Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

What are Students Being Taught about Ethics in Public Speaking Textbooks?

Judy C. Pearson, Jeffrey T. Child, Jody L. Mattern, & David H. Kahl, Jr.

Current conceptions of communication and ethics were investigated in the top ten public speaking textbooks in the communication discipline. Content analysis was used to examine eight ethical topic areas within each textbook. Results indicate the textbooks by Lucas, Jaffe, Beebe and Beebe, and Brydon and Scott provide the most overall coverage to ethics. In addition, plagiarism, ethnical listening, honesty, and ethical research are discussed most frequently while freedom of speech, hate words, and codes of ethics are least discussed among the top ten selling public speaking books. Each author references different philosophers, defines ethics, and describes the consequences of cheating in diverse ways. The implications of how ethics is not given the same amount of space in the top ten best-selling public speaking textbooks are discussed.

Keywords: Applied Ethics; Ethics; Higher Education; Plagiarism; Public Speaking Textbooks

What are Students Being Taught About Ethics in Public Speaking Textbooks?

What has happened to ethical values and practices in the United States? David Callahan, in a recent article in the *Nation*, contends that the United States has

Judy C. Pearson (PhD, Indiana University, 1975) is professor and associate dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND 58105, USA. Jeffrey T. Child (BS, Wayne State College, 2002) is a graduate student in the Department of Communication at North Dakota State University. Jody L. Mattern (MA, North Dakota State University, 2004) is an assistant professor in the Mass Communications Department at Minnesota State University, Moorhead, MN. David H. Kahl, Jr. (BA, Concordia College, 2002) is a graduate student in the Department of Communication at North Dakota State University. *Correspondence*: Judy C. Pearson, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, North Dakota State University, P.O. Box 5075, Fargo, ND 58105, USA; E-mail: judy.pearson@ndsu.nodak.edu

become a "culture of cheating" (2004, p. 4). He suggests that the combination of economic and social inequalities coupled with an emphasis on free market competition is responsible for the breakdown in values. Many Americans have become cynical about big business as people like Kenneth L. Lay, former chair and chief executive of Enron, and John J. Rigas, former head of Adelphia Communications, have been convicted of unethical behavior (Eichenwald, 2004).

Politicians, too, have lost races and have had to relinquish their hopes for public office because of their personal lives. In addition to sexual scandals, politicians have erred by plagiarizing speeches and other materials. For example, Delaware Senator Joseph R. Biden Jr. lost the primary nomination for President in 1988 when the public learned that he plagiarized a speech from British Labour party leader Neil Kinnock. Further investigation found that he also cheated in law school (Farlex, 2004).

Importance of Ethics

Ancient philosophers are frequently quoted when discussing the importance of ethics in communication. Perhaps most frequently cited is Aristotle's *Nicomachen Ethics* in which he writes, "In the arena of human life the honors and rewards fall to those who show their good qualities in action." Aristotle focuses on choice as he instructs us about ethics, by choosing to act '. . .to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way.'" His dictum is both ambitious and ambiguous. Similarly, Quintilian, offers the enigmatic ideal of a "good man speaking well." Aside from the critique that the definition is sexist, the principle is difficult to apply. In addition, early definitions and explanations of ethics honored theoretical treatments.

Ethics in Higher Education

Many of the early colleges and universities in America had connections to religion and to moral training. For example, in the early history of Harvard University, we learn that this oldest university in America:

> "Offered a classic academic course based on the English university model but consistent with the prevailing Puritan philosophy of the first colonists" (Harvard University, 2004). Although many of its early graduates became ministers in Puritan congregations throughout New England, the College was never formally affiliated with a specific religious denomination. An early brochure, published in 1643, justified the College's existence: "To advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity; dreading to leave an illiterate Ministry to the Churches." (Harvard University, 2004, Para 4)

Ohio University began as a result of an Ordinance of Congress on July 13, 1787, which stated, in part, "Religion, morality, and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged" (Hughes, 2003).

While religious and moral-based educational relationships are not present to the same extent in public institutions today, educators continue to emphasize the

importance of ethics in higher education. For example, over the two-year period from 1977 to 1979, the Hastings Center of New York studied the status, problems, and possibilities of teaching ethics in higher education. The Carnegie Foundation funded this extensive study which recommended course goals, evaluation, and teacher preparation (e.g., Callahan & Bok, 1980; Warwick, 1980). Because of the extensive attention given to ethics in research it was no longer conceived of as a theoretical and abstract concept. Instead, applied ethics was now privileged.

Indeed, in his orientation address to the new law students, Harvard Law School Dean Robert C. Clark (2002), observed, ''You will be faced with moral dilemmas and pitfalls all along the way.'' After discussing corporate scandals and the lawyers who defended corporate CEO's, Clark opined, ''Their decisions and advice were not anchored in a clear sense of what is right.'' Today, applied ethics is offered in a variety of disciplines in higher education and applied ethics courses have experienced massive expansion.

