MINDFULNESS IN COMMUNICATION PLANNING: A CURRICULUM CULTIVATING CARE OF THE OTHER IN DIALOGUE

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Abstract

This research project explores the possible connectedness of mindfulness practice in pre-conversational planning to the care of the other in communication. Pre-conversational planning affords a unique opportunity of cognitive resource availability comparative to the synchronous nature of conversational planning during interpersonal interactions. The connection between mindfulness and care of the other stems from the hypothesis that mindful communicative intent, created during pre-conversational planning, is generally more other centered. The project leverages dialogic theory to establish a baseline in communication theory. Key relevant literature in mindfulness and conversational planning is reviewed. These foundations then inform a curriculum founded in documentary research. The curriculum is intended for an adult learning context. The curriculum is designed to inspire an individual’s personal journey of learning through exploring key aspects of mindfulness and conversational planning. Adult learners should leave the course with a working understanding of mindfulness practice, conversational planning and how (when conjoined) those skills bring a unique opportunity to practice care of the other in dialogue. Key limitations, including communication competence, context, nonverbal communication, and cognitive resource availability are identified.

*Keywords*: mindfulness, communication competence, communication planning, conversational planning, pre-conversational planning, mindlessness, dialogue, care of the other
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Chapter One: Introduction

Importance of the Project

The motivation for this project evolved from a personal journey of mine. To become as healthy a person as I could be, and driven by a tendency to overconsume, I began running changing my routine to include healthy choices. Those choices were initially incorporating running into my weekly routine and managing a healthy diet. As I became healthier, additional healthy choices came into view. One of those was yoga, specifically hot yoga. It is practicing hot yoga, and listening to the words of the instructor, that initially exposed me to mindfulness. Words like “nobody can take this time away from you” and “leave your thoughts of the world outside the studio behind and focus on your breath” became a personal mantra for me. As my practice evolved, I began to recognize the mental benefits of this eighty minutes of mindfulness. Yoga had extended beyond flexibility and reached into some of the darkest corners of my awareness. I recognized my attitude towards the other immediately following yoga to be of a different ilk than is the norm. I emerged from the studio a more thoughtful and empathetic communicator. A consequence of this journey towards better health that I never anticipated.

It was around this time that I was in Spokane, Washington on Gonzaga’s campus for my Communication Practicum. A small portion of that practicum focused on mindfulness and a simple breathing exercise. This exercise proved to be similarly fruitful. As an organizational leader of twenty years, I have always been interested in emotional intelligence as a foundation for most leadership communication. It was this initial connection that led me to consider mindfulness as a vehicle for bringing the best of emotional intelligent leaders to bear. As I began to research mindfulness in communication, two things really illuminated for me. The first was how difficult it might prove to bring mindfulness directly into interpersonal dialogue given the
limitations of cognitive capacity and the synchronous nature of dyadic communication. Many immediate obstacles became clear. I shifted my thinking as my research continued to this concept of pre-conversational planning. Conversational planning is a practice all humans are familiar with, and it affords the possibility to insert mindfulness practice given that it is often asynchronous. Certainly, one could choose to explore conversational planning during dialogue, but given our context, pre-conversational planning was a nice match.

It is well understood that the human condition in society today is one that is overburdened with distraction. Couple that with a society in the United States which favors individual gain over the cause of the collective, and interpersonal communication effectiveness erodes dramatically. Often it is the other that suffers in this superficial network of interpersonal exchanges. The text message has often replaced a personal phone call and social media has often replaced coffee with a good friend. Individuals often enter material communication episodes with only personal goals in mind, completely oblivious to the needs of the other. The practice of mindfulness provides ample opportunity to stem the tide of the tyranny of the urgent, allowing for caring attitudes towards the other to emerge. Inconsequential communication episodes aside, when dyadic in person communication unfolds an other-centered mindset is a powerful advocate for societal good. Our individual ability to draw upon mindfulness to evoke these communicative conditions is an enormous opportunity. This project provides a bridge to potentially building that practice.

Langer (1992) developed this opportunity thoughtfully twenty-five years ago:

Awareness of how one is constructing one’s world allows for the possibility of alternative and more adaptive constructions. As such this mindfulness then would be self-sustaining.
There is little “risk” in using language mindfully when one realizes that from another perspective, risk is “opportunity.” (p. 327)

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project is to design a curriculum which intends to develop, in each student, the unique opportunity to leverage mindful communication planning as a vehicle for bringing caring attitudes towards the other to the front of the conversational landscape. The curriculum leverages a “life-centered” (Kistler, 2011, p. 30) approach to adult learning where students are asked to incorporate elements from the coursework into their daily lives.

The curriculum builds on a foundation of mindfulness, helps students begin to develop some form of mindfulness practice, and extends mindfulness into conversational planning. The core curriculum is divided into four modules, each focused on building on the previous, save the first. It is the intention that these students gain a valuable life skill that will enable them to operate in a differentiated and advantageous mindset. Not initially for personal gain, yet from a constructivist perspective eventually personal gains are obtained via caring for the other. In short, these are tools we can use to treat each other better.

Definitions of Terms Used

Throughout the chapters and appendices a few terms are used regularly that warrant definition. Those terms are as follows.

Mindfulness. The “act of unbiased, openhearted, equanimous experience of perceptible events and processes as they unfold from moment to moment” (Grossman, 2015, p. 18).

“Mindfulness refers to active and fluid information processing, sensitivity to context and multiple perspectives, and ability to draw novel distinctions” (Burgoon, Berger & Waldron, 2000, p. 106).
**Mindlessness.** “Mindlessness may be thought of as autopilot, a mode of being that makes it easy to miss how habits direct day-to-day experiences” (McCorquodale, 2015, p. 231).

**Conversational planning.** Leveraging “the cognitive structures and processes developed by an individual from his or her previous social experiences” to “facilitate the preparation and production of conversational messages” (Waldron, 1997, pp. 195-196). Pre-conversational planning is simply premeditation for a future communication episode in this same context.

**The other.** Any individual party involved in a communication episode currently occurring, ongoing or planned. Referencing Buber, yet stated very simply, we refer to “communicative partners (self and Other)” in dialogue (Arnett, Bell & Fritz, 2010, p. 111).

**Communication competence.** Incorporates both “one’s knowledge of appropriate communication practices as well as effectiveness at adapting to the surroundings in a communication situation” (Steele and Plenty, 2015, p. 297).

**Organization of Remaining Chapters**

The chapters that follow are Chapter Two: Review of the Literature, Chapter Three: Scope and Methodology, Chapter Four: The Project, and Chapter Five: Summaries and Conclusions. Chapter Two provides foundational context for the project grounded in communication theory and the social sciences. Chapter Three reviews the scope of the project, methods involved and ethical considerations. Chapter Four details the project entirely. Chapter Four lays out the curriculum for each of four modules. The modules are Foundations of Mindfulness in Communication, Elements of Mindfulness Practice, Conversational Planning and Mindful Communication Plans. For each module, the relevant literature is detailed as are any applicable exercises. Chapter Four concludes with a description of condensed single-day curriculum. Chapter Five affords key considerations for future study, explores possible
limitations, and concludes with a summary of the project findings. References follow, as do multiple appendices. The first two appendices are examples of pre/post assessments to be administered as a part of either curricula. From there, each appendix includes the syllabus and power point presentation for each of the modules listed in Chapter Four.
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Philosophical Assumptions

Mindfulness practice has the potential to be a vehicle for bringing compassion and caring to dialogue in favor of the other. Concepts closely related to mindfulness in communication have been studied for decades. Many of these provide important contextual framing for the purposes of this project. Motley (1986) urged communication scholars to adopt labels for intentional communication and unintentional communication. The intention here is to explore the potential impact of mindfulness practice in intentional communications. Motley (1986) highlights this important delineation:

On the one hand, the performance of intentional communication (or other) acts is so exceedingly complex, and dependent upon so many kinds of efficient and often automatic processors, that the various phases of performance must be capable of operating unconsciously. But on the other hand, purely unconscious behaviors, though temporally efficient, are often so pragmatically imperfect that consciousness must be a necessary option within all phases of performance. (p. 9)

Consciousness is a critical element of communicating mindfuly. Without consciousness communicators rely heavily on automaticity. And while the premise here involves pre-conversational planning, conversational goals are largely executed by extending mindfulness to dialogue.

Automaticity is a well-developed concept where our behaviors, thoughts and actions become scripted or routine based on learned social interactions and outcomes over time. Automaticity is also referred to as overlearned behavior and habitual communication in this
context (Burgoon & Langer, 1995). Langer (1978) explored the danger of automatic routines in social interaction nearly forty years ago:

    Perhaps a more efficacious strategy is on that assumes that by the time a person reaches adulthood, (s)he has *achieved* a state of "ignorance" whereby virtually all behavior may be performed without awareness and tends more often than not to be performed in this manner unless special circumstances are invoked. That is, unless forced to engage in conscious thought, one prefers the mode of interacting with one's environment in a state of relative mindlessness, at least with regard to the situation at hand. (p. 40)

One of the key considerations of this project is to draw out the special circumstances that can invoke a more mindful stance towards social interaction. This project intends to extend the possibility that mindfulness practice can perhaps be a catalyst for limiting the use of automatic routines in interpersonal communication, thus presenting an opportunity for emerging other-centered conversational outcomes. In addition, execution of any pre-conversational plan relies on an individual’s communication competence.

