

Sabbatical Proposal

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1. Statement of Purpose

“Changing *you*, changes *them* and *us*.” This statement explains how I answer my Interpersonal Communication students who say to me during the first week of classes, “Well, I’m a good communicator; it’s my partner who isn’t.” After a chuckle from the class, I give a very simple explanation: Although we like to believe that it’s “all their fault,” communication is a transactional process and happens *between* persons. Interpersonal Communication literally translates as communication between (inter) persons (personal). Thus, I tell the students, that if you change your behaviors, you change theirs.

This story exemplifies the power of communication and has become a motto for my teaching here at Oxnard College. My experience over the last nine years has been extraordinary. This is my home. In this place I thrive and discover. It is the place that reinvigorates my passion for teaching, learning, and students each and every day. I begin with this motto because for my one semester sabbatical during the Spring of 2014, I will in fact, “practice what I preach.” I plan to change my behaviors to enhance my own classroom dynamics, other instructors’ classroom dynamics, the campus at-large, and the community overall. My proposal is three-fold.

Part One: COMMUNICATION THEORY

It begins with a focus on Communication Theory. I intend to improve my in-depth currency in the field of Communication Studies. I will attend and be actively involved in my regional conference (Western States Communication Association: WSCA) which is the regional arm of the National Communication Association (NCA). I plan to sit on WSCA committees and hold office for the community college interest group.

While I am current in the field, I would like to take the opportunity of this sabbatical leave to do more in-depth analysis into the new directions in theory and research. I need to read the most prominent communication journals such as *Southern Communication Journal*, *Western Journal of Communication*, *Communication Quarterly*, *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, and *Communication Studies*. I also plan

to use my sabbatical to scan curriculum of other community colleges and 4-year universities and read primary sources. For example, I want to do in-depth research to learn more about how scholars in the field are responding to technological communication (i.e. teaching online) and I want to understand exactly how social media affects personal relationships. Today Communication Studies is one of the most sought after majors in the United States. Thus, remaining current is even more critical today. I have spent several years doing the business of the college and building my department, leaving me less time for active engagement with the theory. This sabbatical will give me a chance to engage the material without distraction.

Part Two: LEARNING FROM MASTER TEACHERS

In addition to studying the theory, I will watch, study, and learn from “Master Teachers” in my field of study. I have been asked by the President of WSCA (my regional professional association) to serve on “The Distinguished Master Teacher Award Committee.” My sabbatical would give me an opportunity to serve. This committee calls for me to study several of the master teachers in all western states in the field and choose one to be honored. Each year the association honors a different master teacher.

I plan to visit the classrooms of seven Master Teachers to watch how they teach and what they teach. Here you see the connection between part one and two: I am improving as an instructor while engaging the current theory. I plan to visit community college classrooms and 4-year universities in California. A few campuses I hope to visit are CSUCI, UCLA, USC, Bakersfield College, Ohlone College, and Cypress College. I also hope to visit colleges outside California if it is financially possible at the time. I hope to visit Colorado Mountain College-Leadville and Colorado State University. To determine who I will study, I will use the WSCA Master Teacher honorees and those Masters who have published and are prominent members in the field. Each visit will include an evaluation and analysis of their teaching as well as a discussion with each faculty member. I am essentially researching master teachers to improve my own teaching, but my research will also be imperative for part three of this proposal.

Part Three. CREATE MODULE FOR OXNARD COLLEGE

For our Oxnard College FLEX week, I will write a “Teach the Teachers” Module that will enhance professors’ productivity in the classroom by engaging their public speaking skills and their communication behaviors overall. This module will be designed for instructors, but can also be expanded at a later time to be used campus-wide for improving the communication in meetings as well as between instructors and administrators. It is not a secret that there are communication problems on our campus. We are not the only college campus with these problems, however, we can be innovative and change our behaviors. This module brings all three parts of this proposal together: I will use all of the research collected in communication theory (part one) and will include all of the lessons and strategies of the master teachers (part two) when developing this campus workshop. In the end, I can lead this workshop during FLEX week for Fall 2014. If it is successful, this workshop could become a permanent staple during FLEX week each and every year or throughout the semester.