Ethics in the Communication Discipline

Communication theorists and scholars have held disparate views on the role of ethics in communication (Crable, 1978; Kruger, 1967; Segal, 2004). Boileau (1985) reminds us of the contrasting views of Karl Wallace and Ernest Bormann. Wallace contextualized ethics and communication in a democratic society and determined that speakers must present facts and opinions fairly and the speaker must reveal his or her sources of information. Bormann feels that the audience must have knowledge of the speaker's character.

The communication discipline has long discussed and debated the relationship between ethics and communication. The National Communication Association (NCA) adopted a credo for responsible communication in a free society in 1967 and 1972 (see Appendix A). Although the credo for responsible communication is identified as a credo of ''free and responsible'' communication, it is primarily focused on freedom of speech and our legal rights to speak and assemble. Little of this document addresses the creation of honest, accurate, and non plagiarized messages that rely on reason and are presented by credible speakers. NCA would later take on that task.

Kenneth Andersen, as NCA President in 1983 and in subsequent speeches, has asserted that ethics and speech were issues central to the discipline[1]. In 1982, when Andersen planned the NCA convention in Louisville, he used the theme of Communication Ethics and Values. He explained that the communication discipline must maximize individuals' freedom while simultaneously improving the quality of society. As a result of his focus, NCA formed a new unit on communication and ethics, and 16 years later the NCA Legislative Council approved a Credo for Ethical Communication. The Credo for Ethical Communication was originally produced by a small group of NCA members who had a scholarly interest in ethics[2] and was approved by the NCA governance body (see Appendix B).

In the Credo for Ethical Communication, the authors consider the responsibilities of speakers as well as the legal and human rights that speakers and listeners are

granted. Andersen (2005) calls attention to the two NCA documents and advises, "We need to value the incredible relevance of the two credos to our work and enrich the experience of our students by making the principles enunciated in the credos a significant part of their growth and learning" (p. 21).

The Status of Ethics Instruction Within the Communication Curriculum

A number of studies have examined the extent to which ethics is being included in the communication curriculum. As early as 1968, Johnson surveyed communication instructors in the California State Colleges and the University of California system. Although over 90% of the teachers who were surveyed stated that a communication professor has a responsibility to discuss ethical issues, only 28% actually did engage in a separate discussion on ethics (Johnson, 1970).

Jensen (1985) extended this work in an essay in which he identified principles for teaching ethics in the communication discipline. He noted that a few texts had been written exclusively about ethics in communication including those by Johannesen (1983), Nilsen (1974), and Haiman (1981). He also observed that chapters on ethics began appearing in persuasion and discussion books in the 1950s, in argumentation and debate texts in the 1960s, and in general texts on public speaking in the 1970s.

Christians and Lambeth (1996) examined the role of ethics in communication departments and learned that in 1995, 39% of the departments offered free-standing courses on communication ethics. Well over half (59%) of those courses are (or will be) required for the communication major. The most important course objectives (in order) are: fostering moral reasoning skills, advancing liberal education, surveying current ethical practices, examining race, gender, and social justice issues; understanding classical ethical theory; preparing students for professional work; and systematically evaluating media performance.

Christians and Lambeth (1996) were somewhat critical of the current practices in 1995 as they concluded that the pedagogical practices in the ethics courses were not remarkable and encouraged the development of additional pedagogical materials. Faculty expertise was also questioned as over 50% of ethics teachers do not consider ethics as either a primary research interest or as a major strength in their training.

Most recently, Hartung (1998) examined four technical communication textbooks to discern the kind of coverage that exists on ethics. Technical communication authors do not embrace ethical inquiry and do not engage in it as it is traditionally defined. Textbook authors avoid rhetorical approaches, and they do not provide ethical guidelines for students. Instead, they resort to perfunctory accounts of classic ethical theories. They also present "moral principles as objective and self-evident statements of fact" (p. 363) instead of as value-laden assumptions that may not have general and unanimous agreement.

At its base, ethics is fundamental to all higher education curricula. Hinman (2004) defines ethics as "the explicit, philosophical reflection on moral beliefs and practices. The difference between ethics and morality is similar to the difference between musicology and music. Ethics is a conscious stepping back and reflecting on morality,

just as musicology is a conscious reflection on music'' (p. 2). Nilsen (1974) simplifies, ''Ethics deals with questions about the meaning of 'good,' and 'bad,' 'right' and 'wrong,' and 'moral obligation''' (p. 1). Ethics is essential within the communication discipline, but what do most students learn about the role of ethics in communication?