    According to Steele and Plenty (2015) communication competence incorporates both “one’s knowledge of appropriate communication practices as well as effectiveness at adapting to the surroundings in a communication situation” (p. 297). Motley (1986) explains that “one characteristic of ‘communication competence’ is the intentional communicator’s ability to notice, and operate efficiently in,” (p. 16) scenarios which are considered special circumstances. An example which Motley (1986) draws from a study he did with colleagues Camden and Wilson in 1984, is that a white lie is often used when the truth threatens the face of the other. Motley (1986) explains that “the conscious processing of tactful truth may in fact demonstrate the greater communicative competence” (p. 16). Mindfulness could certainly positively impact
communicative competence. That said, this project is focused on mindfulness as a tool to affect communication goals resulting from pre-conversational planning versus communication plan execution.

While it is possible that mindfulness could in fact impact nonverbal communication, it is not the intention of this project to explore that end. Motley (1986) explores his own two-by-two scheme of “verbal/nonverbal by vocal/nonvocal” to show that the “verbal mode requires intentionality, while the nonverbal mode allows, but does not require, intention” (p. 7). It is also considered that nonverbal and verbal are impossible to completely disconnect and both are likely always a part of the message. Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) state simply that “generating messages that produce desired effects in social interactions is clearly one that involves configurations of verbal and nonverbal message attributes rather than single variables or a few variables taken at a time” (p. 121). The important distinction here is to carve out those intentional verbal communication episodes and focus on the possible effects of mindful planning on goal setting therein.

Waldron (1997) expands upon these foundational elements, overlearned automaticity and intentional communication, to explore possible theories of conversational planning. Waldron references a body of existing pre-conversational literature which “demonstrates convincingly that the cognitive structures and processes developed by an individual from his or her previous social experiences facilitate the preparation and production of conversational messages” (pp. 195-196). Waldron (1997) explores three types of planning; “pre-conversational,” “conversational,” and “interactive” (pp. 195-196). Conversational and interactive planning are subject to the fact that “humans are limited information processors who can attend to only some of their goals and plans at any given moment” (Waldron, 1997, p. 198). Waldron (1997) develops this concept further
by explaining that “excessive use of resources for planning may divert resources away from other cognitive operations (e.g., attending to the partner) and may result in processing delays manifested in unacceptably long pauses or disfluencies” (p 204). Although Burgoon and Langer (1995) invite the possibility of learned efficiencies in that “mindfulness need not be cognitively effortful once ingrained” (p. 108) the focus here is on pre-conversational planning as a possible point of insertion for mindfulness practice.

Studies by Waldron and others focused on obtaining sensitive information were referenced by Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) when they summarized the findings:

Competent interactants were found to use more extensive and creative planning processes as they contemplated conversational moves. They looked farther into the conversational future, developed more alternatives in anticipation of partner responses, and were more responsive to the immediate context as they constructed conversational plans. They integrated information obtained from the partner in earlier conversational turns into their plans for future turns. This proactive and flexible approach, which epitomizes mindfulness, was contrasted with the use of “stock” small talk and repetitive questioning by less-skilled information seekers. (p. 117)

It is the intention of this project to extend the correlation between mindfulness practice in pre-conversational planning to the resulting caring attitudes towards the other in intentional verbal communication. I posit that with limited mindfulness training, even exposure to a few simple mindfulness concepts, that individuals will adopt more other-centered and caring strategies during pre-conversational planning. As Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan, and Orsillo (2007) conclude:
As individuals are more mindfully attentive to the thoughts and feelings they and others experience in the present moment, they are more likely to find common ground and greater intimacy in their relationships, engage in higher levels of valued action, and increase their overall quality of life in the process—one moment at a time. (p. 513)

**Theoretical Basis**

Anderson, Baxter, and Cissna (2004) establish influential theorists at the outset of their collection of works on dialogue. They highlight the efforts of Buber as being critically foundational to the establishment of much interpersonal communication theory. Specifically “Buber’s *I-Thou*, for instance was not two words, but one ‘primary word’ in that the *I* does not develop apart from its link with an acknowledged other” (p. 3) is paramount to the intention of care for the other in dialogue as noted by Anderson, Baxter, and Cissna (2004). To further develop the societal context for dialogue as care Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) again leveraged, in part, a baseline of dialogic theory from Buber. Establishing a postmodern moment of “unchecked individualism” (p. 12), “routine cynicism” (p. 11) and systemic societal “devaluation of care” lead Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) to proposing dialogue as the labor of care.

Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) connect Buber’s dialogic theory to care as an act “constituted in communication” where “the way in which one chooses to communicate determines the quality of the caring relationship” (p. 61). Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) explore a variety of scholarship on the practice of care. Specifically, as Griffin, Ledbetter and Sparks (2015) state, Buber saw dialogue as “mutuality in conversation that creates the *Between*, through which we help each other to be more human” (p. 77). Griffin et al. (2015) define mindfulness in the dialogic context simply as “the presence or awareness of what participants are making in the midst of their own conversation” (p. 75). For these and other communication scholars, care of
the other in dialogue is paramount to understanding one’s self, the cultivation of community, and our collective humanity (Frie, 2010, p. 458).

An established body of work exists surrounding mindfulness practice in health care and related fields (Grossman, 2015; McCorquodale, 2015). Communications theorists have surrounded dialogic communication and all its many facets; ethics, care of the other, the between, and more (Anderson, Baxter & Cissna, 2004; Baker-Ohler & Holba, 2009; Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2015). It is Julia Wood’s three qualities in the practice of care which closely mirror a mindful approach to dialogue: partiality, empathy, and a willingness to serve or nurture others (as cited in in Baker-Ohler & Holba, 2009, p. 67). As McCorquodale (2015) explains, “compassion and caring are commonly cited as the generative products of mindfulness” (p. 237). This is where mindfulness has the potential in pre-conversational planning to become the vehicle to promote caring attitudes towards the other in dialogue.

The Literature

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a practice receiving a lot of attention at present. Many definitions of mindfulness exist (Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2015; Grossman, 2015; McCorquodale, 2015). Some definitions focus on mindfulness as a solo activity, a state of meditation, while others offer a definition within a greater situational context (i.e., healthcare). Grossman (2015) settles on a definition that frames the historic moment well, mindfulness is the “act of unbiased, openhearted, equanimous experience of perceptible events and processes as they unfold from moment to moment” (p. 18). Grossman (2015) continues to explain the benefit of this definition compared to others: “This definition alters the prominence of primarily attentional phenomena for mindfulness in the direction of an act whereby attention and a particular set of attitudes coalesce
to achieve a special state called mindfulness” (p. 18). Langer (2014) wrote the book on mindfulness, literally, and Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) leverage her work to say that “mindfulness refers to active and fluid information processing, sensitivity to context and multiple perspectives, and ability to draw novel distinctions” (p. 106). Again, Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) discuss Langer’s (2014) position that a mindful state of mind can be achieved while other “subroutines are ‘run off’ automatically” and “the very capacity to engage in the kinds of semiautomatic conduct that characterizes many routine aspects of interpersonal interaction may free the cognitive resources necessary to make” (p. 106) mindful decisions. Certainly, being present is fundamental to demonstrating care for the other in communication and pre-conversational planning.

McCorquodale (2015) considers the opposite of mindfulness to further definitional understanding: “Mindlessness may be thought of as autopilot, a mode of being that makes it easy to miss how habits direct day-to-day experiences” (p. 231). Burgoon and Langer (1995) list possible antecedents of mindlessness and explain that “each of these tendencies – the pursuit of certainty, dichotomization, overlearning or habitual responding, and premature cognitive commitments – can lead to chronic mindlessness as well as follow from it in a mutually reciprocal and interactive fashion” (p. 110). Full development of the concept of mindfulness includes considering all components of its antithesis.

It is well documented that health care professionals, social workers, and counselors can benefit from exposure to mindfulness practice (Grossman, 2015; McCorquodale, 2015). The benefits of mindfulness are varied, and depending on the focus of study, often situationally specific. One of the conceptual benefits that unfolds from the body of work surrounding mindfulness is a caring attitude toward the other. Frie (2012) explains “a mutually enriching
dialogue requires a kind of ‘relational stance’ that is grounded in a willingness to engage the
Other” (p. 233). Frie (2012) expands on the “relational stance” explaining that it “involves the
dual processes of empathy and compassion” (p. 233). A well-controlled study of the effects of a
mindfulness intervention on medical students by Shapiro and Schwartz (2000) concluded that
“students demonstrated a significant quantitative increase in empathy and spiritual experience;
and qualitative data suggested an impact on an intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal
level” (p. 132). Mindfulness becomes the vehicle for bringing compassion and caring to
dialogue in favor of the other.

Developing a caring attitude towards the other is a first step towards empathetic listening
and a key component to any empathetic style. Listening with empathy, employing an empathetic
style in leadership or personal relationships, has shown some correlation to the promotion of
healthy friendships and the establishment of community. Goleman (2005, 2015) has documented
that emotionally intelligent individuals, those leveraging an empathetic style, find more natural
success in life. The five core components of emotional intelligence are: self-awareness, self-
regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill (Goleman, 2015). Empathy, as a part of
emotional intelligence, is an individual’s ability to be adept at social analysis (Goleman, 2005).
This social analysis is well represented in a mindful other-centered approach to pre-
conversational planning and dialogue in which self-awareness and the associated self-regulation
are ever present. Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan, and Orsillo (2007) find that
“mindfulness and experiential acceptance-based approaches appear to be a viable means for
cultivating levels of empathy” (p. 513).

