An Explanation of Course Flipping and Its Application to Basic Course Instruction

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Flipping courses has become a topic of interest for communication instructors. This essay's primary purpose is to assist communication educators and administrators in understanding course flipping as an instructional delivery approach. Course flipping, encouraging consistent active student learning during class sessions and appropriately using technology (or another means) to prepare students for these sessions, has most effectively accentuated instructional objectives. In fact, flipping the basic course has significantly increased students' understanding of the relevance of the course and positively affected performance outcomes. In addition, to help instructors who want to employ this approach, a process in which they can engage to prepare for course flipping most efficaciously is described. Finally, several suggestions for future research that can further clarify flipping communication courses are discussed.

Keywords: basic course, theory, application, learning-centered instruction, technology, course flipping

For over 40 years, communication educators have examined the pedagogical approaches employed in the basic course; described students' reactions to course instruction and the quality of their performances; and provided advice concerning how to optimize learning outcomes (Ford & Wolvin, 1993; Gibson, Gruner, Brooks, & Petrie, 1970; Gibson, Gruner, Hanna, Smythe, & Hayes, 1980; Gibson, Hanna, & Huddleston, 1985; Gibson, Hanna, & Leichty, 1985; Gibson, Kline, & Gruner, 1974; Morreale, Hanna, Berko, & Gibson, 1999; Morreale, Hugenberg, & Worley, 2006; Morreale, Osborn, & Pearson, 2000; Morreale, Worley, & Hugenberg, 2009; Worley & Worley 2006). Basic course research also has assisted communication professionals in understanding this course's progression and effectiveness, which is essential when preparing for and conducting administrative assessment (Eicholtz & Baglia, 2013*;* Hess, 2012; Mino, 2012; Morreale, Backlund, Hay, & Moore, 2011).

This extensive research not only has described useful basic course practices but also has pointed to significant instructional shortcomings, such as the need to motivate and to engage students during the course (Morreale et al, 2006) and to convey course objectives unambiguously so that students understand the purpose for the communication class that is typically required of them (Morreale et al., 2009). Clearly, these studies have emphasized that the pedagogical approaches employed in the first and, perhaps, the only communication course in which most undergraduate students enroll have not been as effective as possible (see, for example, Worley & Worley, 2006). Thus, department chairs, course directors, and instructors seek those pedagogical approaches that will assist them in best delivering the basic course to undergraduate students. Consequently, exploring approaches that have the greatest potential to emphasize the course's value and to clarify its purpose is necessary.

The term, *class flip,* has been described since the mid 1990's and has been associated with a variety of teaching methods, such as, blended, peer, inverted, and reverse instruction, Pink's (2010) article called attention to and greatly increased the popularity of course flipping as an instructional approach. Because of the claims that flipping courses have

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significantly improved student performance in other subject areas, it has become a topic of interest for communication educators. In fact, at both regional (Eastern Communication Association) and the National Communication Association (NCA) conferences, both short courses and panels have focused on course flipping and have been well-attended. Additional public and private requests for information about course flipping have indicated that an increasing number of communication educators want to learn about this instructional approach (see, for example, McMullen, 2014). Particularly, educators have asked three specific questions. First, what does course flipping involve? Second, how can it be implemented effectively? Third, what are its implications for communication instruction? This essay is intended to aid in answering each of these questions.

Initially, to help explain course flipping, the essay discusses the purposes of learning-centered instruction and using technology. Although many communication professionals are familiar with these pedagogical approaches and assign group activities, lead class discussions, or employ technology to deliver course concepts, instructors do not focus on learning-centered approaches often or consistently enough, especially when offering the basic course. Next, this essay describes course flipping and how it has been implemented in several courses, including basic public speaking. Additionally, because communication instructors not only are interested in understanding what course flipping is but also want to know how to execute it effectively, a process in which instructors can engage to flip a course is shared. Finally, several suggestions for future communication research on course flipping are offered.

