Indirect Communication as a Teaching Method for Developing Transference and Capability in Taiwanese College Students

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Dedication

I have been wonderfully blessed to come across many who encouraged and prayed for me through this long journey. First, I want to thank my children; Sydney, Ryker, and Courtney, who started this journey with me while they were still in high school and who have gone on to graduate with their own college and master's degrees, proving that the family who studies together, stays together.

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Abstract

The capacity of a student to apply knowledge in new contexts involves the ability to transfer memorized knowledge to meaning, in real-world situations. However, there are conflicting views and an overall lack of research regarding how (the process) students in higher education, in Taiwan, transfer that knowledge. This is especially apparent in highly dynamic environments where knowledge is rapidly and continuously evolving, such as in the current technology arena and business industry. This research aims to explore indirect communication as a method for teachers to assist Taiwanese college students to transfer memorized facts, and thus develop capability in new contexts. Research has been done on related topics, particularly in the area of direct communication; however, the use of indirect communication, as a tool for transference, in higher education, remains largely unexplored. This paper will introduce the study by first discussing the background, trends, and current state, followed by an exploration of the literature surrounding Søren Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication, as it applies to education, as a method for Taiwanese students transfer to move from memorized facts, to developing capability.

Keywords: Indirect Communication, capability, Søren Kierkegaard, Taiwan higher education, knowledge transference

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview

The capacity of a student to apply knowledge in new contexts involves the ability to transfer memorized knowledge to meaning, in real-world situations; however, there are conflicting views and an overall lack of research regarding how (the process) students in higher education, in Taiwan, transfer that knowledge. This is especially apparent in highly dynamic environments where knowledge is rapidly and continuously evolving, such as the current technology arena and business industry. This research aims to explore indirect communication as a method for Western teachers to assist Taiwanese college students to transfer memorized facts, and thus develop capability in new contexts. Research has been done on related topics, particularly in the area of direct communication; however, the use of indirect communication, as a tool for transference, in higher education, remains largely unexplored. This chapter will introduce the study by first discussing the background, trends, and current state, followed by the statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study, and conclude with the research questions.

Background, Current State, and Trends

One of the main purposes of higher education is to prepare students to apply learned knowledge in new contexts and real-world situations. However, recent studies have shown that there is a disconnect between higher education and a students' workforce readiness (ahealliance.org, 2020). Work-readiness has been defined as "possession of the skills, knowledge, attitudes and understanding that will enable new graduates to make productive contributions to organizational objectives *soon after commencing employment*" (Mason et al., 2006, p. 2). Companies in major industries report that they are unable to grow or compete

because the students coming out of college are not able to apply the knowledge obtained in school with the capacity to perform specific tasks (penn-mar.org, 2022). A global talent research study surveyed more than 40,000 employers in 40 countries and revealed that four out of five employers report difficulty in finding qualified talent (Manpower Group, 2023; Myers, 2022). Within the global community, this problem has risen from 38% in 2015 to an all-time high of 77% in 2023 (Manpower Group; Myers; OECD.org, 2021; Verma et al., 2018), with skills shortage being the biggest threat to business disruption in the future (Conklin, 2022).

This problem is a global issue, with Asia-Pacific employers in areas such as Taiwan, Singapore, China, and Hong Kong, facing the highest talent shortages. With shrinking birth rates and the rise of early retirees, 90% of employers in Taiwan reported difficulty finding the qualified talent they need, representing the highest percentage within the global market (Manpower Group, 2023). Thus, a person must consider the problem of work-readiness, and what is meant by qualified talent, to examine the competencies that are required to mitigate this problem.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) has identified work-readiness as the ability to perform both hard and soft skills (naceweb.org, 2022). Hard skills can be defined as objective, quantifiable skills gained through training, school, or work experiences (Tankovic et al., 2021) and can be measured by the employee's ability to perform a specific task (penn-mar.org, 2022). For this reason, hard skills can, typically, be easily proven. For example, someone either knows how to write code or speak English, or they do not know how to write code or speak English (Girardin, 2022). In education, one would measure hard skills by a written exam, which could easily measure one's ability to do mathematical functions or grammar proficiency. Soft skills, however, are not easy to measure and can be more difficult to assess.

Soft skills are non-technical skills. They involve how one works and interacts with others, or *how* an employee completes a task (Kaplan, 2022; penn-mar.org, 2022). Other researchers describe soft skills as personal attributes that "improve the interaction of individuals" (Tankovic et al., 2021, p. 169), which permits them to deal effectively with the challenges of the work environment and everyday life (Hurrell, 2016; Tankovic et al.), allowing them to better understand their own actions (Singh & Jaykumar, 2019). Ranade et al. (2010) identified soft skills as a behavior that directs employees towards goals that will make them more effective at what they do (Ranade et al., 2010). Penn-mar.org (2022) states that soft skills include attributes such as thinking, behavior, and cognitive skills.

Even though most researchers agree that employers need both hard and soft skills, soft skills are regarded as more important to employers (ahealliance.org, 2020; Manpower Group, 2023; Myers, 2022; Verma et al., 2018; Tankovic et al., 2021; Singh & Jaykumar, 2019; Balcar, 2016; Succi & Canovi, 2020). According to Joanne Rosen, Chief Operations Officer at Write Choice Resumes, "Employers want to see how well [potential employees] work with people and can think beyond their learning" (Kaplan, 2022, p. 7). Former Harvard University President, Derek Bok, proposed that college students today are more inclined to value education for its ability to provide material success, which entails getting a good job, than for a love of learning. For these students, "useful skills matter more than ever" (Bok, 2006, p. 36). These include teaching skills that were previously thought to be skills one was either born with or had to learn for oneself--skills such as "capability in interpersonal relations, or the ability to communicate effectively across cultural boundaries, or techniques of mediation, negotiation, and leadership" (Bok, p. 36), in other words, soft skills.

Unlike hard skills, soft skills encompass a variety of different skills, are widely applicable, and not directly related to a particular task (Tankovic et al., 2021). Soft skills are a vital part of interpersonal and relationship-building skills, which are required for effective communication and collaboration (Dogara et al., 2020). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2021) has categorized the competencies needed for future employment as foundational skills such as "higher-level cognitive capabilities (problem-solving), interpersonal skills (communication), teamwork and negotiation, flexibility, learning skills, creativity, and entrepreneurship" (p. 14). A recent survey indicated that 89% of college graduates are not successful on the job due to a lack of soft skills (penn-mar.org, 2022), which, when added to the above categories, results in an additional need for soft skills such as social skills, adaptability, time-management, customer service, oral and written communication, leadership, transferability, and capability (Verma et al., 2018; ahealliance.org, 2020; penn-mar.org; Myers, 2022).

Manpower (2023) lists five soft skill categories that employers are looking for in higher education graduates: reliability and self-discipline, resilience and adaptability, reasoning and problem-solving, creativity and originality, and critical thinking and analysis. Tankovic et al. (2021) arranges these skills into five groups. First, communication skills, which includes listening, presenting, and both verbal and nonverbal communication skills. Second, interpersonal skills, which are comprised of skills such as cooperation, developing good relationships, and giving and receiving effective feedback. Third, emotional intelligence, which includes skills such as self-control, self-awareness, and self-motivation. Fourth, intrapersonal skills, which consists of empathy, assertiveness, and managing stress. And fifth, professionalism, which includes

knowledge of business etiquette, work ethic, time management, and the ability to resolve conflicts.

From among this large and varied group of soft skills, many researchers have stressed communication skills as one of the most important for graduating students (Tankovic, et al., 2021; Verma et al., 2018; Conklin, 2022; LeadershipIQ.com, 2022; Nusrat & Sultana, 2019; OECD.org, 2021; Succi & Canovi, 2020; Robles, 2012; Manpower Group, 2023). Youssef (2017) described communication skills as" the ability to share ideas, feelings, opinions, and information in a way that a common understanding of the message among all parties is ensured" (p. 90). Better social and communication skills are related to better job performance and employability, and individuals with greater communication skills tend to be chosen as leaders (Succi & Canovi, 2020). Employers are looking for employees and managers who not only work well with each other, but can collaborate on projects. One study published in the *Harvard Business Review,* found that time spent with managers and employees in collaborative activities has "ballooned by 50 percent or more over the last decade and that, at many companies, more than three-quarters of an employee's day is spent communicating with colleagues" (Duhigg, 2016, p. 2). Thus, communication tops the list as one of the most important skills needed for university and college graduates.

The importance of soft skills has been widely recognized, especially in the area of communication skills, and has become a prominent topic of research, especially in terms of a student's readiness for their future workplace. Despite the undeniable importance of communication skills (Robles, 2012), existing studies show that the preparedness of future employees remains insufficient (Castillo et al., 2021).

According to a *Leadership IQ* study (LeadershipIQ.com, 2022), 89% of new hire failures were a result of poor soft skills; not technical failures. New hires were more likely to fail because they lacked soft skills like coachability, emotional intelligence, and motivation, with only 11% of new hire failures resulting from a lack of technical competence (LeadershipIQ.com). A recent survey, conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), reported that nearly 86% of employers are seeking evidence of teamwork and problem-solving skills on the resumés of the students they are recruiting this year (naceweb.org, 2022). However, according to Singh and Jaykumar (2019), there is a serious gap between the demand for qualified entry-level employees and the available supply.

Regardless of the complaints of employers about the lack of work-ready skills, higher education institutions continue to insist that students need to master STEM subjects–science, technology, engineering, and math–because that is where the jobs are, but research shows that what students need to know and what they need to be able to do, are at odds. Surprisingly, this research comes from the company most identified with the STEM-approach: Google. Google recently conducted two studies on workplace success that contradict the conventional wisdom about hard skills. Originally, Google set its hiring algorithms to sort for technology savvy science students with top grades from elite science universities, only to discover, with its 2008 launch of Project Oxygen, that among the eight most important qualities of Google's top employers, STEM expertise came in last. The seven top characteristics of success at Google turned out to be all soft skills: team management, communication and listening, empathy for others, problem-solving, and being able to make connections across complex ideas. Hard skills, such as technology, engineering, or computer skills, ended up being the least important quality for work-readiness or qualified talent (Strauss, 2017).

In 2013, Google took a second look at their research to see if the qualities needed updating. The results were the same; however, two additional soft skills were added to the list, the ability to collaborate and make decisions (Harrell & Barbato, 2018). Following the success of Project Oxygen, where the analytics team studied their managers, Google researchers applied a similar method to discover the qualities of effective teams. Project Aristotle further supported the importance of soft skills, even in high-tech environments (Duhigg, 2016). Google studied its A-teams, made up of top scientists, each with specialized knowledge, and the ability to produce cutting-edge ideas. Remarkably, however, the data analysis revealed that the company's most important and productive new ideas came from its B-teams, which were comprised of average employees who were not superstars (Strauss, 2017). In addition to a corporations' need for qualified and skilled talent, venture capitalist Mark Cuban, the Shark Tank television personality, says, "He looks for philosophy majors when he is investing in sharks most likely to succeed" (Strauss, 2017, p. 2).

Even though research has shown the increasing need for soft skills, education systems pay limited attention to this topic and remain focused on the development of hard skills (Balcar, 2016; England et al., 2020; Daniels & Brooker, 2014). According to Harvard President Derek Bok (2006), most professors try to concern themselves only with provable knowledge--"statements that can be verified by empirical demonstration, mathematics, or logic" (p. 37). However, Bok discovered that students feel differently. In addition to preparing for work, many students are intensely interested in learning skills that relate to personal values such as moral reasoning, ethics and ethical behavior, and civic responsibility (Bok, 2006). According to a survey of more than 112,000 college students, two-thirds of all freshmen considered it "essential" or "very important" that colleges help students develop these personal values

(McDonald, 2005). Bok (2006) posited that at this stage in their lives, students are often seeking to determine their identities: "what they stand for, how they want to live their lives, what experiences hold the greatest meaning" (p. 38). Thus, learning soft skills, in addition to hard skills becomes an important issue for a student's future success.

Both recruiters and higher education faculty all agree that soft skills are a desirable quality; however, there are disparities in the perceived importance of which ones to teach and how to teach them. Many higher education faculty believe that passive lecturing can help students memorize rules and concepts and apply them to a limited range of problems similar to those covered in class, but they do little to equip students to apply their knowledge to new problems (Bok, 2006). A study conducted by Nusrat and Sultana (2019) indicated a gap between executives' expectations from graduates and the institutional teaching provided by higher education institutions. Moreover, the study suggested the need for further research for implementing training programs for attaining the most desired soft skills among higher education institutions (Nusrat & Sultana, 2019). According to Bok (2006), this can be accomplished by a process of active learning, challenging students' answers, and encouraging students to apply the information and concepts to a variety of new situations. Bok suggests that it is a university's job to help students achieve these soft skills by helping them communicate with greater precision, think more clearly, analyze more rigorously, become more ethically discerning, and more active in civic affairs. The absence of training in these skills at higher education institutions has resulted in what Bok terms "underachieving colleges" (p. 4)

The lack of these skills has had a direct impact on educational institutions around the world. In 2022, National Taiwan University was ranked number 113 in *The Times Higher Education World University Rankings*, but fell 74 spots, to number 187 for 2023. The rankings

are evaluated using more than 1,600 universities in 99 countries and were based on performance indicators focusing on teaching, research, and knowledge transfer (Strong, 2022). This is of great concern to Taiwan, where the education system is still based on memorization and rote learning (Di, 2017; Wang & Byram, 2011; Wegerif, 2014). The education method in Taiwan continues to emphasize hard skills in its curriculum, especially in the areas of math and science, leaving an absence in the education of soft skills. Even though the Taiwan Minister of Education stresses the need for Taiwan to move towards a more hands-on, learner-centered classroom, there is still a major emphasis on teaching to the test (Hallinger & Jiafang, 2013; Liu, 2006), which creates an inability for the students to develop soft skills. This inhibits the transfer of memorized information and knowledge to new contexts and real-world situations, which requires soft skill competencies, such as problem-solving skills, teamwork, and communication.

A study conducted by the Taiwan Ministry of Education in 2021 (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2021) reported that students entering college perform better in receptive skills than in productive skills, with an English proficiency of 27% in listening and reading, 20% in writing and a capability of only 8% in speaking. In addition, students encountered difficulty in the ability to dialogue and express their thoughts. To help remedy this problem, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan has implemented the Bilingual Nation 2030 Policy, which aims to utilize diverse learning methods and emphasize communication capabilities by connecting learning with real life situations to strengthen their global competitiveness and satisfy the demand for qualified talent (Taiwan Ministry of Education, 2021). Thus, the demand for soft skills and a student's ability to transfer those skills is a necessity in order to compete in the job market.

Verma et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of transferability as one of the competencies that is needed for work-readiness. According to a study conducted by the Stanford

Research Institute and Harvard University, 85% of a person's professional success is attributed to social skills, while only 15% is derived from technical knowledge (Youssef, 2017).

It has been suggested by the American Higher Education Alliance that universities could increase the value of a college degree if there was more hands-on training in the area of soft-skill basics such as communication and conflict resolution skills (ahealliance.org, 2020). Hung (2013) suggested that when the focus of teaching and learning is on abstract concepts and memorization, the way knowledge exhibits itself in real world situations or is used to solve real-life problems is often overlooked. This means that college graduates in Taiwan have added barriers to overcome if they are going to be successful in their future careers. A recent poll of university graduates in Taiwan, showed that 65.6% felt uncertain about the future, while 39.2% said their schools do not offer the education that would help them acquire skills that would be useful in the job market (Lin, 2022). "All this indicates that we have serious problems with our tertiary education system," stated Professor Huang, from the Kunhuei Education Foundation in Taiwan (Lin, p. 1).

All the mentioned soft skills are considered desirable by both corporate recruiters and college faculties; however, there are disparities as to the perceived importance of soft skills among faculties and recruiters and a gap was found between the business curriculum and the industry expectations from fresh-out of business school graduates. Nusrat and Sultana (2019) indicated that understanding the soft skills gap between executives' expectations from the graduates and the institutional teaching provided by higher education institutions (for business majors), would help practitioners reform their business curriculum to better ensure employability for their business graduates. Moreover, the study opened an avenue for further research in this field for the implementation of training programs for attaining the most desired soft skills among higher education institutions (Nusrat & Sultana, 2019). While research concludes that higher

education institutions should pay more attention to soft skills development, the method for how to go about developing those skills has not been researched (Balcar, 2016). Even though research supports the need for students to be able to transfer knowledge (hard skills) into meaning (soft skills), no study so far has examined the process by which a student accomplishes this task. Thus, this study attempts to fill this lacuna in the research by examining that process and the role of indirect communication to enhance the understanding of transference of knowledge to meaning from the perspective of the student.

Statement of the Problem

The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-life situations is one of the predictors of students' success in real-world situations; however, traditional teaching methods, such as lecture-based instruction, are often inefficient at boosting students' learning transferability (Wang et al., 2019). The ability, or inability, of individuals to transfer knowledge to meaning has been a topic of communication theorists for decades (Brau, 2018). This is especially prevalent in Asian countries where the education system is based on memorization of facts (He, Yuan, 2021; Di, 2017; Li & Wegerif, 2014).

Studies on indirect communication and transfer of learning have been advocated in Western countries; however, it is relatively new in the context of Chinese higher education. Li and Wegerif (2014) supported these views by explaining that Chinese students are generally described as rote learners who learn mechanically, often without meaningful understanding (Li & Wegerif, 2014). A recent study found that many students cannot apply their knowledge productively in new contexts to new tasks and situations (Butler et al., 2017). This is especially important to employers. The *World Economic Forum Report* indicated that 40% of all employees in companies will need to learn new skills in the next six months that will enable them to

perform in a different job within the company and that 94% of business leaders expect employees to acquire new skills on the job (World Economic Forum, 2020). These results indicate that what is essential for a professional is not only focused on what employees know, but on their ability to learn and adapt to changing situations, technologies, and processes (Castillo et al., 2021).

While numerous scholars have discussed the importance of a student's ability to transfer knowledge, none have approached the topic from the perspective of indirect communication, as a method for acquiring these skills. Frasier (2020) suggested that the primary purpose of indirect communication is to effect a fundamental change in the way of life of a viewer or hearer. In this way, indirect communication is concerned with transference of knowledge as it applies to conveyance of ability (Fraser). As Søren Kierkegaard saw it, "All communication of capability is indirect communication" (Kierkegaard, 1967-1978, p. 282 Vol 1).