McCorquodale (2015) posits that “coming to understand that humans exist and are
constituted by the ‘other’ naturally places the other in a place of immense significance” (p. 235).
This importance of the other that stems from a relational view of the world is a first step in cultivating a caring attitude towards the other. Frie (2012) expands this relational view to a “compassion for the other” which breeds a different type of empathy that “allows me to explore the experience of the Other in ways that a dispassionate stance may not” (p 233). Arnett, Baxter and Cissna (2004) explore the phenomenological theory of Levinas as ethical responsibility in caring for the other in dialogue. For an individual to possess or exhibit tenets of a caring attitude in dialogue, communication ethics literacy is required.

Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) leverage a communications ethics literacy from Arnett, Fritz and Bell (2009) “that identifies a good within the interplay of self, other, and the historic moment” (p. 14). It is this literacy, and attention to it, which cultivates caring attitudes toward the other. Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) detail that “meaningful caring relationships require that we be able to reach out to the other, trust the other, connect with the other, and be concerned for the other as opposed to only ourselves” (p. 16). This other centered communication literacy is what Buber explored as the ‘between.’ As Frie (2012) aptly states “empathy is morally valuable when it enables us to recognize the Other as a part of a shared and situated experience” (p 233). Frie (2012) continues to expand on the ‘between,’ “like, empathy, the capacity for compassion is part of the attitude we bring to our relationship with the Other” (p. 233).

Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) researched five communicative examples looking for effectiveness of communication as a byproduct of mindfulness. The results were not as direct as one would assume. Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) concluded:

In other words, without the requisite communication skills to monitor their actions and adapt their messages, without the breadth of repertoire that enables flexible, novel thought processes to translate into creative action, a more mindful state may not lead to
more successful communication. (p. 121)

In contrast, in a study of communication students where one group was exposed to mindfulness training, Huston, Garland, and Farb (2011) concluded:

The concept of mindfulness that is beginning to make its way from the health and psychology fields into the study of communication may be particularly useful as a tool for increasing students’ awareness of emotional reactions to interactions, reappraising those interactions as growth or learning opportunities, and regulating verbal interchange in a constructive manner. (p. 419)

Conversational Planning

Conversational planning, specifically pre-conversational planning, is a human condition. One need only to be human, and perhaps of some advanced communicative maturity, to acknowledge its existence. The intention of this project is to connect mindfulness to dialogue where mindfulness in pre-conversational planning becomes the vehicle for bringing compassion and caring to dialogue in favor of the other.

“It is at this intersection of unconscious goals or plans and habituated responding that the interplay of mindfulness is illuminated” explain Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000), “if particular plans and schemata are activated in an overlearned and automated fashion. It is possible for them to become so routinized that they escape periodic reevaluation of their effectiveness and so become mindless response patterns” (p. 109). Mindfulness, in this context, is a tool that requires proper training and practice. Mindfulness has the potential to combat this automaticity in communication and communication planning.

Allen (2011) mentions a meta-awareness where an individual is required to “observe” oneself “in the process of thinking” (p. 9). Allen (2011) would also argue that mindfulness and
caring attitudes towards the other are what allow us to thoughtfully negotiate difference. It is this meta-awareness in conversational planning that allows for thoughtful consideration of the other. Mindfulness has been shown to cultivate compassion (Frie, 2012); compassionate attitudes are paramount to caring attitudes towards the other in dialogue. If we as a community of communicators become practiced in mindfulness during pre-conversational planning, perhaps increased positive and productive interpersonal interactions will result. It is the intention of this project to potentially draw out that correlation and tease it into practice.

Certainly, additional research is required to further our collective understanding of mindfulness and its many facets. The project herein posits that there exists potential for mindfulness practice in pre-conversational planning to promote careful consideration of the other in intentional verbal interpersonal communication. Specifically, that the intention, or communication goals, formulated in mindful pre-conversational planning includes more other-centered themes.

**Rationale**

Through the practice of mindfulness, we can authentically approach communication with others ethically and establish the caring attitudes necessary for other centered dialogue. This is important for many reasons. As a collective humanity burdened with the tyranny of potential overstimulation and multitasking associated with mobile devices and constant connectedness, we often need a strategy to combat these pressures and the habits they promote. As Turkle (2011) so aptly recognizes we are often “alone together.” Turkle (2011) would argue, in part, that the unchecked individualism, routine cynicism, and the devaluation of care that Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) develop are tied to overstimulated and constant connectivity. With practice of
mindfulness it is possible to promote an awareness which encourages us to be present for one another and combat this over connectivity.

We also have an ethical obligation to one another in this context. Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) fully develop the importance of caring as a moral imperative for greater societal good. Specifically, Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) explain that “caring is essential to society because in being part of the good life, caring connects each of us to the other, in turn creating a better society” (p. 70). Many communication scholars have developed this moral imperative that we have towards one another (Arnett, Bell, & Fritz, 2010). Mindfulness can potentially provide a path to establish more caring communities of communicators while upholding this morale imperative. Shapiro and Schwartz (2000) develop this opportunity when exploring the possible health benefits of self-regulation and mindfulness, “the self may then be recognized as embedded within interpersonal relationships, family and community, and in this way the intention to heal interpersonal relationships is also added” (p. 130). When we become mindful, the effects immediately extend beyond oneself. As participants, we become advocates of a healthy and collectively mindful network. A network not aimed at providing individual opportunity but rather collective compassion and understanding. This project is a distillation of one slice of that opportunity.

**Design Questions**

Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) explain a key limitation to any study considering mindful message creation, “mindfulness is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition for success in communicating” (p. 120). Further study and complex experiments are required to isolate mindfulness as a communication asset. Removing environmental factors and other communication influences, even in pre-conversational planning, would require extensive testing.
and a specialized process. As Neuman (2011) explains “experiments provide focused tests of hypotheses with each experiment considering one or two variables in a specific setting” (p. 277). As such, innumerable experiments would be required to establish true causality between mindfulness planning and care of the other. Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) sum it up nicely, “we have a long way to go before we understand how message plans and the complex configurations of speech and action used to implement them can be mindfully monitored and controlled in ways that promote communication effectiveness” (p. 122).

Communication competence is a key variable in the effective execution of mindful communication planning. One study by Madlock (2008) highlights the importance of communication competence, “the strongest relationships were found between supervisors’ communication competence and both employee job and communication satisfaction” (p. 72). Further study of communication competence and its connectedness to mindful communication planning is an important area for future investigation and research.

Nonverbal communication is another key variable which would require specific experiments designed to isolate the effect of nonverbal communication in the execution of mindful plans. Too many environmental factors exist to discuss them all here. It is acknowledged that nonverbal factors impact communication effectiveness and goal achievement. To avoid overcomplicating the intent with nonverbal factors, and challenges related to cognitive resource availability during dialogue, this project will focus on mindful pre-conversational planning.

As Burgoon and Langer (1995) posit “social science redeems itself with its critics to the extent that it contributes to the social good by unmasking dysfunctional actions and proffering communicative routes to greater personal and societal efficacy” (p. 127). Limitations always
exist, but because of the possibilities, mindfulness and its fruit are an important social focus for future studies across a myriad of disciplines. Shapiro and Schwartz (2000) summarize the possible, and profoundly personal, healing power of mindfulness:

When utilizing mindfulness qualities, people focus attention on themselves in a nonjudgmental and gentle way, open to whatever they may find. This attention involves a stance of impartiality, letting go, and cultivating patience for whatever is present, a willingness to just listen to and accept in lovingkindness all the parts of one’s whole. (p. 130)

It is my hope that a greater percentage of humanity find this communication evolution fruitful, not for my purposes, but rather for their own. Motley (1992) aptly describes our opportunity to innovate, “After all, as communicators, a certain level of mindfulness seems necessary in order to do differently whatever communication research suggests might be done differently” (p. 306).
Chapter Three: Scope and Methodology

Scope of the Project

The project’s intention was to incorporate relevant printed materials about mindfulness practice, mindfulness practice in communication planning and pre-conversational planning. The ultimate intention was to establish a method for mindfulness practice in pre-conversational planning leveraging these sources as a foundation. The target audience was the adult learner in an organizational or community setting. Modifications would likely be required to leverage this project as a collegiate curriculum. Learners should leave with an understanding of how mindfulness practice can, and should, affect conversational plans with an intention towards care of the other. Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan and Orsillo (2007) detail this concept well, “private experiences that arise in the course of meditation or other forms of mindfulness practice may, when held in awareness without judgment, lead to additional insights about another’s emotional experience and, perhaps, insight about how best to convey this understanding” (p. 510). The project created a set of curricula leading to this end, one full curriculum and one abridged version.

While nonverbal communications and communication competence (or communication skill) play party to successful execution of any communication plan, those elements were not fully developed in either curricula. It could be argued, however, that mindful conversational planning likely increases communication competence.

Methodology of the Project

The primary method of study was library, or documentary, research. As Rubin, Rubin Piele, and Haridakis (2010) explain “when conducting library/documentary research, we examine all relevant published materials about our research topic” (p. 212). The foundation for
this project was an analysis of existing research in three key areas; the potential impacts of mindfulness practices, the different types of mindfulness practice, and conversational planning. There was some light additional library, or documentary, research required in communication pedagogy or curriculum design best practices to properly inform and design the curriculum. Future iterations should include informal interviews conducted of professors in the communication education discipline to further inform curriculum design.

As mentioned above, the approach included the creation of two curricula. A full course curriculum was designed to be taught over a period of eight to twelve weeks, and a single day condensed curriculum was designed for an organizational community of adult learners. Each curriculum required a reading list and supporting materials for the practice of mindfulness in pre-conversational planning. These materials explore mindfulness and conversational planning separately, tying them together in a thoughtful way nearing the conclusion of the curriculum. Each curriculum attempts to thoroughly define and discuss the fruits, academic support, and challenges associated with mindfulness and conversational planning.