The Purposes of Learning-Centered Instruction and Incorporating Technology

When delivering the basic course, selecting a pedagogical approach that most strongly motivates students to learn communication theory *and* to apply communication skills effectively must become more of an instructional priority (Morreale et al., 2006; 2009). Recognizing the purposes of learning-centered instruction and incorporating technology is one of the first steps in accomplishing this goal.

Learning-Centered Instruction

Learning- (student-) centered instruction creates an educational setting that fosters student understanding, discovery, and the construction of knowledge, improves learning, and helps diverse students achieve success (see, specifically, Dewey, 1916; Dewey, 1938; Barr & Tagg, 1995; Hill, 1974; Hill 1985). Instructors have advocated employing forms of *learning-centered instruction*, such as *interactive* or *collaborative instruction* (Mino, 2001) and *integrated learning* (Mino, 2014), to improve teaching outcomes.

According to Laird and House (1984), *interactive instruction*, creates a classroom environment that encourages active learning, aids the instructor in leading discussions that stay on track, involves all students, and improves communication skills, which is a goal of communication study. Walkin (1992) also has advocated employing an instructional approach that focuses on students instead of the instructor. He has observed that learning situations are successful only if there is a desired change in student behaviors. Thus, Walkin (1992) has defined the instructor's role as the facilitator who provides a framework for the desired student learning responses to occur. His focus on student skills development strongly supports learning-centered instruction for delivering courses.

Educators who incorporate learning-centered instruction have recognized that students must advance beyond memorizing or comprehending theory. Specifically, students need to define course content by directly relating it to real life contexts. Otherwise, this content is soon forgotten after the class is completed. Moreover, course information is most effectively assimilated through learning that focuses on theoretical application and not by listening to an instructor as he or she shares information, explains its application during class sessions, or spends time reiterating why learning the material is important (Mino, 2001; 2012). Through their efforts preparing for class sessions and their active participation during these sessions, students are more accountable for their own educational outcomes.

Technology

With the advent of technology, communication educators began to investigate how it could enhance learning in their courses (see, for example, Althas, 1997; Chesebro & Bertelsen, 1996). For instance, they studied the effects of Computer-Assisted Instruction (Kuehn, 1994; McComb, 1994), such as electronic mail (Bailey & Cotlar, 1994), presentational or self-paced software (Bodary, 1997; Oblinger & Rush, 1997); and video technology (Cronin & Kenan, 1994; Reppert, 1995). In the same way as studies conducted for other communication courses, the research on employing technology to share basic course concepts (see, for example, Cronin & Glenn 1991; Hayes 1990; Hunt & Simonds, 2002) or offering the entire class online (Clark & Jones, 2001; Goodnight & Wallace, 2005) have provided the rationale and explained the means to do so. The increased use of technology to present communication course information has decreased basic course instructors' reliance on traditional instructional approaches and has helped them to share course information in nontraditional ways more often and, in some cases, more effectively.

Regardless of the instructional approach selected, the means by which the approach is implemented determines its degree of pedagogical effectiveness. For example, basic course instructors have used group activities to clarify a course concept or concepts *for* students. However, when incorporating a learning-centered approach, the students are expected to interpret the concept(s) themselves; it is the students' primary responsibility to share information with each other about the purpose and value of the concept(s) and to discuss and to describe for their classmates and the instructor similar real word contexts in which applying the concept would be valuable. Instructors who have most successfully employed active learning have done so because they effectively and consistently incorporate a learning-centered approach that encourages students to provide content and application details during which the instructor guides them in the appropriate direction through facilitation.

Further, rather than using technology to prepare students for active class sessions, sharing theory during sessions is a main focus in many basic course classrooms. This emphasis does not give basic course students sufficient time to apply course concepts to real world contexts consistently enough. Instructors also may primarily rely on traditional instructional approaches to teach aspects of rhetorical theory and/or criticism in the basic public speaking course to prepare students for speeches. Again, students are not provided with the class time to explore rhetoric's direct application to their personal and professional lives. In some cases, when instructors do use technology, the students must adapt to the type or quality of the technology used. In order to be most successful, the technology selected must be adapted to the students instead of having students adapt to the technology (Mino, 2001). Moreover, technological application must appropriately support clear course objectives, be well-planned, and never be implemented in a course on a trial and error basis.