To understand current conceptions of communication and ethics, this study examined the top ten public speaking books in the communication discipline. Since over 450,000 students enroll in the public speaking course in the United States each year, the vast majority of college students learn about communication and ethics in that course. The public speaking textbooks may be the only source of information on communication and ethics that a typical undergraduate student would receive.

RQ$_1$: *Are there overall differences in the total length of coverage used by each of the public speaking textbook authors to discuss ethics?*

RQ$_2$: *Are there overall differences in the total length of coverage for each ethical topic in the top ten public speaking textbooks?*

RQ$_3$: *Are there positive differences in the length of coverage in public speaking textbooks when considering each ethical topic individually?*

Method

The presentation of ethics in public speaking textbooks was studied by examining the ten top-selling books. Books that contained their own chapters in which ethics was the primary subject were analyzed, along with any other pages covering ethical issues found in each text's index. When texts did not contain a chapter in which ethics was the subject, pages with ethical coverage were found by consulting the index.

Artifacts

McGraw-Hill editors were consulted about the ten most widely used public speaking books in the entire communication discipline. Some of these were published by McGraw-Hill and some by other companies. The top selling public speaking textbooks for the academic year 2003–2004 were: Lucas (2003), O'Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein (2004), Beebe and Beebe (2003), Osborn and Osborn (2003), Jaffe (2001), Gregory (2002), Brydon and Scott (2003), Grice and Skinner (2004), Zarefsky (2002), and Sprague and Stuart (2003).

Procedure

To evaluate the presentation and amount of coverage of the topic of ethics, the top ten selling public-speaking textbooks were examined. Chapters which highlighted ethics as the focus were analyzed in addition to coverage areas described in the index of the text. Because some texts did not include a specific chapter on ethics, only indexed information was available for examination.

The study employed a derived etic content analysis coding approach. The approach revealed ''what units make sense within the world of the messages'' instead

of using prescribed categories that may not have encompassed the range of how top-selling public speaking textbook authors approach the topic of ethics (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 72). To employ a derived etic approach, the section discussing ethics in each public speaking textbook was examined. When examining each textbook, a list of terminology used by the author to discuss ethics was developed.

Terms from all ten textbooks were jointly examined and terminology that repeatedly occurred within multiple textbooks or terms that reflected substantial use within any single textbook were included in the final term coding list. Twenty-eight distinct terms about ethics composed the final coding list from the derived etic approach. Then, open coding techniques were employed in order to inductively group conceptually related terms about ethics under more abstract terms as distinct categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The terms were inductively grouped under eight main categories.

Two coders were then provided a list containing all the terms with the corresponding terms under the appropriate main category of ethics. A sample public speaking textbook was used to help train coders. The portions of the textbook discussing ethics were determined and each paragraph of discussion was individually numbered for coding proposes. Therefore, each paragraph in which any keyword referencing a main overall category was found counted as one unit for that category. Coders were instructed to read through each paragraph eight times to examine it once for each main category coded. If more than one keyword reference for the same category was contained within a paragraph, the main category was still only counted as simply being reflected within the paragraph. The two coders coded the sample textbook and discussed differences in coding responses until complete agreement was reached. Once coders felt confident with the coding schema, both coders independently coded one of the ten textbooks used in the study and intercoder reliabilities were computed for overall agreement of the presence or absence of each main category by paragraph.

Measures and Analysis

The eight categories consisted of: freedom of speech (keywords: freedom, free speech, and democracy); honesty (keywords: honest, untrue, truth, lies, falsehoods, dishonest, and truthfulness); plagiarism (keyword: plagiarism); ethical listening (keywords: feedback and listening; used in the context of the listener's responsibility – keywords: not a speaker's responsibility to the listeners); ethical research (keywords: research); hate words (keywords: hate, emotional, hurt, sexist language, name calling, inflammatory language, emotionally charged, and abusive); diversity (keywords: diversity, culture, cultural, and ethnic); and codes of ethics (keywords: National Communication Association code, and any other codes mentioned by name or otherwise).

The Cohen's Kappa intercoder reliability for the theme of freedom of speech was excellent ($\alpha = .854$). The Cohen's Kappa intercoder reliability for the theme of honesty was excellent ($\alpha = .827$). The Cohen's Kappa intercoder reliability for the theme of plagiarism was excellent ($\alpha = .940$). The Cohen's Kappa intercoder reliability for the theme of ethical listening was excellent ($\alpha = .925$). The Cohen's Kappa intercoder reliability for the theme of ethical research was excellent ($\alpha = .884$). The Cohen's

Kappa intercoder reliability for the theme of hate words was excellent ($\alpha = .847$). The Cohen's Kappa intercoder reliability for the theme of diversity was excellent ($\alpha = 1.0$). The Cohen's Kappa intercoder reliability for the theme of codes of ethics was excellent ($\alpha = 1.0$). One-way chi-square tests were performed to answer the three research questions and to complete follow-up tests with the significant results.