Given the importance that knowledge transfer and capability may hold for future Asian university graduates, it is important to fill this gap by conducting a study on the use of indirect communication. By doing so, the present study can add to the literature on indirect communication as a method to help Asian college students move from memorized facts to meaning. The problem to be addressed is how Western teachers can use indirect communication as a method for college students at a large university in Taiwan to transfer memorized facts to meaning, and thus develop capability in new contexts and in real-world situations.

Purpose of the Study

Although this paper has discussed the problem of the lack of soft skills in higher education graduates, soft skills are not the focus of this paper. Rather, it is the result of a lack of education in the area of soft skills that needs addressing. The majority of higher-education

institutions in Taiwan favor the teaching of hard skills, which require the use of direct communication in the form of lecture and memorization as opposed to teaching soft skills, which requires a different educational focus. Preparing students to enter the workforce is the primary goal of education, therefore, the need for education in the area of soft skills is critical, especially as it relates to transferring knowledge into meaning. It is the emphasis on indirect communication as a method for transference of those skills into meaningful capability that was the focus of this research. The literature shows that methods other than direct communication, which is the focus of most schools in Taiwan, are needed in order to assist students in forming soft skill capabilities.

Most students entering college in Taiwan have been taught to memorize facts and vocabulary, but cannot use that information in new contexts or in speaking English in real-world situations. The purpose of this study was to explore how indirect communication can help students make the transfer from facts to meaning, and thus develop capability in new contexts and in real-world situations. The research objective was to explore the process a student goes through to transfer knowledge to meaning and the role indirect communication plays in that process.

Significance of the Study

This study adds to the current body of knowledge by contributing research on the use of indirect communication as a means of moving students from knowledge-based learning (memorization), to meaning, and ultimately to capability. According to the International Trade Commission on Taiwan Education, there is a growing interest in innovative approaches to learning (Chen, 2022). For Taiwan to reach its goal of being bilingual by 2030, new education models will include a more personalized learning environment, hands-on experiential learning,

situation and simulation learning, game-based learning, and AR/VA experience-type technologies (Chen, 2022), as indirect methods of instruction. The Taiwan Ministry of Education's 2021 study considers a student's ability to communicate in English, to effectively dialogue with others, and to connect learning with life to be "vital for raising the international competitiveness of Taiwan's workforce" (p. 2). In order to accomplish this, Taiwan is deploying advanced strategies and teaching models aimed at enhancing communication, capability, professional expertise, and an education in soft skills. In this, the significance of indirect learning as a communication model will be of value as Asian educators move toward solving the problem of rote-memorization and knowledge-only-based learning.

Currently, there is no research on using indirect communication as a tool for transference, or on the process a student goes through to transfer knowledge to meaning, and thus becoming able to develop capability in new contexts or in real-world situations. This study explored how indirect communication can be used as an educational tool.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study are:

RQ1: How can Western teachers use indirect communication as a method for Taiwanese college students to transfer memorized facts into meaning, and thus develop capability, that can be used in new contexts and in real-world situations?

RQ2: How does indirect communication affect a student's ability to transfer facts into capability so students can apply that knowledge in new contexts and real-world situations?

Summary

Employers and business owners are looking for students with the skills necessary to take learned knowledge, gained in higher education institutions, and apply that knowledge in new

contexts and in real-world situations; however, research indicates that these skills are lacking, causing a disconnect between what a student learns in college and that student's ability to perform specific tasks, which affects the student's workforce readiness. Many of these specific tasks revolve around a student's ability to perform soft skills. Most higher education institutions excel at teaching hard skills and continue to utilize lecture and memorization in the classroom, even though evidence points to alternative communication methods and models of teaching. This is important to Taiwan as there is a significant deficiency in the students' communication skills and ability to perform soft skills, which affects the graduating student's ability to compete in the global employment market. Chapter 2 will explore the literature surrounding Søren Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication as it applies to education and as a method for students to transfer memorized facts into meaning, and thus develop capability in new contexts.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

One of the main purposes of higher education is to prepare students to apply learned knowledge in new contexts and in real-world situations. However, recent studies have shown that there is a disconnect between a student's knowledge and his or her capability to perform upon graduation (Verma et al., 2018; Nusrat & Sultana, 2019; ahealliance.org, 2020). From a communication perspective, research suggests that time is spent on *what* is communicated as opposed to *how* it is communicated (Fraser, 2020). This chapter will begin with a discussion of the communication traditions, followed by a review of the literature surrounding Søren Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication, as it applies to transferability and capability through the eyes of Eastern and Western thought. The discussion will conclude with a review of the literature on learning theories and their relationship to indirect communication.

Communications

Before progressing further, it is worth visiting the field of communications to understand it as a field. It was not too long ago that 'communications' was not recognized as a field of study (Craig, 1999). Even after it was so recognized, it remained a field of disconnected and non-dialogical theories that simply did not recognize other theories (Craig, 1999; Ward, 2013). Craig attributed the largely incoherent condition of communications, as a field, to the originating sources of communications theory, being drawn from a wide variety of other fields of study, followed by the lack of discourse.

If the field of communications continues on its current trajectory, it seems that Craig (1999) will be seen by many as the father of the modern field of communications. Craig argued that the field of communications should not seek a unified theoretical frame, but rather be dialogical and dialectical (Craig, 1999). However, Craig was clear that there was a level of

interconnectivity between the different traditions. Craig also posited that the interconnectivity of these traditions in communication was, at its heart, meta-discursive in that it becomes the discourse about discourse (Cooren, 2012), and therein lies its coherence (Craig, 1999).

Traditions

As part of this treatise on communications as a field, Craig (1999) offered a frame of seven traditions within which the communications field could operate. Those seven traditions are identified and summarized below, along with a rationale for the tradition used in this study.

The Socio-psychological Tradition

The socio-psychological tradition sees communication as interpersonal interaction (Craig, 2022) and falls under the behavioral approach, which focuses on stimuli and reaction. According to Krauss and Fussell, (1996), social psychology is defined as the "study of the ways in which people affect, and are affected by, others" (p. 3). Socio-psychological theorists believe that the meaning of a communication resides in the individual; whereas, socio-cultural theorists believe that meaning arises from the interaction (LibreTexts, 2021). The socio-psychological tradition postulates that the meaning of communication resides within the mind of each individual. The objective is to understand how a person processes information.

Understanding the elements of persuasion and attitude change is a key aspect of the socio-psychological tradition and revolves around the central question of how to get people to change. The goal of the researcher is to discover what stimuli elicit what responses, which tends to be quite objective in nature. Communication in this tradition is theorized as expression, interaction, and influence, with the ability to analyze cause-and-effect relationships. For example, a person may be inclined to stop smoking if one saw an article or a graphic video showing what smoking does to the lungs. Thus, the essential element of this tradition is that

truths are revealed through systematic experimentation and observation in order to show cause and effect (Apuke, 2018).

The Cybernetic Tradition

The cybernetic tradition, also known as the control theory, relies on the process of communication first posited by Shannon and Weaver (1949). In this model there is an encoder, a sender of the message, a communication channel, a receiver, and a feedback process (Ward, 2013). In this model the sender sends a message to a receiver through channels (the five senses) with the goal of reducing as much noise as possible in order to send the message effectively and accurately (Kubota, 2019). A good example of 'noise' would be someone using a smart phone to make a telephone call and experiencing static, or a loss of signal, when driving through a tunnel, impeding feedback, with the receiver responding by saying, "Wait. I can't hear you. You're breaking up." Shannon and Weaver saw information as "the ability of a message to combat the chaos of noise" (Apuke, 2018, p. 23).

In the cybernetic tradition, inputs and information are gathered from the surrounding environment and responses are generated based on the message received. In this tradition, feedback is the key concept that makes effective communication possible within a system (Maguire, 2006). Here, the focus is on the system and the channels which are used to transmit the message. Cybernetics operates by following a sequence of events for reaching a goal and taking action, thus, communication in this tradition is always goal oriented (Grover, 2016).

When applied to classroom teaching, cybernetics can be used to improve efficiency and effectiveness by automating the system. According to Grover (2016), the teacher plays the role of the steers-man who "navigates through the ocean of problems and takes the learner to the

target agreed by the teacher and learner" (p. 51). This is accomplished in a conscious and systematic manner, with the goal of control and automation.

The Rhetorical Tradition

The key characteristic of the rhetorical tradition is the understanding that speech is a primary differentiator between man and animals. Rhetoric is also valuable as a means of influencing large groups of people, even to the point of subjugation. In this tradition, words matter when crafted correctly. Rhetoric is generally one-way communication, and is considered the domain of public speaking and public relations (Maguire, 2006). It examines the processes by which the speaker and the listener move toward each other and find common ground to go forward (LibreTexts, 2021). Jasinksi (2001) recognized rhetoric as, "not only helping to produce judgments about specific issues, it also helps to produce or constitute a social world" (p. 192).

The Critical Tradition

The critical tradition emphasizes discursive reflection and reflects on the ways that discourse creates dominant and marginalized voices, often revolving around restoring social justice (LibreTexts, 2021). This tradition emphasizes the control of language to regulate power imbalances and unjust discourse. Scholars of this tradition believe that the group who controls the language can actually be the dominant influence within a given society (Craig, 2022). Lynch (2019) suggested that there are several ways one can implement critical pedagogy into the classroom: one can challenge oneself to think critically, challenge social structures, change the classroom dynamic, present alternative views, change one's assessments, and encourage activism. Ultimately, the critical tradition links the reduction of dominion and violence and tries to support the evolution and development of humanity (Lynch, 2019).

The Socio-cultural Tradition

The socio-cultural perspective considers the way that different individuals interact with their social groups and how these social groups influence their development. Littlejohn et al. (2017), posited that the socio-cultural tradition addresses how one's understandings, meanings, norms, roles, and rules are worked out interactively; therefore, the formation of identities through interactions is essential in this tradition. In essence, culture is produced through dialogue. It is believed that individuals shape their identities through interaction as they move from situation to situation and from social group to social group. For socio-culturalists, the influence of culture on both communication and meaning cannot be underestimated (Littlejohn et al., 2017). Because this tradition focuses on cultural and social norms, communication is socially constructed and is shaped by the language people use to understand their world. For example, a wealthy individual will develop and understand the world differently than a poor individual.

This tradition also studies how communication assists the formation of small groups, and provides the impetus for them to grow. It is in this tradition, and in the semiotic tradition, that one catches a glimpse of what Craig (1999) alluded to when he suggested that the traditions were interconnected. This tradition both influences and is influenced by the semiotic tradition in that a word or symbol, with an alternate meaning, may become that meaning, with the original meaning becoming the alternate one. For example, the word "gay" once meant essentially "happy." At some point, that meaning was supplanted with a new meaning that now has become the main meaning in American society.

Unlike the socio-psychological tradition that focuses on individual characteristics, this tradition is more interested in patterns of interaction between people (Magut, 2016; Maguire, 2006). The focus is on the way meaning is created in interactions in real-life situations (Magut,

2016). It would follow that the researcher in this tradition would be seeking to understand and explain the various possible meanings of a subject in its natural setting (Magut). Unlike the other traditions, the socio-cultural focuses on how cultures influence "what we say; how we say it, and the interpretations we give to messages we receive" (Magut, 2016, p. 10), which ultimately shapes our worldview. People cannot ignore the influence of culture on what, why, where, and how people communicate.

The Phenomenological Tradition

The phenomenological tradition focuses on dialogue, reflexivity, and mental models rooted in personal experience. In other words, a person's experience is their own subjective truth, and authentic relationships are established through the direct experience of others (Maguire, 2006). This implies that two people cannot have the same exact experience. In this view, one comes to know the world by "directly and consciously engaging in it, pondering its meaning for oneself, and interpreting that meaning through language" (LibreTexts, 2021, p. 5). The aim of phenomenology is focused on finding new meanings and explanations for things through real-life experience (Selvi, 2008). As students focus on inner experiences and perceptions related to a topic, they create new knowledge. According to Louchakova (2005), phenomenological research is a "transformative educational practice" (p. 108).

The phenomenological approach focuses on an individual's first-hand experience rather than the abstract experiences of others (Selvi, 2008). Dialogue is an important aspect of this tradition. Through dialogue with others, one opens up oneself to the experience of others and can integrate that experience into one's own life. The goal of the phenomenological approach in education is to create the motivation, desire and awareness to learn about others, inspiring self-searching, self-experiences, and new learning experiences (Selvi, 2008). In this way, students

become aware of the importance of creating knowledge based on their own experiences. Moustakas (1994) stated, “The most crucial learning comes from immersions and self-dialogues and from transcendental places of imagination and reflection” (p. 41). Students describe their experience, consider possible meanings, and understand the essence of their experiences, through observations and direct perceptions. Meaning is derived by directly experiencing a particular phenomenon. When combined with dialogue, this tradition provides a richness that has value; however, one’s truth is still based on one’s experience.

The Semiotic Tradition

It is within the Semiotic tradition that indirect communication finds its home. The semiotic tradition is about the discovery of “how meaning is created, not what it is” (Natsir, 2016, p. 2). The process of that discovery depends upon the idea that it is not just in the words that meaning exists, but also, that the words and/or combinations of words themselves may be hiding meaning that needs to be uncovered (Craig, 1999). Oftentimes, it is not the meaning of the words themselves that matters, such meaning being rather arbitrary, but the meaning that exists in the intent of the communicator (Maguire, 2006). Nordquist (2020) suggested that semiotics is the process by which one person intends to stimulate meaning in the mind of another.

In the semiotic tradition, communication is seen as a process of sharing meaning through signs, which can be both verbal and non-verbal (Maguire, 2006). There are two concepts that are crucial to this tradition: sign and symbol. Signs refer to something that actually exists, such as a stop light or a stop sign. Symbols are arbitrary and allow an individual to form concepts and assign meaning to them, such as emojis that are included as part of a text message (Nordquist, 2020). Saussure (1983) defined a sign as any motion, gesture, image, pattern, or event that

conveys meaning, which, according to Apuke (2018), could be intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect, and can be in the form of puns, analogy, allegory, metaphor, or symbolism.

Craig (2022) suggested that meaning comes from the relationship between the object, the person, and the sign. Thus, meaning does not reside in the words, but in people. The meaning the recipient derives from the sign is subjective and resides in the thoughts and associations that a person links to the sign, causing it to have meaning for that person. It is the different thoughts that people have about something, that permit meaning to be shared.

Within the realm of education, Sebeok et al. (1988), considered semiotics an important part of teaching, arguing that semiotics "examines fundamental and highly abstract concepts that are at the basis of education, namely, mind, learning, and information" (p. 1). Sebeok et al. also stated that semiotics has provided a new perspective on pedagogy through the "broadening of interest beyond the verbal into the nonverbal" (p. 2). Postman (1993) suggested that every school should offer a course in semantics, as it is the process by which people make meaning. He stated, "English teachers claim to be concerned with teaching reading and writing, but if they do not teach anything about the relationship of language to reality, I cannot imagine how they expect students to improve, since it is not possible to separate language from what we call knowledge" (Postman, p. 194). He goes on to emphasize the importance of semiotics as it deals with the processes by which we make and interpret meaning. Postman (1993) argues that the use of semiotics:

> Has great potential to affect the deepest levels of student intelligence. Such subjects have the capability of generating critical thought and of giving students access to questions that get to the heart of the matter. It teaches them to discover the underlying assumptions of what they are told. The study of semantics insists upon these questions. (p. 195)

Natsir (2016) suggested that in the language classroom; the primary role of the language learner is to "transfer and exchange correct information with his/her audience" (p. 2). While doing this, the learner makes use of semiotic signs, many of which are nonverbal. This communicative method can be used when utilizing forms of indirect communication such as task-based activities that engage students in authentic and real-world situations. These social interaction activities include dialogue, pair and group work, discussions, role plays, and conversation. In this respect, the use of activity-cards, pictures, videos, graphics, advertisements, and their symbols can be used as semiotic elements in the class (Natsir, 2016). According to Jacobson (1974), the role of semiotics is to provide "the communication of any messages whatever" (p. 32), or for Sebeok (1985) "the exchange of any messages whatever and the system of signs which underlie them" (p. 1). In other words, the process of sharing meaning, through both verbal and nonverbal language, is the primary concern of semiotics.

Rationale for Tradition Selection

In determining which tradition would be the best fit for this study, each of the traditions was examined in light of its importance to communication and education. Even though there are several traditions that could fit within the paradigms of this study, the focus of this research is on how indirect communication moves a student from knowledge, to meaning, to capability. The tradition that was chosen was based on the exploration of indirect communication as a method for transference.

The topic for this research is situated in the semiotic tradition since it deals specifically with indirect communication; however, the mentality and the culture of the subjects of the study must also be considered. The subjects of this study were students who were oriented in the socio-cultural tradition; and taught in the method of direct communication, in the form of rote memorization and one-way communication. Therein, lies part of the problem. The difficulty rests

in how the students' socio-cultural tradition, as part of their education, has affected their ability to create meaning and thus move to capability. The socio-cultural tradition it is part of the students' background and orientation; however, the sociocultural tradition is not part of this study as it focuses on how individuals interact within their social groups and through interactions with others. This does not fit with the study of indirect communication as a method for moving individuals to capability.

The socio-psychological tradition sees communication as interpersonal interaction, with the objective to understand how people process information. Persuasion and attitude change are key elements in this tradition, with the goal of the researcher being to discover what stimuli will elicit change. Though this tradition could fit this research, as it studies the ways in which people are affected by others, it falls under the behavioral model, which is based on experimentation and observation, normally a quantitative approach. Thus, the socio-psychological tradition is not the focus of this study, as the research is being conducted using a constructivist approach to communication and learning.

