perspective

Angela M. Hosek & Jordan Soliz

The goal of instructional communication research is to examine the role and influence of communication within the educational process across all disciplines and contexts (McCroskey & McCroskey, 2006). Yet, instructional researchers have paid little attention to the ways in which personal and social factors influence the classroom context rendering the complexities of identity and multidimensionality relatively invisible in the classroom (Hendrix, Jackson, & Warren, 2003; Sprague, 1992). The classroom is not immune from the broader sociohistorical context, as students and teachers come into a classroom as constellations of various identities (e.g., ethnicity–race), and, based on the tenets of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), these play a central role in our social perceptions and interactions. Thus, a more comprehensive approach to instructional communication warrants attending to the influence of social identities, as these can enhance or diminish self-efficacy, self-esteem, and job satisfaction for teachers, and also facilitate student learning. As such, we offer an intergroup perspective as a way to engage and advance scholarship surrounding diversity in the instructional context. We briefly overview the intergroup perspective and theorizing, and outline three domains of instructional communication research that can be enriched through a concerted focus on diversity through an intergroup lens.

Intergroup perspective and instructional communication research

The "intergroup perspective" is one of the leading theoretical perspectives that guide research focusing on issues of identity, as it emphasizes the ways in which people in a social interaction identify and categorize themselves or others in terms of social collectives membership, thereby shaping perceptions and interactions with others (Harwood, Giles, & Palomares, 2005). Despite the fact that the classroom operates as primary space for continued interactions with those outside of one's intimate social sphere, an intergroup perspective has not been central to inquiries in higher education and, specifically, within instructional communication research and literature (for exceptions, see Edwards & Harwood, 2003; Hosek, 2015). This is unfortunate, as it offers an interdisciplinary framework and theoretical language to bridge the gap between instructional research and other realms of inquiry on human relations. We

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briefly discuss three domains in which this perspective has the potential to further knowledge in the instructional setting: (a) teacher–student relationship as a social identity hierarchy, (b) the classroom and intersections of social identity engagement, and (c) ideology in the classroom and intergroup salience.

Teacher–student relationship as a social identity hierarchy

The student–teacher relationship represents a salient social identity hierarchy in the classroom. One could consider this a vocational identity (Deaux, 2000) with corresponding perceptions, biases, expectations, and communicative scripts that teachers and students enact. In fact, much of the research on teacher–student communication actually highlights the benefits of reducing the psychological or social distance reflected in the traditional academic hierarchy. Research has supported the benefits of doing so through teacher use of immediacy (Witt, Wheeless, & Allen, 2004) and rapport-building (Frisby & Martin, 2010) behaviors. The research on creating immediacy mirrors research on transcending or minimizing difference in other intergroup contexts. Whereas teacher–student relations do not carry the same sociohistorical complexities of ethnopolitical conflicts, the same processes are likely at play (e.g., stereotypes). Thus, an intergroup perspective complements much of the research between students and teachers by providing perhaps a novel or nuanced approach to examining this relationship through a lens that reflects a social identity hierarchy.

The classroom and intersections of social identity engagement

Harwood (2006) argued that collective identities are central to human interaction, and if we are to understand them more fully, we must regularly incorporate them in our research. In line with this notion, Sidanius, Levin, van Laar, and Sears (2008) note that much of the research on the impact of higher education focuses on outcomes of academic achievement but ignores issues of intergroup relations and the role of social identity. Yet, issues of social identity are ever-present in the instructional settings and impact rhetorical and relational goals. Sidanius *et al.* found that outgroup contact has positive effects on ethnic attitudes during the college years. This is in-line with Intergroup Contact Theory (Pettigrew, 1998) that explains how exposure and constructive interactions with *others* can shift attitudes toward a more prosocial and constructive perspective. Further, Harwood (2006) proposed that students may express positive evaluations for teachers who they feel belong to similar social groups. Researchers have found this to be the case for social identity categorizers such as age (Edwards & Harwood, 2003); nationality (de Oliveira, Braun, Carlson, & de Oliveira, 2009); race/ethnicity and gender (Hendrix, 1997). Importantly, research using Communication Theory of Identity shows that students feel marginalized in the classroom based on identity difference (Wadsworth, Hecht, & Jung, 2008) but student academic and personal well-being are positively influenced when they share common social identities with their teachers in regard to race/ethnicity (Allen, 1992) and sexual

identity (Rankin, 2003). Finally, students participate more in classes with instructors they believe share similar attitudes and backgrounds (Hosek, 2015).

Ideology in the classroom and intergroup salience

Many recognize the current polarization in the United States today and how political ideology influences not only our worldviews but also our social networks and community affiliations (Doherty, 2014). As such, our divergent ideologies are creating group-based distinctions that give rise to a preference for communal and relational homogeneity in our lives. The instructional realms have never been immune from discourse about prevalent ideologies, and students will be exposed to a variety of worldviews and ideologies in the classroom. Yet, if the polarization evident in society pervades our classrooms, this diversity of thought may no longer be an opportunity for discourse. Rather, it can create rigidity of group boundaries, replacing dialogues of understanding with dialogues of defensiveness. One potential outcome may be that teacher credibility is assessed on intergroup biases stemming from ideological distinctions rather than on competence and pedagogical skill (Park & Rothbart, 1982). As we grapple with these ideas, Communication Accommodation Theory can offer important insight on understanding perceptions of difference, attributions and motives for classroom behavior, and, in turn, positive or negative evaluations of students and teachers (Gasiorek & Giles, 2012).

In all, the intergroup literature provides a conceptual landscape for engaging new challenges and opportunities in our interactions about identity differences with students. In doing so, we potentially ameliorate some of the issues surrounding difference in the instructional context.

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Is RuPaul Enough? Difference, Identity, and Presence in the Communication Classroom

Robert W. Carroll, Madeleine H. Redlick & Jenna N. Hanchey

We begin by projecting two pictures of the famous drag queen, RuPaul: one of her in drag, and the other of him in a traditional men's suit. We pose one simple question to

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our class: what gender is RuPaul? In spite of the intellectual force of the room, 20 graduate students stare back at us in an uncomfortable silence. Our planned conversation on gender performance fails to start.

In this graduate seminar, it was our task to preview feminist, postcolonial, and difference scholarship in organizational communication. Using RuPaul as an entry into more complex notions of oft-portrayed rigid categories of identity, we hoped to destabilize traditional assumptions about gender and sex, and believed clips from the show could provide an opportunity to talk about raced, classed, and Eurocentric expectations for the performance of femininity. As a group of men and women, both straight and gay, from quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches, and coming from backgrounds in rhetorical, organizational, and interpersonal approaches to communication, how is it that we are still stymied in promoting discussions of complex identities in the classroom?