Results

To answer the first research question, a one-sample chi-square test was performed to assess whether Zarefsky (2002), Jaffe (2001), Lucas (2003), Grice and Skinner (2004), Beebe and Beebe (2003), Brydon and Scott (2003), Gregory (2002), Osborn and Osborn (2003), O'Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein (2004), or Sprague and Stuart (2003) cover the eight ethical concepts with a different amount of paragraphs. The results of the chi-square test were significant, $\chi^2(9, N=558) = 124.867$, $p=.000$, $ES=.02$.

Follow-up tests indicated that the proportion of paragraphs on ethics covered overall by Lucas (2003) ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 19.384$, $p=.000$, $ES=.03$), Jaffe (2001) ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 19.384$, $p=.000$, $ES=.03$), Beebe and Beebe (2003) ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 9.814$, $p=.000$, $ES=.02$), and Brydon and Scott (2003) ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 9.814$, $p=.000$, $ES=.02$) are significantly higher than the combined hypothesized proportions of all other authors. Furthermore, the proportion of paragraphs on ethics covered overall by Gregory (2002) ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 9.463$, $p=.000$, $ES=.02$), Sprague and Stuart (2003) ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 28.452$, $p=.000$, $ES=.05$), and Zarefsky (2002) ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 39.965$, $p=.000$, $ES=.07$) are significantly lower than the combined hypothesized proportions of all other authors.

To answer the second research question, a one-sample chi-square text was performed to assess whether freedom of speech, honesty, plagiarism, ethical listening, ethical research, hate words, diversity, or codes of ethics are discussed at greater length overall in public speaking textbooks. The results of the chi-square test were significant, $\chi^2(7, N=558) = 84.695$, $p=.000$, $ES=.02$.

A follow-up test indicated that the proportion of paragraphs discussing the ethical topics of plagiarism ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 18.115$, $p=.000$, $ES=.03$), listening ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 8.857$, $p=.003$, $ES=.02$), honesty ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 4.327$, $p=.038$, $ES=.01$), and ethical research ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 4.327$, $p=.038$, $ES=.01$) by textbook authors overall are each significantly higher than the combined proportions of paragraphs covering the other ethical topics. Furthermore, the proportions of paragraphs covering the ethical topics of freedom of speech ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 6.391$, $p=.011$, $ES=.01$), hate words ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 10.037$, $p=.002$, $ES=.02$), and codes of ethics ($\chi^2(1, N=558) = 43.880$, $p=.000$, $ES=.08$) are each significantly lower by textbook authors overall than the combined proportions of paragraphs covering the other ethical topics (see Table 1).

To answer the third research question, a one-sample chi-square test was conducted to examine if there are positive differences in the length of coverage covered by authors when individually considering the topics of freedom of speech, honesty, plagiarism, ethical listening, ethical research, hate words, and diversity in public speaking textbooks.

Table 1 The Coverage of Ethical Topics in the Top-Selling Public Speaking Textbooks

Textbook author	Ethical topics*								Total length of coverage discussing ethics
	1 N(%)	2 N(%)	3 N(%)	4 N(%)	5 N(%)	6 N(%)	7 N(%)	8 N(%)	
Lucas	9 (10.3)	18 (20.7)	24 (27.6)	3 (3.4)	13 (14.9)	15 (17.2)	3 (3.4)	2 (2.3)	87 (15.6)
Brydon & Scott	5 (6.4)	20 (25.6)	13 (16.7)	9 (11.5)	9 (11.5)	0 (0)	15 (19.2)	7 (9.0)	78 (14.0)
Gregory	0 (0)	6 (17.6)	3 (8.8)	7 (20.6)	13 (38.2)	3 (8.8)	2 (5.9)	0 (0)	34 (6.1)
O'Hair, Stewart, & Rubenstein	8 (13.6)	12 (20.3)	12 (20.3)	3 (5.1)	9 (15.3)	8 (13.6)	5 (8.5)	2 (3.2)	59 (10.6)
Zarefsky	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (27.3)	6 (54.4)	1 (9.1)	0 (0)	1 (9.1)	0 (0)	11 (2.0)
Osborn & Osborn	1 (2.2)	5 (10.9)	13 (28.3)	6 (13.0)	8 (17.4)	4 (8.7)	8 (17.4)	1 (2.2)	46 (8.2)
Jaffe	7 (8.0)	9 (10.3)	7 (8.0)	18 (20.7)	7 (8.0)	6 (6.9)	31 (35.6)	2 (2.3)	87 (15.6)
Grice & Skinner	0 (0)	3 (5.0)	15 (25.0)	26 (43.3)	14 (23.3)	0 (0)	1 (1.7)	1 (1.7)	60 (10.8)
Sprague & Stuart	0 (0)	7 (38.9)	2 (11.1)	4 (22.2)	1 (5.6)	3 (16.7)	0 (0)	1 (5.6)	18 (3.2)
Beebe & Beebe	20 (25.6)	6 (7.7)	11 (14.1)	11 (14.1)	11 (14.1)	6 (7.7)	11 (14.1)	2 (2.6)	78 (14.0)
Overall Total	50 (9.0)	86 (15.4)	103 (18.5)	93 (16.7)	86 (15.4)	45 (8.1)	77 (13.8)	18 (3.2)	558