In all, when teaching the basic course, employing each of these instructional methods most effectively is imperative in order to motivate and to engage students. Preparing students for class sessions so that they are active participants instead of observers strengthens teacher-student and student-student relationships, thus increasing students' attention and involvement when enrolled in this course.

Description of Course Flipping

In 1995, J. Wesley Baker, a professor of communications, employed an early edition of an online content management system. This system allowed him to place lecture notes online and share them during class sessions. Students began to retrieve and review his lectures before class sessions, which he encouraged. Once Baker shared his entire course with students online, he needed to conduct his class sessions differently. Consequently, he began to use these sessions to explore course content through increased student participation (Johnson & Renner, 2012).

Between 1996 and 1998 at teaching conferences, Baker shared with educators how his students employed out-of-class time to prepare for class sessions through online lectures and how he used class time for increased student interaction. In 1998, he formally referred to this approach as *the classroom flip* (see, for example, Johnson & Renner, 2012, p. 4; Baker, 2011). In 2000, Lage, Platt, and Treglia designed and implemented a similar instructional method that they called *the inverted classroom* (p. 30); students viewed lectures in advance and class sessions were spent clarifying course concepts and engaging students in small group activities.

King's (1993) essay has described this instructional shift in the 1990's from traditional teaching approaches to learning- (student-) centered ones. While traditional approaches require students to complete reading and other assignments during their own time and consist of learning settings in which students listen to theoretical lectures and take notes while in class, when employing learning-centered instruction, the topics that are usually shared by the instructor during class sessions, such as theory and other course-related information, are studied outside of class and prepare students for active learning.

To comprehend course flipping fully, it is important to recognize how it differs from a **_hybrid course_** (which incorporates *blended learning).* Hybrid courses consist of employing face-to-face instruction and online activity. For example, a two-day-per-week course meets face-to-face one day per week in the classroom and anywhere from 30% to 79% of learning activities are scheduled to occur online the other day. During the online class sessions, either all students work at the same time in a chat room (synchronously) or students complete online assignments, including out-of-class homework and readings, at their convenience (asynchronously), (see, for example, Allen, Seaman, & Garrett, 2007). On the other hand, a **_flipped course_** has been best described as one that:

> typically meets as per the class schedule for all planned face-to-face (F2F) hours (i.e., a two day per week course meets in the classroom two days per week). The 'flip' refers to out-of-class time watching online lectures or otherwise independently exploring course content, while in-class time is devoted to a deeper exploration of the material and increased student interaction (see, for example, University of Utah, 2013).

Similar to other instructional approaches, in a flipped course, the instructor is in charge of and responsible for course substance. He or she specifies learning objectives, prepares carefully designed lectures, shares appropriate supplementary information, and plans the content and the direction of the interactive class sessions. However, the primary change is how class time is used. A flipped approach primarily employs suitable technology or other means to free time in class so instead of listening to the instructor's lectures and explanations, students learn through application, become more skilled at asking the right questions, and help each other understand course concepts.

Because class sessions are designated for active learning, another modification is the instructor's role, which changes from that of lecturer to that of facilitator whose primary objective during class is to create a learning environment that centers on student interaction and application and is intended to increase significantly students' understanding of course concepts. Specifically, course flipping substitutes the focus during classes from sessions in which students rely on the instructor to explain course material and make theoretical and application connections for them to sessions wherein students must work toward their own mastery of course concepts. To accomplish this goal, the instructor's role shifts from the "sage on the stage to the guide on the side" (King, 1993). As their guide, the instructor consistently assists students in drawing appropriate and accurate conclusions related to the course concepts as the students discuss theory and apply it. The goal is to encourage students to become more responsible for their learning outcomes both in and outside of the classroom. Thus far, this goal has been achieved.