The supporting materials for the full, twelve week, curriculum include multiple power point presentations, a reading list, a complete syllabus and a pre/post self-assessment. The syllabus was broken in to four modules; foundations of mindfulness in communication, conversational planning, elements of mindfulness practice and mindful communication plans. Four power point presentations were created, one for each module. Each module includes supporting reading materials pointed towards thoughtfully building a foundation of learning.

The supporting materials for the condensed, single day, curriculum include a power point presentation and the same pre/post self-assessment as the full curriculum. The single day power
leverages the power point presentations created for the full curriculum. It is intended that these are leveraged in a combined and condensed version of the four modules above.

Many classes conclude or begin with some form of mindfulness practice. This might include breathing practice, meditative practice, or journaling conversational plans. This practice is designed as a mix of in class and homework. As O'Donnell (2015) thoughtfully posits, “where mindfulness techniques meet creative pedagogy, contemplative inquiry and the kind of unselfing that education involves through the way that it brings our careful attention to something other than ourselves” (p. 198). A key take away near the end of each curricula is the practice of building a pre-conversational plan for an upcoming material dialogue leveraging mindfulness. An intention statement about use of mindfulness practice in conversational planning will be designed by each student at the conclusion of the course. All learners will complete a self-assessment at the outset and the culmination of the course.

**Ethical Considerations**

The primary ethical considerations of the study would stem directly from social science’s code of ethics. As Neuman (2011) explains “the truthfulness of knowledge produced by social research and its use or misuse depends on individuals like you, reflecting on their actions and how social research fits into society” (p. 160). Researchers have an obligation not to overstate or suppress findings to satisfy internal or external needs. This study, correlations drawn, and any potential findings will be no exception.

There is also an obvious ethical obligation associated with teaching in general, more pointedly the teaching of mindfulness. O'Donnell (2015) explains that “mindfulness has been uprooted from rich wisdom traditions and has thus lost sight of its ethical orientation becoming a programmatic rather than pedagogical practice; it is simply another element in a very profitable
self-help industry” (p. 188). This study intends to avoid those pitfalls by encouraging ethical deployment of mindfulness in the context of other centered conversational planning. Certainly misuse of anything learned is possible, but when married with critical thinking and context, perhaps improbable.
Chapter Four: The Project

Project Description

This project involves the creation of a full curriculum and the associated syllabus for a full semester, eight to twelve weeks, and the associated teaching materials. It is intended that the full curriculum be taught in to four modules; foundations of mindfulness in communication, elements of mindfulness practice, conversational planning and mindful communication plans. These modules and the associated syllabus section are broken out and described in detail below and in the associated Appendix. The syllabus sections will assume an eight-week instructional period. For a twelve-week instructional period each module is simply modified by adding a third week. It is assumed that instruction take place both in person, at least once per week, and in an e-learning environment during the course. The associated learning materials leveraged should remain fluid depending on the instructor, size of the class, and physical space available.

An intended key learning from either curriculum designed herein will be the student’s ability to practice mindful communication planning. The curricula are designed to not only inform the students on the concepts and their relatedness, but practice the application of the learnings throughout. It is intended that the curriculum be designed in such a way that the students are finding application of the learnings in their personal and professional experiences as the teaching unfolds. As Hains and Smith (2012) explain in an academic journal article on student-centered course design:

It is no longer acceptable for students to master knowledge and logical reasoning skills in the traditional academic sense; they must be able to utilize their knowledge outside the structure and context of the academic system (Immordino-Yang & Damasio, 2007). This can be accomplished by creating learning experiences that evoke emotion, provide
practical application, and solidify new concepts with previous knowledge (Ablin, 2008).

(p. 359)

The curricula are intended for adult education settings. As such, adult orientation to learning and key strategies informing curriculum development are of paramount consideration. Saunders, Batson and Saunders (2000) identified “four identifiable composites, each of which was supported by a current and credible educational theory” (p. 3) in a study of graduate students they conducted at Indiana Wesleyan University. These composites and the associated instructional strategies showed strong correlation in the adult learner’s ability to attain intended meta-skills (Saunders, Batson & Saunders, 2000). The third instructional composite and instructional strategies discussed in the study surround curriculum development for the adult learner. Saunders, Batson and Saunders (2000) aligned with social learning theory in this composite to confirm “that collaborative learning strategies and substantive content aggregated and together were positively related to students’ reported attainment of meta-skills” (p. 19). The curricula developed herein are designed to leverage this knowledge about adult learners.

Adults have a differentiated orientation to learning than other students, most specifically as Kistler (2011) explains “adults are life-centered (or problem-centered) in their orientation to learning” (p. 30). Developed more fully, in an article on adult e-learning strategies Chaves (2009) leverages Knowles work on the concept of andragogy to consider:

This construct offers five assumptions about adult learners: (1) adults are internally, versus externally, motivated about learning new things; (2) adult students must transition from dependent learning towards self-directed learning; (3) adults’ greater reservoir of experience can be used as a learning tool; (4) adults’ readiness to learn is based on actual
social roles; and (5) adults need to apply new knowledge and skills almost immediately (Knowles, 1980). (p. 2)

Strategically placing opportunities for adult learners to leverage the course material in this way will be a key theme in each module of the curriculum. As Kistler (2011) explains “the most effective learning occurs when the change in behavior (i.e., knowledge, attitude, skills and practices) is presented in the context of their application to their own life” (p. 30).

Each module of the full curricula is detailed in the sections below and in the appendices referenced. Each module’s learning plan will include the core concepts to be taught (key learnings), the relevant literature, the associated personal exercise that accompanies the learning, and detailed descriptions of the group exercises. These elements are intended to align with the concepts of andragogy (Chaves, 2009; Kistler, 2011; Saunders, Batson & Saunders, 2000) explored above.

All students will complete the pre-course self-assessment and post-course self-assessment found in Appendix A and B respectively to gauge learning, assess the instruction and inform future versions of this curriculum.

**Foundations of Mindfulness in Communication**

This module is intended to be taught in a period of two to three weeks. The key learnings for this module are; the historical perspectives of mindfulness in communication, a definitional understanding of mindfulness, the dangers of automaticity, mindlessness as a vehicle for understanding mindfulness, and mindfulness as a conscious and intentional act. The syllabus for this module can be found in Appendix C. An instructional power point presentation for this module is in Appendix D. The power point is designed to accompany a single introductory lecture, and to be presented by an instructor with a comprehensive grasp of these concepts.
Relevant literature. The relevant literature to be read during this module includes:


Readings will be assigned as detailed in the syllabus in Appendix C. Part one, chapters one through four, of *Mindfulness* by Langer (2014) will be read in the first half of module one to establish a baseline of knowledge. This will be considered the primary text for this module. The primary reading will be followed by reading Grossman’s (2015) journal article from *Mindfulness* and an exercise where the students develop a definition for mindfulness through collaborative online discussion posts.

The Burgoon and Langer (1995) and Burgoon, Berger and Waldron (2000) journal articles will be read along with Motley’s (1992) journal entry from *Communication Monographs* in the second half of module one. These texts begin to shape mindfulness as a communicative act, or at least a communicative tool, to be leveraged in personal and professional interactions. These readings will be followed by the group exercise detailed below. The goal here is to begin to establish mindfulness as an aspirational communicative practice.
**Personal exercise.** The personal exercise for this module is designed to allow for immediate personal exploration of the key concepts of this module and to encourage the adult learner to immediately apply key concepts of mindful communication to their personal and professional lives. The exercise requires authoring a daily mindfulness/mindlessness journal throughout module one. In the journal the students will be asked to reflect upon material verbal interpersonal conversations that occurred during the day. Does the student recall any automaticity or routine responses in a dialogue? How did those responses affect the exchange? Does the student recall any mindfulness or elements of mindfulness in a dialogue? How did those elements affect the exchange? What single take-away does the student have for that day as it relates to mindful communication? Students will be asked to share, as willing, portions of their daily journal entries at the outset of each class. The goal being that the students begin collaborative dialogue around these key foundational elements of mindful communication.

**Group exercise.** Each group will be asked to come up with a detailed verbal interpersonal exchange scenario and write it down. This scenario should not be novel in nature. The group will be asked to brain storm a list of conversational goals for each party given the details of the scenario. The lists will be written down in two columns on a sheet of paper. The group will then brain storm a list of risks associated with a mindless approach to the scenario. In contrast, each group will then detail mindful strategies to mitigate these risks prior to entering the dialogue. What could each party do in advance to avoid a mindless exchange? Each group will choose a spokesperson and a single strategy to share. The detailed scenario will be shared, along with the potential risks, followed by the strategy to promote a mindful exchange.
To conclude module one and thoughtfully transition into the next module, the students will be asked to prepare and submit an initial draft of a personal intention statement related to communicating mindfully.

**Elements of Mindfulness Practice**

This module is also intended to be taught in a period of two to three weeks. The key learnings for module two are: different types of mindfulness practice, benefits of mindfulness practice, and establishing some strategies for developing a personal mindfulness practice. The syllabus for module two can be found in Appendix E. An instructional power point presentation for module two is in Appendix F. The power point is designed to accompany a single lecture after the students have completed the readings, and to be presented by an instructor with a comprehensive grasp of these concepts.

**Relevant literature.** The relevant literature to be read during this module includes:


Readings will be assigned as detailed in the syllabus in Appendix E. The Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan, and Orsillo (2007), Eberth and Sedlmeier (2012), and McCorquodale
MINDFULNESS IN CONVERSATIONAL PLANNING

(2015) will be read in the first half of module two to expose students to the possibilities mindfulness practice affords and to encourage self-study on the effects and application of mindfulness. These readings will be followed by an exercise where the students engage in self-study, write and discuss the possible effects of mindfulness practice in a situational context of personal interest.