Note. *1 = Freedom of speech, 2 = Honesty, 3 = Plagiarism, 4 = Ethical listening, 5 = Ethical research, 6 = Hate words, 7 = Diversity, and 8 = Codes of ethics.

There were positive significant differences when examining the proportion of paragraphs by public speaking authors on the topics of freedom of speech, $\chi^2(5, N=50)=24.400$, $p=.000$, $ES=.10$, honesty, $\chi^2(8, N=86)=29.535$, $p=.000$, $ES=.04$, plagiarism, $\chi^2(9, N=103)=40.204$, $p=.000$, $ES=.04$, ethical listening, $\chi^2(9, N=93)=52.914$, $p=.000$, $ES=.06$, hate words, $\chi^2(6, N=45)=16.444$, $p=.012$, $ES=.06$, and diversity, $\chi^2(8, N=77)=87.922$, $p=.000$, $ES=.14$. Follow-up tests indicate that Beebe and Beebe (2003) discuss significantly more paragraphs on the topic of freedom of speech, $\chi^2(1, N=50)=19.600$, $p=.000$, $ES=.40$. Brydon and Scott (2003) ($\chi^2(1, N=86)=12.843$, $p=.000$, $ES=.15$) and Lucas (2003) ($\chi^2(1, N=86)=8.395$, $p=.004$, $ES=.10$) discuss significantly more paragraphs on honesty. Lucas (2003) discusses significantly more paragraphs on plagiarism, $\chi^2(1, N=103)=20.247$, $p=.000$, $ES=.20$. Grice and Skinner (2004) ($\chi^2(1, N=93)=33.320$, $p=.000$, $ES=.36$) and Jaffe (2001) ($\chi^2(1, N=93)=9.043$, $p=.003$, $ES=.10$) discuss significantly more paragraphs on ethical listening. Lucas (2003) discusses significantly more paragraphs on hate words, $\chi^2(1, N=45)=13.333$, $p=.000$, $ES=.30$. Jaffe (2001) ($\chi^2(1, N=77)=66.240$, $p=.000$, $ES=.86$) and Grice and Skinner (2004) ($\chi^2(1, N=77)=7.506$, $p=.006$, $ES=.10$) discuss significantly more paragraphs on diversity.

To contextualize these findings, the researchers identified the definitions of ethics offered by the textbook authors as well as philosophers who were identified in the discussion of ethics. Since the most material on ethics focused on plagiarism, the researchers identified how plagiarism is characterized, the consequences of plagiarism that are identified, and how plagiarism is found in student speeches.[3]

Discussion

Ethics is not given the same amount of space in the top ten best-selling public speaking textbooks. The authors who provide the most information on ethics include Lucas, Jaffe, Beebe, and Beebe, and Brydon and Scott. The authors who provide the least detail about ethics include Gregory, Sprague, and Stuart, and Zarefsky. Public speaking book adopters may use this information to inform their decisions about book selection.

Although public speaking books may appear to be far more similar than different, a number of differences in the treatment of ethics occurred among these books. The topics that are discussed most in the top ten best-selling public speaking books include plagiarism, ethnical listening, honesty, and ethical research. The topics that are least discussed by these same books include freedom of speech, hate words, and codes of ethics.

The emphasis on honesty, plagiarism, ethical listening, and ethical research denies students' autonomy, or "ability to freely determine one's own course in life" (Hinman, 2004, p. 1) and on ethical egoism which is the idea that people should act in their own self-interest. Instead, the authors offer imperatives, or commands. Honesty, plagiarism, ethical listening, and ethical research may be construed as ethical obligations or responsibilities. All four of these topics are covered the most by these top-selling authors.

The least likely discussed topics are freedom of speech, hate words, and codes of ethics. The first of these may be seen to be a legal right, a right that belongs to people who live in a democracy, and the second may relate to a human right, the right not to be called derogatory names. Why are codes of ethics not discussed? Perhaps they are seen as too complex or beyond the scope of a fundamentals of public speaking text.

Public speaking authors may perceive their goal as sharing a communicator's responsibilities in public speaking, not as informing him or her about legal and human rights. The practical and applied nature of the fundamentals of public speaking course may require authors to carefully focus on the student speakers' most essential and salient aspects of ethics.