We believed we presented broad perspectives of scholarship, method, and theoretical bases through an accessible pop culture reference in order to generate meaningful conversation, yet seemingly failed. In searching for meaning in our classroom's silence, we tried to untangle issues that may have stalled the conversation. We argue our unfulfilled discussion echoes the recognized dearth of research on these issues (Hendrix & Wilson, 2014) and believe instructional communication researchers are particularly well-equipped to address these concerns. Three lines of inquiry are posed below.

First, is discussing a non-normative identity figure in the classroom enough to stimulate a dialog, or is it necessary to have members of diverse communities be physically present to inspire discussion? We, the authors, fully recognize ourselves as cis-gender,[1] white, and Western people, who perform our identities in relatively traditional ways, and question if this played a role in the silent classroom.

Second, in the frequent case that our classrooms are lacking in diversity, how do we invite diverse speakers into the classroom without turning them into tokens?

Third, what are the factors that prevent students from speaking up when controversial or difficult issues are raised in the classroom? What makes students feel afraid or uncomfortable to offer their perspective on such topics? On the other hand, what factors or instructor strategies might stimulate student participation? Only limited research has addressed this question (Miller & Harris, 2005), but we should continue to investigate how instructors can facilitate an open and enriching classroom environment, as pursued by early instructional communication researchers (Brownell, 2014), even on topics that they themselves may not be comfortable discussing.

Recent research on identity in instructional communication has taken a turn towards biological determinism (Afifi & Floyd, 2015; cf., Horan & Afifi, 2014). There is, however, an alternative body of research that calls for more fluid, constructivist, and critical perspective on identity in instructional communication (Mawhinney & Petchauer, 2013; Warner & Shields, 2013). It seems, however, that these topics have yet to enter classroom discussions in meaningful ways. While respecting both perspectives, we would seek to further this latter body of work. We advocate for a focus on research projects that may be better served by methodologies other than the recently popular physiological research methods. This involves understanding identities that

may not be best assessed by or discussed in biological methods or terms, but identities that go against the hegemonic norms. Trujillo's (1991) analysis of hegemonic masculinity uses Nolan Ryan as an exemplar of an "archetypal male athletic hero" (p. 290), but does so with a critical, gendered eye that goes beyond his biological "maleness" and instead focuses on easily understood media portrayals. Similarly, instructional communication researchers should strive to push past discussions of identity in the classroom as biologically determined and try to expand the way we discuss meaningful identity differences.

So, then, how do we as instructors and researchers, with our own identities and assumptions, conduct better research that informs more inclusive identity conversations in the classroom? Instructors need the tools to enable students' understanding of their own experiences and identities, as well as those of people who they are different from. Instructors also need to be comfortable talking in their classrooms about those experiences in meaningful and relevant ways. Our goal is to empower people to explore these conversations in their research and the classroom, and to talk about their successes and failures openly in research publications. We recognize that our questions are broad but hope they pose fertile ground for researchers to begin building knowledge. In the interest of protecting the classroom, it is incumbent on researchers to first take up these questions and then pass their findings along to teachers. Insofar as their role allows them to be separated from a teaching environment, instructional communication researchers are optimally positioned to start these investigations, to find what can be incorporated profitably and meaningfully into the classroom. We would not seek to force a laboratory environment on our students but see no harm in inviting our students to enrich our laboratories.

RuPaul is a famous and notable celebrity because of the clarity and unabashedness with which (s)he represents gender identity as fluid and changing. However, in our experience, the reaction of students to this gender performance did not clearly denote such understandings. While we can only guess what chilled the speech in our classroom that day, we are certain that the experience of silence in the classroom when discussing identity is not uncommon. Given this, every instructor should be prepared to speak about and promote discussions of race, class, gender, and ethnicity in the classroom, regardless of their research program or focus. Researchers should aim to be pioneers in the effort to incorporate diverse perspectives on identity in the classroom. Their work should support instructors and classrooms, which will doubtlessly be composed of individuals of differing and complex combinations of race, gender performance, sexual identity, national identity, and class background.

Note

1. For the purposes of this brief article, we define a cis-gender individual as a person whose gender identity aligns with the one typically associated with their biological sex; as an example, a biological female who identifies as a woman.

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Diversity, instructional research, and online education

Pavel Shlossberg & Carolyn Cunningham

Online instruction is becoming a mainstay in undergraduate and graduate education, connecting students that are as or more diverse than students in the brick and mortar classroom. However, instructional communication researchers have been slow to theorize about diversity (Hendrix & Wilson, 2014). In this paper, we offer insights into how a focus on diversity issues can enrich instructional communication research as it pertains to the online classroom. The perspectives and positions presented here emerge from the authors' research-in-progress on the possibilities and pitfalls of teaching diversity in online graduate communication classes, supplemented by their combined seven years of experience teaching online.

Critical communication pedagogy asks instructors to "situate their inquiry in relation to larger, macro sociocultural, socioeconomic structures to explore the ways in which racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression

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permeate classrooms and research on classrooms, teachers, and students" (Fassett & Warren, 2007, p. 27). This framework can be applied to the shortcomings of current research on online education. In general, research on online education emphasizes the importance of social presence and community building as essential aspects of effective online instruction (Hughes, 2007; Swan, 2004). Yet, reflecting an implicit white, Eurocentric perspective or bias, this research has hardly addressed pedagogical concerns with race, class, gender, and other categories of difference as these relate to distance education. Critical communication pedagogy asks us to recognize that social presence and community cannot be organized or structured in an equitable or socially just way when power, difference, and inequality are not recognized and acknowledged between and among students and teachers.

This shortcoming in instructional research is regrettable, because learning technologies deployed online offer rich opportunities to support diversity education that reaches and engages classrooms with students that are more and less diverse. Online learning can take on synchronous (e.g., video conferencing) and asynchronous (e.g., discussion boards) forms; "richer" modes engaging video, images, sound, writing, and text, and "leaner" modes engaging only writing and text. Different mediated contexts present a range of opportunities and challenges both for teaching about diversity and mediating interactions among students from diverse backgrounds. Extending insights from the field of critical pedagogy, which pay attention to how students engage and resist issues of difference, privilege, and power (Allen, 2010; Giroux, 2011; hooks, 1994), we argue that research that seeks to engage and enhance diversity and diversity education in the online context needs to examine the distinct instructional possibilities and challenges afforded by different communication technologies; as well as the attentiveness of instructors to those dynamics.

In our work, we found that objectives such as self-critical reflection and awareness look different in distinct mediated contexts. Research is called for that examines how different online environments impact interactions among students from diverse backgrounds, and also how those different environments impact and shape the dynamics of dialog, productive discomfort, disclosure, and resistance related to teaching about diversity.