Neither the rhetorical tradition nor the critical tradition fits the purpose of this study. The rhetorical tradition is based on one-way communication and is considered the domain of public speaking, while the critical tradition is based on discursive reflection to regulate power imbalances and unjust discourse. The cybernetic tradition focuses on the system and channels that are used to transmit a message and operates by following a sequence of events for reaching a goal and taking action. The goal of cybernetics is to improve efficiency and effectiveness by automating the system, with a focus on effective feedback. The focus of this study was on indirect communication as it applies to meaning and capability and not on rhetoric or critical discourse. The cybernetics tradition could fit this study as indirect communication requires

effective feedback from the teacher to the student and vice-versa; however, effective feedback was not the focus of this research. It was the process of transference from knowledge to meaning that was being explored.

The phenomenological tradition focuses on an individual's first-hand experience, with dialogue being an important aspect of this tradition. The goal is to create the motivation to learn by self-searching and new experiences. This tradition was carefully considered, as it aligns closely with the objective of discovering meaning for oneself, studying human experiences, and integrating those experiences into one's own life, which was one of the aims of this study. However, the primary objective of this study was the investigation and description of a phenomena without theories about the causal explanation. Phenomenology captures aspects of a phenomena by analyzing data gathered over multiple time points and studies. Thus, this tradition was not selected as it tends to require a more longitudinal structure, with observations being conducted over a longer period of time. This study was conducted over a shorter period of time, as it involved students in a particular classroom, over a specific period of time.

Thus, the tradition for this study was nested in the semiotic tradition. It is within the semiotic tradition that the study of abstract concepts is shared as a process for how meaning is developed. It focuses on the understanding of how people create and interpret meaning, including how people communicate through metaphors, analogy, allegory, and other means of expression (Tech Target, 2017). This study explored how indirect communication is used to uncover the hidden meaning of words, moving a student from knowledge of the word; to the ability to use that word in new contexts and in real-world situations.

With this brief analysis, both the interconnectivity and the focus of each of the traditions are apparent. While all of the traditions have elements that come into play, the tradition that is

most significant to this study is the semiotic as it focuses on the meaning behind words, actions, and symbols (indirect communication). In the process of uncovering that meaning, students move from knowledge, to meaning, to capability. The semiotic tradition is concerned with the motions, gestures, images, patterns, and events that convey meaning, which would include the method of indirect communication, which was a central aspect of this study, and was the area in which this research was conducted.

Indirect Communication

Communication is a process by which information is exchanged, requiring a sender, a message, and a receiver. Communication theory suggests that effective communication takes place when the message sent across by the conveyer is clear and easily comprehended by the receiver and a relevant response is fed back to the one who conveyed the message (Littlejohn et al., 2017).

From the viewpoint of psychology, communication is not simply the flow of information from the sender to the receiver (direct communication), but also includes the thoughts and feelings of the sender (indirect communication), which the sender tries to share with the receiver, and includes the feedback of the receiver after he decodes the information (Braithwaite, 2021).

There are two methods by which exchange of information can be accomplished: directly, which conveys knowledge by way of logic and reason, where the author's intentions are obvious; or indirectly, which hides or camouflages the speaker's true intentions and conveys knowledge "by way of story, narrative, and symbol" (Fraser, 2020, p. 4). For example, one can say, 'please close the window,' or one can say, 'it sure is cold in here.' The first example is the direct form of communication and the second represents an indirect form of communication.

According to Mooney (1997), communicating straightforward beliefs is not problematic. For example, if someone says it is sunny in Florida, or that a neighbor has been unbelievably

rude, unless there is reason to doubt the speaker's character, or any irony in the speaker's voice, a person will believe what they are being told. Thus, "the transmission will be *direct* and uncomplicated by the need for *interpretation* or worries about unresolved ambiguities" (Mooney, 1997, p. 132). On the other hand, if someone states that they have just become a grandmother, this simple comment is open to interpretations as to what being a grandmother means to that person – whether it is good or bad, or whether that person is happy or sad about this experience – and may evoke questions from the recipient. In this case, the transmission is indirect and requires clarification.

Yeo (1981) provided another way of thinking about direct and indirect communication by using the analogy of pain. Pain can be understood through a second-hand experience, as when the information available is based on someone else's description of the pain. Pain can also be understood through first-hand experience. Once someone has experienced pain for themselves, they no longer need to rely on someone else's description. Yeo (1981) states that how someone arrives at this understanding is "like the difference between imagining and experiencing something" (p. 101). Kierkegaard (2009) warned of "the infinite difference which exists between understanding something in possibility and understanding something in actuality" (p. 202). Kierkegaard went on to state, "The fact is that when I understand something in possibility, I do not become essentially changed. I remain in the old ways and make use of my imagination; when it becomes actuality, then it is I who am changed" (Kierkegaard, 2009, p. 202). Turnbull (2009) explained that this type of communication is a form of ambiguity which Kierkegaard would have considered as indirect communication. The question then arises as to who is responsible for making sure the message is understood.

According to communication theory, the burden of understanding the message relies on the sender being clear and concise in order for the listener to correctly interpret the message. If a misunderstanding occurs, the fault tends to rest on the sender (Littlejohn et al., 2017). There could also be a problem with the medium through which the message was conveyed, creating noise or distraction (Littlejohn et al.). With indirect communication, however, the opposite appears to be true, as "the burden [of effective communication] seems to rest on those who are indirect" (Tannen, 1994, p. 102). According to Joyce (2012), it is seen as the responsibility of the indirect communicator to convey information, and the responsibility of the listener to understand it. There is nothing wrong with using either direct or indirect communication. The problem occurs when there are differences in strategies, expectations, or understanding within a particular situation.

According to Fraser (2020), indirect communication can be defined as a "veiled or hidden approach to communication that intends to impart capability rather than information" (p. 140). Edward Mooney (2007) defined direct communication as communicating using words. Direct communication is information that is understandable on its face with no need for reflection on the part of the recipient; whereas, indirect communication requires filtering and reflection to interpret the meaning (Mooney, 2007; Peace Corps, 2022). For Garrett (2012) the only clear way to define indirect communication is that "it is not direct communication (p. 332). A more comprehensive definition was suggested by Parmelee (2015) as "the use of literary devices and/or tropes to communicate meaning through an intellectual sleight of hand that encourages receivers to utilize inwardness and double-reflection to determine the sender's true meaning" (p. 27). It has direction, in that it is designed to elicit a response caused by questions, suggestions, and models, as opposed to simply stating the facts (Sowers, 2021).

There are four schools of thought with regard to indirect communication. First, indirect communication is used in nonverbal activities such as body language, facial expression, tone of voice, and/or gestures, in order act out what a person is thinking or feeling. Second, indirect communication is used as a more nuanced tone within an intercultural or business situation in order to build mutual trust and understanding, where, for example, a statement in an indirect style says one thing, but implies another meaning, often to avoid embarrassment or conflict (Joyce, 2012) or to maintain harmony and save face (Peace Corps, 2022; Gunta, 2015). Third, indirect communication can be used to encourage the receiver of a message to engage with and think through the issues being presented (Turnbull, 2009). Finally, indirect communication can include features of language such as irony, satire, metaphor, and humor (Fraser, 2020; Kierkegaard, 2000).

In considering the relationship between direct and indirect communication, for it is suggested that one does exist, it appears that instead of being mutually exclusive, there is a continuum between direct and indirect communication (Fraser, 2020). This continuum between direct and indirect communication is also the continuum between knowledge and what Kierkegaard refers to as realization (Kierkegaard, 1967-1978; McPherson, 2001).

Søren Kierkegaard was the first to explore and coin the concept of ‘indirect communication’ (and its application) as it applies to the field of communication. Kierkegaard’s perspective on communication was that the communication of knowledge comes by way of direct communication (Fraser, 2020), where the speaker is responsible for clear communication; however, in opposition to communication theory, the burden of understanding the message falls on the recipient to interpret. Indirect communication; conveys meaning not just by the words; but by nonverbal behaviors, tone of voice, pauses, and silence (Ting-Toomey, 1999), as well as

implication, understatement, innuendo, and figures of speech, requiring a widely shared understanding of the context of the communication (Joyce, 2012). Context plays a much more nuanced and internal role in indirect communication than direct communication; however, the burden still rests on the recipient to interpret, deduce, or perceive the meaning (Turnbull, 2009; Mooney, 2007).

In his *Journals and Papers*, Kierkegaard (1967-1978) proposed that all communication consists of four interconnected elements: the object (the topic), the communicator, the receiver, and the communication. Herrmann (2008) expounded on this idea by explaining that "the object, or topic, is the exclusive matter of focus in the communication of knowledge, and neither a particular communicator nor a particular receiver is of importance" (p. 76). According to Kierkegaard (2000), this kind of direct communication is impersonal. It is *how* the message is transmitted that is important to Kierkegaard. The *how* is the defining characteristic of indirect communication. Before turning to Kierkegaard's approach to indirect communication, it is important to understand Kierkegaard's reason for utilizing the methodology of indirect communication as his tool of choice.

Kierkegaard's History and Background

To understand Kierkegaard, it is important to be aware of the context in which he was writing. As a Danish Christian theologian, Kierkegaard became distressed with his own Christian community. He was convinced that his countrymen "believed that they were Christians because they lived in a "Christian nation"" (Parmelee, 2015, p. 25). For Kierkegaard, this meant that the actions of Christians looked no different from the actions of secular society. Torrance (2016) argued that Christian intellectuals were promoting a way of reading the Bible that prevented readers from being affected, challenged, and convicted by its message. He further suggested that

Christian intellectuals were focused on objective truth with little consideration toward the more subjective faith-filled truth (Torrance, 2016). Against this backdrop, Kierkegaard insisted that there should be no difference between a person's life of faith and the Christian life. For Kierkegaard it was entirely disingenuous for the Christian to pretend that Scripture is not a witness to God, such that one could live in both the secular world as well as the world of the church (Torrance). The Christian life comes with a duty to witness to the truth (Torrance, 2016). It was this duty that Kierkegaard felt was being ignored by the Christians in Denmark.

For Kierkegaard, Scripture was being treated as a source of intellectual amusement (Torrance, 2016). Thus, Kierkegaard's mission was simply to "introduce Christianity into Christendom" (Kierkegaard, 1991, p. 36). Kierkegaard felt that the church members' knowledge lacked truth, and that the only way to lead them to true faith was to make them believe that Kierkegaard thought they were saved and then lead them into a knowledge that would bring them to true conversion (Ferreira, 2009; Yeo, 1981; Fraser, 2020). Kierkegaard chose to eschew direct communication of the facts and pointing out to people what they should do, in favor of a less direct approach. Rose and Halliday (2019) suggested that Kierkegaard sought to awaken the social club of Christians with the "shock of Truth through indirect but powerful communication of the Gospel" (p. 3), in order to assist his fellow churchgoers to really experience Christ (Fraser, 2020). To do this, he used a different communication approach, one that helped them realize who they really were and provoked them to examine their own life. This approach he called indirect communication.

In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard noted that "knowledge and doctrine can be communicated directly, but that ethical and religious truths can only be communicated indirectly" (Herrmann, 2008, p. 75). Kierkegaard suggested that indirect communication was not

about knowledge, but about realization (Kierkegaard, 1967-1978). Realization, as Kierkegaard used it, was the process of coming to terms with the ethics of one's own life (Tietjen, 2013), thus, producing a transformative effect on how individuals communicate and receive messages about their faith, bringing it to life in themselves, as opposed to a more mechanistic list of do's and don'ts (Sowers, 2021).

As part of his indirect communication methodology, Kierkegaard employed literary devices such as humor, irony, and pseudonym to move people through the process that would take them from knowledge to meaning, through inward examination or reflection, and finally to emerge into what Kierkegaard termed *capability,* or the ability to live an ethical life that aligned with their religious faith (Fraser, 2020; McPherson, 2001; Tietjen, 2013).

Though numerous scholars have discussed Kierkegaard's writings in-depth, there is still no consensus on the exact definition of indirect communication. Kierkegaard himself was not consistent and was even ambiguous in how he used the term (Fraser, 2020; Garrett, 2012; Aumann, 2010; Turnbull, 2009). Indeed, Kierkegaard appears to have made ambiguity a central feature of his method (Garrett, 2012; Turnbull, 2009).

Indirect Communication -- How/What

Kierkegaard's strategy of indirect communication arises out of the concept of what is communicated, and how it is communicated. His focus was on the meaning of communication itself (Kierkegaard, 1967-1978). For Kierkegaard, coming to a meaningful understanding of both *what* was being communicated, and *how* it was being communicated was important (Fraser, 2020). Thus, "when one is concerned not simply with communicating something, but about communicating it in such a way as to facilitate a certain kind of understanding, the form of the

communication becomes very important" (Yeo, 1981, p. 5). Kierkegaard's strategy of indirect communication arises out of such concern.

In the process of communication, it is common to use words without ever asking what the words mean, or even what the words are understood to mean. People simply take the meaning of the words for granted. Yeo (1981) discussed this concept and suggested that, because individuals are brought up in a language, they immediately attach, by association, a meaning at face value given to a word that is in common use. However, on reflection about context, both internal and external, people often discover that they likely did not mean what they said. There is a movement away from simply communicating information, to communicating meaning, "not just *what* is communicated, but *how* it is communicated" (Yeo, p. 5). For example, when someone uses the word 'happiness,' it can have a totally different meaning from one person to the next, as each person may have a different view of what happiness is. People who have visited countries where the children have no toys, find them to be just as happy, if not more so, than children who are surrounded by toys. Thus, *how* one uses words becomes more important than *what* is communicated.

According to Fraser (2020), there is a difference between technological ways of knowing and the indirect communication approach, in that "the technological is focused on what is known, while the indirect method is focused on how one lives" (p. 80). In essence, Fraser was saying that too much time is spent on the object of communication--the *what*, without enough consideration of the medium upon which it is communicated--the *how* (Fraser, 2020). Rather than trying to win someone to his point of view directly, Kierkegaard wanted his readers to reflect critically upon their own point of view. Yeo (1981) considered this "dialectical cunning" (p. 29) which is occasioned by the consideration that "*how* something is understood is at least as

important as *what* is understood" (p. 29). Jeyaraj (2014) suggested that the direct communication of *what* may not easily communicate the indirect communication of *how* when it comes to "experiential knowledge such as surmises, hunches, and feelings of plausibility" (p. 195). He went on to suggest that one cannot make discoveries without indirectly experiencing something for oneself.

Fox (2002) provided a good example of the difficulties of using direct communication to communicate experiences involving perception and/or hunches, when it comes to curing concrete. Because knowing when concrete has cured and is ready to be sawed is a 'craft,' it cannot be taught merely by explaining the process. For example, an experienced engineer could determine if the concrete is ready by scratching the surface with a nail. "If the scratch looks a certain way, it's ready" (p. 379). The same situation occurs when a blacksmith must rely on the colors of the flames to determine temperature. As steel begins to approach forging temperatures, it will start to glow red, orange, then yellow and eventually, white as it reaches higher temperatures (Nzoiwu, 2020). Since both of these processes are not an exact science, they are very difficult to teach. One cannot simply communicate the *what* of the process without experiencing the *how.*

According to Jeyaraj (2014), such explanations may not easily provide insights and must go beyond direct communication from a textbook and be demonstrated. Someone becomes an expert, not simply from factual knowledge, but by being a person who is able to offer meaningful and imaginative solutions that non-experts cannot. Polanyi and Prosch (1975) stated it this way, "The popular conception of science says that science is a collection of observable facts that anybody can verify for himself. We have seen that this is not true in the case of expert knowledge" (p. 184), like that needed in determining when concrete is ready or what color is

correct for forging steel. Kierkegaard suggested that simply overhearing someone explaining something to someone else can be a convincing and persuasive way to indirectly discover something for oneself (Craddock, 2002; Parmelee, 2015; Fraser, 2020).

Kierkegaard came to regard indirect communication as a powerful approach to communicating truth when he was standing in a graveyard and overheard a conversation between a grandfather and his grandson over the newly dug grave of their beloved son and father. Hidden behind a bush, Kierkegaard listened to the older man plead with the younger man to follow Christ. Kierkegaard was moved by this conversation, even though the message was addressed to someone else. Later he reflected that it had such power because the message was not directed at him (Fraser, 2020; Parmelee, 2015). This experience allowed Kierkegaard to create a distance between the communicator, the message, and himself, allowing time for reflection on the message he overheard. He could lower his defenses and consider the message for himself without feeling like he was being judged or persuaded. In this instance, it was *how* the message was communicated that was as important as *what* the message communicated.

Kierkegaard came to consider the use of this type of indirect communication as an art form. According to Fraser (2020), "Art is a medium for imaginative and indirect forms of communication" (p. 10). It is not just reason that makes people aware of truth, but also a person's heart and feelings, which is the purpose of art. Fraser wrote, "Art can bring us into authentic confrontations with ourselves through indirect means" (p. 184). It is the literary techniques [art] such as humor, irony, stories, hinting, suggestion, and other devises of indirect communication, that ultimately make one capable of living an authentic life. Kierkegaard used indirect communication to accomplish this by utilizing "deception, humor, irony, ambiguity, fictional

narratives, and 'imaginative constructions'" (Aumann, 2019, p. 9). Parmelee (2015) refers to these as "rhetorical tropes" and includes sarcasm, metaphor, and deception as art (p. 24).

Indirect Communication as Art

Kierkegaard understood indirect communication to be hidden, or even, at some level, deceptive, such that one was put into a situation of discovering the hidden, or actual meaning apart from the words (Fraser, 2020). To do this, he needed a set of tools. Those tools included, but were not limited to, fictional narrative, irony, humor, and constructions of the imagination (Aumann, 2010). Other such devices would include illusions, riddles, hinting, insinuation, suggestion, intimation, sarcasm, and allegory and were considered art (Fraser, 2020; Garrett, 2012). First, Kierkegaard would have differentiated indirect communication as an art rather than a science because the outcome was not predictable due to the uniqueness of individuals. Second, Kierkegaard understood that, much like studying a painting, for example, the process was not uniform, and required the listener to be an active participant in the discovery of meaningful knowledge (Kierkegaard, 1992). The listener is the one who must disentangle the meaning from the message (Kierkegaard, 1972). Two artistic methods employed by Kierkegaard that bear further reflection are his use of pseudonyms, and the Socratic or maieutic method.