Clearly, these authors do not suggest that the "ends justify the means." In their sections on ethics, little discussion on the goals of public communication is provided. Kruger (1967) observed, "the teacher has an obligation, it seems to me, to point out the immorality of the doctrine that only success matters" (p. 296). He adds, "Many . . . today seem to have lost sight of the goal of rational belief and are more preoccupied with teaching students how to be successful persuaders regardless of the means used" (p. 296). As the individual topics are examined, more attention is given to freedom of speech by Beebe and Beebe. Lucas, and Brydon and Scott give more attention to honesty. Lucas also gives more attention to plagiarism and to hate words. Grice and Skinner and Jaffe provide more coverage on ethical listening and on diversity than the other authors.

As we examine these texts, we find that they are similar to the technical communication texts analyzed by Hartung (1998). In general, the authors in both cases do not employ discussions of ethical inquiry, but rather talk about "moral casuistry, which deduces moral judgments," and "moralism, which prescribes moral principles" (p. 363). Authors in both investigations tend to infer and instruct rather than to substantiate or validate underlying principles of moral behavior.

The tendency to infer and instruct is reflected in the definitions of ethics that the authors provide. Though none of the definitions are exactly alike, some commonalities emerge. Four of the definitions use the words "right" and "wrong" as part of their definitions. Brydon and Scott (2003) present ethics as "a system of principles of right and wrong that govern human conduct" (p. 129). Lucas (2003) positions ethics as a branch of philosophy "that deals with issues of right and wrong in human affairs" (p. 34). Grice and Skinner (2004) refer to ethics as "standards we use to determine right from wrong, or good from bad, in thought and behavior" (p. 20). According to Beebe and Beebe (2003), ethics are "beliefs, values, and moral principles by which we determine what is right or wrong" (p. 44). These definitions indicate that public speaking authors use ethical standards. However, as Nilson (1974) opined, "The choice between what is right and wrong is not simple" (p. 1). This right/wrong, deontological perspective, while useful in some areas, positions ethics as an area where definitive answers can be found rather than as an ongoing process of critical examination. Three of the four authors who included the most information on ethics overall in their textbooks used this polarized right/wrong perspective in the definitions of ethics they chose to present.

Another reappearing theme in the definitions was a focus on "otherness." O'Hair, Steward, & Rubenstein (2004) positioned ethics as the study of moral conduct—"how people should act toward one another"(p. 53). Osborn & Osborn (2003) also spoke of human conduct, defining ethics as "the way we treat others and want to be treated by them in return" (p. 18).

Only two of the textbooks presented definitions of ethics specifically related to communication. Zarefsky (2002) referred to ethics as "respect for audience, topic and occasion" (p. 25). Jaffe (2001) used a definition attributed to Professor Vernon Jensen (1997) that encompasses not only the communication aspect of ethics but also brings in the key elements of the other definitions previously discussed. Ethics was defined as "your moral responsibility to choose, intentionally and voluntarily, oughtness [what you should do] in values like rightness, goodness, truthfulness, justice, and virtue, which may, in a communicative transaction, significantly affect [yourself] and others" (Jaffe, 2001, p. 42).

The differential references to theorists are also telling. Zarefsky (2002) references no philosophers; Jaffe (2001) mentions Roman educators, but not by name; and O'Hair, Stewart, and Rubenstein (2004) and Beebe and Beebe (2003) only mention Aristotle. On the other hand, Brydon and Scott (2003) mention nine philosophers by name (but then discount them). Why would the authors minimize the mention of classic theorists? Perhaps they perceive that these references will not be salient to students or they offer little heuristic value.

Overall, the authors spent more paragraphs discussing plagiarism than any other topic that was coded. The treatment of plagiarism is intriguing. All of the authors, with the exception of Zarefsky, apply the concept of consequentialism, which means "the rightness or wrongness of actions depends on their consequences" (Hinman, 2004, p. 1). The other authors are bold is describing the multiple consequences of this form of unethical behavior.

All plagiarism is not equally serious to some of these authors. For example, Brydon and Scott (2003) describe the "total rip-off," the "partial rip-off," and the "accidental rip-off." Lucas (2003) similarly describes "global," "patchwork," and "incremental" plagiarism. Osborn and Osborn (2003) similarly describe "blatant or intentional," "cut and paste," and "more subtle forms" of plagiarism. Grice and Skinner (2004) distinguish between intentional and unintentional plagiarism while Beebe and Beebe (2003) ask the student to recall grade school experiences and then discusses multiple forms of plagiarism including having another person edit your speech. In this way the authors are refuting absolutism—that all plagiarism is wrong and the same violation—and endorsing relativism which suggests that different levels of unethical behavior can be identified.