Based in empirical data that we have gathered through content and discourse analyses, interviews with students, journaling, and auto-ethnographic reflection regarding things students said and did across six online classes, we have noticed some trends in how students navigate and discuss diversity in various mediated environments. For example, asynchronous discussion board threads can arguably invite sustained self-reflection, which is critical to recognition regarding matters such as privilege and disadvantage. Students cited the presence of a permanent transcript as well as time to reflect and formulate responses as especially beneficial to their learning. However, some students felt that given the permanence of the written record and surveillance by the instructor, disclosure can be limited, and conversations may be less-than-authentic. Furthermore, content analyses across classes found some students consistently avoided threads with discussions on topics such as white privilege and institutional racism, choosing instead to participate in

discussions that emphasized individual actions and choices as these inform life chances. This novel pattern of avoidance, denial, and evasion observed in the threads aligns with discursive strategies and patterns associated with postracialism/ colorblind racism and post- or antifeminism (Nakayama & Krizek, 1995).

In our analyses of synchronous moments of instruction, such as in video conference calls, both constructive engagement and acts of resistance manifested in somewhat different ways. In notable contrast to what occurred in the discussion board threads (where the expression of emotions was usually muted or concealed) live video conference discussions of issues such as white privilege generated substantial socioemotional engagement and interaction among participants. However, the emotional dynamics were varied and complex. For example, during video conference calls, participating students routinely turned off their cameras, limiting the participatory and embodied richness of the mediated interactions. This approach in effect mitigated emotional labor and allowed students to avoid or resist fuller personal engagement with issues related to diversity. Other patterns were also observed. For example, white men in particular commonly intervened in the live discussions by changing the topics or steering conversations away from issues such as white privilege to resistant claims regarding the presence of meritocracy and equal opportunity in their own organizations.

Students are creative and adaptive. Partly in response to different mediated environments, they express both their engagement with and resistance to diversity in shifting and dynamic ways. Research is needed to track and and document such strategies of engagement and resistance, and likewise work is needed to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of adaptive facilitation techniques, exercises, and engagement strategies that instructors might employ in the context of different online environments and in relation to different outcome goals (e.g., promoting engagement, dialog and inclusion; generating productive discomfort and tackling white privilege; equalizing access and centering perspectives of students from nondominant groups). Research in distance learning and critical pedagogy should be developed to inform educators of how they might tailor and adapt their facilitation techniques, their engagement and feedback strategies given different and distinct mediated environments. Arguably, an effective online diversity course should incorporate and blend together a range of synchronous and asynchronous, rich and lean, and other mediated elements.

The suggestions and findings presented in this position paper are by no means final and exhaustive. Rather, the point here is to provoke much-needed discussion of diversity in instructional research that engages with distance education, and to suggest some initial departure points for such work. A rich record of transcripts generated in each online diversity course stands ready to be examined. The insights that we develop will aid distance education and instructional research to uphold its commitment to diversity and equity within the field and in society in general.

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Rethinking Inclusion and Diversity in Communication Education Research

Jake Simmons & Shawn T Wahl

This forum on *Diversity* in *Instructional Communication Research* provides a necessary and timely opportunity for communication education scholars to engage in a moment of reflexive disciplinary intervention. We are overdue in productively addressing issues of "diversity—or the lack thereof—in mainstream communication education research" as well as our own systemic problems in higher education regarding diversity and inclusion programs. We will contribute to this exigent moment by addressing some terminological concerns regarding the term "inclusion," particularly as it applies to diversity and inclusion efforts in *Communication Education* (*CE*) and universities at large.

A Double Bind

In 2013, we published a qualitative study in *CE* entitled "Understanding the African American experience in higher education through a relational dialectics perspective" (Simmons, Lowery-Hart, Wahl, & McBride, 2013). We addressed dialectical tensions among African American students and the predominantly White institutions (PWI) in which they are enrolled. The data overwhelmingly revealed that despite diversity and inclusion efforts, administrators at PWI are failing to maintain productive relationships with African American students. The subject of the 2013 essay resonated with readers through experiences beyond university contexts. *Inside Higher Ed* published

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an article on the essay entitled "Racial Tensions" (Inego, 2013) and The *Huffington Post* picked up the topic and published "Black Students At White Colleges Fear They'll Lose Their Cultural Identity (2013)." These essays produced substantial online discussion regarding diversity and inclusion in university contexts and public life.

Reflecting on the multiplicity of responses to the subject matter of our essay, which focused primarily on intercultural contexts within higher education, we recognized the importance of the "inclusion" of the 2013 article in *CE*, an article that Hendrix and Wilson (2014) referred to as "rare" among the larger body of *CE* research. It was indeed "rare" as Hendrix and Wilson (2014) beautifully articulated in their topical synthesis of research in *CE* in their essay "Virtual Invisibility: Race and Communication Education." They argued, "In the last 14 years, more than half of the articles published [in *CE*] focused on teacher/instructor to student communication, while only 17 articles addressed race/ethnicity" (p. 420). As the forum call suggests *CE* has not, historically, been consistent in publishing articles related to diversity in communication education.

The concerns regarding higher education addressed in our 2013 essay mirrored Hendrix and Wilson's (2014) concerns with communication education research. Reading the two essays in relation to one another, we became increasingly aware of a praxeological double bind in communication education. There is a lack of published research on diversity in our primary communication education journal, particularly in regular issues (Hendrix & Wilson, 2014). At the same time, there is a growing body of concern regarding the failures of diversity and inclusion programs in higher education (Simmons et al., 2013). Despite inclusion efforts through special issues and forums like this, *CE* is failing to maintain productive relationships with communication education researchers interested in maintaining research programs that focus on diversity in higher education (Hendrix & Wilson, 2014; Simmons et al., 2013).

Problems with "Inclusion"

One prolific term we identified within communication education research is "inclusion" (Borisoff & Chesebro, 2011; Ropers-Huilman, 2009; Roy, 1995; Simmons et al., 2013; Storrs & Mihelich, 2009). The terminological deployment of inclusion became increasingly disconcerting, given the double bind we addressed in the prior section, because inclusion carries with it power-laden rhetorical and systemic burdens. Hearkening back two decades to Alice Roy's work is integral to a better understanding of the problems with inclusion initiatives.

In her essay "The Grammar and Rhetoric of Inclusion" Roy (1995) argued, "*Include* … entails an includer and, so to speak, an includee, and, because of the property of negation in human language, an 'excludee' as well" (p. 193). Indeed, the grammar and rhetoric of inclusion tells us two interrelated stories. First, a standard definition of inclusion addresses the act of including or being included within a group or structure. Inclusion maintains the rhetorical and grammatical power to include and exclude based on its hierarchical status within this transitive exchange.

Second, a biological definition of inclusion reads, "A body or particle recognizably distinct from the substance in which it is embedded." An adapted biological definition of inclusion reveals the ways in which this maladaptation manifests within organizational contexts. Minority "bodies remain recognizably distinct from the [institutions] in which [they are] embedded." That is, through inclusion, the institution maintains a (white, male, straight, able-bodied) identity with power over the bodies it ostensibly includes. The mission of diversity and inclusion efforts, be it in this journal or in colleges and universities, is unequivocally compromised as long as minority voices, concerns, and experiences are ghettoized within "special" contexts.