To prevent his writings from directly influencing his readers, Kierkegaard often wrote under pseudonyms, with each pseudonym approaching a topic from a different point of view, giving the appearance of contradiction within his writings. Kierkegaard's overarching goal was to push the reader to confront themselves by being truthful and honest with themselves; he did not want his reader to be influenced by knowing that he was the writer. Kierkegaard believed there is a coherency that emerges when a reader is pushed to take responsibility for discovering the truth of the message for themselves (Sowers, 2021; Taylor, 1975; Kierkegaard, 2000). According to Sowers (2021), the use of pseudonyms was intentional in meeting this objective.

Kierkegaard sought to have his readers deal with the content of his presentations on their own, subjective terms. He believed this was important since he could juxtapose various pseudonyms against one other, to create different voices and different points of view (Herrmann, 2008). He wrote under the names of Climatus, Anti-Climatus, Johannes de Silentio, and others, with the intent of taking his readers through various existential stages: aesthetic, ethical, and religious. Kierkegaard wanted his readers to view his pseudonyms as separate individuals, "living and writing from their own experiences, philosophical worldviews, and religious positions" (Herrmann, p. 79). Turnbull (2009) argued that Kierkegaard's reason for doing this was specifically because indirect communication could achieve what direct communication could not; in that, according to Parmelee (2015), it could veil the meaning behind the different characters' points of view. Hiding his identity behind the pseudonym allowed the learner to discover their own meaning from the context--a meaning that was not more vague or ambiguous, but one that was intentional, and made more so by the ownership of the reader, gained through the process of active reflective discovery (Garrett, 2012). To keep discovery from being simply ambiguous, Kierkegaard understood the need for some form of guidance that would not conflict with his philosophy of indirect communication. For that, Kierkegaard used pseudonyms as part of the Socratic, or maieutic process.

The maieutic process, as Kierkegaard saw it, was essentially a coaching process, similar to what a midwife does in assisting a woman giving birth (Fraser, 2020; Johansson, 2019). The process is growth, movement, and birth. An idea begins to grow, moving a person in a certain direction, and culminating in the consciousness (Kierkegaard, 1985; Garrett, 2012). Kierkegaard believed in the uniqueness of individuals and wanted them to recognize that they were unique (Herrmann, 2008). That uniqueness would result in each individual discovering meaningful

knowledge distinct to themselves (Fraser, 2020; Aumann, 2019). This self-discovery will, according to Kierkegaard, lead to action by way of reflection (Aumann, 2019; Fraser, 2020; Herrmann, 2008). It was by using the maieutic method of injecting questions from different perspectives, or voices, into the process, that Kierkegaard believed one would become that coach, or, as Socrates put it, the midwife (Johansson, 2019), helping people to birth truth leading to action that they had an understanding of, and a capacity to do, or as Kierkegaard liked to call it, capability (Herrmann).

Capability

Kierkegaard's idea of art applies to capability as art seeks to "facilitate a capacity that can only by set in motion by the act of self-discovery" (Fraser, 2020, p. 189). Kierkegaard suggested that capability was not knowledge, and was only developed by indirect communication (Fraser, 2020; Herrmann, 2008). Knowledge is the domain of objectivity, facts, and figures. It tends to be explicit, and easily accessible (Fraser, 2020). For example, when this author first started teaching English in Taiwan, most students, when asked to read in English, could do so with very few mistakes. When asked about what they had read, however, very few of those students had any idea about what they had read. They could read the words perfectly, but they had no comprehension of what they were reading or how to use it. It is when moving into *how* to use knowledge that capability is encountered.

According to Fraser (2020), knowledge is necessary, but information alone is not a prerequisite for transformation and does not enable a person to change. An example of this would be in examining the behavior of someone who is interested in quitting smoking. The person could have read four articles, two books, watched a movie on the health risks of smoking, and taken a class on quitting smoking, yet still does not quit smoking. According to

Kierkegaard's way of thinking, this person would have substituted knowledge for capability. The knowledge of the detriments of smoking did not lead to change.

Capability, as Kierkegaard saw it, involved ethics, truth, capacity, and actuality. Actuality, or actualizing is the process of bringing the ethical into the light (Herrmann, 2008). Kierkegaard was suggesting that capability was about producing a passion to live by the self-knowledge, or truth, that was realized (Herrmann, 2008). In essence, capability is internalized knowledge. Using the example above of the smoker, developing capability involves the shifting of knowledge, which is external, obvious, and less personal, to self-knowledge, which is internal, not obvious, and deeply personal (Fraser, 2020; Herrmann, 2008; McPherson, 2001). Thus, "more than transference of knowledge, the indirect approach conveys the capability to embody the belief we encounter" (Fraser, 2020, p. 273). Fraser stated that, capability "is not merely the change of mind but a change of will" (p. 205).

Kierkegaard wrote from a pastoral perspective; however, much of what he wrote applied to education as well. Often, educators fall back on direct communication methods while their students, particularly in today's world, are highly adept at, and immersed in technology, such that they are easily distracted by something more interesting than the acquisition of meaningless knowledge. According to Fraser (2020) it is the use of indirect communication, in the form of pseudonyms, poetic authorship, and the Socratic method of midwifery, that help people move to capability. He stated, "The salient factor in indirect communication involves the communication of capability, rather than the communication of additional information" (p. 162). The purpose of indirect communication is to "provoke thought, stir emotions, and engage the imagination, rather than impart objective information" (Fraser, 2020, p. 32). As Jean Piaget put it, "The principal goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating

what other generations have done--men who are creative, inventive, and discoverers" (Silverman, 1980, p. 110). Kierkegaard felt so strongly about the need for developing capability that he proposed the idea that "all education of capability requires indirect communication" (Kierkegaard, 1967-1978, pp. 282, Vol 1).

Direct and indirect communication are not mutually exclusive; therefore, acquiring knowledge and using that knowledge to create meaning, and thus capability, functions as part of a continuum. In order to understand that continuum, the next section will explore the educational philosophies of behaviorism, and constructivism, as it relates to moving from knowledge to meaning, and the role indirect communication can play in improving the quality of meaningful learning.

Behaviorist and Constructivist Philosophies of Education

The behaviorist philosophy has its roots in the objectivist philosophy that information exists outside of the mind. It is objective, absolute, and exists whether observed or not (Fitch, 2018). It is simply awaiting discovery. Objectivist philosophy suggests that information is the currency of knowledge (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). Like objectivism, the behaviorist philosophy is also positivist in nature and is largely based on the work of Edward Thorndyke. Thorndyke was an early 20th century educator who posited that educational ability was largely a product of genetics, and that the design of an education system needed to be mechanistic in nature, measurable, and scientific in its approach (Tomlinson, 1997). Thorndyke developed the law of effect, which suggested that any action followed by pleasant consequences was likely to be repeated. His work was the predecessor of the studies by Ivan Pavlov involving rats, chickens, and dogs that involved a stimulus and response (Tomlinson, 1997). For example, Pavlov would ring a bell and then provide his subject, a dog, a treat. After repeating this multiple times, the dog

would begin to salivate every time it heard the bell. This process was known as classic conditioning (Akpan, 2020).

In 1937, B. F. Skinner, building on classic conditioning theory, developed the theory of operant conditioning. In operant conditioning, the subject is given a task to perform. When the subject performed the task correctly, they received a reward. If the subject performed the task incorrectly, they were punished. Thus, Skinner theorized that extrinsic motivation to perform, either through fear of punishment, or in anticipation of reward, coupled with the appropriate supply of knowledge, was the primary means of achieving education (Akpan, 2020). Thus, the basis for the behaviorist philosophy suggested that a students' learning process is simply the formation of habit (McLeod, 2020). This is accomplished through the process of repetition, the repeated reproduction of the information provided by the instructor, and memorization (Hinduja, 2021), enabled by punishment or reward (Bada & Olusegun, 2015). Behaviorist theory further suggested that it is only achievable by students who were genetically fit to learn (Tomlinson, 1997).

Behaviorism further posits that learning is a mechanical process that works with the transfer-receiving method, or lecture method. Behaviorist theory assumes that the learner is a blank slate and that "students are empty containers that can be filled" (Hinduja, 2021, p. 112). The student is rewarded for the right answers, which is important for conditioning the learners' behavior (Hinduja, 2021; Bada & Olusegun, 2015).

There are several significant weaknesses in the behaviorist philosophy. First, there is the failure of moving knowledge to meaning as it applied to everyday life. Second, behaviorism failed to explain the development of human languages, and finally, behaviorism failed to explain the effect of the environment in shaping human behavior (ipl.org, 2022). Largely as a result of

these weaknesses, the broader objectives of learning, specifically recognizing the cognitive differences between animals and humans were missed, such as individual freedom, socio-economic development, and social justice (Hinduja, 2021).

The failures of behaviorism gave rise to constructivism. Constructivism holds that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experience and reflecting on those experiences, and that people are active creators of that knowledge, rather than just passive learners. Learners use their previous knowledge as a foundation upon which to build new experiences, incorporating new information into their pre-existing knowledge (Brau, 2018; Hein, 1991; Bada & Olusegun, 2015; von Glasersfeld, 2012; wgu.edu, 2020a). For the constructivist, the construction of meaningful knowledge is, by nature, an intersubjective interpretation process where the learner connects the new information being taught with their own past experiences and cultural background (Brau, 2018). To understand the importance that constructivism plays in communication theory, one must examine it through the lens of psychology.

Constructivism postulates seven principles: (1) that knowledge is constructed, meaning that knowledge is built upon other knowledge; (2) learning involves constructing meaning and systems of meaning; (3) learning is an active process, not a passive process, in which learners must engage with the world in order to construct meaning; (4) learning is a social activity and recognizes that social interaction is the key to learning; (5) learning is contextual and is connected to things we already know, not isolated facts and theories; (6) learning exists in the mind and must involve activities for the mind, not just the hands; and (7) knowledge is personal, so the way people learn and engage with the world will be different for each person (wgu.edu, 2020a; Hein, 1991). According to Jean Piaget (2008), “Each time one teaches a child something he could have discovered himself, that child is kept from inventing it and consequently from

understanding it completely" (p. 27). In essence, this is the basis of the constructivist theory, as it aims to guide the student in the right direction, with the ultimate goal of letting the student discover the meaning, by using his or her own reasoning.

As with any learning theory, there are several disadvantages that might make it difficult for some students. First, it is difficult for the teacher to assess whether the student has reached the correct conclusion; thus, there is a chance that the student will develop the wrong conclusion. Second, since the student is the one who draws the conclusions, the teacher may need to implement different evaluation methods, which can be time-consuming. Third, constructivist learning strategies need to be adapted to the student's level because; the previous knowledge gained by the student may not necessarily be on the same level as other students. Finally, some constructivist learning strategies may not be compatible with certain subjects or a standardized curriculum and do not fit well with standardized tests (Collins, 2020; Drew, 2022).

The fundamental differences between behaviorism and constructivism are that behaviorism is centered around the transmission of knowledge from the instructor to the student (passive student and a top-down or instructor-centered approach); whereas, constructivism is focused on the construction of knowledge by the student, where the instructor functions as a guide, or mentor, in an interactive participative learning process (Zhang, 2019), or as Kierkegaard would describe it, the midwife or using a maieutic method.

The theorists who were largely responsible for the emergence of constructivism included Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980), Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), American philosopher and psychologist John Dewey (1859-1952), and finally, Ernst von Glasersfeld (1917-2010) (McLeod, 2020; Brau, 2018). According to Brau (2018), the theorists formulated their theories in real classroom experiences and not from experiments in a lab.

Generally, constructivism can be divided into two main types: radical, or cognitive constructivism. Radical constructivism, embraced by Piaget and von Glasersfeld, focuses on learning new information by connecting it to things one already knows. Social constructivism, introduced by Vygotsky, focuses on the collaborative, or social, aspect of learning (Brau, 2018). Piaget focused on the interaction of experiences and ideas in the creation of new knowledge, or cognitive constructionism, while Vygotsky explored the concept that learning is taught socially and culturally, alongside peers, and thus affects the assimilation of knowledge, known as social constructivism (Huang, 2021). The primary concern was in how to best guide learners in their construction of that knowledge.

Although both Piaget and Vygotsky contributed significant ideas to learning theory, it was Dewey who combined Piaget's focus on the cognitive aspect with Vygotsky's focus on social learning (wgu.edu, 2020a; Brau, 2018; Mayer, 2008). Dewey emphasized inquiry and the integration of real world and classroom activities (Huang, 2021) and is often seen as the proponent of learning by doing, believing that humans learn through a hands-on approach (Lorina, 2022). He believed that each child was active, needed to interact with other people, work cooperatively with their peers and adults, and learned best when in natural settings (Lorina, 2022; Williams, 2017). One of Dewey's most recognized quotes is: "If you have doubts about how learning happens, engage in sustained inquiry: study, ponder, consider alternative possibilities, and arrive at your belief grounded in evidence" (Reece, 2013, p. 320).

Dewey had a profound influence on the Chinese and their philosophy of education. He lived, traveled, and lectured in China from 1919 to 1921. Two PhD students, who studied under Dewey at Columbia University, were prominent Chinese educators who adapted Dewey's educational concepts to Chinese culture; and promoted his ideas throughout China. After the

May Fourth demonstrations of 1919, the New Culture Movement was established, which sought to modernize China through cultural ideas borrowed from other countries, especially Western ones (Zhang & Sheese, 2017). During Dewey's two years, he gave approximately 200 lectures across China and became a well-known and highly respected educator among China's elite aristocracy, "attaining something akin to superstar status" (Zhang & Sheese, p. 401). According to Zhang and Sheese (2017), "thousands of people attended his lectures; numerous newspapers carried his speeches; and a book series of his lectures was published and sold over 10,000 copies" (p. 401). During the time Dewey was lecturing, Mao Zedong was an assistant librarian at Beijing University and was heavily influenced by Dewey's educational philosophy (Zhang & Sheese, 2017).

Dewey's relation to Confucius was a factor in Dewey's influence. Wang and Liu (2009) asserted that Confucius and Dewey shared some similar beliefs about education. Both shared a belief in the need for education. Both believed in promoting equal educational opportunities for all, without discrimination. Both emphasized the importance of reflection as a means of enhancing the learning process (Wang & Liu, 2009). Dr. Cai Yuanpei, president of Beijing University (1916-1927) referred to Dewey as the "Western Confucius" in his speech at Dewey's sixtieth birthday celebration (Wang & Liu, p. 30).

Zhang and Sheese (2017) point out that even though Chinese scholars embraced the idea of "apply what one's learned" (p. 402), many Chinese educators saw the country's problems as a result of education in the Confucian tradition; with its emphasis on the study of the virtues of the ideal man. This model leaned toward allowing a small group of people to enter a more elite society; by emphasizing high-performance exams. While this enhanced government efficiency, it was also seen as a means of controlling society. This was directly contrary to Dewey's ideas of

constructivism and his belief in the education of the common man (Zhang & Sheese, 2017). The system of memorization and teaching to the test were advocated in place of Dewey's theory of 'learning by doing.'

In the 1950s, Mao Zedong turned his back on Dewey's educational philosophies, turning instead to the Soviet Union. Dewey's theories were strongly condemned by the Soviet Union and China soon adopted the attitude of the Soviet Union by following the philosophies of Marxism and Leninism (Zhang & Sheese, 2017). Dewey strongly opposed the concepts of "class struggle" and "revolution" (Chuankao, 2009, p. 144), both of which were advocated in China at the time of the cold war (Zhang & Sheese, 2017). Currently, graduates of Chinese universities express a desire to move away from "test-taking machines and slaves-to-learning" (p. 406) along with being forced to memorize knowledge rather than allowed to reflectively pursue their own interests (Su et al., 2003). Su (1996) recognized that contemporary education is still dominated by the elements of Confucian tradition, that emphasize examination and memorization. Zhang and Sheese (2017) argued that changing the current education system has been an almost impossible task, due to the strength of the Confucian tradition and the Chinese culture.

Up to this point, discussion has been largely about education philosophy in the Western paradigm. Discussion has centered around the effect of constructivism as it relates to Dewey and his influence on Chinese education. It seems valuable to now explore Eastern educational philosophy, primarily as it relates to Taiwanese culture and orientation.

Taiwan Educational History

In order to understand Taiwan's educational philosophy, it is necessary to take a brief look at Taiwan's past. According to Davidson's (2003) history of Taiwan, during the Japanese

period school attendance for Taiwanese children increased from 3.8% in 1904 to 71.3% in 1943, making literacy common among the majority of Taiwanese (Davidson, 2003). After Taiwan came under the control of the Republic of China in 1945, education in Taiwan became an amalgamation of both the Japanese and Chinese system. In 1949, the leadership of the Nationalist government, under Chiang Kai-shek, began to reconstruct the education of Taiwan, with the intention of creating a new national identity, a process referred to by Taiwanese scholar Ting-Hong Wong as "national colonialism" (Wong, 2020, p. 160). In the early 1950s the government decreed that Mandarin was to be the only language taught in schools, with the local Taiwanese dialect (Hok-lo) forbidden from even casual conversations outside the classrooms (Wong, p. 166).

In the late 1950s Taiwan experienced a severe shortage of schooling facilities creating an outcry from the Taiwanese locals, as well immigrants to the island. The government yielded to pressure from the Taiwanese and enacted a series of educational reforms, allowing for the expansion of private schools; however, colonizers from China took over the private education sector from the Taiwanese and controlled the curriculum, proliferating the "indoctrination of the state nationalistic ideology" (Wong, p. 184). This substantially compromised Taiwan's freedom in its educational mission and pedagogy. It was also in the 1950s that Dewey's educational philosophies were condemned in favor of Marxism and Leninism, moving away from the philosophy of 'learning by doing' towards an emphasis on exams and memorization.

With this history in mind, recognizing that the background of the Taiwanese was all but erased from their educational system (Wong, 2020), it is understandable that the Taiwanese educational philosophy has its roots in the Chinese philosophy of education.

Eastern Education Philosophy

Hassan and Jamaludin (2010) suggest that Eastern philosophies are obtained from the teachings of Eastern religion, such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Taoism, where the transmission of knowledge is one-way. In the Eastern classroom, teachers are fully responsible for class effectiveness (Hassan & Jamaludin). Students are not trained or encouraged to voice their own views or perspectives, questions are rhetorical and are brought up for the teacher to answer, and students learn from memorizing facts rather than focusing on understanding (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010).