2. Rationale

a. Professional Development

This sabbatical will allow me crucial time and engagement with communication theory to improve my success in the classroom. I will acquire more current, in-depth knowledge on subjects such as hybrid and online teaching and I will better understand the impact social media has on our communication behaviors in relationships. I will also become a more dynamic and active instructor studying how master teachers handle their classroom dynamics.

b. Value to Department or Discipline

This sabbatical project is absolutely fundamental to my discipline, but also to the Letters department overall. What I learn from the Master teachers can easily be shared with my colleagues, and the module I write and facilitate will provide a hands-on opportunity for my colleagues to reap the benefits of my project. They can actually attend and participate in the workshop and therefore, become aware of, and sharpen, their public speaking in the classroom. Thus, this offers concrete value to my department overall.

c. Value to College and/or District

Many Oxnard College instructors are already very successful communicators and public speakers, however, we can always do better. What are these master teachers doing in their classrooms? What can we learn about ourselves to better serve our students? Teachers love to talk about teaching. Teachers also understand the importance of constant assessment, renewal, and improvement. Most teachers are left to their own devices; however, it has been proven that when teachers work with other teachers, they improve much more rapidly. The workshop created on my sabbatical will provide a concrete reward for all of the Oxnard College instructors who are in pursuit of teaching excellence.

d. Value to Students

I am the only full-time instructor for communication on our campus. I, therefore, become the communication department when students need someone to turn to. I have counseled many students on personal and academic affairs. This sabbatical will specifically help me understand how communication is taught online and how, and if, the students benefit from taking communication courses online. Also, several of my students transfer to 4-year universities and will be better prepared to succeed if I am more current.

Further, students will have more prepared Oxnard College instructors since instructors will be participating in my FLEX workshop. Finally, students will have up-to-date information on how social media and other communication theories affect their daily lives both on and off campus. This sabbatical will help me help the students the most overall. When I am a more knowledgeable teacher, my students' retention and success will ultimately improve.

e. Value to Community

A well-functioning community college with good communication is a plus to any community. But it is even more important here in Oxnard. We witnessed the power of public speaking and communication when OC students were working hard to save their programs on our campus last year. As a campus, we watched the students care, organize, and participate. We watched the communication process in action. We watched people "change their behaviors" and therefore make changes to them and us. My sabbatical will be a time for me to revisit and renew, helping the college and the students overall. Better

communication among students, faculty, and staff reflects positively in the community, and in turn, helps build a more positive image of the Oxnard community at large.

3. Implementation:

a. Implementation Procedure

January:

1. Begin in-depth analysis of multiple communication theories
 - a. Read *Communication Quarterly* articles
 - b. Choose two communication theories such as Coordinated Management of Meaning and Social Exchange Theory to study
 - c. Begin analyzing online communication courses at other community colleges such as Pierce College.
2. Create Master Teacher Evaluation Rubric
3. Begin coordinating Master Teacher visits
4. Begin developing FLEX module
5. Begin WSCA committee work
6. Begin WSCA program planning

February

1. Continue in-depth analysis of multiple communication theories
 - a. Read *Western Journal of Communication* articles
 - b. Choose two other communication theories such as Muted Group Theory and Groupthink to study
 - c. Finish analyzing online communication courses at other community colleges
2. Work closely with WSCA Master Teacher committee to select master teacher honoree for 2014
3. Attend WSCA conference in Anaheim, CA
4. Visit two Master Teachers classrooms and write reports and analyze my findings
5. Continue developing the FLEX module

March

1. Continue in-depth analysis of multiple communication theories
 - a. Read *Southern Communication Journal* articles
 - b. Choose two other communication theories such as Standpoint Theory and Uncertainty Reduction Theory to study
 - c. Begin analyzing the effects of social media on personal relationships
2. Visit two more Master Teacher classrooms and write reports and analyze my findings
3. Continue developing the FLEX module

April

1. Continue in-depth analysis of multiple communication theories
 - a. Read *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication* articles
 - b. Choose two other communication theories such as Relational Dialectics Theory and Systems Theory to study
 - c. Finish analyzing the effects of social media on personal relationships
2. Visit two more Master Teacher classrooms and write reports and analyze my findings
3. Continue developing the FLEX module

May

1. Finish in-depth analysis of multiple communication theories and compile all of the research and analysis of the past four months and evaluate the findings.
2. Visit one final Master Teacher classroom and write a report and analyze my findings
3. Write a report on my experience of visiting master teachers and publish this article or present findings at a communication conference to help other faculty in the field and in other fields
4. Finish FLEX module
5. Schedule the FLEX “Teach the Teachers” workshop with the OC Professional Development committee and EVP
6. Revamp lesson plans for Fall 2014 to reflect on what I have learned from the Master Teachers

b. Projected Results

At the end of the period of my sabbatical leave I will have achieved the following:

1. I will have conducted an in-depth study of communication theory
2. I will have read multiple journal articles from various journals
3. I will have explored approximately 8-10 communication theories in depth
4. I will understand prominent subjects in the field such as communication classes online and how social media affects personal relationships
5. I will have conducted an in-depth study of several master teachers in the field
6. I will have a better understanding of how public speaking enhances learning for students in the classroom
7. I will have enhanced knowledge of best teaching strategies

8. I will have produced a brand new teaching tool in the form of a FLEX workshop “Teach the Teachers” for all OC instructors

c. Dissemination Plan: Benefit to Colleagues/Students/College

I will offer the workshop I wrote during my sabbatical during FLEX week for Fall 2014 and I will advertise for this workshop near the end of the summer of 2014. I will explain what the module includes and try to persuade all instructors to attend. I will also share my findings with my department during our first department meeting and will answer any questions during our first Letters meeting for Fall 2014.