An Informed Climate for Inclusion

Instead of succumbing to the unjust power dynamic inherent in inclusion practices, we should focus on negotiating relational partnerships among diverse bodies in research and educational contexts. Doing so will result in a more ethically centered cocreation of knowledge, experience, and power in our journals and in our learning institutions. If the rhetorical burdens of inclusion are not appropriately addressed, a call for further inclusion of research on diversity in *CE* runs the same unproductive risk of faltering to the failures of diversity and inclusion programs on college and university campuses (Hendrix & Wilson, 2014; Simmons et al., 2013). The concerns of this forum go beyond the historical invisibility of communication education research that productively addresses diversity issues. Diversity carries with it a problematic ubiquity. Carr and Lund (2009) remind us that a generalized view of diversity located in whiteness (as well as unproductive masculinity, ableism, and heteronormativity) "can diminish the problematic of diversity to nothing more than a superficial manifestation of potentially stereotypical gestures and exchanges" (p. 45). The solution to the historical contexts of exclusion should not be to simply "include" more research on diversity. Such a practice of inclusion will inevitably lead to a tokenization practice that mirrors the problematic tradition of ghettoizing diversity topics within special issues and forums in journals and on college campuses. Instead, as Steinberg's (2009) axiom goes, "Individuals are diverse and must be understood and accepted as diverse" (p. xi). Communication education research should accurately reflect the bodies present within, and excluded from, the organizational body of higher education and public life. As a result, we will better understand and form relationships with the bodies that comprise the multiple, multifaceted, intersecting identities that comprise diversity in higher education.

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Demystifying Normativities in Communication Education

Gust A. Yep

The new cultural politics of difference are neither simply oppositional in contesting the mainstream (or *male*stream) for inclusion, nor transgressive in the avant-gardist sense of shocking conventional bourgeois audiences. Rather, they are distinct articulations of [cultural workers such as teachers] who desire to align themselves with demoralized, demobilized, depoliticized, and disorganized people in order to empower and enable social action and, if possible, to enlist collective insurgency for the expansion of freedom, democracy, and individuality. … Demystification is the most illuminating mode of theoretical enquiry for those who promote the new cultural politics of difference.

—Cornel West (1990/1999, pp. 257, 264, original italics)

Communication education offers the great promise of expanding and shifting individual and collective worldviews of the participants.[1] Although they are interrelated, by expanding, I am referring to the development of a broader and larger cognitive, affective, and behavioral repertoire, including ways of perceiving and understanding oneself (e.g., self reflection) and others (e.g., deep listening) in the social world. By shifting, I am gesturing to the development of *new* ways of seeing, perceiving, understanding, and acting

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in culture and society, including our individual (e.g., interpersonal) and collective (e.g., community) relationships. The focus of the forum—diversity in instructional communication research—is, in my view, concerned with this great promise of communication education. To untangle how these essays address such a promise, I examine their converging and diverging themes before I sketch a model for transformative communication pedagogy and use it to explore how our discipline can foster the development of scholarship reflecting the U.S. classroom diversity in the twenty-first century.

Identity and Power

The essays in the forum rightfully highlight identity and power as two critical themes in communication education (points of convergence). However, they differ on how identity and power are deployed and mobilized in the communication curriculum and in teaching (points of divergence). Taken together, the essays offer a rich and complex view of diversity in instructional communication theory and practice.

Identity is a social construction whose meanings are derived from cultural, historical, and geopolitical contexts (Yep, 2016). It gives people a sense of "being" (i.e., who they are in society), a lens through which they see the social world (i.e., what they experience in interactions with others), and a set of guidelines for ways of "acting" (i.e., how they are expected to behave when interacting with others). Further, identities are intersectional, that is, different facets of identity (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, body, nation, and so on) come together simultaneously and in mutually constituting ways to produce a social identity that is larger than the sum of its individual components (Yep, 2016; Yep, Russo, Allen, & Chivers, in press). Because such components concurrently influence how the individual experiences the social world, ranging from privilege to oppression, they cannot be easily separated for analysis. For example, the experience of physical violence by a poor African American lesbian cannot be simply reduced to her social class, race, gender, or sexuality; the physical violence is a result of the simultaneous combination of all these aspects of her identity.

In the forum, the authors rightly focus on the classroom—both embodied (see Hosek & Soliz; Redlick, Hanchey, & Carroll) and online (see Shlossberg)—as important sites for the negotiation of intersectional identities, including teacher–student and student–student. As the essays point out, identity matters for intergroup as well as intragroup interactions: It affects how participants perceive and feel about each other, behave in class discussions, and respond to class questions and issues. In short, identity influences how participants relate to each other and engage in the learning process. However, the essays differ in how they deploy identity in the classroom. For example, Hosek and Soliz suggest an intergroup perspective based on identity differences; Redlick and colleagues use nonnormative identities as a teaching tool; and Shlossberg invites students to engage in critical self-reflection based on their identity locations. In doing so, the authors point to how identity is related to social and cultural hierarchies. To put it differently, identity is inextricably connected to power.

Power refers to the ability to control circumstances (e.g., access to financial, social, and cultural resources) and outcomes (e.g., getting things done to fulfill personal goals,

helping others achieve theirs; Yep, 2013). Further, power is a network of relations that circulates through all social relationships and at all levels of society (Foucault, 1978/1990). As such, no social relations exist outside of power. The process of classifying individuals and groups—indeed the creation of identities—is not a neutral endeavor; it is saturated by power (Bowker & Star, 1999). For example, racial categorizations for southern and eastern European immigrants—such as Jewish-, Italian-, and Polish-Americans—have shifted and changed in U.S. history from "racial inbetweeness" to "white" to secure social, economic, symbolic, and material privilege and power (Roediger, 2005, p. 8). In this sense, identity and difference become intricately connected to social and cultural hierarchies, such as access to resources and upward social mobility.

All the essays in the forum highlight the importance of power. However, they address it in multiple ways, ranging from less overtly (see Hosek & Soliz; Redlick *et al.*) to more overtly (see Schlossberg; Wahl & Simmons). For example, Redlick and associates examine questions of difference and silence in the classroom, which are undoubtedly connected to power. Schlossberg discusses invitations for student self-reflection based on white privilege and racism while Wahl and Simmons explicitly examine questions of inclusion (e.g., who has the power to include?) and diversity (e.g., who is the norm?).