In studying the writings of *Xueji* (學記), Di (2017) discusses three common fundamental philosophies, or themes of Eastern thought that affect teachers' paradigms of higher education. First, teaching should have a social and humanistic focus, be aligned with nature, cultivate, and transform habits, and be concerned with the collective wellbeing of the nation. Second, teaching should focus on the formation of character (Di, 2017) such as respect, aspiration, honesty, humbleness, dedication, trust, and credibility (Xu & McEwan, 2016). Third, the role of teachers is to be revered (Di, 2017; Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010), "not so much for their content knowledge and expertise, but for their exemplary virtue, their modeling, and their impact on the entire culture, people, and state" (Di, 2017, p. 448). For *Xueji*, "the first and foremost purpose of teaching and learning is not subject and content-focused, but rather society and universe-oriented" (Di, 2017, p. 446). The teacher is seen as "the maker and keeper of humanity" (Di, p. 449).

There are several differences between Eastern and Western philosophies and schools of thought. According to Francisco (2018), the main principle of Eastern philosophy is collectivism, thus the emphasis is on unity, where life is perceived as round. On the other hand, Western

philosophy is based on individualism, and due to the West's Christian influence, there has to be a beginning and an end in order to find meaning, thus, life is perceived as linear. Western philosophy is logical, scientific, and rational compared to the East's concept of eternal and recurring. Both philosophies center on virtues; however, Western philosophy focuses more on ethics. Eastern philosophy is also more about the spiritual, while Western philosophy is more of a hands-on style. "The difference is the "I" of the West, and the "We" of the East, as one focuses on finding truth and meaning" (Francisco, 2018, p. 1). Thus, when it comes to education, there tends to be significant differences in concepts, thinking patterns, and teaching methods.

According to Yuan He[1] (2021), Chinese education tends to attach more importance to the construction of a students' basic knowledge, than the development of their creativity. For the Chinese, the main purpose of a students' education is to increase their knowledge (He, Yuan, 2021).The teacher repeatedly explains the information so that the student can successfully pass the exam. The student is not required, or asked, to think for themselves. Knowledge is passively accepted, with no time for reflection or independent thinking. Because of this emphasis, Chinese students tend to have excellent memorization skills, but are poor at presentation, hands-on skills, and the capability of using the memorized knowledge outside of the classroom (He, Yuan).

Western education tends to be student-centered, with the goal of capability. The teacher acts more like a guide, or facilitator, allowing them to control their own learning process and share in the responsibility of applying the knowledge learned in the classroom (He, Yuan, 2021; Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010). This is accomplished by utilizing educational methods such as discussion, dialogue, group work, projects, and other sources of indirect communication. Yuan He (2021) observes that Western teachers often provide students with opportunities to compare

[1] For clarity, because the name of the author (He, Y.) is a pronoun, in English, the author will be referred to using his first and last name (He, Yuan) throughout this work.

and analyze problems from different perspectives, “which doesn’t require a standard answer” (p. 64). However, Yuan He (2021) points out that teaching in the West also has its own problems. For example, Yuan He (2021) feels that Western education lacks rigor, students are undisciplined, and the basic knowledge of Western students is not well-grounded (He, Yuan, 2021).

In addition to the aforementioned differences, Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) measured seven “Confucian Heritage Cultures” with regard to differences in their educational views and communication methods. To validate these findings in a more recent context, Jeffery (2022) did a study in Hong Kong to assess the cultural differences between the teaching methods of Korean and non-Korean teachers. He discovered that, in particular, three of Hofstede’s dimensions affected the ability of Eastern educators to apply Western methods of communication and instruction: saving face, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance (Jeffery, 2022). In the next few paragraphs, each of these dimensions will be discussed in light of Eastern versus Western communication philosophies.

Power distance is the way people in a society relate to each other on a hierarchical scale. A culture that gives deference to a person of authority is a high-power distance culture, and a culture that values the equal treatment of everyone is a low power distance culture (Hofstede, 1986). High power countries only allow the leaders to make decisions and do not allow low-ranking individuals or subordinates to challenge superiors. According to the World Population Review (2022), Taiwan ranks number 58; as a high-power distance culture, which is in the middle to high range (World Population Review, 2022). This results in teacher-centered classrooms, where the teacher is the authority and students are not allowed to challenge the teacher or ask questions. It is one reason why memorization and rote learning are still popular as

an educational method. Westerners come from a low power distance culture; thus, the Western teacher feels free to share power with the student, acts as a guide, and helps facilitate a students' ability to ask questions and take responsibility for their own education.

Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture feels either comfortable or uncomfortable in unstructured situations and with unpredictability (Hofstede, 1986). Taiwan holds a world ranking of number 86, which is considered very high (World Population Review, 2022). This means that educators in Taiwan feel very uncomfortable with situations which are novel, unknown, or different from the usual. Because of this, Taiwan classrooms are highly structured, which does not allow for constructivist, or problem-based learning environments to flourish, or for the introduction of indirect communication methods. This culture perpetuates the method of lecture and memorization as a direct communication approach to learning.

The final dimension, which has the greatest impact on communication methods is that of saving face. Losing face in Taiwan is equal to losing the respect of others and can be caused by criticism, embarrassment, or disagreement (Jeffery, 2022). Face is not just about pride. In Taiwanese culture, if a teacher does not have the answers to a students' question, the teacher loses face. If the student asks a question the teacher cannot answer, the student also loses face. Thus, students are taught not to ask questions and the teacher is expected to provide the answers.

The consequence of Eastern educational philosophy on students' perception of learning is interesting. Wang and Byram (2011) identified four perceptions that Eastern cultures hold about education: (a) Effort learning: learning is always associated with difficulty and is not fun, but necessary, (b) Memorization learning: connecting memorization to understanding, (c) Reflective learning: learning requires commitment and is not just acquired, but must be reflected upon, and

(d) Humble learning: respect to elders and teachers. This finding corresponds with another study by Dahlin and Watkins (2000) that suggests Taiwanese students think of understanding as a long process that requires considerable mental effort.

Up to this point, the focus of this section has been on the acquisition of knowledge. Yet, it seems that knowledge devoid of meaning is somewhat useless. It is important, then, to explore the process of transforming knowledge into meaning. Therefore, the next section will focus on the transference of knowledge to meaning in both Western and Eastern cultures.

Transference

As defined above, constructivism focuses on the idea that students actively create meaningful knowledge through learned experiences, and suggests that the transfer of that knowledge can be facilitated by involvement in authentic real-world tasks anchored in meaningful contexts (Macaulay & Cree, 1999; Huang, 2021; Lorina, 2022). In addition to imparting knowledge, one of the primary goals of education is to ensure that learners can apply that knowledge in various ways and under different circumstances (Hajian, 2019). Transfer takes place when a student's existing knowledge affects the performance of new tasks (Macaulay & Cree, 1999).

For Kierkegaard, the utilization of indirect communication was critical for students in the development of transference and selfhood (Kierkegaard, 2000). Manheimer (1977) suggests that transference allows a teacher to awaken the student through evoking a contrast between significance and meaning in order to renew the student's "concern for what is of ultimate value" (p. 198). This concept is so significant that Macaulay and Cree (1999) would argue that transfer of learning "is a fact of life and is fundamental to all learning" (p. 185). Hajian (2019) defines

transfer as the "productive application of prior learning and experiences in novel contexts" (p. 95).

Application of that knowledge requires more than just actively creating and constructing new knowledge from experience. Students often find transferring knowledge to real-world situations highly challenging and that transfer may not occur naturally for many students (Selingo, 2018; Macaulay & Cree, 1999; Hajian, 2019; Hung, 2013). A recent survey from the *Washington Post* stated that "college students find the concept of transfer of learning particularly difficult to grasp" (Selingo, 2018, p. 1). Hung (2013) suggested that when the focus of teaching and learning is on abstract concepts and memorization, the way that knowledge exhibits itself in real world situations, or is used to solve real-life problems, is often overlooked.

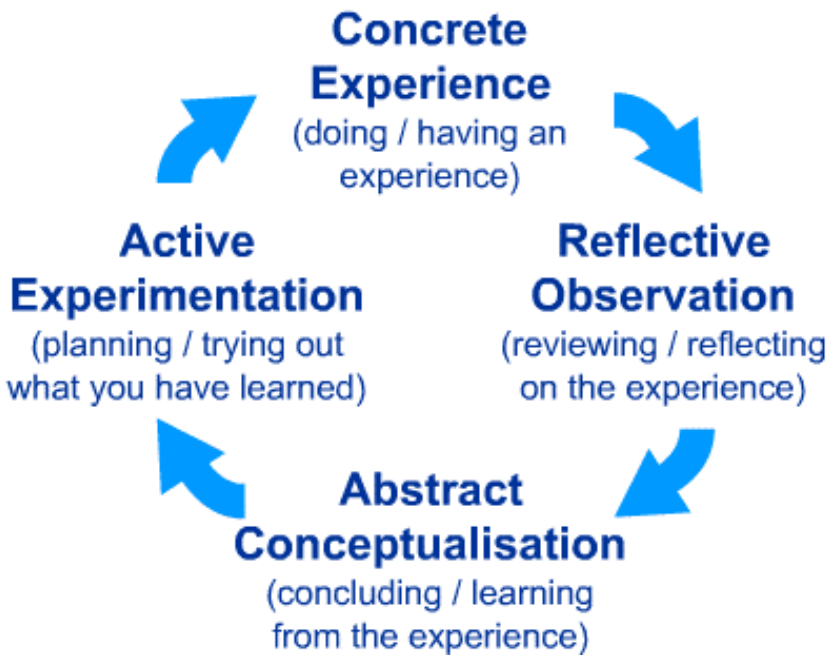
Although many of the major transfer theories were developed concurrently, it was the theory of 'situated learning' (Lave & Wenger, 1991) that led to a more complete theory of learning and transfer. According to situated learning, learning and cognition are developed through purposeful, authentic activities in social contexts. Learning and transfer occur when learners are given an opportunity to practice and observe in a context with a specific situation (Hajian, 2019), a process that can take place through participation, even though the learner is not central to the process (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The theory of situated learning was developed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in the early 1990s, and followed the work of Dewey, Vygotsky, and others who claimed that students were more inclined to learn by actively participating in the learning experience (Brau, 2018; Huang, 2021), as well as by creating meaning from the real activities of daily living (niu.edu, 2012). Hung (2013) suggested that situational learning is the bridge between theoretical understanding and the practical application of knowledge.

One of the obstacles to successful transfer of knowledge is in traditional teaching practice, where rote memorization of facts and knowledge is taught in abstract concepts, without attaching meaning or practical usage to a students' life outside of the classroom. As a result, teaching practice takes place out of context, "without an understanding of when, where, and how the knowledge is applied" (Hung, 2013, p. 29). Situational learning is often absent from such a classroom. Another communication model that can assist in the transfer of knowledge is that of problem-based learning, which was conceived in response to medical students' poor performance and the emphasis on memorization of knowledge in traditional medical education (Hung, 2013). Problem-based learning enhances students' learning outcomes by promoting their abilities and skills in applying knowledge, solving problems, practicing higher order thinking, and self-directing and reflecting their own learning (Hung, 2013; Mestre, 2002; Macaulay & Cree, 1999; Kubsch et al., 2020). Reflection is an important aspect of problem-based learning. Though problem-based learning emphasizes self-directed learning, it does not mean the instructor is not involved in the students' learning. Instead, the instructor is situated in the learning and transfer process as the facilitator, guide, mentor, friend, and motivator (Morrison et al., 2020).

The themes that seem to emerge from the constructivist philosophy are that learning is an active process for the learner; and is not simply the acquisition of knowledge; but rather the acquisition of capability. Meaningful knowledge creates the ability to generalize; or apply that knowledge in differing situations (Hajian, 2019). The process by which capability is obtained is through reflection, dialogue, and experience, or as Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory suggested; acquiring knowledge, reflecting on that knowledge, experimenting with that knowledge, reflecting on the knowledge gained through experimentation, and incorporating the meaningful knowledge into one's life (Morris, 2020; Kolb, 1984).

According to Kolb (1984), “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). Kolb’s (1984) learning cycle was used for exploring additional techniques as a process for effective transference of knowledge to meaning, as demonstrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1
Kolb’s Learning Cycle, as cited in ISC Medical, 2019



Kolb (1984) suggested that effective learning occurs when an individual progresses through a cycle of four stages.

1) Concrete experience. This might involve a new experience, situation, concept and/or the presentation of a situation or concept the student has learned before but is presented in a new context or in a new way. This phase requires the students to become actively involved in ‘doing’ something. In this instance, the classroom activities could include in-class presentations and projects, debates and discussion, moral dilemmas, reading, watching a Ted Talk, teamwork exercises, problem-solving, and experiences involving real-world scenarios.

2) Reflective observation. This is a reflection of the new experience as it compares to the students' existing knowledge or between the students' new experience and their understanding of that experience. During this phase, students may share their reactions with other teammates and discuss their reactions to the concrete experience. By reflecting on their experience, the students are actively involved in deriving meaning from the experience and/or activity. Students are encouraged to think critically about the experience and verbalize their feelings and perceptions about the experience.

3) Abstract conceptualization. After reflecting and dialoguing, this phase helps students to form conclusions about what they learned and to apply what they learned to 'real life.' At this stage, questions such as, "What did you learn from this experience?" are asked. The students are then asked to share their conclusions with their teammates and to exchange thoughts and ideas. This helps the students become more rigorous in their thinking, to compare and contrast different conclusions, identify patterns, and discuss areas of disagreement.

4) Active experimentation. Once the student has either created a new idea or made a conceptual modification to an existing idea, they can begin to apply that idea to their real lives. The students are asked to test the new ideas and/or concepts in a real-world scenario or in a future situation, resulting in new experiences.

Although the model appears to be straightforward and logical, its practical application is not always explicit or clear. There are transitions between phases and the phases can be approached in a non-linear fashion and interchanged. For example, the teacher can introduce the new theory either before or after the experience/activity, thereby, interweaving the conceptualization phase with the experimentation phase, allowing the students to develop their

own theory or to reinforce the importance of the theory after completing the activity (ISC Medical, 2019).

One of the problems is that this model is frequently misused in practice (Mcleod, 2023). For example, having students participate in a concrete experience such as an in-class presentation, role play, or discuss a moral dilemma, without applying the phases of reflecting, conceptualizing, or experimenting with real-world scenarios, lessens the power of the experiential learning model and learning is significantly diminished or is nullified and made ineffective. The model is meant to serve as a guide for the instructor and all four of the phases must be included in the learning process in order for transformation, capability, or effective learning to occur (Kolb, 1984; Mcleod, 2023).

Perhaps the three most significant attributes in the transference of learning and acquisition of capability are: context, reflection, and dialogue.

Context

As stated earlier, the acquisition of knowledge, and the learning process are dynamic (Bada & Olusegun, 2015), and constructed through active learning (Brau, 2018; Hung, 2013). Understanding the context of the when, where, how, and why, is important in that it provides a frame of reference for that knowledge, both in generalization as well as transference (Hung, 2013; Hajian, 2019). McPherson (2001) understood direct communication to be about the *product* of communication; whereas, indirect communication is about the *process* of communication. Thus, the distinction between the product (direct) and the process (indirect) is often context-sensitive and is respective of one's circumstances (McPherson, 2001; Mooney, 1997). Park et al. (2009) discussed the concept of verbal immediacy, which is defined as the degree to which a message is explicitly communicated. Both the Chinese and Taiwanese rely

heavily on context to transmit messages, whereas, Western countries demonstrate the opposite (Jeffery, 2022). For example, a Taiwanese teacher would think it was important for instructions to be explicitly stated (Jeffery, 2022), whereas, a Western teacher may prefer that the student figure things out on his own. Correct understanding of context seems to be significant for providing the foundation and framework for reflection.

Reflection

In Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, reflection provides the catalyst for comprehension. Kolb drew on the works of Lewin, Dewey, and Piaget, all of whom recognized the acquisition of knowledge, followed by reflection, then experimentation, then more reflection, and finally internalization and generalization (Kolb, 1984; Morris, 2020). Reflection in Western education is an active process, however, precisely what the process of reflection is, has not been studied.

According to Rodgers (2022), the concept of reflection, as part of the learning process, was introduced by John Dewey who posited four criteria for meaningful reflection. First, reflection needs to move the student to deeper meaning by connecting experiences and ideas, progressing on a continuum from the individual through to society. Second, reflection needs to be approached as a form of scientific inquiry: rigorous, systematic, and disciplined. Third, reflection needs to contain a significant element of discourse, since it should happen in a community of learners and be interactive. Finally, reflection should be unselfish and humble, seeking to value both the individual and others (Rodgers, 2022).

Reflection for Eastern education follows much of the theory of Confucius, given that Confucius' analects and sayings continue to be studied today (Wegerif, 2014). Confucius believed reflection should be concentrated in two areas: First, reflect on the knowledge for the

purpose of integrating the knowledge into wisdom, and second, reflection should be internal to ensure integration of the knowledge into one's own wisdom through synthesis (Wegerif, 2014).

According to Mezirow (1990), reflection is a synonym for higher-order mental processes and is defined by Boud et al. (1985) as, "a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciation" (p. 3). According to Mezirow (1990), reflection would include "making inferences, generalizations, analogies, discriminations, and evaluations, as well as feeling, remembering, and solving problems" (p. 5). In addition, he also referred to "using beliefs to make an interpretation, to analyze, perform, discuss, or judge" (p.5). For Dewey (1933), reflection referred to "assessing the grounds [justification] of one's beliefs," (p. 9). In short, reflective interpretation is the process of "correcting distortions in our reasoning and attitudes" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 7). Reflection is involved when one looks back on content, or the process one used to solve a problem, and makes an effort to re-assess the effectiveness of the strategies that were used (Mezirow, 1990). Mezirow goes so far as to suggest that critical reflection triggers transformative learning, allowing the student to structure meaning that leads to integrating new experiences and perspectives (Mezirow, 1990). This involves questioning "the why's, the reasons for and consequences of what we do" (p.13), to understand one's perspective and transform it if necessary (Mezirow, 1990).