The first five chapters of *The Charisma Myth* by Cabane (2013) will be read in the second half of module two. This text includes a multitude of examples of practicing mindfulness, or off-shoots of mindfulness, in context. The examples will be drawn out and potentially become a part of the student journaling in the second half of the module. Specifically, the “Putting It into Practice: Presence” (Cabane, 2013, p. 15) at the top of page fifteen, the “Putting It into Practice: Responsibility Transfer” (Cabane, 2013, pp. 34-35) and “Putting It into Practice: Metta” (Cabane, 2013, pp. 88-89). These are all examples of mindfulness practice, presented a different way. Many other forms of practice will be presented in the readings and power point throughout this module. The goal is to encourage self-directed learning resulting in a practice of mindfulness that appeals to each student individually.

**Personal exercise.** The personal exercise for module two is designed to encourage the development of a personal mindfulness practice while continuing to build on the foundation of knowledge established in module one. The exercise asks that each student add daily mindfulness practice, in the form of their choosing, to the authoring of a daily mindfulness/mindlessness journal. The practice can be as simple as a focused breathing exercise that lasts less than one minute. In the journal the students will be asked to reflect upon the addition of mindfulness practice in their daily lives. Is it difficult to develop the practice of mindfulness? How does the difficulty change with practice? How does the student feel immediately following the
mindfulness practice? Does the student notice any change in interpersonal exchanges after adding mindfulness practice to their daily routine? How? Students will be encouraged to share, as willing, their chosen mindfulness practice and the resulting awareness at the outset of each class during module two.

**Group exercise.** In your groups discuss the elements of a personal one month commitment plan to the practice of mindfulness. Like exercise or any other good habit, mindfulness takes planning and commitment. Each group member should identify the time of day that they will practice, where they will practice, how long they will practice, and the specific form of practice they are committed to. Each group member should identify an accountability partner. The intention of the accountability partner is to have a weekly discussion of the evolution of one another’s practice. At the end of the group dialogue some time will be allotted for each group member to author their personal thirty-day commitment plan, schedule the mindfulness practice, and schedule the weekly accountability meetings.

This thirty-day action plan and the associated accountability meetings will be submitted by each student at the conclusion of the second module. The instructor will schedule a quick checkpoint review with each student nearing the end of the fourth module. It is quite possible that the practice has evolved as their personal knowledge on this topic continues to grow.

**Conversational Planning**

This module, like the others, is intended to be taught in a period of two to three weeks. The key learnings for module three are exploring; intentionality in communication, consciousness in interpersonal communication, and some possible models of conversational planning. The syllabus for module three can be found in Appendix G. An instructional power point presentation for module three is in Appendix H. The power point is designed to
accompany the readings and draw out the key learnings for this module. As always, this material is best presented by an instructor with a comprehensive grasp of these concepts.

**Relevant literature.** The relevant literature to be read during this module is intended to be augmented by self-study materials uncovered by the students. Here is the reading list:


The readings in module three are to be read as detailed in the syllabus articulated in Appendix G. Langer’s (1978) piece will be read, along with Motley’s (1986), in an effort to establish context for conversational plans. Specifically, leveraging Langer’s (1978) work to establish mindlessness as overly routine in interpersonal communication. Building from this position, we begin to understand intentionality of communication by reading Motley (1986). Students should come away from these readings, in the first half of module three, with a general social context for the possible insertion of thoughtful pre-conversational planning into their lives. There is no argument that any of us fail to plan for upcoming material interpersonal
communication. The goal is to establish some critical thinking surrounding these topics. Is there an opportunity for conscious, and eventually more mindful, approach to this natural human condition of conversational planning? Where? How?

The second half of module three is designed to offer some further perspectives on the critical thought evoked in the first half of this module. Students will read Holba’s (2008) theoretical connection to Buber as we begin to establish a framework for conceptualizing care of the other. Lastly, Waldron’s (1997) chapter will be read as a potential opportunity to bring intentionality and consciousness to conversational planning. Each of these concepts has a large body of research associated with it, the individual requirements for this module will include self-study designed to encourage the exploration of that body of work.

**Personal exercise.** The personal exercise for module three is designed to bring awareness to the natural human moments of conversational planning. We all build conversational plans. We are not always aware when we are planning for material conversations. During this module, building upon the journaling from the first two modules, students will be asked to add conversational planning to the journaling. Is the student aware when he/she is building conversational plans? How can the student incorporate the readings from this module into these plans? What tend to be the primary goals when the student brings awareness to the moment of planning? Is there an opportunity to shift those goals to something else? Does the student notice that the planning surrounds more novel or more material future conversations? This journaling will continue throughout the module. Each class during this module, save the first, will include some sharing of conversational planning awareness from willing participants. There is also an opportunity to incorporate conversational planning into the weekly accountably partner meetings scheduled in module two.
**Group exercise.** In small groups, and after watching *12 Angry Men* (Fonda & Lumet, 1957) the students will be asked to document examples of automaticity and the lack of conversational plans. Conversely, from the movie, the students will document examples of mindful communication planning. Discuss the consequences of each. Each group will write down, in two columns, the results from the brain storm. Each group will select a group member to share the collective findings. The larger group will discuss the merits, and pitfalls, of each approach.

Each student will then be asked to draw from a movie or television show of their choosing, a few good examples of thoughtful conversational planning. The students, through self-study, will then post their findings to a discussion board. The students will engage in online dialogue about the examples drawn out from personal experience and self-study.

**Mindful Communication Plans**

This module has a good deal of reading in it. It is advised that the instructor inform the students of this fact in advance to allow them time to read these materials during prior modules if necessary. Like the others, the final module is intended to last two to three weeks. The key learnings for module four are; extended dialogic communication theory, care of the other (otherness or othering), and the establishment of mindful and other centered communication plans. The complete syllabus for module four can be found in Appendix I. The final instructional power point presentation, for module four, can be located in Appendix J. The power point is designed to be presented in the second half of module four after the students have completed the readings. These materials are best presented by an instructor with a comprehensive grasp of these concepts.
Relevant literature. The relevant literature for module four creates a good deal of reading. It is recommended that the students get a head start on this list during prior modules.

Core texts. These are considered the primary texts for the module.


Additional texts. These texts further develop, contextually, the core learnings for this module.


This module intends to bring the learning to an apex by turning the focus to the other. The readings for this module are comprehensive by design. Each brings the other to focus through a different context. For Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009) it is dialogue as a possible vehicle for bringing compassionate attitudes to the other. For Gordon (2011) it is listening as an extension of Buber’s dialogic theoretical foundations. Deetz and Simpson (2004) consider a constructivist stance, among other positions, as one is transformed by the difference of the other. Langer (1992) succinctly attends to the mindless use of language as potentially harming the other.

When we bring a mindfulness to pre-conversational planning we have the opportunity, some would argue the ethical responsibility, to attend to the difference of the other. It is the intention of this module to encourage the self-awareness and self-regulation through mindfulness practice in pre-conversational planning, to thoughtfully attend to the difference of the other. Deetz and Simpson (2004) summarize it well, “failure to attend carefully to the otherness around us limits our own perspective, produces incomplete and inadequate decision-relevant information, and does violence to those ‘others’ whose positions are often already institutionally and culturally marginalized” (p. 157). Similarly, Langer (1992) says “without an awareness of the language choices I am making when I speak, I am left out of a process that would personally benefit me. Without an awareness of the choices I could make when I listen to others, the costs increase” (p. 327). Mindful pre-conversational planning provides this opportunity.
Personal exercise. In the final module, the journaling should include mindful consideration of the other in pre-conversational planning. How can we self-regulate to include other-centered considerations in our conversational plans? Are we naturally situated to naturally have the self-awareness to bring mindfulness to our plans? Does that mindfulness gravitate towards other-centered themes? The journaling has become a bit of a habit at this point and the expectation is that the core journal entries are becoming rich with learnings from the course. Throughout the module, individuals will be asked to share journal entries during this final evolution.

The student will, in the second half of module four and building on the previous personal intention statement drafted, author a final version of the personal intention statement. The statement should include each of the core concepts from the course; mindfulness, conversational planning and care of the other.

Group exercise. We will practice other-centered communication competency in the group exercise for this module. The students will be broken into pairs and ask to each write down a material interpersonal dyadic communication scenario, past or present, that they are willing to share with their partner for this exercise. Before sharing the scenario, the participants will each write down their personal goals, emotional triggers, and any appropriate cultural context for each example. The students then share their scenarios with one another without sharing the personal goals, emotional triggers, and appropriate cultural context. Students will then guess at the personal goals, emotional triggers, and cultural context for one another’s scenarios. A larger group dialogue around how difficult it is to guess will follow. The pairings will then practice some mindful other-focused conversational planning, followed by role playing
each other’s scenarios while using these conversational plans. The larger group will share a discussion on this experience.

Students will complete and submit the post-assessment survey found in Appendix B.

This concludes the eight to twelve-week course.

Condensed Single Day Curriculum

The condensed single day curriculum is meant to be taught to a group of adult learners in a community setting. The focus for the single day curriculum is to quickly, roughly two hours per module, discuss and develop the core themes from the full curriculum. The two hour blocks will be broken into one hour of instruction, forty five minutes of group exercises, and fifteen minutes of documenting key learnings before transitioning to the next module. The core concepts to be taught in the single day curriculum are; foundations of mindfulness in communication, elements of mindfulness practice, conversational planning and mindful communication plans.