Toward a Model of Transformative Communication Pedagogy[2]

To develop, cultivate, and actualize the promise of expanding and shifting worldviews, I offer a model for transformative communication pedagogy. It consists of three inter-related components: (a) awareness, (b) insight, and (c) action. Awareness refers to the development of keen and nuanced observation of the social world to see and highlight sociocultural forces at work, such as relational dynamics, social processes, institutional spaces, and structural arrangements, ranging from covert to overt (e.g., how we talk about and treat people with disabilities; how physical buildings and social institutions are set up for or against people with disabilities). Insight refers to the development of modes of deep and complex understanding of such observations (e.g., how social and cultural views of disability affect the lives of everybody, including those who have disabilities; how disability is related to other identity markers such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and so on; how current U.S. mainstream conceptions of disability are related to questions of individual economic productivity, personal responsibility, and global capitalism). Finally, action refers to individual and collective behavior aimed at transforming and changing a particular social process, relation, event, institution, structure, or a combination of these (e.g., treating people with disabilities more sensitively and humanely; participating in ways to increase disabled U.S. veterans' access to health care). Awareness, insight, and action mutually influence each other in an ongoing and unending cycle (e.g., insight can produce more awareness which can lead to action and further insight). As such, the model is fluid and dynamic rather than fixed, static, linear, and unidirectional.

Demystification is at the heart of transformative communication pedagogy. According to West (1990/1999), demystification refers to the process of highlighting and analyzing how power operates in society through its symbolic and representational

practices (e.g., creation and reification of certain identities) and its institutional and structural arrangements (e.g., vilification of certain identities in the media). The practice of awareness, insight, and action offers ways to demystify identity, difference, and power—that is, questions of diversity in the communication classroom and in society.

Using the model of transformative communication pedagogy as a set of useful and adaptable guidelines rather than rigid and strict prescriptions, I integrate the ideas in the forum to offer some guidelines to foster the development of diverse instructional communication scholarship. In terms of awareness, the essays have done an admirable job in highlighting the centrality of identity and power in communication education. Consistent with Hendrix and Wilson's (2014) important findings, the articles, in many ways, identify white, middle-class, male, heterosexual, able-bodied, and U.S. American—an intersectional identity that Audre Lorde (1984, p. 116) aptly calls the "mythical norm"—as a hegemonic perspective in current instructional communication research. In addition to being a narrow perspective that yields "maladjusted research that does not reflect the nuances of a changing society or classroom demographic" (Hendrix & Wilson, 2014, p. 420), it also produces what I call a "mythical intersectional normativity,"[3] which establishes itself as *the* standard through which *all* identities are measured, judged, and declared to deviate.

Insight, or deep and complex modes of understanding, can be explored through awareness of this mythical intersectional normativity. Based on the works of numerous scholars in communication and related disciplines (e.g., Dyer, 1997; Hendrix & Wilson, 2014; Lorde, 1984; Wahl & Simmons, this issue; Yep, 2003, 2013), several insights can be derived. First, normativity creates an "Other," that is, those who do not—or cannot—adhere or conform to the norm (e.g., racial others, women, sexual others). Second, the normality of this mythical intersectional normativity is utterly dependent on the degradation of its "Others" (e.g., race-related research is not valuable or legitimate). Third, by passing itself off as race-less, class-less, gender-less, and so on, the mythical intersectional normativity makes itself universal—that is, representative of *all* human identity rather than a particular intersectional identity. Fourth, by appearing invisible—that is, unmarked and unremarkable—the mythical intersectional normativity evades scrutiny and analysis, thus, hiding its power in a social system. Finally, the mythical intersectional normativity produces social hierarchies that have powerful symbolic and material consequences for everyone in society.

To begin to engage in action, communication scholars should keep in mind that (a) communication is always already cultural and (b) power is always already operating in all communication situations. By recognizing that all communication occurs within a cultural domain where social differences are created, negotiated, and contested, we can focus more on the nuances and complexities of communication rather than reifying certain normativities. For example, intercultural communication has, in many ways, been imagined as communication with "Others"—exoticized, essentialized, and marginalized—which reify the mythical norm (Yep, 2000/2014). By recognizing that power operates—sometimes invisibly, sometimes hypervisibly—in all communication situations, from interpersonal communication to mediated representations, we can

potentially avoid reaffirming the power of the mythical norm. For example, color-blindness works against racial justice by ignoring the realities and consequences of racism and racial stratification (Omi & Winant, 1994).

Diversity in instructional communication is, in my view, not about "making the current tent bigger to accommodate 'Others'" where the rules of engagement remain the same, that is, governed by mythical intersectional normativity. Wahl and Simmons address this eloquently: Inclusion efforts continue to recenter the power of the mythical norm and tokenize "Others." Diversity in instructional communication is about engaging in West's (1990/1999) "the new cultural politics of difference" (p. 257) by creating and maintaining spaces for "Other" forms of communication to be legible in the discipline through local, embodied, and historically situated knowledges. As these forms of communication emerge to represent different identity locations without seeking hegemonic status, our collective disciplinary knowledge is amplified and enriched. It is then that we begin to actualize the great promise of communication education.

Acknowledgments

Notes

1. Teachers and students, as participants, have the potential to mutually change and transform each other.
2. I adopted the model from Dr. Donald Arquilla who uses it primarily for psychological transformation.
3. The mythical norm is a particular intersectional identity. By highlighting this aspect, we can unpack how it invisibly creates and marks "Others."

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Tracing the Spiral Path Toward More Diversity in Instructional Communication Research

Jo Sprague

> This seems to be the law of progress in everything we do; it moves along a spiral rather than a perpendicular; we seem to be actually going out of the way, and yet it turns out that we were really moving upward all the time.
>
> Francis E. Willard, American Activist

As I write this, there is plenty of cause for despair about ever achieving our dreams of racial, ethnic, and gender equality and justice. Unarmed black youth are being killed by police, people are taking to the streets in protest, acts of international and domestic terrorism continue, and there are calls to close our borders to refugees and immigrants. Hearing all this, I remember other marches, other cities torn apart, other deaths. Within educational institutions, we hear reports of both blatant and insidious racism resulting in calls to be more inclusive in curriculum, faculty, and student recruitment; to establish support systems and sensitivity training. Some of this hits close to home. From within my faith community there are regular reports of vandalism of Black Lives Matter banners displayed outside houses of worship. I think about two black athletes from my own campus, San Jose State University, raising their fists

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on an Olympic awards platform in 1968. I remember countless hours of committee meetings and soul-searching workshops as faculty struggled with issues of diversity in higher education. And now, we seem to be moving backwards.

Yet even in the face of persistent suffering, hatred, and greed, there are signs that something different is happening in the world. People continue to stand up for justice and compassion; they speak out for tolerance and inclusion, offer gestures of hospitality, and resist environmental destruction. Perhaps, as Willard maintains, we are spiraling upward instead of just retracing our steps. When a person reaches a certain age, they have seen some of these spirals a number of times. The repetition evokes in me a mixture of impatience and hope.