According to Yeo (1981), there is a didactic relationship beween questioning and reflecting. In other words, questions induce reflection (Yeo, 1981). Reflection brings the 'what' of communication into question and entails a process by which possibilities are contemplated and examined, allowing one to decide upon a belief or a specific viewpoint (Yeo, 1981). For Kierkegaard, instead of trying to win someone to his point of view directly, he might try to get

his reader to reflect critically upon his own point of view. According to Yeo (1981), "Reflection crystallizes the various possibilities, but the conclusion, the choice of one possibility over another, has to come from elsewhere" (p. 24). The cognitive factor in arriving at a conclusion is important, but Kierkegaard is more concerned with the role reflection plays in a person's will or decision and the meaning a person derives from that decision. Thus, one is back to the consideration of *how* something is understood, as opposed to *what* is understood (Yeo, 1981). This is the role of reflection.

While Dewey's and the Confucian concepts of reflection seem to be complementary, with both seeking to move the student to higher morality, and better civics, and both recognizing synthesis as important, Dewey approached reflection from an egalitarian worldview, while the Confucian worldview is distinctly classist (Shen, 2012). Another significant difference has to do with the worldview in which Confucius continues to have a strong influence, one that views the individual, within the hierarchy of society, through a collectivist lens, whereas, Western society tends to view the place of an individual in society through an individualist lens (Shen, 2012). This placement has an impact on openness to dialogue as a component of reflection.

Dialogue

Nisbett (2004) suggested that the collectivist worldview of the East was a result of the majority of the people being confined to land, while the individualists came from seafaring people. It is just as likely that the collectivist nature of the East is largely the result of the influence of Buddhism, and even more so, the influence of Confucius (Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010; Wegerif, 2014).

It is situated in the milieu of collectivism versus individualism that a notable difference between Eastern and Western approaches to reflection occurs. Dialogue as described by Dewey,

was not only an internal process, but also involved discussion, debate, and discourse with people outside of oneself, and certainly outside of the dialogue between the teacher and the student (Rodgers, 2022). Dewey understood that people needed to express their ideas outside of themselves and seek feedback to gain true meaning. Indeed, without discourse, a person is simply alone without validation, and at times, unable to come to a solution (Rodgers, 2022).

The Confucian approach to dialogue, by contrast, generally consisted of dialogue within an individual. Because of the Confucian view that teachers were to be revered and respected (Tan, 2015; Wegerif, 2014; Hassan & Jamaludin, 2010), dialogue may happen, but it is at the invitation of the teacher. Furthermore, because of the role of the teacher as the keeper of the moral values (Di, 2017; Wegerif, 2014), and someone who is highly respected, it seems, as Wegerif (2014) suggested, that silent reflection is the greater virtue. Because of the worldview of teacher/student hierarchy, and the perception that it is the responsibility of the student to figure things out on their own, seeking discourse among their peers does not seem to happen that frequently. As a result, a lack of discourse in Eastern education, as it relates to reflection, seems to be one of the significant differences between Eastern and Western education. The next section will explore the educational philosophy of Kierkegaard's indirect communication theory and how they come together to help in the construction of the theoretical frame.

Kierkegaard on Education

Kierkegaard viewed himself primarily as an educator, with the goal of bringing his reader to understanding (Yeo, 1981). Kierkegaard saw the purpose of education as creating freedom by removing restrictions on inquiry and thus allowing exploration of what is not yet known (Johansson, 2019). Kierkegaard believed this freedom could be achieved through indirect communication, offering his reader the freedom to act or think in their own way (Youssef, 2017).

Such an aim makes Kierkegaard's writings a kind of educational pedagogy that, through indirect communication, offers exercises for the student to "make a leap and choose his or her own life" (Johansson, 2019, p. 113). The implication is that this "anxious leap" (p. 112) creates the capability to live in the unknown.

Soderquist (2016) describes this pedagogy as dialogical. This form of communication between teachers and students, is more about what is shown, rather than what is said in the texts (Soderquist, 2016). With indirect communication, the use of literary devices is crucial in that they "show us truth rather than tell us the truth" (Fraser, 2020, p. 160). Thus, the mission and purpose of indirect communication, within education, is to capture the attention of the listener and "utilize the written word, creative verbal device, or demonstration, to guide the recipient to come to their own conclusion" (Rose & Halliday, 2019, p. 7). Kierkegaard (2009) pointed out that with this type of indirect communication the communicator tries "to say something to a passer-by in passing, without standing still and without delaying the other, without attempting to persuade him to go the same way, but giving him instead an impulse to go precisely his own way" (p. 247).

What Kierkegaard really had in mind is a general pedagogical strategy that mirrors Socrates' method of asking questions. Aumann (2008) suggested that Kierkegaard offered two ways of determining whether something counts as indirect communication. The first is whether the teacher relates to his students in a maieutic manner--in other words, the level of guidance the teacher provides to the students. The second is whether the teacher makes use of literary devices such as irony, humor, ambiguity, fictional narratives, or stories.

Mirroring constructivist education philosophy, Kierkegaard (1972) suggested that the indirect communication process was not uniform and required the listener to be an active

participant in the discovery of meaningful knowledge. Kierkegaard wanted people to recognize that they were distinct and special (Herrmann, 2008). That distinctiveness would result in each person discovering meaningful knowledge unique to themselves. (Fraser, 2020; Aumann, 2019). By recognizing these differences, Kierkegaard believed his readers would reflect critically upon their own point of view. Creating reflection and discourse that would have been both internal and external (Yeo, 1981). Constructivist education theory is very much about the shifting of knowledge to meaning. Kierkegaard, using indirect communication, sought to do the same thing. Interestingly, both recognized that education without context, reflection, and dialogue, including discourse, was of little value. These three attributes are directly related to the instruction in the classroom. These requirements mean that the role of the teacher is critical to the transference of knowledge and capability.

Role of the Teacher

One goal of education is to help students think critically and be able to communicate coherently. Ko (2013) suggested that the teacher plays a significant role in the critical classroom, but to do that "teachers themselves must be critical thinkers" (p. 106). The *Foundation for Critical Thinking* defines critical thinking as "the art of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving it" (Criticalthinking.org, 2023). They go on to suggest that the most powerful tactic for fostering critical thinking resides with the teacher, using the Socratic (or maieutic) method, which focuses on giving students questions, not answers. It is the role of the teacher to develop a student's critical thinking skills by continually probing, inquiring, and asking questions (Criticalthinking.org, 2023).

Another goal of education is to prepare students for their futures as contributing members of society. While it is necessary to communicate knowledge to students, simply lecturing does

not create the desire for the type of self-reflection and growth Kierkegaard hoped for. It is important that educators utilize capability, giving the students the space for self-reflection and dialogue to develop their own commitments and capacities. The caveat to doing this means that educators themselves must be prepared and willing to change as a result of the dialogue (Herrmann, 2008). This implies a mutual relationship. Walters (2008) explained this mutual relationship as, "one involving an exchange i.e., the active sharing of views between learner and facilitator, 'as a way to knowledge'" (p. 113). According to Hall (2015), in an educational setting, a trusting relationship, based on friendship and support, is key to fruitful reflection and intelligent discourse. With a proper student-teacher relationship, the student becomes actualized in the classroom (Hall, 2015), as the teacher makes it clear that he or she "possesses no interest in judging, diagnosing, or diverting the learner from an experience that is personally relevant and meaningful" (Walters, 2008, p. 116). Kierkegaard (2000) put it this way:

> The helper must first humble himself under the person he wants to help and thereby understand that to help is not to dominate but to serve, that to help is not to be the most dominating but the most patient, that to help is a willingness for the time being to put up with being in the wrong and not understanding what the other understands. (p. 460)

He went on to explain:

> Consider a person who is impassioned about something, granted that he actually is in the wrong. If you cannot begin with him in such a way that is seems as if it is he who should teach you…and is gratified to find in you a willing and attentive listener--if you cannot do that, then you cannot help him either. (p. 460)

Kierkegaard fully believed that it was the teacher's role to find the student where he or she is and begin there. He felt that "to be a teacher is truly to be the learner" (p.461) and that instruction

begins by placing oneself in the shoes of the student by understanding what the student has understood and how he has understood it.

Kierkegaard believed that it was the teacher's job to seek reflection from the learner (Yeo, 1981). This involves getting the student to question things previously taken for granted, "to become attentive to recognize a misunderstanding which has previously been confused for understanding" (Yeo, 1981, p. 130). It is necessary, therefore, for the teacher to reflect upon the method (the how) of instruction that will best shape the learner's presuppositions and guide them to their own conclusions. In order to do this, Kierkegaard (2000) stated, "Even though a person refuses to go along to the place which one is endeavoring to lead him, there is still one thing that can be done for him: Compel him to become aware" (p. 464). Kierkegaard (1991) also suggested that people are reached, not directly, by presenting them with facts and information, but indirectly, through stories, allegories, metaphor, humor, irony, parables, and personal examples.

This type of teaching has the power to create a new perspective. Thus, "indirect communication moves the hearer from abstract belief (that which is conveyed through direct communication) to action, habit, and incarnational embodiment" (Fraser, 2020, p. 4). In this way, indirect communication is not only concerned with the transference of knowledge, but with the "conveyance of capability (the ability to do, to live the truth, rather than just knowing the truth" (Fraser, p. xi).

This outcome requires a true Socratic teacher to practice and perform a type of vanishing act. According to Dalton (2019), it is "the art of catalyzing the student's own creative process and then erasing yourself--vanishing before anyone notices" (p. 248). It also requires teachers not to think of themselves as an authority. "A Socratic teacher stands on the same plane and shares the same world as the student; there is no hierarchy of authority that makes the teacher

transcendent" (Dalton, p. 248). It is the student who must create their own truths. "The teacher is only an occasion, whoever he may be…because I can discover my own untruth only by myself, because only when *I* discover it is it discovered, not before, even though the whole world knew it" (Kierkegaard, 1985, p. 14). Kierkegaard (1985) compares this type of learning to a coachman who is not "capable of pulling the horse's load, even though he may help the horse do it by means of the whip" (p. 13). Thus, there must be a way to teach that allows the student to teach himself. This is where indirect communication comes in. The purpose of indirect communication is to help the student give birth to their own creative solutions to problems, become critical thinkers, and capable citizens.

In summary, Kierkegaard saw education as communication that was designed to give students knowledge, but then to give them the freedom to transfer that knowledge to capability. The process Kierkegaard proposed was one of dialogue, or discourse resulting from reflection, and being part of the reflection process. Kierkegaard did not isolate the educators from this process, but rather suggested that they be immersed along with their students, being equally open to change as a result of their own reflection coupled with the discourse among their students and themselves (Kierkegaard, 2000). The understanding of knowledge and meaning through the constructivist lens mirrors Kierkegaard's theory of indirect learning. Indeed, as seen above, education and communication are closely allied, and constructivist education and indirect communication appear destined to be forever interconnected.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to explore the process which students in Taiwan go through to transfer knowledge to meaning under the direction of a Western teacher. In preparation for that research, the works of Kierkegaard were examined, particularly in the

context of his theory of indirect communication. Following that, the two major Western educational philosophies of behaviorism and constructivism were explored in order to understand the concept of knowledge and meaning. Behaviorism focused on the impartation of knowledge while constructivism focused on gaining meaning from knowledge.

The focus shifted to Eastern education with its foundation in Confucianism, and while both constructivist and Confucian educationists espouse similar philosophies in terms of seeking deeper meaning, there are significant differences. For example, teachers are revered in Eastern education, and are considered the holders of societal values. As such, they have considerable power over students. By contrast, the relationship between teachers and students in Western education tends to be much more collegial.

Another difference between Eastern and Western education systems is the focus and purpose of the education. For example, in Eastern education, the focus is much more collective, universal, nature related, and societal, while in Western education, the focus is much more individual, concrete, and productivity oriented.

While both Eastern and Western education systems believe in seeking deeper meaning, and they use similar terms in their approach, the difference is worth noting. For example, in constructivist philosophy, the process essentially involves the acquisition of knowledge, which is processed through reflection and dialogue or discourse to become meaningful. In Eastern education, the process involves memorization before reflection. Reflection in Eastern education tends to be self-reflection, and the dialogue tends to be self-dialogue, while in Western education, the reflection involves dialogue that is both internal and external.

This literature review concluded with a comparison of Kierkegaard's views on education and indirect communication. In that comparison, it was noted that Kierkegaard's theory of

indirect communication was an integral part of constructivist educational philosophy as influenced by Dewey, though Kierkegaard tended to allow more degrees of freedom when it came to discourse and reflection. Whether that difference would stand the test of research remains to be seen.

This study sought to explore the process Taiwanese college students go through to move from simply gaining knowledge, to developing meaningful knowledge. The theoretical framework was Kierkegaard's indirect communication methods coupled with the constructivist philosophy of education. As such, the students spent time reflecting and dialoguing peer to peer with the teacher acting as guide and mentor. In the next chapter, the methodology for this study is discussed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Overview

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate how teachers can use indirect communication as a method for Taiwanese college students to transfer knowledge to meaning and thus to capability in new contexts and in real-world situations. The goal of this chapter is to describe the research approach and address the trustworthiness and ethical considerations of this narrative inquiry research. study. This study was nested in the semiotic tradition which includes the semiotics of indirect communication as a teaching method.

Research Approach

Using narrative inquiry allowed for understanding the journey that Taiwanese students take in transferring knowledge of a second language into meaning, and thus into capability. Furthermore, this method provided insight into the role of indirect communication methods in facilitating that transference of knowledge. Finally, this approach provided insights into understanding how a schema is constructed by ESL students to create meaningful understanding that leads to capability.

The constructivist approach and the applicability of narrative inquiry are discussed more fully in this chapter. Attention will be given to the research plan, methodology, participant selection, research method, and procedures. This chapter will also address reliability and ethical issues and the research questions.

Research Questions

This study sought to provide information on the process that enables transference of knowledge to meaning by ESL students, and the role indirect communication plays in that process. The research questions are:

RQ1: How can Western teachers use indirect communication as a method for Taiwanese college students to transfer memorized facts into meaning, and thus develop capability, that can be used in new contexts and in real-world situations?

RQ2: How does indirect communication affect a student's ability to transfer facts into capability so students can apply that knowledge in new contexts and real-world situations?

Methodology

This study focused on transference of knowledge into meaning, and thus capability in Taiwanese ESL students. Of special interest to this study are first, to attempt to understand the process students go through to transfer knowledge to meaning, and second, to attempt to understand how indirect communication shapes and abets that transference process. Communication is not simply the flow of information from the sender to the receiver (direct communication), but also includes the thoughts and feelings of the sender (indirect communication). Thus, the burden of understanding the message relies on the receiver to correctly interpret the message. This is often accomplished by nonverbal behaviors such as tone of voice, pauses and silence, as well as literary devices such as "deception, irony, humor, ambiguity, fictional narratives, and imaginative constructions'" (Aumann, 2019, p. 9), and "rhetorical tropes which include sarcasm, metaphor, and deception as art" (Parmelee, 2015, p. 24). It is not *what* is transmitted but *how* it is transmitted that is important to indirect communication (Fraser, 2020). Kierkegaard believed that change comes about by indirect communication, which is a critical aspect of this research.

Since this topic has received little research, and there is no hypothesis to test, it becomes difficult to approach it from a positivist perspective. Furthermore, while a quantitative approach makes it easy to deconstruct a subject and examine its various parts, a constructivist approach allows for the exploration of how people construct meaning from knowledge (Cresswell &

Cresswell, 2018; Merriam, 2002; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Because this study endeavored to understand how Taiwanese ESL students process information and construct meaning, a qualitative approach was the most appropriate. The tradition that best served this study was the semiotic tradition, as it emphasizes utilizing the nonverbal (or indirect) use of signs and symbols to create meaning.

Within the qualitative research approach, there are different methodologies. Of all of the methodologies, the five most prominent are: (a) phenomenology, the construct of a phenomenon; (b) ethnography, the study of society and culture; (c) case study, which primarily deals with a single subject; (d) grounded theory, an approach for the construction of a theory from within the data collected in the research project; and (e) narrative inquiry, a basic or interpretive form of qualitative research that studies a phenomenon through the narratives pieced together within the lives of the subjects of the research (Merriam, 2002; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Since this research sought to understand transference of knowledge to meaning in Taiwanese ESL students, and the role that indirect communication played, certain methods were appropriate to the study. Ethnography did not fit since, while this study did have an ethnographic element to it, that was not the primary focus. Grounded theory was not appropriate since this study did not seek to create a theory, but rather to explore the process of transference. Case study did not fit since this study as it was not focused on a single bounded subject, but rather on a selective sample of subjects. Phenomenology was not appropriate because this study did not seek to explain a phenomenon, but rather was intended to explore the journey of students from knowledge to meaning to capability. Narrative inquiry was the most appropriate because it provided a broad platform that encompassed processes and the lived experiences of the research

subjects in seeking to understand the process of transference as it occurs in a classroom that utilizes indirect communication as the primary means of instruction.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative inquiry is a well-established method of inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This method seeks to provide a story through the collection of interviews, artifacts, and observations (Creswell & Poth). Narrative inquiry has a certain fluidity because it is situated in the three-dimensional frame of the temporal: time; past, present, and future; social and personal; and place or places (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Additionally, narrative is nested, meaning that the reality of the research subjects and the researcher, are nested within each other and are inseparable (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Though the individual narratives are nested, they are individual (Creswell & Poth, 2018), meaning each person's story is unique and needs to be treated as such. While narrative inquiry is about individual stories, the collection of stories creates a composite narrative. Adding to that composite narrative are student reflexivity journals, fieldnotes, and observations.