Conclusions

Andersen (2005) provided the Carroll C. Arnold Distinguished Lecture at the 2003 National Communication Association convention. He told communication teachers

and professionals that they needed to do three things: Two are relevant for the development of this discussion. First, Andersen noted that we need to consider the relevance of the two NCA credos. He explained, "The classroom is an ideal setting in which to value and to act in accord with the principles in the credos" (p. 21). Second, he urged listeners "to assist students in developing strategies for dealing with the mass of communication stimuli coming at us" (p. 21). Do the leading public speaking textbooks do all of this? Clearly, some are better at meeting these high standards than are others.

Hartung (1998) recommends that textbook authors should "treat moral principles, not as objective and self-evident statements of fact, but as evaluative assumptions whose truth-values and meaning are both tentative and lacking universal agreement" (p. 363). Similarly, Riley (1993) encourages authors to treat ethical behavior in a more sophisticated manner including ideas from linguistics such as implicature and indirectness, which she believes are occasionally used in a deliberate or premeditated way to deceive listeners. The textbooks surveyed in this investigation do not provide such an erudite treatment. Nonetheless, they are the most popular books in the fundamentals of public speaking course. Perhaps the textbook authors correctly perceive the goal in this first course to be fundamental rather than a sophisticated treatment of ethics, which might be reserved for upper-level communication courses.

Nilsen (1974) observes that "the choice between what is right and wrong is not simple" (p. 1). Public speaking textbook authors cannot be expected to include all of the aspects of ethics in public speaking in beginning texts. On the other hand, he notes that public speaking courses are ideal "to create more of an awareness of the meaning of freedom of speech, the meaning of discussion and debate as vital democratic disciplines that make possible more enlightened choice, and the relevance of ethical principles to communication in a democracy" (p. 89). This examination of the best-selling public speaking texts suggests a wide variety in the treatment of ethics in public speaking. Adopters of public speaking books may base part of their selection decision on the extent to which authors frame ethics in the public speaking context.

Sproule (1987) asks the question, "Whose ethics in the classroom?" and then observes that, "In a diverse, pluralistic, constitutional republic, based on virtually universal suffrage, the question for teachers of communication is a political as well as an educational one" (p. 325).

Notes

[1] Robert Jeffrey and Frank Dance also discussed ethics in their Presidential Addresses, but Andersen was perhaps the most detailed in his treatment of the topic.
[2] The conference planners included Kenneth Andersen, Lawrence Frey, Pamela Shockley-Zalabak, Dolores Tanno, Paula Tompkins, Julie Belle White-Newman, Matthew Seeger, and Sherwyn P. Morreale.
[3] For a complete description of the definition of ethics, the philosophers referenced, and the treatment of plagiarism, please contact the authors.

References

Andersen, K. E. (2005). *Recovering the civic culture: The imperatives of ethical communication.* Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

Beebe, S. A., & Beebe, S. J. (2003). *Public speaking: An audience-centered approach* (5th ed.). New York: Pearson Education, Inc.

Boileau, D. M. (1985). ERIC REPORT: Ethics and speech: An inherent or irrelevant relationship? *Communication Education, 34,* 259–265.

Brydon, S. R., & Scott, M. D. (2003). *Between one and many: The art and science of public speaking.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Callahan, D. (2004, February 9). Take back values. *Nation, 278,* 14–17.

Callahan, D., & Bok, S. (1980). *Ethics teaching in higher education.* New York: Plenum.

Christians, C. G., & Lambeth, E. B. (1996). The status of ethics instruction in communication departments. *Communication Education, 45,* 236–243.

Clark, R. C. (2002). Harvard law dean urges corporate ethics in speech to new students. http://www.law.harvard.edu/news/2002/08/29 Retrieved August 29, 2004.

Crable, R. E. (1978). Ethical codes, accountability, and argumentation. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 64,* 23–32.

Eichenwald, K. (2004, July 10). Warning to executives: Honesty is best policy. *New York Times, 153,* C1.

Farlex, Inc. (2004). *U.S. presidential election, 1998.* Retrieved November 22, 2004, from http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/U.S.%20presidential%20election,%201988

Gregory, H. (2002). *Public speaking for college and career.* Boston: McGraw Hill.

Grice, G. L., & Skinner, J. F. (2004). *Mastering public speaking* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Haiman, F. S. (1981). *Speech and law in a free society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hartung, K. K. (1998). What are students being taught about the ethics of technical communication?: An analysis of the ethical discussions presented in four textbooks. *Journal of Technical Writing and Communication, 28,* 363–383.

Harvard University (2004). *The early history of Harvard university.* Retrieved November 22, 2004 from http://www.news.harvard.edu/guide/intro/

Hinman, L. M. (2004). Ethics update: Glossary. Retrieved August 29, 2004 from http://ethics.acusd.edu/Glossary.html

Hughes, J. (2003). *Ohio, its first university commemorate proud histories.* Retrieved November 22, 2004 from http://www.ohiou.edu/infocus/bicentennialmarker/

Jaffe, C. I. (2001). *Public speaking: Concepts and skills for a diverse society* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning.