In considering what new experiences we have been exposed to since we last grappled with these issues, most of us would point to the exponential advances in information technologies. The visible effect is a level of connectedness that is still almost unimaginable. We are beginning to grasp its paradoxical effects on our daily life: greater convenience, more isolation, less civility, enriching new contacts, broader world perspective, a new tribalism that narrows contacts and information sources. Immersed as we are in this dizzying change, we are way too close to get a real sense of how all these high speed, global, curiously intimate connections may be having revolutionary effects on human consciousness.

The Upward Spiral in Instructional Communication Research

The struggles for social justice and against racism "out in the real world" can be traced in this of essays about the work we do as scholars of instructional communication research. We respond with both impatience and optimism. At first, seeing much that is familiar, one tends to wonder "Are we really still talking about this?" But then, taking a closer look, that becomes, "Wait! something different and positive is underway." Though these essays may include a handful of oversimplified ways of discussing diversity and a persistent attachment to certain research practices, I'll forego the temptation to revisit past critiques. Instead, let us celebrate the many ways they reflect all that has been learned from prior journeys around the spiral. I'll mention just four that give me particular hope.

We've learned that however well intentioned, some efforts to expand diversity can actually perpetuate the marginalized positions of people we sought to help. It's bad enough that efforts to counter racism and other kinds of discrimination can unleash vicious backlash effects from opponents; but how troubling when people who consider themselves allies of oppressed groups, inadvertently make things worse! Those of us who are white, heterosexual, cis-gendered, able-bodied, financially secure, educated, and/or otherwise privileged are frequently blind to our positional advantages. We make clumsily paternalistic efforts that appear disrespectful. We stereotype. We tokenize. We patronize. I cringe to notice in my CV a 1991 paper entitled "Giving Voice to At-Risk Students." Intellectually smitten with the notion of voice, I overlooked the subtext that voice was something that we could bestow on someone. Nor did the rest of us at that conference understand that invoking the empirical reality that

some students were in fact very much "at risk" of academic failure could still cast the rest of us in the rescuer role. Wahl and Simmons offer here a thoughtful analysis of the dangers of coopting or appropriating students' actual felt identity into a broader, more homogenized identity. They call attention to the tightrope educators walk as they try to neither absorb students of color nor ghettoize them.

We've moved away from talking about identity as if it were a unitary, static characteristic. Several of these authors discuss the multiple and multifaceted identities that characterize the contemporary world. We all have not one but many aspects of identity. When a black male student interacts with a white male teacher, who is to say if similarity of gender is more salient than disimilarity of race? Perhaps class or religion or any of a host of other traits overrides both. Applying a model like Intergroup Identity Theory for instance, as do Hosek and Soliz, offers a useful way of organizing research designs, but only when we understand how identities are perceived and prioritized in specific learning situations. We have also come a long way in understanding that race is primarily a social construct, and thus often is not a useful way of naming identity. The person of color that I met most recently turned out to be of Thai and El Salvadorian heritage, neither "African American" nor black in any meaningful sense. Along with the increasing number of mixed race people, he shared only the experience of being publicly perceived as nonwhite. The sheer number of permutations of teacher and student identities has moved us away from prescriptions of how to relate to certain groups. Simultaneously, researchers show greater awareness that identities are fluid. As our culture becomes more open about previously taboo topics, young people realize that some overt signs that might have been seen to reveal gender identification or sexual orientation may be much more transitory experimentation with gender display. Certainly a partial explanation of the lack of uptake in the RuPaul discussion reported by Carroll, Redlick, and Hanchey could be that students were processing how to answer a close-ended question about the gender of someone who identifies as not being tied down to a single gender.

A third heartening sign in contemporary instructional communication research is that *we continue to show increasing awareness of the significant power of our language choices.* Naming does matter. It is not a mere semantic quibble to problematize the word *diversity* as compared with *difference* or to aggressively parse of the notion of inclusion. This pushes us much deeper into the issues intercultural communication scholars explored years ago when they challenged the melting pot metaphor and proposed the tossed salad image in its place. My colleague Marquita Byrd later talked about tributary cultures capturing well the dynamic intermingling of new arrivals flowing into a mainstream. The struggles over how to refer to specific marginalized groups must continue. It is uncomfortable to those who are trying to be respectful to adjust to usages like Queer, which sounds derogatory. But the ultimate respect is to recognize the right of groups to name and rename themselves as it seems relevant to what they see as important to highlight at a certain historical juncture. How else could we identify the victims of decades of violent police overreaction but as "*black* Lives?" When law enforcement officers are firing shots within seconds of encountering a person, they are not considering age or education or subtle blends of ancestry. They

are reacting to a single visual feature, the blackness of the person's skin. This particular movement's leaders are exposing an irrational fear triggered by blackness. They cite research, both old and new, revealing for instance that by the age of nine, black youth are considered more dangerous than white kids and that darker-skinned blacks get longer sentences than whites who are convicted of similar crimes (Halloway, 2015).

In research decisions as well as conceptual discussions, there seems to be more carefulness in language. Fewer articles report effects on learning when they mean self-reported learning. This journal's recent forum on affective learning attempts to bring our usage closer to that used by other fields. Discussions of teacher immediacy have been narrowed to the set of mostly nonverbal behaviors that have been well validated. Catchall, almost circularly conceived terms, like teacher misbehaviors are being challenged.

Looking to Our Next Chapter

For the next spin around our subdisciplinary spiral, there is justification for considerable optimism. Here are a few of the changes I hopefully predict.

1. *We will be unified by a reconnection with our applied mission.*

Looking closely at the origins of our research questions, you may find that often the rationale for a particular piece of research is grounded within a small community of scholars: There is a gap in the literature. This instrument can be refined. Are we not an applied subdiscipline, devoted from the start to helping educators and institutions improve the effectiveness of education through communication? The Power in the Classroom program, for example, was originally justified as a response to concerns from teachers who wanted to find effective means of classroom management. Though of course our brand of scholarship does not consist of offering tips for teachers, neither should it remain in the rarefied world of theory and the niceties of measurement. The most useful insights are not drawn from a single method or research tradition. We are seeing promising signs of new collaborations among instructional communication scholars. In the last few years, the current generation of intellectual leaders from varied perspectives have issued eloquent calls to return to our shared mission (e.g., Dannels et al., 2014; Rudick & Golsan, 2014).

2. *We will listen to teachers' concerns in their full complexity.*

Instead of beginning with research questions, we might view our work as starting from problems in the field, translating those into researchable questions, and then repackaging our findings back into usable solutions and advice. Especially in the complex area of diversity in education, problems are rarely simple. Teachers aren't struggling with questions of "How do I do X?" More likely they are juggling issues of "How do I do X

without compromising Y in constantly changing situations?" Inevitably, listening deeply to the widespread pain in the educational trenches will generate a research language more often expressed in terms of tensions and dialectics.