Relevant literature. In this scenario, the adult learners will have little to no time to read the materials, as such key elements from the core texts will be read aloud during the course. Those core texts are as follows:

Foundations of mindfulness in communication.


Elements of mindfulness practice.


Conversational planning.


Mindful communication plans.


Exercises. All the group exercises detailed herein will be replicated in some form in the single day session. During the appropriate module, and after the one hour of instruction, the group exercises will be explained and initiated. The instructor will facilitate the learning by encouraging, and shaping, the discussion that follows the group exercise. The exercises will be followed by a wrap-up session intended to document, in fifteen minutes, the key concepts from the module before transitioning to the next.

Relevant materials. The power point presentations in Appendix D, Appendix F, Appendix H and Appendix J are suitable for use in the one hour instructional period in the single day curriculum. It is noted that the instructor may need to develop each concept more fully as
many of the students may not have had any exposure to some of these topics previously. The
pre-assessment and post-assessment surveys located in Appendix A and B will be administered
before and after the course. The syllabus for the single day curriculum can be found in Appendix
K.

**Culmination of single day course.** Each participant will be asked to author a personal
mindfulness in communication planning intention statement. This statement should be one page
or less in length and should incorporate the learnings from the day. The intention statement
should be action oriented. It should use verb-driven language to describe the commitment that
each student is making to implement these learnings into their personal and professional lives.
Those willing will share their statements. All participants will be asked to complete and submit
the post-assessment.
Chapter Five: Summaries and Conclusions

Limitations of the Project

Any good curriculum design requires iteration. The best of the intended offering here would come from multiple iterations post implementation. The instructor would be informed by the order of things, the experience of the students in the course, and the assessments completed before and after course completion. This information would certainly help an instructor to refine, reorder or perhaps enhance key sections of the curricula. To be sure, without implementing the curriculum here and being a part of the experience, the content is simply stagnant and unevolved. The cycle of implementation, evaluation, and iteration would continually shape the curriculum to its best possible form for each moment. Knowing that these concepts are always evolving, we also know that the curriculum is never perfect and never the same. Intended to guide an experiential learning opportunity it affords a framework for exploring these concepts as the students relate to them.

Communication studies are complex and ever evolving. Key communication concepts are so interconnected and heavily reliant upon one another that any project isolating a select few is certainly open to well-deserved criticism. This project is no exception. The concept of mindfulness in a communicative context calls into question key concepts like cognitive capacity and cognitive priority. The concept of conversational planning in this context begs the question of the synchronous and/or asynchronous nature of dyadic communication episodes. No communication occurs without underlying and interwoven nonverbal communication. Some of this nonverbal communication is intentional and some of it unintentional. Certainly, exploring the implications of mindfulness on message delivery without consideration for nonverbal tactics is incomplete. Caring for the other requires an understanding of the other’s goals and desires in a
specific communication episode. Mindfulness practice, and conversational planning, does not remove the possibility that communicators misinterpret or falsely diagnose the needs of the other. This is not a comprehensive list of limitations or other environmental factors at play. Suffice it to say, that any project intending to draw from select communication concepts will be subject to the expanse of connected concepts in the field.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

The research clearly affords that mindfulness practice contributes to components of interpersonal care. Compassion, empathy and listening are all quality byproducts of mindfulness practice. A body of research continues to evolve around conversational planning as well. Limited research exists focused on the direct interconnection between these two communicative practices. Similarly, extending these concepts to the promotion of caring attitudes towards the other requires some complex experimental research. The social scientific process would do well to explore and extend these concepts and their interconnectedness in well-constructed experimental research. Further informed by such research, the practices recommended in the curricula designed herein may evolve.

Communication competence is another communication skill not contemplated in this project. Communication competence can potentially enhance or destroy any gains achieved by mindful communication planning. Communication competence may include nonverbal awareness in communicating. Communication competence may affect our individual ability to carry out our mindful communication plans. The study of communication competence as related to caring for the other would be another rewarding area for future research.

One final area that could provide some exciting insights would be exploring mindfulness and its possibilities in interrupting cognitive automaticity in stressful situations. These moments
of stress provide an enormous opportunity for humans to evolve communicatively. Bound by a hard-wired fight or flight mentality, we often fall into unhealthy and regrettable patterns of communication when stress is introduced. Some well-designed experimental research in this area may provide some interesting correlations.

**Conclusions**

It is the intention that this project is a catalyst for change for some students, a crystallization of concepts for others, and a learning experience for all involved. Mindfulness provides a rich and rewarding potential opportunity when applied to communication practice. Specifically, when we apply this learning and implement mindful conversational planning with the other clearly in focus, we practice an ethic of communication which rewards the collective.

As Arnett, Bell and Fritz (2010) so eloquently detail:

Learning is the precondition for dialogic ethical encounter. A minimalist “common sense” for this moment requires communicators to engage in the following communicative actions: (a) to learn before speaking and evaluating, (b) to recognize the limits of our backgrounds that shape our learning, (c) to assume that the Other thinks/values differently, and (d) to embrace dialogic engagement of ethical difference as the pragmatic necessity of an era of difference. The world is no longer in the hands of Enlightenment assurance; this worldview is now one perspective among many, not the one authority on the human condition. Such a moment moves communication ethics into a public admission of situated, tainted ground, framed as a “theory of differences” that privileges learning over telling and respect for content/communicative ground over process. The pragmatic importance of dialogic learning emerges in an era in which the universal commonsense myth that one can stand above history and define the truth no
longer unites communicators of difference, making learning about the prejudices and biases of self and others the first principle of communication ethics. (p. 118)
References


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doi:10.1080/15456871003742021


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Appendix A

Pre-Assessment to Identify Knowledge Baseline

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<tr>
<th>Mindfulness in Conversational Planning Pre-Assessment</th>
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<td>Please share your current experience / exposure to the following topics: (1 = No exposure/understanding, 5 = Comprehensive Understanding)</td>
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<td>Conversational Planning</td>
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<td>Awareness of the Other in Conversational Plans</td>
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<td>Listening as Caring for the Other</td>
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<td>Self-Regulation in Caring for the Other</td>
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What is your primary objective for taking this course?
Appendix B
Post-Assessment to Identify New Knowledge Baseline and Assess Instruction

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<th>Mindfulness in Conversational Planning Post-Assessment</th>
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<td>Please share your experience and understanding of the following topics:</td>
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Appendix C

Syllabus for Module One: Foundations of Mindfulness in Communication

All students please complete and submit the pre-assessment survey.

Required Readings First Half of Module One (Week One)

  Part One, Chapters 1 – 4.
  *Mindfulness*, 6(1), 17-22.

Week One in Eight Week Course

**Read.** Part One (Chapters 1-4) of *Mindfulness* by Langer (2014) and Mindfulness: Awareness Informed by an Embodied Ethic.

**Discuss.** Develop a definition for mindfulness through collaborative online discussion posts. Post your personal definition informed by the readings and thoughtfully respond to your peers.

**Write.** Begin to author a personal daily mindfulness/mindlessness journal throughout module one. In the journal thoughtfully reflect upon material verbal interpersonal conversations that occurred during the day. A simple paragraph or two should suffice. Reflect on the following questions.

- Do you recall any automaticity or routine responses in a dialogue?
- How did those responses affect the exchange?
- Do you recall any mindfulness or elements of mindfulness in a dialogue?
- How did those elements affect the exchange?
- What single take-away do you have for that day as it relates to mindful communication?
Required Readings Second Half of Module One (Week Two)


Week Two in Eight Week Course


**Discuss.** As a group come up with a detailed verbal interpersonal exchange scenario. The scenario should not be novel in nature. Brain storm in your group to establish a list of conversational goals for each party given the details of the scenario. Capture the goals by listing them in two separate columns. Then, as a group, brain storm a list of risks associated with a mindless approach to your chosen scenario. For contrast, detail mindful strategies to mitigate these risks prior to entering the chosen dialogic scenario. What could each party do in advance to avoid a mindless exchange? Choose a spokesperson and a single strategy to share. Share the detailed scenario, along with the potential risks, followed by the strategy. Discuss each groups’ strategy and how well the strategy promotes a mindful exchange.

**Write.** Continue to author a daily mindfulness/mindlessness journal throughout week two. At the end of module two reflect on the readings, reflect on your personal mindfulness journal, and submit an initial draft of a personal intention statement related to communicating mindfully. This statement should be one to three pages in length.
Appendix D

Instructional Power Point Presentation: Module One

Foundations of Mindfulness in Communication
Module One

Dilbert Comic Strip (Adams, 2014)
Definitions of Mindlessness

- “Mindlessness may be thought of as autopilot, a mode of being that makes it easy to miss how habits direct day-to-day experiences” (McCorquodale, 2015, p. 231).
- “The pursuit of certainty, dichotomization, overlearning or habitual responding, and premature cognitive commitments” (Burgoon & Langer, 1995, p. 110).
- “People...passively responding to cues in the environment rather than actively making choices” (Langer, 2014, pp. xiii - xiv).
- People’s tendency to “cling to... rules and the categories we construct from them,” resulting from “practice, and a more subtle and powerful effect that psychologists call premature cognitive commitment” (Langer, 2014, p. 21).