Both high school and university instructors employ course flipping. Rosenberg (2013) has reported one telling example of the effects of course flipping in Detroit, Michigan's Clintondale High School's 9th grade class. The school was described as having the worst student academic performance rates. After flipping all of the 9th grade courses, instructors discovered that student performances significantly improved. Specifically, the English failure rate dropped from 52% to 19%; and failure rates in math decreased from 44% to 13%; in science, from 41% to 19%; and in social studies, from 28% to 9%. After 2011, the school flipped its courses for all grade levels. Subsequently, its overall failure rate decreased from 30% to 10%. At the same time, graduation rates increased to above 90% and college attendance grew from 63% in 2010 to 80% in 2012.

At the Pennsylvania State University, whose accounting class accommodates 1,300 students, effective course flipping has been employed. These class sessions consist of open discussion and hands-on problem solving where instructor support is augmented by student assistants. One Harvard University physics professor also has employed a flipped approach for his course and has shared his free interactive software so other instructors can duplicate his success in their physics classes (Educause, 2012). Moreover, at many other institutions, faculty members in a variety of disciplines who have employed course flipping have reported positive instructional outcomes (Walsh, 2013).

Instructors who have flipped their courses most successfully have combined *appropriate* technological application to prepare students for class sessions with *effective and consistent* active learning during these sessions. As a result of these pedagogical practices, course objectives have been better clarified, students' comprehension of both course concepts and their application have significantly improved, and students have more effectively comprehended the course's value as an academic requirement.

Research on Basic Public Speaking Course Flipping

Like other communication educators (Duran & Zakahi, 1987; Gibson, Hanna, & Huddleson, 1985), Mino and Butler (1995) have defined the basic course as a "skills course" (p. 39). They believe the instructor's primary objective "must center on students' [fundamental communication skills] development" (p. 40) (see, also, Engleberg, Emmanuel, Van Horn, & Bodary, 2008; Morreale, Osborn, & Pearson, 2000; Neff, 2013; Pearson, Child, Herakova, Semlak, & Angelos, 2010). Their essay "shares an interactive approach to basic [public speaking] course instruction" that "not only [emphasizes the significance of understanding] theory but also [employs] all class sessions [to help students directly relate [learning] communication skills" [to their personal and professional lives] (p. 39).

Mino and Butler's (1997) basic course research on learning-centered instruction has revealed that most students reacted positively to studying the topics typically shared by the instructor during class sessions outside of class; students wanted to be active learners during all class sessions; and when doing so, their understanding of communication fundamentals in regard to basic course theory increased, and their application skills, in particular, significantly improved.[1] To update the approach and further emphasize its pedagogical value. Mino's (2007) essay has continued the discussion concerning employing active learning during basic public speaking course class sessions and using online technology to prepare students for these sessions.

Just as the terms, *interactive or collaborative instruction,* employing active learning by means of technology, used by Mino and Butler (1995; 1997) and Mino (2007), *course flipping* has become the latest buzzword that describes and achieves identical pedagogical goals. All of these approaches are forms of learning-centered instruction. As such, Mino and Butler's (1995; 1997) and Mino's (2007) research have described for communication instructors a sound rationale for and detailed descriptions of one method for flipping the basic public speaking course. Moreover, based on advances in technology and pedagogical experts' best advice, these authors' instructional approach has consistently evolved and has been effectively employed in a basic public speaking course at a campus of a large northeastern university since its inception over 20 years ago. Thus, these authors' cumulative research is currently relevant when investigating basic course flipping. Reviewing these essays can provide useful insights for communication professionals who are interested in more

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[1] Mino and Butler's (1997) basic public speaking course study has shared the findings of their preliminary analysis that gathered background information about how this course could be delivered most effectively. An analysis was completed before the design of the course delivery approach was finalized or the study's performance-related data were collected. This analysis employed a critical incident exercise to determine what events positively or negatively affect student performances (Mino & Butler, 1997, p. 495; see also, Rothwell & Stredl, 1992; Yukl, 1994). Specifically, one hundred and fifteen basic course students were asked to respond to three questions: (1) What was the most successful college course you have ever taken? (2) What role did you play to make this course successful? (3) What role did the instructor play to make this course successful?