3. *More voices will be evident in our scholarly discourse.*

With some notable exceptions, the writing in our journal is addressed from scholar to scholar, often within very small subspecialities. The researcher defines issues and interprets findings in rather detached tones and dense prose. Though data are routinely gathered from teachers and students, it is often reduced in advance to categories whose boundaries are drawn by the researchers. We will benefit from supplementing that kind of data with narrative accounts, in-depth interviews, and rich detailed observations. Triangulate! Quadrangulate! Quintangulate!

4. *Our unit of analysis will broaden from the decontextualized teacher–student relationship.*

We will resituate pedagogical work in its broader historical and cultural contexts. A single classroom episode will be examined as an ever-changing glimpse of teachers, students, classrooms, schools, educational systems, and sociopolitical milieux. Picture a stack of slippery, overlapping disks. Scholars will need to hop nimbly up and down those layers, using the wonderfully evocative writing skills demonstrated by the critical scholars represented in these two issues. Or, they will need to drive a skewer cleanly through them, capturing a line of connections even more sophisticated than those our talented methodologists have tackled to date.

Integrating Connectedness and Consciousness

So, in our small corner of academia as in the greater world, we experience massive, largely visible changes in connectedness and subtler, less nameable changes in consciousness. These will continue. As we struggle to survive and thrive, the greatest threat we face is that the ability to connect so widely and rapidly will enable populations to be manipulated through fear and primitive prejudices. Lacking a reliable basis to identify truth from falsehood or to reason about their collective good, groups may become more and more irrational and combative. The only hope for avoiding this is through a counter transformation of consciousness. The best way we know to make such positive changes in people is through education. Most crucially, education in such a hyperconnected world needs to (1) pursue the cognitive goals of critical thinking—recognizing the difference between data and opinion, evaluating evidence, deconstructing reasoning; (2) nurture the affective values of civility, compassion, justice; and (3) foster complex communication competence beyond levels imagined so far.

Déjà vu? Yes, these learning tasks sound outdated. But they take on new urgency in our current world, and we are far from understanding how best to actualize them. Let

us stay united and open in seeking useful insights by remembering how much Instructional Communication Research Matters.

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The Contours of Progress: Parsing Diversity and Difference Studies

Katherine Grace Hendrix & Ronald L. Jackson II

> Early on, it became clear to me that any discussion of gender or culture or race/ethnicity automatically upsets someone. These variables are largely harmless when placed into cross-breaks and used to extend the generality of theory, i.e., to discount them as important to the literature …. they can be rendered inoffensive by means of saying they did not matter.
>
> (Starosta, 2010, p. 177)

The conversation about diversity and difference transcends theory. It extends into the bitter reality that higher education has not kept up with the pace at which the nation is moving to become increasingly multicultural. The paradigms, curricula, association leadership, etc. have not begun the hard work of intensive self-reflection. After all what does it say about us if we as professors strive to prepare the next generation to be multicultural citizens, but we find we ourselves are ill prepared? Yet, as we look across both forum contributions, we are hopeful about the future of postsecondary education in Communication in general and the impetus *Communication Education* can provide in offering a platform for relevant scholarship of teaching. Although the journal's initial years included applied pieces, somehow as the years progressed,

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we lost our way and forgot about the importance of research relevant to the classroom teacher in favor of establishing ourselves as bona fide scholars.

This forum simultaneously gives us hope and trepidation. We are hopeful that this forum will move us away from the same topics, investigated in the same manner, and often published by the same researchers. On the other hand, our trepidation stems from a belief that we might be advocating a major change without the proper foundation in place. The need for change in our approach to our research is clearly articulated by the contributors to this forum; consequently, there is no need to repeat the line of reasoning. However, from where we stand, we see a distinct need for cautionary guidance regarding: (a) acknowledging the privilege associated with the creation of this forum and the ideas articulated within, (b) so quickly dismissing the term "diversity" in favor of "difference," and (c) the dangers associated with extending the conceptual boundaries of inclusion such that inclusion becomes ambiguous and slippery.

First, the movement requested in this forum is not new. It has been articulated by scholars of color for decades across all specialty areas in our field (Asante & Miike, 2013; Hendrix, 1998; Jackson & Moshin, 2011; McPhail, 2002; Ono, 1997; Orbe & Allen, 2008; Yep, 2007) including the call for a critical progressive pedagogy in the 2003 special issue of *Communication Education* we edited 13 years ago (Hendrix, Jackson, & Warren, 2003; Jackson & Hendrix, 2003). The difference is the message now has a better chance of being heard and acted upon. Throughout Katherine's career, she has sat in faculty meetings where a white male colleague repackages her comments without acknowledging them as her original thoughts, is (unlike her) then heard, and moves on to claim full ownership of the idea. Within Ron's career, he has noticed that when there is an opportunity to make decision-making bodies more culturally diverse within academe there is active resistance and strategic movements to reinstate white privilege. Before we can move forward, we must acknowledge white privilege and how having such power has influenced whether the subaltern speak, who has been published, where, and why as well as who has been listened to (and who has not) over the decades. To put it bluntly, the use of this space to discuss disciplinary transformation and conceptual redefinition of difference is in and of itself a political act. It gives voice; it challenges hegemony; and it seeks structural change.

The implications of such acts of white privilege are far-reaching. As a marginalized person in the United States (U.S.), one is forced to cringe seeing oneself written out of history, dismissed, and devalued virtually every day. Over the 2015 Christmas holiday, Ron's family went to see the much-anticipated movie *Concussion*. As they watched the previews, a trailer for a new movie *Risen* was shown. This film about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his removal from a tomb seemed compelling; yet the cringe reemerged. Although this is set in what is now falsely called the Middle East, a place that has no separation in land mass from the continent of Africa, very few darkskinned people are in the movie. Ron's family was reminded that this is what privilege looks like. Ironically, during this identical timeframe, Katherine had the same conversation with her husband after watching CNN's *Finding Jesus: Faith, Fact, Forgery*. The same cringe occurs in the classroom when few communication theory and public

speaking textbooks acknowledge paradigms produced by or about culturally diverse peoples. All of these things remind us that this is what privilege looks like, the ability to not have to consider others' humanity. So, this forum is significant as a way to give voice to the subaltern.

Second, beyond the forum providing a platform where we might give voice to those on the margins, we must attend to how that happens as we discuss diversity and difference. We must be aware of the dangers of the terminology we are using. Difference studies, albeit an interesting concept, run the risk of mimicking extant attempts to conflate diversity concerns pertaining to racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination and exclusion to mere differences in opinion, emotion, cognition, ideology, attitude, approach, socioeconomic status, family background, etc. One of the epistemic dangers in shifting from diversity studies to difference studies is that rather than bringing specificity to the "imprecise[ness]" of diversity studies, it would literally split the conversation about diversity into a thousand pieces turning a meaningful conversation about structural privilege into one that is about everything and therefore nothing. On the other hand, to the extent that difference studies could truly anchor the impreciseness of diversity studies effectively while directly confronting structural privilege head on, it might add some benefit.