At this point, it is appropriate to delve briefly into the philosophical underpinnings that guide narrative inquiry. As used in the context of this study, the foundation of narrative first comes from the idea that the narrative depends on the individual and does not exist independently of the individual. This has been termed ontological relativism (Smith, 2016). Secondly, narrative inquiry holds to the notion that knowledge is relative and fallible. This is known as epistemological constructionism (Smith, 2016). Ontological relativism and epistemological constructionism provided the foundations upon which this research was based.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested three guidelines that gave direction to this study. First, researchers should always remember that they are in the midst of nested stories, "theirs and ours" (Clandinin & Connelly, p. 63). This way the researcher can honestly recognize

his or her own story in the narrative process. Understanding this point also ensures that the researcher will take care not to select 'our' story over 'theirs;' but rather embrace both. Another point is that narrative research seems to find itself situated in the midst of different disciplines. Here, the narrative researcher must be careful not to choose one discipline over another but rather allow the narrative to speak from within the midst of the disciplines, because narrative inquiry tends to be interdisciplinary (Merriam, 2002). This idea may be problematic for some, because the borders are less defined as opposed to a more positivist perspective. The second guideline relates to the purpose of the work; it has a reason to be done (Angen, 2000), and should be internally valid (Schwandt, 1999) and meaningful (Lincoln, 1985). The third guideline applies to the method of analysis, to be discussed in more detail under the section titled Data Analysis in this study.

The Researcher

It is good at this point to understand the role of the researcher. Unlike quantitative studies where the research instrument is of a static nature, in qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument (Merriam, 2002; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The researcher finds themselves situated in the middle of the research subjects, and their stories. Since humans tend to be storied people (Clandinin & Connelly), they often find that the stories of their research subjects awaken their own stories, and their stories can color and shape the meaning of the data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As a research instrument, the researcher must be adept at collecting the data, verbal, non-verbal, written, and artifacts. The researcher's eyes, ears, and other senses gather data that the researcher must record robustly and accurately (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). The researcher as the research instrument poses ethical issues that will be addressed later in this chapter. For now, the focus will shift to the processes and procedures to perform the study.

The Study Process

As already indicated, this study was a narrative inquiry that sought to understand the process that ESL students in Taiwan go through to move from knowledge acquisition to meaningful knowledge, and finally to capability. This study also investigated how employing indirect communication as the primary teaching method affects that process. The duration of this study was 16 weeks, or one semester.

Before beginning the human subjects' portion of this study, two important steps were taken. The first was to seek institutional research board human subjects research approval. The second was to seek appropriate releases from the students and authorization for the students to participate in this study. The study then commenced as outlined in the next few sections.

Participants

Sampling within this study was purposeful with the aim of increasing depth (as opposed to breadth) of understanding (Campbell et al., 2020), with the purpose of selecting respondents that "are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information" (Kelly, 2010, p. 317). The reasons for adopting a purposive sample are based on the assumption that, given the aims and objectives of the study, "specific kinds of people may hold different and important views about the ideas and issues at question and therefore need to be included in the sample" (Campbell et al., p. 652).

A total of 38 undergraduate students from National Chi Nan University participated in the research. Data was collected from non-native English-speaking students in two university English classes, over a period of one semester (16 weeks). Both classes were elective classes, that is, they were chosen by the students on a voluntary basis. Both classes were senior-level classes, and so the participants' English language proficiency was expected to be at the

intermediate to high intermediate level. All of the students were asked to write a personal reflexivity journal for each class activity, each week. There were 10 students in the public speaking class and 28 students in the English school-wide elective (Business English) course. The students in the public speaking course were all English majors. The participants in the Business English class included majors from the entire university and were made up of students from departments such as tourism, international business, banking, engineering, and education. The study included a wide range of participants from various backgrounds and disciplines.

Data Collection

Using narrative inquiry, this qualitative study used three methods of data collection: student semi-structured audio and video-taped interviews, students personal reflexivity journals, and the personal reflexivity journal and field notes from the researcher. Thirty-eight students turned in a weekly reflexive journal, detailing their thoughts over a 16-week semester. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' learning experiences, students were asked to volunteer to record a semi-structured interview, at the end of the semester. Eighteen students volunteered for the interview: 5 from the public speaking class and 13 from the Business English class. There were 6 male and 12 female college students. Since the author of this study was also the teacher of the sample subjects, to prevent any bias from the teacher or the students, the interviews were conducted by a proxy, who spoke both English and Chinese.

Data included student notes, along with the teacher's notes for each class, and the professor's syllabus, along with a bibliography of the literature being used in this study. A copy of the public speaking class syllabus is included in Appendix C and the syllabus for the English school-wide elective course is included in Appendix D. Other data was in the form of written papers, student discussions and participation, both student and teacher reflexivity worksheets,

and semi-structured interviews with the students. A copy of the interview questions is included in Appendix E.

Reflexivity

The use of a reflexivity journal was a large part of this study. Incorporating reflexivity in the research process is traditionally recognized as one of the most notable differences between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Reflexivity is commonly viewed as "the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the researcher's positionality within the research" (Berger, 2015, p. 220). Reflexivity can be defined as the act of examining one's own assumptions and belief systems and thinking carefully about their own biases and how these influence the research process and the outcome of the study (Jamieson et al., 2023; Creswell & Baez, 2021). Creswell & Baez (2021) define reflexivity as the "engagement by researchers in self-understanding about the background they bring to a research study and how it shapes their interpretations, how the participants may be experiencing a study, and how its readers may react to a study" (p. 233).

In qualitative research, it is assumed that who the researcher is makes a difference in the findings of their study, thus objectivity is not present. It is often said, "The researcher is the research instrument" (Dodgson, 2019, p. 220). Thus, "reflexivity makes the research process not only a mere data collection process, but an enriching process where the understanding obtained is holistic and in-depth" (Dodgson, 2019, p. 391). Dewey (1938) wrote that "to reflect is to look back over what has been done so as to extract the net meanings which are the capital stock of intelligent dealing with further experiences. It is the heart of intellectual organization and of the disciplined mind" (pp. 86-87).

Reflexivity is a validation process that creates a level of objectivity. Merriam (2002) suggested that this is a tool used to identify and "clarify the researcher's assumptions, worldview, and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study" (p. 205). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) use the word "wakefulness" (p. 184) to describe the reflective process of the researcher.

Reflexivity has been recognized for its value in qualitative research for three reasons. First, it recognizes the researcher's own experiences, beliefs and biases, and influence they have on the research process and findings. Through reflexive thinking, researchers can help to ensure that their research is more reliable because they have been able to either neutralize, acknowledge, or capitalize on their own research bias (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). Second, reflexivity expands the focus to include context and social and political issues in knowledge production necessary to the research (Lizard & McAvoy, 2020). Third, reflexivity helps researchers to engage in a dialogue with their participants. By remaining open to feedback and criticism, researchers can ensure that their research is ethical. This includes being aware of the power difference between the researcher and the participants and ensuring that the research is conducted in a way that respects the participants' autonomy and agency (Taquette et al., 2022).

There is a tendency for confusion when it comes to the difference between reflection and reflexivity. According to Nagata (2004), self-reflection is after the fact, while self-reflexivity is in the moment. She goes on to suggest that to be reflective is to sit and think about what took place after it is completed, while reflexivity is an ongoing dialogue with oneself about what one is experiencing as one is experiencing it (Nagata, 2004). In this study, the students were given a reflexivity worksheet after every class with questions such as, 'What did you learn from today's TedTalk? or, "What did learn from today's discussion?

The advantages of reflexivity are that it "binds the researcher, the participant and the topic of the research together and makes the researcher an active part of the process rather than being a mere spectator" (Ravi, 2019, p. 391). It helps the researcher become aware of the values, opinions, and experiences they have brought to the research and how it can be useful. One of the challenges is that the researcher's viewpoint might hinder or color participants' views, thereby making the researcher more important than the participant. In addition, reflexivity takes a lot of time and self-discipline which can make the research process challenging for the researcher (Ravi, 2019).

The reflexivity journals kept by both the students and the researcher are an important part of the data collection process. According to Ravi (2019), there is a high need for reflexive thinking in the research process because it is important that different views are taken into consideration and that the researcher also becomes an active part of the research. Reflexivity is a two-way or bi-directional process whereby the researcher and the researched influence each other (Ravi, 2019). Thus, the cornerstone of reflexivity is the question "what is the research process and how am I influencing it?" (Lazard & McAvoy, 2020). The worldview and background of the researcher affects the way in which he or she constructs the world, uses language, poses questions, and chooses the lens for filtering the information gathered from participants and making meaning of it, and thus may shape the findings and conclusions of the study (Berger, 2015).

Data Analysis

Coming from a philosophical world view of ontological relativism and epistemological constructionism, leads to the question of the theoretical approach to the data analysis. The two theoretical models are constructivist or constructionist. The narrative constructivist approach

suggests an approach that is more individualistic, and the narrative is a thing inside the mind that is used to make meaning out of the stream of inputs coming into the mind. In the constructivist model, narrative is essentially a window to the soul (Smith, 2016). On the other hand, the narrative constructionist approach is much more semiotic, and views humans as meaning makers who use narrative to make meaning of who they are, what their environment is about, and how they fit into that environment. These narratives are passed on to coming generations (Smith, 2016).

In this study, both approaches were utilized. First, because this study crossed cultural lines; secondly, as has been established, there are differing approaches to the education process that may have a cultural foundation (constructivist approach), and finally, change to an individual occurs individually (constructionist approach). It continues to be important to remember that people exist in a continuum of time. As such, approaching this study, it is imperative to remember that it is situated in time and location. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) offer a three-dimensional model of inquiry that provided a useful approach to this study. The empirical data used in this study and the collected data came from the teacher's field notes and student reflexivity journals, as well as transcripts of the interviews. To apply the model developed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), the empirical data was analyzed on a temporal level (past, present, and future) that is situated in place (specific and possibly sequential specific topological locations), and an existential level (personal and social issues). The purpose of the temporal level is to highlight the nature of nested stories that are a part of narrative inquiry by focusing on the personal and social aspects of the participants' narratives related to specific times and places or sequence of places.

The data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) theory of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis (TA) is "a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data" (Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297). The aim of thematic analysis is not simply to summarize the data; but to identify and interpret key features of the data, guided by the research questions. The advantage of this form of thematic analysis is its flexibility, allowing the research data to reveal what participants' think, feel, and do (Clarke & Braun, 2017). To better ensure the accuracy of the analysis, the data was analyzed through a triangulation process.

Triangulation

Triangulation is the use of multiple data sources, theories, methods, or researchers within the study of a single phenomenon (Noble & Heale, 2019; Carter et al., 2014). The method was introduced in the 1950s as a means of avoiding potential biases arising from utilizing a single methodology or research instrument (Noble & Heale, 2019). Triangulation aims at validating the results of the study by helping to increase the credibility and validity of the research (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021). It helps explain complex human behavior by using a variety of sources in order to offer a more balanced explanation of the findings. It also contributes towards a research strategy and tests validity by merging information from different sources (Carter et al., 2014).

Triangulation has several advantages. (a) it can help to confirm research findings; (b) it makes use of a variety of sources; (c) it can provide additional insights for better explanation of research findings; (d) it ensures that data that are inconsistent, or conflicting, are easily noticed and can be removed so they do not negatively impact the findings of the study; and (e) it improves the validity and credibility of the study by reducing research bias (Bans-Akutey &

Tiimub, 2021; Noble & Heale, 2019; Carter et al., 2014). One of the challenges that exists with triangulation involves questions about how to analyze and weight the data (Carter et al., 2014). For example, does an interview with one participant carry the same weight as 15 reflexivity journals? The researcher must consider these issues and analyze the data separately, identify the similarities and the differences, and conclude how the different methods affect the results (Carter et al., 2014). This study utilized triangulation, which involved the use of multiple methods of data collection about the same phenomenon (Carter et al.), which included interviews, observations, and reflexive journals from both the researcher and the students, throughout the semester. This helped ensure that the analysis of the data was trustworthy.

Trustworthiness

Qualitative research approaches trustworthiness with questions centered around "the validity and reliability of the instrumentation, the appropriateness of the data analysis techniques, the degree of relationship between conclusions drawn and the data upon which they presumably rest, and so on" (Guba & Lincoln, 1981, p. 378). A qualitative study must be able to give enough detail as to demonstrate to the reader that the conclusions make sense (Merriam, 2002).

The discussion of the criteria for validity, reliability, and generalization still continues in qualitative research circles. The only consensus of what determines the reliability of a qualitative study seems, as Merriam (2002) suggests, to be centered around the careful attention to the study's conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented.

To ensure trustworthiness or validation, issues of reliability, and both internal and external validity, must be answered, though not by the same means as in quantitative research, nor in the same philosophical orientation (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Internal validity has to

do with the question of congruence to reality (Merriam, 2002), but the term reality has multiple meanings. From a positivist perspective, reality must be observable by many people in exactly the same way. This viewpoint may work well in a mathematical or positivist worldview, however, it cannot easily describe the essence of something. Schwandt (1999) suggested:

> To understand is literally to stand under, to grasp, to hear, get, catch, or comprehend the meaning of something; to know is to signal that one has engaged in conscious deliberation and can demonstrate, show, or clearly prove or support a claim. (p. 452)

Schwandt here exposes two dimensions of reality--the dimensions related to the observable, concrete and static, and the dimensions related to meaning and understanding. It is within this framework that qualitative research finds its home.

To establish validation, this study followed what literature suggests as accepted practices of triangulation: member checking, peer examination, and examining the researcher's bias (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Merriam, 2002). Triangulation is a procedure that essentially uses the convergence of different sources to ensure truth (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). In this study, it is the different sources that validate the assumption. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested, narrative inquiry exists at "the boundaries of reductionist and formalistic modes of inquiry" (p. 184). The triangulation process was to examine multiple sources to discover converging themes. In this study, the sources were the participants' voices, as seen through semi-structured interviews, as well as both student and teacher reflexivity journals and field notes.

Viewing research through the lens of the research subjects is another form of validation (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Member checking is the process of returning to the participant with the story as collected to confirm its accuracy (Merriam, 2002). Creswell & Cresswell (2018) suggested that it is the narrative, rather than the raw story that is brought back to the members.

This process, though challenging because of the co-creative aspect of understanding, provides more than just an accuracy gauge, it provides a significant hermeneutic element as well (Angen, 2000). Qualitative inquiry literature recognizes that reality as originally stated in an interview or exchange will be altered as a result of that exchange (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). By returning to the member, issues that had not surfaced to consciousness may come forth that could add additional depth of meaning.

Reliability in qualitative research is a function of whether the results of the research are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2002; Stahl & King, 2020). Accepted procedures for creating reliability include triangulation (there were multiple data sources in this study as well as multiple methods of data collection) and through careful detailing of the methods and processes, through which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

The issue of external validity, as explained by Merriam (2002), or transferability, as explained by Guba & Lincoln (1981) is not easily accomplished by qualitative researchers. By its very nature, findings in qualitative inquiry are not easily or acceptably generalizable in the traditional sense because foundationally, there is a difference in the understanding of what is being researched. Generalizability in quantitative research is generally determined by the validity of the research structure utilized to obtain and analyze the data that identify the variables, whereas generalizability in qualitative research is more or less determined by the ability of the research to describe the variables (Gobo, 2005). Gobo illustrates this point as follows:

> The squeak of the door (which gives us shivers when we watch a thriller or horror [movie]) does not represent all squeaks, but we associate it with them. We do not think about the differences between that squeak and the one in our own front door; we notice

> the similarities only. These are two different ways of thinking, and most social sciences aim at finding such patterns. (p. 453)

Merriam (2002) suggested that generalizability can only come from detailed knowledge of the particular. This concept is the reason literature and art have an enduring value in that learners can experience constructed reality vicariously through them.

For this study, creating generalizability had to rely on descriptiveness (Merriam, 2002) as well as its orientation in its analysis of the relationships being studied (Gobo, 2005). Thus, this study provided enough richness and thickness of detail to allow the reader to determine how closely the concepts of this study met their own experience, and whether there is enough evidence to make it applicable to other situations, though maybe not with the same results (Stahl & King, 2020). These factors were significant in helping to determine the generalizability (or transferability) of this study.

As with any qualitative human subjects' research, since it is recognized that the researcher is the instrument, understanding that this type of research may change who the researcher is or who the participants are is important (Angen, 2000; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). Therefore, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) suggested, to do narrative inquiry all individuals involved must recognize their own history and how it affects their perspective.

Ethical Issues

There were three issues considered with regard to the ethical issues of this study: First, was maintenance of the confidentiality of the participants; second, was respecting the willingness of the participants to participate; and third, was procuring proper authorization from the university to conduct human research.

Before undertaking this study, authorization was received from Liberty University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for conducting human-subject research (see Appendix A),

Because the instructor was also the researcher, it was necessary to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. To do so, the interview process was designed as follows: The participants were interviewed by an interviewer who was not connected with either the university, or substantively, with the instructor. The interviews were transcribed and the participant's name changed before the interview transcript was given to the researcher.

No individual who was unwilling to participate was included in this study. All participants were invited to participate by letter, outlining the scope of the study, their possible involvement, the potential risks of such involvement, and how their participation would be used in the study. It was made clear to the persons who were asked to participate that there were no repercussions for not participating and that, in any event, their confidentiality was to be carefully protected. The process was carefully explained to them so that they understood what was expected and how it could impact them. Prior to the interview, each participant was given a consent form (see Appendix B**)** to ensure the participant completely understood the study, their part in the project, and the process for the interview.

Summary

This study sought to explore the role of indirect communication in facilitating or affecting the process a Taiwanese university student, studying English as a second language, goes through to transfer knowledge to meaning and thus develop capability. The methodology for this study was qualitative based on a constructivist perspective. Narrative inquiry was chosen as the research approach as this study sought emerging themes and relationships as opposed to proving a hypothesis, as would be done in a quantitative study. Since the researcher was also the teacher, the role the researcher, as the research instrument was discussed, as well as the ethical issues surrounding the validity, reliability and trustworthiness of the data.

A purposive sample was composed of 38 students, currently enrolled in a Taiwanese university, who agreed to participate in this study. Data collection was in the form of semi-structured interviews, student reflexivity journals and field notes. The data was analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2012) theory of thematic analysis and was triangulated to check for bias and to ensure consistency. Because reflexivity journals from both the students and the teacher were used for shaping the findings and conclusions of this study, a discussion of reflexivity was also included in this chapter. The next chapter will discuss the findings of the research study.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

Overview

The overall purpose of this study was to understand how indirect communication can move a student from memorized knowledge to meaning, to developing capability. This qualitative study explored the experiences of students at a Taiwan university to learn how indirect communication helped them apply the knowledge they learned in class in real-world situations. Through narrative inquiry and reflexivity journaling, this study not only explored the 'how' of indirect communication, but what factors and classroom activities contributed to the students' ability to move from knowledge to being capable of applying that knowledge in new contexts. This study explored how indirect communication can be used as an educational tool.