Jensen, J. V. (1985). Teaching ethics in speech communication. *Communication Education, 34,* 324–330.

Johannesen, R. L. (1983). *Ethics in human communication* (2nd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Johnson, R. C. (1970). Teaching speech ethics in the beginning speech course. *The Speech Teacher, 19,* 58–61.

Kruger, A. N. (1967). The ethics of persuasion: A re-examination. *The Speech Teacher, 16,* 295–305.

Lucas, S. E. (2003). *The art of public speaking* (8th ed.). Boston: McGraw Hill.

National Communication Association, (1999). *NCA credo for ethical communication.* Retrieved November, 22, 2004 from http://www.natcom.org/policies/External/EthicalComm.htm

National Communication Association (n.d.). *Credo for free and responsible communication in a democratic society.* Retrieved November 22, 2004 from http://www.natcom.org/policies/External/Democratic.htm

Neuendorf, K. A. (2002). *The content analysis guidebook.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Nilsen, T. R. (1974). *Ethics of speech communication* (2nd ed.). Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

O'Hair, D., Stewart, R., & Rubenstein, H. (2004). *A speaker's guidebook: Text and reference* (2nd ed.). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Osborn, M., & Osborn, S. (2003). *Public speaking* (6th ed.). New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Riley, K. (1993). Telling more than the truth: Implicature, speech acts, and ethics in professional communication. *Journal of Business Ethics, 12,*179–196.

Segal, A. (2004). Goodness beyond speech. *Philosophical Investigations, 27,* 201–221.

Sprague, J., & Stuart, D. (2003). *The speaker's handbook* (6th ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth.

Sproule, J. M. (1987). Whose ethics in the classroom? An historical survey. *Communication Education, 36,* 317–326.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Warwick, D. P. (1980). *The teaching of ethics and the social sciences.* New York: Hastings Center Monograph.

Zarefsky, D. (2002). *Public speaking: Strategies for success* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Appendix A

Credo for Free and Responsible Communication in a Democratic Society

Recognizing the essential place of free and responsible communication in a democratic society, and recognizing the distinction between the freedoms our legal system should respect and the responsibilities our educational system should cultivate, we members of the Speech Communication Association endorse the following statement of principles:

WE BELIEVE that freedom of speech and assembly must hold a central position among Americans constitutional principles, and we express our determined support for the right of peaceful expression by any communicative means available.

WE SUPPORT the proposition that a free society can absorb with equanimity speech which exceeds the boundaries of generally accepted beliefs and mores; that much good and little harm can ensue if we err on the side of freedom, whereas much harm and little good may follow if we err on the side of suppression.

WE CRITICIZE as misguided those who believe that the justice of their cause confers license to interfere physically and coercively with speech of others, and we condemn intimidation, whether by powerful majorities or strident minorities, which attempts to restrict free expression.

WE ACCEPT the responsibility of cultivating by precepts and example, in our classrooms and in our communities, enlightened uses of communication; of developing in our students a respect for precision and accuracy in communication, and for reasoning based upon evidence and a judicious discrimination among values.

WE ENCOURAGE our students to accept the role of well-informed and articulate citizens, to defend the communication rights of those with whom they may disagree, and to expose abuses of the communication process.

WE DEDICATE ourselves fully to these principles, confident in the belief that reason will ultimately prevail in a free marketplace of ideas (National Communication Association, n.d.).

Appendix B

NCA Credo for Ethical Communication

Questions of right and wrong arise whenever people communicate. Ethical communication is fundamental to responsible thinking, decision making, and the development of relationships and communities within and across contexts, cultures, channels, and media. Moreover, ethical communication enhances human worth and dignity by fostering truthfulness, fairness, responsibility, personal integrity, and respect for self and others. We believe that unethical communication threatens the quality of all communication and consequently the well-being of individuals and the society in which we live. Therefore we, the members of the National Communication Association, endorse and are committed to practicing the following principles of ethical communication.

- We advocate truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication.
- We endorse freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and tolerance of dissent to achieve the informed and responsible decision making fundamental to a civil society.
- We strive to understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages.
- We promote access to communication resources and opportunities as necessary to fulfill human potential and contribute to the well-being of families, communities, and society.
- We promote communication climates of caring and mutual understanding that respect the unique needs and characteristics of individual communicators.
- We condemn communication that degrades individuals and humanity through distortion, intimidation, coercion, and violence, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred.
- We are committed to the courageous expression of personal convictions in pursuit of fairness and justice.
- We advocate sharing information, opinions, and feelings when facing significant choices while also respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- We accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences for our own communication and expect the same of others (National Communication Association, 1999).