Third, the reflex to be inclusive still needs some definitive parameters. Although Gonzalez and Cramer give a positive nod to the history of diversity, as we read the forum essays, we notice that the word "diversity" often absorbs the blame in the essays advocating difference studies (also see Affirmative Action, 2014). However, it is the person behind the term—whether difference or diversity—who articulates a particular ideology. Is diversity the problem or, rather, the discipline's doxa and standpoint of the researcher(s)? During the 1970s, Stanford University professor, William Shockley, argued he had scientifically proven blacks were genetically inferior to whites and creating a retrogression in the evolution of human beings (Shockley & Pearson, 1992). Shockley's research, along with that of University of California, Berkeley professor, Arthur Jensen, was grounded in arguments based on difference (Jensen, 1973). Given this history, to a person of color, "difference" may very well hold a negative connotation.

Consequently, as we adhere to this call for change, we must be mindful that we do not live in a postracial society. Race matters. We may belong to the same social class and/or be employed in the same field, but our lives are not necessarily the same. The formation of research teams is encouraging, but all researchers—in particular whites—must be mindful of their standpoints and privilege, and attuned to the presence (or absence) of such privilege among their academic peers. An example of such mindfulness in a classroom setting is demonstrated in Shlossberg and Cunningham's discussion of incorporating diversity education when wrestling with how a technology-driven context impacts student/student and student/professor interaction.

In Forum 1, Fassett and Nainby identified multiple authors with similar theoretic training and methodological alignment as part of the problem; but it goes deeper than that down to research teams that have also conducted investigations and analyzed

data (for years) through the lens of whiteness. Finally, even if we accept the premise that it is time for movement toward "difference," we must be careful that: (a) we understand difference from an international perspective[1] and (b) classroom studies do not become so relative that we gain limited understanding and virtually no practical application. When such studies become all encompassing, they may fail to say anything really helpful.

When providing a specific case of incorporating gender identity into the classroom, Carroll, Redlick, and Hanchey ponder what causes students' fears about expressing their ideas and how to introduce exemplars without creating tokens. Along this same vein, Spencer and Capuzza mention the downfalls of tokenism in relation to sex, gender, and gender identity, and note how other disciplines are ahead of Communication in teaching about transgender identity. Their observations highlight how slow our field is to change. Overall, the contributors call for a transformation in our approach to research. Hosek and Soliz advocate expanding diversity by incorporating an intergroup perspective emphasizing the ways people identify and categorize themselves and others; thereby influencing their approaches to interaction. Simmons and Wahl note the absence of a regular relationship with scholars whose research programs focus on diversity and state that the "mission of diversity and inclusion . . . [will be] unequivocally compromised as long as minority voices, concerns, and experiences are ghettoized" within special issues. Orbe petitions for a "more complex understanding of cultural intersectionality" via multifocal, relational scholarship that incorporates diverse methodological designs. Sciullo believes difference will allow us to work in tandem with Panacea's siblings and, consistent with this, Rudick and Golsan call for mutual respect and cross-pollination of ideas. But are the relationships in place to allow such interaction, or are these research teams working in a vacuum?

Looking over our careers, we have stressed the importance of not being invisible and the critical nature of accepting our scholarship as legitimate knowledge. As we are well aware from Schutz's three-part system (inclusion, control, affection), being included is not necessarily the same as affection (Schutz, 1958). This forum—whether couched as diversity or difference—attempts to move us toward respect and love. However, if we have failed to appreciate diversity (sometimes with the very colleagues in our own department) and failed to expose ourselves to other standpoints, are we even ready to move toward difference? Hence, our trepidation is about these proposed major changes in our philosophical orientation.

Given all this, our hope is that we will move forward cautiously, being particularly mindful of the significant impact of "diversity" on the face of college campuses and other organizations within the U.S. Let us remember the lives sacrificed as part of the Civil Rights Movement in the history of this country and the legal decisions allowing us the opportunity to raise such issues. At this turning point, rather than

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1 Do not forget that we are a national organization with an international reach. No one can be an expert in all things, but we should seek to learn how coidentities of teacher and student manifest themselves in other countries.

disparaging "diversity," let us acknowledge its critical roles in bringing us to this point in not only the history of our nation but the history of our discipline.

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Editor's Post-Script

Our goal for this forum was not only to call for enriching our scholarship through diversity, but more importantly to create an avenue for change. Change begins with recognizing which differences are needed, why they matter, and a destination to

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move toward—or at least enough sense of direction to start the journey. I hope you have found both vision and inspiration in this forum. How specifically can you make that difference? I would offer just a few actionable ideas to help develop our scholarship potential.

Start Exploring

- *Infuse diverse perspectives into many phases of your work*—Reimagine an empirical instructional communication project you are working on, including questions related to understanding diversity, experiencing marginalization, or mitigating key differences among people.
- *Consider a critical analysis*—A well-done critical analysis can make a significant contribution to advancing scholarship. *Communication Education* and a number of other journals accept such pieces. The standard for such scholarship is high. It must offer substantive and important new contributions and provide agenda setting insights through meticulous review of existing data and theory. But work that clears that bar is valuable and can be influential.

Team up

- *Form a research team*—Seek out and collaborate with disciplinary colleagues who may seem to differ from you in important ways (race, culture, gender identity, etc.). Bring multiple perspectives to address issues of diversity and difference better than you could do on your own or with a more homogeneous research group.
- *Facilitate conversations*—Convene conversations on your campus (perhaps even beyond your department) among those interested in diversity that can help scholars get such research started. These conversations might involve just a few faculty; that is fine if it helps move people forward.
- *Reach beyond the academy*—Look for organizations in your community who support marginalized populations and develop scholarship that can advance their work while making theoretical contributions to the discipline.

Develop Yourself and Get Support

- *Attend workshops*—A number of well-run conferences, institutes, and workshops annually focus on comprehending and addressing key societal differences. Attending one may give you tools and support needed to start or improve your project.
- *Get support from your chair or dean*—If collaborating on diversity research requires travel or other modest financial support ask your chair. If that office lacks funds, work with your chair to seek funding from your dean or provost. Your administrative team may be able to provide resources and other support you wouldn't get without asking. As a return on investment, they may ask you to share your findings on campus, spreading the benefit further.

Develop the discipline

- *Develop a preconference workshop specific to instructional communication*—Pull together a team of scholars to facilitate a preconference workshop on diversity in instructional communication scholarship.
- *Get an NCA grant*—NCA's Advancing the Discipline grants are ideal for developing and hosting a weekend institute on diversity in instructional communication scholarship. Such an institute could facilitate research collaboration and launch numerous publishable projects.

What are you going to do?

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