Students reported six factors they believed contribute to a successful course. These factors included: (1) gaining an understanding of the material; (2) feeling comfortable in the classroom environment; (3) participating in discussions both with the instructor and their classmates; (4) receiving clear information concerning the direct application of course concepts; (5) consistently engaging in practice or demonstrations in a non-threatening setting; and (6) receiving immediate performance feedback and evaluation (Mino & Butler, 1997, p. 496).

In addition, when comparing a traditional lecture approach when teaching the basic public speaking course with learning-centered instruction, although quiz and exam scores revealed no significant differences when employing either approach, students' informative and persuasive presentations significantly improved when the instructor employed learning-centered instruction (course flipping).

thoroughly examining learning-centered instruction (course flipping) when discussing, designing, and delivering the basic course.

Understanding the concept of course flipping is essential. However, both communication educators and administrators also need to understand how to apply it most successfully.[2]

Preparing for Course Flipping

The pedagogical literature that discusses flipping courses provides communication educators with several choices. For instance, Johnson and Renner's (2012) research has suggested that a flipping a course "does not have to be all or nothing" (p. 73). Therefore, the instructor can employ class or course flipping (replacing individual lectures with active learning or substituting many or all lectures with student interaction, respectively). Moreover, as do other explanations of course flipping, the University of Utah (2013) has included in its description of flipping a course an alternative to online lecturing. It asserts that any means of "independently exploring course content" outside of class while effectively using class sessions for active student learning is considered to be course flipping.

Notwithstanding, a meta-analysis published by the U.S. Department of Education (2012) (see, TeachThought, 2014) has indicated that when studying course information, students exposed to both face-to-face and online instruction were the most successful. These findings have suggested that sharing lectures and/or other course materials with students online is the best practice when course flipping. Thus, instructors need to consider their choices for flipping a course carefully.

The Process

When well-planned, basic course flipping encourages student preparation for class, increases student understanding of course information, directly connects theory and application to real life situations, and employs suitable technology to foster greater student in-class collaboration. Although the information related to exploring, implementing, and assessing course flipping that follow is not exhaustive, it includes practical guidance and queries that can increase instructors' successes when flipping a course. Specifically, instructors who want to flip a course should consider how to apply technology or other content delivery methods aptly, organize the course clearly, use facilitation skills adeptly, and assess learning outcomes effectively to improve future instruction. This process also provides a clear plan that is extremely useful when articulating process-related information during administrative assessments.

Exploration

When sharing course information online, exploring instructional options and understanding the challenges involved are essential. Institutions are wired for technology and students have access to it. However, different institutions have different technological

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[2] Mino (1999) has suggested that basic course instructors complete a three stage process, exploration, implementation, and assessment, when planning to use or when employing technology in the basic course. Based on the technology used, she also discusses its advantages and limitations. The pedagogical process this essay's author has described is based on Mino's process and has been applied to course flipping.

capacities and facilities available for putting course information online. Even if instructors are extremely proficient using their own or the institution's technology, altering a course's delivery approach may require some institutional or departmental support. Other instructors may be less proficient and/or uncertain about the value of using online technology. Those instructors who question the value of employing technology should, at the very least, assess and understand the reasons for any aversion they experience (see, for example, Howard, 2013). Becoming technologically competent initially involves exploring the types of technology application instruction the institution offers by contacting the appropriate professionals and asking questions. Specifically, what technological training sessions are available to aid instructors? Are they readily available? What types of online course assistance do these sessions provide?