Definitions of Mindfulness

- “Mindfulness refers to active and fluid information processing, sensitivity to context and multiple perspectives, and ability to draw novel distinctions” (Burgoon, Berger and Waldron, 2000, p. 106).
- Mindfulness is the “act of unbiased, openhearted, equanimous experience of perceptible events and processes as they unfold from moment to moment” (Grossman, 2015, p. 18).
- Grossman (2015) explains the benefit of this definition compared to others: “This definition alters the prominence of primarily attentional phenomena for mindfulness in the direction of an act whereby attention and a particular set of attitudes coalesce to achieve a special state called mindfulness” (p. 18).
Ellen Langer (Pop!Tech, 2013)


Automaticity (Stress → React)

“‘We often encounter stimuli, appraise them unconsciously, feel stressed as a result, and react instinctively’ (Huston, 2010, p. 34).

Discuss:
- Share some examples of where you have personally encountered this phenomenon in your personal or professional life.
- Did you reflect on the scenario later and regret the reaction?
- What are the possible dangers of automaticity?
- Share with the larger group.
Mindfulness (Stress + Awareness → Respond)

- “Inserting mindfulness into the middle of that process helps us recognize how we interpreted that stimuli, which enables us to choose a conscious response to it” (Huston, 2010, p. 34)

Discuss:
- Share some examples of where you have personally encountered this phenomenon in your personal or professional life.
- How did these scenarios differ from the “mindless” ones?
- What are the possible benefits of mindfulness?
- How can you begin to practice being mindful? Discuss some strategies.
- Share with the larger group.

Mindfulness in Communication

- Martin Buber (1878 – 1965)
  - Dialogic Theory
  - Buber saw dialogue as “mutuality in conversation that creates the Between, through which we help each other to be more human” (Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2015, p. 77).
- Griffin et al. (2015) define mindfulness in the dialogic context simply as “the presence or awareness of what participants are making in the midst of their own conversation” (p. 75).

(www.thefamouspeople.com, 2015)
Where does mindfulness play in dialogue?

- What are the communication acts that demonstrate mindfulness?
  - Discuss as a group.
  - Collect as many examples as possible.
  - Share your list with the broader group.

- How can we incorporate mindfulness into our communication patterns in an effort to decrease automaticity in communication? (We will never eliminate automaticity.)
  - Discuss as a group.
  - Collect as many examples as possible.
  - Share your list with the broader group.

References

Appendix E

Syllabus for Module Two: Elements of Mindfulness Practice

Required Readings First Half of Module Two (Week Three)


Week Three in Eight Week Course


**Discuss.** Identify, research, and discuss the possible effects of mindfulness practice in a situational context of personal interest. Leverage the readings from week three your own self-study to inform the discussion.

**Write.** Augment the personal daily mindfulness/mindlessness journal to include the perspectives gained by practice. In the journal thoughtfully reflect upon incorporating mindfulness practice into your daily routine. A simple paragraph or two should suffice. Reflect on the following questions.

- Is it difficult to develop the practice of mindfulness? What do you notice at first?
• How does the difficulty change with practice? Does the practice get easier? Or harder?
• How do you feel immediately following the mindfulness practice?
• Do you notice any change in interpersonal exchanges after adding mindfulness practice to your daily routine? How?

**Required Readings Second Half of Module Two (Week Four)**


**Week Four in Eight Week Course**

**Read.** Read the first five chapters of *The Charisma Myth* by Cabane (2013) and view her website, video, and associated workbook at www.foxcabane.com and www.foxcabane.com/book/exercises/.

**Discuss.** In your groups discuss the elements of a personal one month commitment plan to the practice of mindfulness. Like exercise or any other good habit, mindfulness takes planning and commitment. Each group member should identify the time of day that they will practice, where they will practice, how long they will practice, and the specific form of practice they are committed to. Each group member should identify an accountability partner. The intention of the accountability partner is to have a weekly discussion of the evolution of one another’s practice. At the end of the group dialogue time will be allotted for each of you to author a personal thirty-day commitment plan, schedule the mindfulness practice, and schedule the weekly accountability meetings.

**Write.** Continue the augmented personal daily mindfulness/mindlessness journal. Submit your thirty-day action plan and the associated accountability meetings. The instructor will schedule a quick action plan progress review with each of you near the end of the course.
Appendix F

Instructional Power Point Presentation: Module Two

Elements of Mindfulness Practice
Module Two

Mindfulness Qualities
(Shapiro & Schwartz, 2000)

- Nonjudging
- Nonstriving
- Acceptance
- Patience
- Trust
- Openness
- Letting Go
- Gentleness
- Generosity
- Empathy
- Gratitude
- Lovingkindness

(Huston, 2010, p. 89; Shapiro & Schwartz, 2000, p. 129)
Possible Benefits of Mindfulness

- Personal Health
- Personal Happiness
- Cultivation of Compassion
- Alleviate Suffering
- Increase Focus
- Lower Blood Pressure
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Regulation
- Care of the Other
- Listening Skills
- Creative Problem Solving

- Loving Attitudes
- Empathy
- Relational Health
- Stress Reduction
- Reduced Rumination
- Focus
- Increased Working Memory
- Cognitive Flexibility
- Quality of Life
- Attitudinal Awareness

(Davis & Hayes, 2011; Langer, 2014; McCorquodale, 2015; Shapiro & Schwartz, 2000)

Mindfulness Guide – Scott Cameron
TedEx ABQ ED (Cameron, 2015)

https://youtu.be/FK_ozfARfO (Cameron, 2015)
Presence (Cabane, 2015)

- “Here are a few techniques for remaining present, adapted from mindfulness disciplines. All you need is a reasonably quiet place where you can close your eyes for one minute...” (Cabane, 2015, p. 15).
- Set a timer for one minute. Close your eyes and try to focus on one of three things:
  - 1. Sounds: Scan your environment for sound. Imagine your ears are satellite dishes, passively registering sounds.
  - 2. Your breath: Focus on your breath and the sensations it creates in your nostrils or stomach as it goes in and out.
  - 3. Your toes: Focus your attention on the sensations in your toes.

Exercises also available at http://foxcabane.com/book/exercises/

Responsibility Transfer (Cabane, 2015)

- “The next time you feel yourself considering alternative outcomes to a situation, pay close attention. If your brain is going around in circles, obsessing about possible outcomes, try a responsibility transfer to alleviate some the the anxiety” (Cabane, 2015, p. 35).
  - Sit comfortably or lie down, relax, and close your eyes.
  - Take two or three deep breaths. As you inhale, imagine drawing clean air toward the top of your head. As you exhale, let it whoosh out, washing all your worries away.
  - Imagine lifting the weight of everything you’re concerned about off your shoulders and placing it in the hands of whichever benevolent entity you’d like to put in charge.
  - “Now that everything is taken care of, you can sit back, relax, and enjoy whatever good you can find along the way” (www.foxcabane.com)

Exercises also available at http://foxcabane.com/book/exercises/
Metta (Cabane, 2015)

- “Metta is millennia-old Buddhist compassion and self-compassion practice that roughly translates as “loving kindness” (Cabane, 2015, pp. 87-88).
- Sit comfortably, close your eyes, and take two or three deep breaths, letting them wash all your worries away.
- Think of any occasion in your life when you performed a good deed, however great or small.
- Now think of a being—present, past, mythical, or actual; person, pet, or even stuffed animal—that you can imagine having warm affection for you.
- Picture this being in your mind, and see their warmth, kindness, and compassion.
- Imagine their affection and let it envelop you.
- Feel them give you complete forgiveness for everything your inner critic says isn’t good enough about you or your life.
- Feel them giving you complete acceptance as you are right now, with all your imperfections, at this stage of your progression.

Exercises also available at http://foxcabane.com/book/exercises/

Group Exercise
(Mindfulness Commitment)

- Break into small groups.
- Discuss the elements of a personal one month commitment plan to the practice of mindfulness. (15 mins)
- Identify:
  - Time of day to practice.
  - Where to practice.
  - Identify specific form of mindfulness practice to commit to.
  - Accountability partner.
- Author and submit your personal commitment plan, schedule mindfulness practice, schedule weekly accountability meetings. (15 mins)
- Instructor will schedule a check-in near the end of the course.
References

Appendix G

Syllabus for Module Three: Conversational Planning

Required Readings First Half of Module Three (Week Five)


Week Five in Eight Week Course

**Read.** Read Langer’s (1978) piece along with Motley’s (1986) journal article.

**View.** Watch the film *12 Angry Men* (Fonda & Lumet, 1957).

**Discuss.** Each class during this module, save the first, will include some sharing of conversational planning awareness from willing participants. Review your journaling and please be prepared to share. Also consider incorporating conversational planning into the weekly accountably partner meetings scheduled in module two.

**Write.** During this module, building upon the journaling from the first two modules, please add conversational planning to the journaling. Are you aware when you are building conversational plans? How can you incorporate elements from the readings from this module into these plans? What tend to be the primary goals when you bring awareness to the moment of planning? Is there an opportunity to shift those goals to something else? Do you notice that the planning surrounds more novel or more material future conversations? This journaling will continue throughout the module.
Required Readings Second Half of Module Three (Week Six)


Week Six in Eight Week Course


**Discuss.** In small groups, please document examples of automaticity and the lack of conversational plans in *12 Angry Men* (Fonda & Lumet, 1957). Conversely, from the movie, document examples of mindful communication planning. In your groups discuss the consequences of each. Please write down, in two columns, the results from the brain storm. Please select a group member to share your group’s collective findings.

**Write.** Drawing from personal experience, identify a movie or television show which represents good examples of thoughtful conversational planning. Post your findings to the discussion board leveraging concepts from the module and self-study. This post should be two to three well-structured paragraphs. Thoughtfully respond to two of your peers. Engage in this effort as you would an in-person exchange.
Appendix H

Instructional Power Point Presentation: Module Three

Conversational Planning
Module Three

Role of Thought in Interpersonal Communication (Langer, 1978)

- "Much psychological research relies on a theoretical model that depicts the individual as one who is cognitively aware most of the time, and who consciously, constantly, and systematically applies ‘rules’ to incoming information about the environment in order to formulate interpretations and courses of action” (Langer, 1978, p. 35).