4. Past Contributions to the District

a. Scholarship

Much of my scholarship has been on behalf of Oxnard College at the Regional Communication association WSCA. A sample list of scholarship follows by date and location. I have many more pieces of scholarship to showcase if needed.

2012 in Albuquerque, New Mexico

Chair of Community College Interest Group: 12 theoretical panels organized and facilitated.

2011 in Monterey, California

Vice-Chair of Community College Interest Group

Assistant Program Planner

Chair of four different panels around theme G.I.F.T.S (Great Idea for Teaching Students)

Presenter on Theory of Performance Studies panel

2010 in Anchorage, Alaska

Vice-Chair of the Community College Interest Group

Panel Participant: *“Creating Community from one community college in the next: Profiling current issues on our campus”* :

2009 in Phoenix, Arizona

Panel Participant: *Baby Boomers, Gen Xer’s, and Gen Yer’s:*

Integrating the generations in the classroom is its own mixed metaphor

Panel Participant: *The “Crack Cocaine of College Life”: Students, Popular Technologies & the Ideological Conditions for a New Culture*

2005 in San Francisco, California

Chair of panel: *Theory in the Community College Classroom*

Presenter in panel: *Gender and the Classroom*

2004 in Albuquerque, New Mexico
Roundtable Panel Participant: *Strategies for Dealing with Hard Times in Community Colleges*

2003 in Salt Lake City, Utah
Original Performance Piece: *Memories of When It Still Mattered*

b. Service

1) Department/Discipline

For the last nine years I have been working very hard to develop and grow my program here on campus. When I arrived there were only a few COMM 101 classes offered. They were actually still called SPEECH 101, but I have since changed our name and brought the discipline into the 21st century. We now have a complete Communication Studies program with an AA-T. I have written all of the curriculum and have done all of the program business as lead faculty. All of the Communication Studies SLOs are updated, assessed, complete, and up- to-date in eLumen.

I also created the speech tournament in my third semester on campus and have held this tournament twice a year for eight years. I have also been very involved in campus committees. I have sat on the Academic Senate for several years and am currently the Academic Senate Secretary and have been for the last two years. I have participated on tenure committees, curriculum committee, hiring committees, and several others campus committees.

Further, I have attended and participated in WSCA for the last 12 years and have held positions voluntarily in order to make Oxnard College a prominent part of the conference. Even before we had travel funding, I was paying my own way to the conference to make sure I knew who and what was going on in the field. Thus, this sabbatical allows me an opportunity to continue to work at this high level. It will reinvigorate me to be the best instructor I can be and help me continue my role as an active faculty member and team player here at Oxnard College.

2) College

- Academic Senate Secretary 2011-2013
- Academic Senate Elections Committee Chair 2008-present
- Academic Senator 2008-2011
- Intercultural Grant Project with CSUCI

- Director of Theatre Showcase: *Life, Love, and Everything in Between*
- Theatre Club Advisor
- Speech Tournament twice a year
- Literature, Arts, and Lecture Series Director 2012
- Lighting Tech for the Ballet Folkloric show
- Performing Arts Advisory Committee
- Curriculum Committee
- Marketing Committee
- Letters Department Meetings
- Division Meetings when scheduled
- Students presentations for administrators on “Solving a Campus Problem”
- Sing National Anthem at all college events
- Graduation Singer 2011 and 2012

3) District

- Teaching in the district for 9 years
- Participate in all trainings and in-service activities as offered
- AFT and District Health Benefits Committee
- Literature, Arts, and Lecture Series Director 2012
- Part-Time Hiring Committees for VC and MC

4) Community

- Speech Tournament twice a year is open to the community
- Theatre Club Showcase Spring 2012 open to the community
- Literature, Arts, and Lecture Series Director 2012 open to the community
- 3rd Grade Camarillo Speech Tournament
- Oxnard College Intramural Speech Tournament includes Judges in Training from The Oxnard Boy’s and Girl’s Club
- Secured professional theatre facilitators to run Theatre Club workshops on a volunteer basis

5. Length of Service & Past Sabbaticals Awarded

I was hired at Oxnard College as full-time faculty in August 2004. This is my first request for a sabbatical leave.