Other questions include, if the instructor wants to design his or her own website (see, Figure 1) without using the university's technological resources to offer basic course materials, how does he or she find technological assistance if needed? What are the costs? Who will maintain the site? What is the process for updating instructional materials? Other questions that require answers are: Does the institution provide faculty members with any funding, release time, sabbatical leaves, or institutional grants to support developing online course lectures and material? What course lectures and materials are already available for online instruction? Are any or all of these lectures or materials ones that can effectively meet the instructors' and students' needs in terms of preparing them for active learning? Are these materials available and cost-effective? If the instructor does not want to implement online lectures, what other formats for sharing lectures can help students best understand the class information independently?

Preparing instructional materials and placing them online requires much time, effort, and patience. Experiencing the instructional advantages of technology requires overcoming the challenges. Can the instructor manage these challenges? In addition, do the instructor and the administration believe the potential advantages are worth the time and effort involved? If online lectures are not employed, is the instructor willing to explore and to devote the time and effort to compile all the information included in the lectures in those formats that best prepare students for active collaborative class sessions?

Implementation

In order best to implement course flipping, the instructor must evaluate his or her own pedagogical effectiveness. As Richmond (1998) has noted, instructional weaknesses cannot be hidden through technology. When sharing information outside of class, the information must effectively present course theory and adapt it to students. Whether the instructor chooses to utilize online audio or videotaped lectures or share lecture information through another technological outlet, like compact discs, learning labs, or use workbooks, for example, the instructor must ensure the material used is high quality and contains all the appropriate elements of effective communication. Since these "out-of-class lectures" serve as examples of the elements involved in sharing effective messages for students, they must include appropriate content, clear organization, strong audience adaptation, varied credible supporting materials and/or appropriate and engaging vocal and/or other nonverbal delivery. That is, when delivering information in print, or if sharing course information through any type of audio and video technology, quality must be a primary focus. These considerations are essential for establishing and maintaining students' attention and best

modeling effective communication as they process theory and prepare for group exercises, discussion topics, and skills practice.

Consequently, some questions include: Is competent communication captured most effectively and consistently when using others' materials? How can the instructor, when using his or her course information, best achieve this goal? Besides lectures, what other course material should be shared prior to class? In all, regardless of the format used to share course materials, how are course materials best compiled, organized, adapted, and delivered?

Because class sessions are designed for active learning, instructors also must plan the discussion topics and class activities, and select the types and number of presentations for practice that will most efficiently focus on student understanding and skills development. Class sessions are primarily designed to illustrate course theory, clarify its application, and allow students to engage consistently in discovery and skills practice. Therefore, what are the sources of the instructional material that most effectively illustrate course theory and best initiate student discussions and which types of activities most successfully help students to operationalize course concepts?

Moreover, the instructor must consider his or her in-class teaching abilities when classes involve direct and immediate interaction with students (see, for example, Frymier & Houser, 2000). Specifically, because the instructor's role shifts from lecturer to facilitator, he or she must be comfortable and extremely proficient at thinking on his or her feet or be willing to struggle at times to reach higher competency levels. When acting as facilitator, the instructor must be well-prepared for each class to guide students through each activity, discussion, and application. Thus, important questions are: How proficient is the instructor as the catalyst for encouraging learning and applying theory in collaborative settings? If the instructor needs assistance, does the institution provide any workshops or training sessions that focus on developing effective facilitation skills?

Assessment

As with traditional approaches, when flipping any course, one must engage in consistent instructional assessment. This assessment can be informal and limited to course and institutional use. Accordingly, it will assist the instructor in adjusting or replacing online lectures and materials, discussion topics, class activities, and application, and serve to evaluate course outcomes during administrative assessments. However, in the basic course in particular, formal research studies on course instruction that are shared beyond one institution are necessary (Morreale, Backlund, Hay, & Moore, 2011). This research can assist the communication discipline in gaining a more informed perspective on course flipping and how to employ this instructional approach in the basic course most effectively.