- "Perhaps a more efficacious strategy is one that assumes that by the time a person reaches adulthood, (s)he has achieved a state of ‘ignorance’ whereby virtually all behavior may be performed without awareness and tends more often than not to be performed in this manner unless special circumstances are invoked. That is, unless forced to engage in conscious thought, one prefers the mode of interacting with one’s environment in a state of relative mindlessness, at least with regard to the situation at hand” (Langer, 1978, p. 40).
### Intentional vs. Unintentional Communication (Motley, 1986)

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“One characteristic of ‘communication competence’ is the intentional communicator’s ability to notice...those cases for which...require conscious processing of the intention” (Motley, 1986, p. 16).

### Pre-conversational Planning (Waldron, 1997)

- Waldron (1997) explains that a “body of literature demonstrates convincingly that the cognitive structures and processes developed by an individual from his or her previous social experiences facilitate the preparation and production of conversational messages” (pp. 195-196).
I-It versus I-Thou (Holba, 2008)

- “Martin Buber (1971) described I-It encounters occurring outside of the between because these encounters occur outside the fabric of pure human connectedness. In other words, I-It encounters fall somewhere outside of ideas that can connect one human being to another human being. These are superficial encounters” (Holba, 2008, p. 40).
- “I-Thou moments shift our consciousness from this world toward otherness. It is in these moments that we are fully acknowledged and we fully acknowledge the other” (Holba, 2008, p. 40).

Consider: Bringing mindfulness and intentionality to conversational planning to encourage I-Thou

(Holba, 2008)

12 Angry Men (Fonda & Lumet, 1957)

12 Angry Men  
(Fonda & Lumet, 1957)

- Break into small groups.
- Document examples of automaticity and the lack of conversational plans in 12 Angry Men (Fonda & Lumet, 1957).
- Conversely, from the movie, document examples of mindful communication planning.
- Discuss the consequences of each.
- Write down, in two columns, the results from the brainstorm.
- Select a group member to share your group’s collective findings.

References

Appendix I

Syllabus for Module Four: Mindful Communication Plans

Required Readings for Module Four (Weeks Seven and Eight)


**Week Seven and Eight in Eight Week Course**

**Read.** As mentioned in class, there is a lot of reading for this module. While the Baker-Ohler and Holba (2009), Baxter (2004) and Deetz and Simpson (2004) are considered the core texts, all texts were carefully chosen as they explore the other in a variety of contexts. It is expected that you read some of these materials prior to the beginning of this module.

**Discuss.** Please find a partner to work with. Each of you will write down a material interpersonal dyadic communication scenario, past or present, that you are willing to share with your partner for this exercise. Before sharing the scenario, please write you’re your personal goals, emotional triggers, and any appropriate cultural context for each example. Please share your scenarios with one another without sharing the personal goals, emotional triggers, and appropriate cultural context. Take turns guessing at one another’s personal goals, emotional triggers, and cultural context. A larger group dialogue around how difficult it is to guess will follow. Each of you will then practice some mindful other-focused conversational planning, followed by role playing each other’s scenarios while using your conversational plans. Please be prepared to share your experience with the broader group.

**Write.** In addition to adding other-centered mindfulness to the process of building communication plans to the daily journals, each student will author a final version of the personal intention statement. The statement should include each of the core concepts from the course; mindfulness, conversational planning and care of the other. Submit to the instructor.

All students please complete and submit the post-assessment survey.
Appendix J

Instructional Power Point Presentation: Module Four

Mindful Communication Plans
Module Four

(Waterson, 2015)
Post-Modern Moment  
(Baker-Ohler & Holba, 2009)

- “Due to the manifestations of postmodernity, which is marked by the loss of narrative background, routine cynicism, extreme individualism, and existential mistrust, people find it harder than ever to connect meaningfully with others” (Baker-Ohler & Holba, 2009, p. 4).
- “Routine cynicism invites and fosters existential mistrust” (Baker-Ohler & Holba, 2009, p. 10).
- “Individualism separates one from everything but oneself; everything leads back to oneself” (Baker-Ohler & Holba, 2009, p. 12).
- “Existential mistrust destroys our connections to each other, eclipses our interdependence, and finally prevents us from entering into genuine dialogue with each other” (Baker-Ohler & Holba, 2009, p. 16).

Importance of the Other  
(Deetz & Simpson, 2004)

- “Only through our encounter with radical difference does transformation become possible, as the taken-for-granted assumptions of dominant ideologies are made visible through juxtaposition with alternative understandings. If we encounter the other in this way, we not only challenge the status quo of existing systems, but also open the door to deeper self-awareness” (Deetz & Simpson, 2004, p. 145).
- “The otherness before us makes visible the one-sidedness and suppressed conflict in current perceptions and forces us to surrender those perceptions to the development of consensual thought as a new momentary resting place” (Deetz & Simpson, 2004, p. 147).
Listening as Embracing the Other (Gordon, 2011)

- Gordon’s (2011) interpretation of Buber’s “presence to other beings” is that “such presence, in my view, implies that one is ready to really listen to the other without dominating the conversation or hastily prejudging the other” (Gordon, 2011, p. 207).
- “The conception of listening as embracing the other presented” by Gordon (2011) “suggests that, for Buber, listening is much more about being present to the other than about displaying some proficiency or following a set of techniques” (Gordon, 2011, p. 218).

Can listening alone be an other-centered conversational plan?

Compassion and Dialogue (Frie, 2010, 2012)

- “We may feel compassion for those whom we love, but it is more challenging to be compassionate and understanding toward those who we do not know” (Frie, 2010, p. 464).
- “Compassion, in my view, demonstrates an attunement to, and awareness of our fundamental situatedness with the Other” (Frie, 2010, p. 464).
- “To enter into a mutually enriching dialogue requires a kind of ‘relational stance’ that is grounded in a willingness to engage the Other. This relational stance involves the dual processes of empathy and compassion” (Frie, 2012, p. 233).
- “When I feel compassion for the Other, my empathy is also of a different kind. It allows me to explore the experience of the Other in ways that a dispassionate stance may not” (Frie, 2012, p. 233).
References

Appendix K

Syllabus for Single Day Course

All participants will be asked to complete and submit the pre-assessment.

Module One: Foundations of Mindfulness in Communication (2 Hours)

Readings. Sections of the following texts will be drawn upon by the instructor.


Group exercise. As a group come up with a detailed verbal interpersonal exchange scenario. The scenario should not be novel in nature. Brainstorm in your group to establish a list of conversational goals for each party given the details of the scenario. Capture the goals by listing them in two separate columns. Then, as a group, brainstorm a list of risks associated with a mindless approach to your chosen scenario. For contrast, detail mindful strategies to mitigate these risks prior to entering the chosen dialogic scenario. What could each party do in advance to avoid a mindless exchange? Choose a spokesperson and a single strategy to share. Share the detailed scenario, along with the potential risks, followed by the strategy. Discuss each groups’ strategy and how well the strategy promotes a mindful exchange.

Key learnings. The key learnings for this section are the historical perspectives of mindfulness in communication, a definitional understanding of mindfulness, the dangers of automaticity, mindlessness as a vehicle for understanding mindfulness, and mindfulness as a conscious and intentional act.

Module Two: Elements of Mindfulness Practice (2 Hours)

Readings. Sections of the following texts will be drawn upon by the instructor.


**Group exercise.** A brief mindfulness exercise will be led by the instructor. The participants will then break into small groups and discuss the experience. How difficult was it to stay neutral and non-judging? How might someone develop this practice on their own?

**Key learnings.** The key learnings for this section are the different types of mindfulness practice, the benefits of mindfulness practice, and establishing some strategies for developing a personal mindfulness practice.

**Module Three: Conversational Planning**

**Readings.** Sections of the following texts will be drawn upon by the instructor.


**Group exercise.** Watch the knife argument from *12 Angry Men* (Fonda & Lumet, 1957). In small groups, please document examples of automaticity and the lack of conversational plans in the film clip. Also from the movie clip, document examples of mindful communication planning. In your groups discuss the consequences of each. Please write down, in two columns,
the results from the brain storm. Please select a group member to share your group’s collective findings.

**Key learnings.** The key learnings for this section are exploring; intentionality in communication, consciousness in interpersonal communication, and some possible models of conversational planning.

**Module Four: Mindful Communication Plans**

**Readings.** Sections of the following texts will be drawn upon by the instructor.


**Group exercise.** Please find a partner to work with. Each of you will write down a material interpersonal dyadic communication scenario, past or present, that you are willing to share with your partner for this exercise. Before sharing the scenario, please write you’re your personal goals, emotional triggers, and any appropriate cultural context for each example. Please share your scenarios with one another without sharing the personal goals, emotional triggers, and appropriate cultural context. Take turns guessing at one another’s personal goals, emotional triggers, and cultural context. A larger group dialogue around how difficult it is to guess will follow. Each of you will then practice some mindful other-focused conversational planning, followed by role playing each other’s scenarios while using your conversational plans. Please be prepared to share your experience with the broader group.
Key learnings. The key learnings for this section are; extended dialogic communication theory, care of the other (otherness or othering), and the establishment of mindful and other centered communication plans.

Conclusion

Each participant will be asked to author a personal mindfulness in communication planning intention statement. Those willing will share their statements. All participants will be asked to complete and submit the post-assessment.