There are a variety of questions that can aid instructors while conducting a course assessment. Based on the instructional objectives and goals, what is the relevance of flipping the course? How is instructional quality (the online lectures, the online materials or other formats used to prepare students for class sessions, and the class sessions) assessed? What specific modifications need to be made? How does flipping significantly affect students' understanding of communication competence and their mastery of communication skills? For what specific skills, theoretical content areas, and educational levels (first through fourth year students; traditional or adult learners) does flipping appear to be most effective? Are student more engaged in the course? Does student anxiety decrease? Does course flipping improve students' attitudes toward enrolling in a communication course? When the instructor employs this approach, do students better understand the course's purpose and

objectives than they do when the instructor uses traditional instructional approaches? Will improved attitudes translate into better performance in other communication contexts? Does a flipped course motivate students to take additional communication courses?

All of the pedagogical considerations that are given to a course's format require the instructor's most thoughtful attention. Ultimately, he or she needs to base any decisions concerning if or how a course is flipped on his or her instructional and institutional circumstances.

Conclusion

In a variety of disciplines, the pedagogical literature has described course flipping as an extremely effective instructional approach. Although communication instructors already understand some aspects of flipping courses, this essay clarifies this approach through its focus on employing learning-centered instruction and technology most effectively, its application to teaching the basic public speaking course, and a process to help instructors execute the approach most successfully. Because *course flipping* is one form of *learning-centered instruction* and *all learning centered approaches' goals* are identical in every way except the terms used to describe them, examining this pedagogical approach can provide relevant instructional information that can help communication professionals better understand course flipping.

Considering communication instructors' interest in how to apply course flipping and the limited published communication research specifically emphasizing it as a form of learning-centered instruction, additional informal and formal studies need to be conducted to help educators understand learning-centered instruction more fully. These types of studies not only can further validate for instructors the effects of flipping communication courses, but also can fill voids in the communication literature by adjusting communication professionals' research agendas and addressing what basic communication skills should include.

For more than 20 years, few communication studies have examined student behaviors (Canary & MacGregor Istley, 2008). Instead, these studies typically share communication theory and research findings rather than promoting the skills that exhibit effective communication behaviors (Mortenson, 2007; Mino, 2013). As Bertelsen and Goodboy (2009) have explained, in the past, communication scholars have contended that "'an emphasis on performance . . . created a 'skills perspective' that encourages the perception that [the communication] discipline does not have a cognate body of theory nor [does it] lend itself to research and scholarship'" (p. 264). However, communication study requires educators to share both theoretical concepts and the means by which to teach students how to apply these concepts by exhibiting effective communication skills. Thus, a focus on developing skills in a discipline that must teach them should not be marginalized, especially when this generation's students, who habitually rely on and are proficient in employing technology to interact, need to understand the value of learning and become competent at demonstrating appropriate, effective, and requisite speaking and listening skills when interacting face-to-face (see, specifically, Turkle, 2011). Since course flipping predominately centers on improving student behaviors through knowledge and application, instructors who implement this approach can share their best practices for developing students' oral communication skills through additional pedagogical studies that clearly translate theory into practice.

In addition, research has indicated that communication professionals do not agree on what constitutes basic communication skills and, thus, have not clearly defined them (Spitzberg, 2011). Educators who conduct and share basic course- and skills-development related research as they apply to course flipping can assist others in the discipline by more clearly defining basic communication skills and the contexts in and for which particular skills are best taught, thus contributing to the extant literature.

Most importantly, due to the nature of the courses taught by communication educators, research that further examines and describes effectively employing active learning and appropriately using technology when flipping communication courses can help instructors assess their courses; determine the best pedagogical practices for adapting to student audiences; and meet these students' communication needs. In particular, understanding basic course flipping has the potential to aid communication administrators and educators when discussing whether or not the basic course they deliver is the most effective one or if the course needs to be reviewed and/or revised.

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