The structure of Chapter 4 identifies the participants and the themes that were developed from the thematic analysis of the data. The instruction and pedagogy, as well as the role of the teacher, were analyzed in the light of indirect communication, showing three overarching themes that moved students from memorized knowledge to capability: Student presentations, teamwork, and discussion/debates. The classroom environment and feedback were also shown to be critical for moving a student to capability. Direct quotations from participants are included in order to 'give voice' to the participants about their experiences.

Participants

Purposive samples, from 38 university students at National Chi Nan University in Taiwan, participated in the research. Purposive sampling was done with the aim of increasing the depth of understanding (Campbell et al., 2020) and for generating new knowledge through the process of comparison and contrast (Denieffe, 2020).

Data were collected from two university English classes over a period of one semester (16 weeks). Both classes were senior-level elective classes, thus the participants' English

language proficiency was expected to be at the intermediate to high intermediate level. The students were asked to write a personal reflexivity journal for each class activity, each week. There were 10 students in the public speaking class and 28 students in the English school-wide elective (Business English) course. Eighteen students volunteered for the interview: 5 from the public speaking class and 13 from the Business English class. There were 6 male and 12 female college students. The students in the public speaking course were all English majors. The participants in the Business English class included majors from the entire university and were made up of students from departments such as tourism, international business, banking, engineering, applied mathematics, and education. The study included a wide range of student participants from various backgrounds and disciplines.

Data Collection and Analysis

Using narrative inquiry, this qualitative study used three methods of data collection, including semi-structured audio and video-taped interviews, student reflexivity journals, and the personal reflexivity journal and field notes from the researcher.

An inductive, analytic thematic analysis of the semi-structured interviews, as well as of the students' reflexivity journals, was conducted to identify key themes and issues. This ensured that the process of coding was data-driven rather than based on the researcher's preconceptions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The advantage of this form of thematic analysis is its flexibility, allowing the research data to reflect what participants think, feel, and do (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The interviews were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six phase process (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Braun & Clarke, 2012; Clarke & Braun, 2017) as depicted in Table 1. Braun and Clarke's framework was chosen as it offers a clear, well-structured approach to data analysis (Nowell et al., 2017). The approach is especially suited to gaining the richness and depth of a qualitative

study (Byrne, 2022). Braun and Clarke's (2023) reflexive approach to thematic analysis aligns with this study by acknowledging that the researcher is always shaping their research, is never a "neutral conduit" (p. 4), and will always permeate the research with their individuality and subjectivity. While the table shows these phases as linear, in practice they are set up to be flexible, allowing for "layers of analysis that helped interpret the broader meaning of the data" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 38). This was done by conducting a two-level thematic review process, which reviewed potential themes against the coded data, as well as against the entire dataset. Table 1 explains the process for Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis.

Table 1
Process for Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of Process
1. Familiarizing yourself with the data	Conducted and transcribed the interviews. Read the data, and noted down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coded interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion using data software DELVE across the entire data set, and collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collated codes into potential themes.
4. Reviewing themes	Checked if the themes worked in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	Selected vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relate analysis to the research question and literature, producing a report of the analysis.

Note: Based on Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis (2006; 2012; 2017)

Table 2 presents phase two of the analysis process--generating initial codes. At this stage, codes were developed based on the repetition and use of specific words and phrases that

appeared within the student journals and transcribed interviews using qualitative data software from DELVE. In this example, taken from four student reflexivity journals, students were responding to a question about which class activities were the most helpful in teaching them to be more capable of working in a real-world situation and what skill they learned.

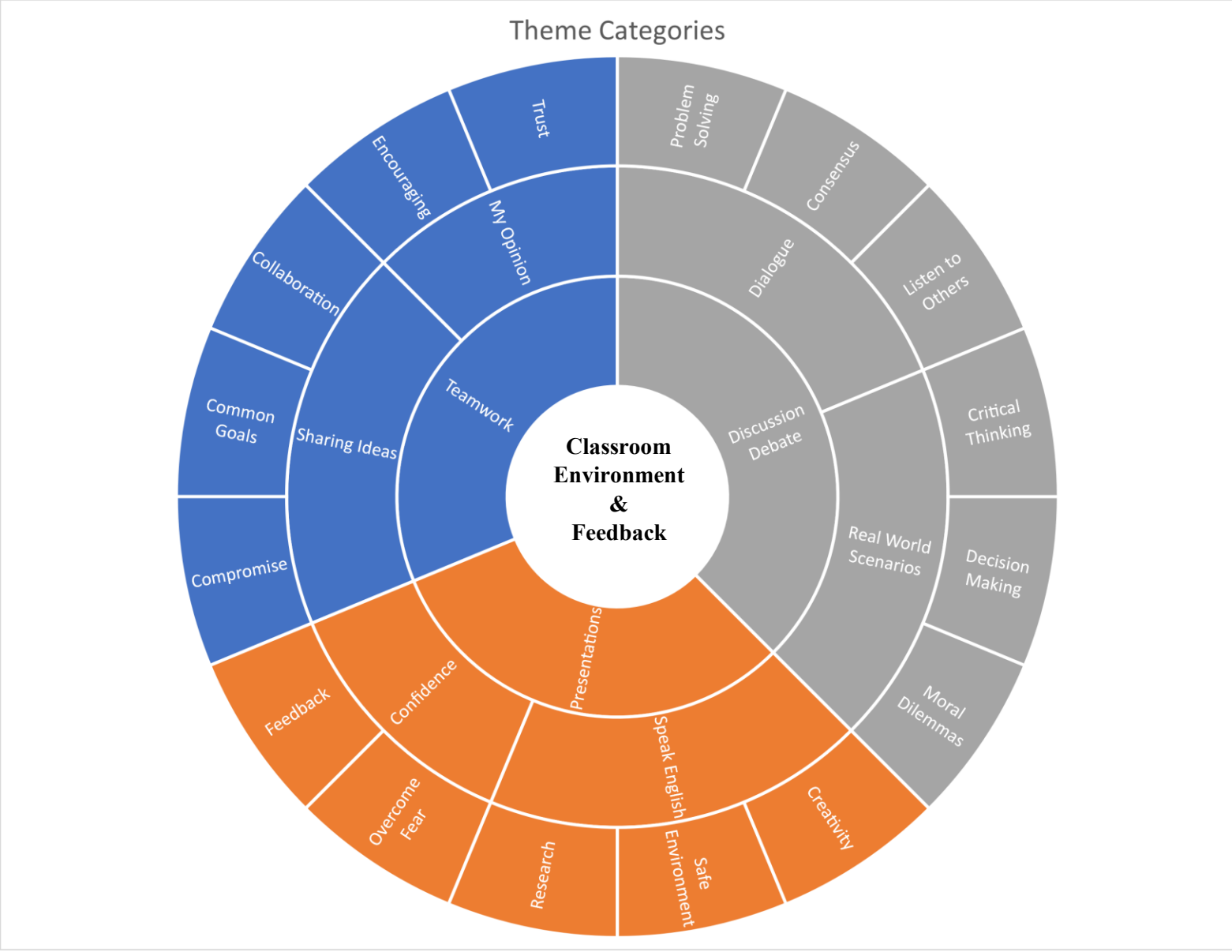
Table 2
Coding Process

Coded for Themes	**Reflexive Journal – Data extract**
1.Presentations 2.Speaking English 3. Read an English book 4. New vocabulary 5. Teamwork	**STUDENT #1** (1) I think the presentations we have in some lessons taught me the skill of (2) giving speeches in English very well. Actually, I want to go to the U.S. to study in the future. So the skill of giving English presentations is quite essential to me, and I did learn it through the lessons. (3) I learned the ability to read an English book and watch an English movie. (4) I also learned lots of interesting vocabularies while I was doing them. (5) I learned how team-working can help us to deal with dilemmas and difficulties.
1.Presentation 2. Ted Talks 3. Teamwork 4. In-class discussions 5. Problem-solving 6. Share ideas 7. Made friends	**STUDENT #2** (1) I learned the skill of giving English presentations. (2) I got lots of knowledge through the Ted talk and the textbooks. (3) I learned the importance of being a team player and how teamwork can lead us to solve really difficult problems. (4) I really enjoyed the discussion parts that we have during every lesson. (5) I like to solve problems with my team members and (6) exchange our thoughts with each other. I also (7) made lots of friends through this project.

1.In-class discussions 2. Moral dilemmas 3. Give Reasons 4. Solve problem by myself 5. Critical thinking 6. Problem-solving 7. Share ideas 8. Consensus 9. Teamwork	**STUDENT #3** (1) In class-discussions about (2) moral dilemmas helped me learn how to (6) solve problems, (7) share my ideas, and (9) work in a team **STUDENT #4** Every time we were doing a project, we have to try to (3) give our reasons and (4) solve the problem by ourselves first. It trained my (5) critical thinking and (6) problem-solving skills. And then we had to (7) discuss with our team members and (8) reach the final conclusions together. I learned the value of (9) how team-working can be so helpful if we encounter some difficulties.

At the end of the coding exercise, the total number of codes within the 18 interviews and 38 reflexivity journals came to 150 across the entire data set. In phase three, the codes were collated and sorted into potential themes, reducing the number to 45. This number would have been cumbersome and un-maneuverable without a data analysis system. But since the coding was inductive, the coded data was allowed to speak for itself. In phase four and five, the themes were reviewed, defined, and given specific names. The coded categories were generated into a thematic map, as seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Theme Categories



The findings centered around two major aspects that moved students from knowledge to meaning and are shown in the center of the wheel: The classroom environment and feedback. Because the classroom environment and feedback are tied into each aspect of student learning, a discussion of how it affects each ring of the wheel will be discussed at the end of this section.

The inner circle represents the three major pedagogical themes of student learning: Presentations, Teamwork, and Discussion/Debates. The student journals and interviews identified these three themes as being at the core of their ability to transfer memorized knowledge to capability. All of the classroom activities and projects centered around these three aspects and were set up by the teacher as a framework for utilizing indirect communication as a teaching method. A discussion of the instruction and pedagogy surrounding these three themes will be discussed in the next section, as well as the role the teacher played in moving the students from memorized knowledge to capability.

Radiating from the pedagogical themes are six core competencies, represented by the skills listed in the middle circle. These were identified by the students as the point at which they began to become aware of their competence and move from knowledge to capability. Analysis of the student interviews and journals showed that the instruction and pedagogy indirectly gave the students the ability to dialogue, speak better English, develop confidence, share their ideas, be able to share their opinion, and use these skills in real-world scenarios.

The ability of the students to move toward competency in these six areas, led to 16 outcomes the students reported as making them capable of not only having knowledge but being able to use that knowledge in the real world. This is represented by skills listed in the outer circle. The data showed the students developed critical thinking skills; were capable of better decision-making and problem-solving; were more creative; able to listen to others; able to provide feedback to their peers; had the ability to collaborate, compromise, and research; and most importantly, were able to overcome their fear. The outer circle represents 16 student outcomes that were developed through indirect communication, the classroom environment, and activities.

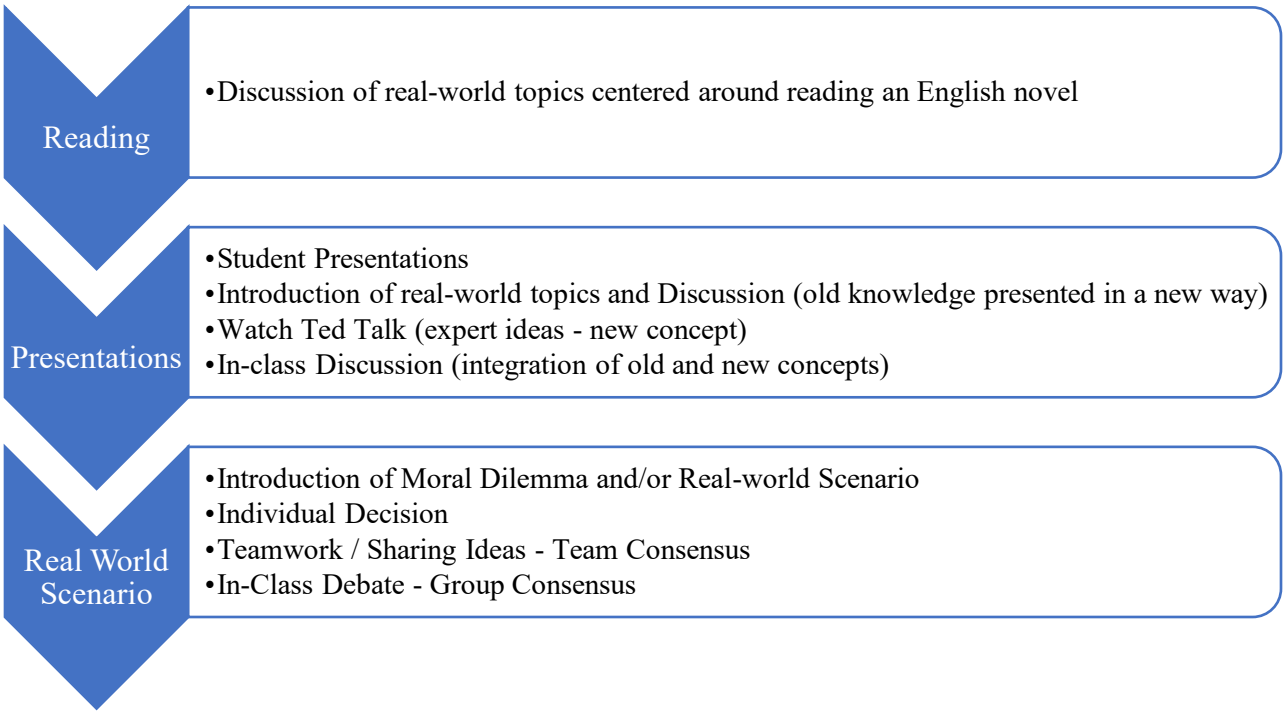
The research suggested that a strong relationship between the indirect communication method of instruction and pedagogy had the largest impact on the students' ability to move from simply having knowledge to developing competence to displaying the outcomes of capability.

Instruction and Pedagogy

The next section discusses how the instruction and pedagogy allowed indirect communication to frame the research findings. As indicated in the syllabus, the goals of this course were to develop teamwork, critical thinking skills, confidence, and higher-order English communication skills. This was accomplished by way of the introduction of a real-life concept, along with a Ted Talk, class discussion in small groups and shared ideas as a class, where the teacher prompted more ideas, critical dialogues, and in-class debates. The students then had to do a research project and presentation around the real-life scenario discussed in class.

Other weekly activities included moral dilemmas, conversations around real-life subjects, and the reading of an English novel. Real-life topics were discussed around each chapter, with the students required to write weekly assignments about what they would do, if placed in that situation, with critical dialogues discussed in class about their answers. (See Appendices C and D for the course syllabus showing the weekly assignments and discussion topics). Thus, Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, which focuses on doing, reflecting, conceptualizing, and experimenting, played a role in the creation of the instruction and pedagogy. Figure 3 illustrates the type of curriculum design and pedagogy the students experienced in these classes.

Figure 3
Classroom curriculum design



Reading: A two-hour lesson started with a 15–20-minute discussion about what the students read in their English novel. Topics such as forgiveness, revenge, indoctrination vs education, bullying vs intimidation, etc. were debated in class. This was followed by a class discussion centered around a real-life concept from the *21st Century Communications* textbook. The concepts in the textbook were not new to the students. For example, one of the featured topics involved body language. The students had already acquired a basic knowledge of this subject in high school, but were introduced to it again in a new way or in a new context allowing the students to look at the topic in a new light. Instead of discussing body language as messages people send to others, this unit looked at the message our own body language sends to ourselves. This was followed by a matching Ted Talk, featuring an expert on the high power and low power poses for success, which involved further class discussion. This required the students to combine and integrate old knowledge with new concepts and to apply those concepts in new contexts.

Students were then asked to apply the principles of high power and low power body language and give a presentation to the class.

Presentations: Each week the students were asked to research a topic of their own choosing and give a presentation on that topic in front of the class the following week. For example, if the main topic was on disabilities, the student had to research a person with disabilities and tell how that person overcame his or her disability, how their strengths and weaknesses contributed to that person's success, and how the student could use that information in a real-world scenario.

Real World: In the second hour, students were given a real-life problem to solve. For example, one of the scenarios involved ten applicants vying for admission into a medical school program that only had room for four. The question the students had to answer was: "Who would you choose to accept into the program and why?" There was a scenario for each applicant, along with their MCAT scores, GPA, the applicant's past history, and a recommendation letter explaining why the applicant should be admitted into the program. Each student was first asked to choose which four they would pick and why. The students were then asked to compare their answers with the members of their team. Each team was then asked to come to a consensus about which four people they would choose. The students had to learn to share their ideas, listen to others, work as a team, and provide reasons for their choices. Once the teams had finished their discussion, each team had to bring their decisions to the entire class. Then the class, as a whole, had to come to a consensus. Thus, each team had to debate, in class, with the other teams. It was important that each person make an individual choice first and then write down his or her own reasons for those choices. That way, each member came to the group with their own opinion and would have something to contribute to the team.

Each week the scenario would change and could be a moral dilemma, or a problem with deciding who got the visa, who got the loan, or who got the heart, etc. Some real-world scenarios revolved around moral problems, some were financial and banking issues, and some were local Taiwan issues or even world issues, dealing with war, poverty, or human rights.

Classroom Design: The classroom was set up to be student-led in a project-based environment where the teacher acted only as the guide in self-discovery, not in the instruction of new knowledge. Because there were no right answers in this type of environment, the students were able to explore their own creativity and share ideas with others without fear of criticism. The syllabus was built around in-class discussions of real-world topics, moral dilemmas, and presentations. The purpose was to enhance their teamwork, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and to develop confidence--all while enhancing their English conversation ability. The goal was to let the students take charge of their own learning, with the end result of creating employable students, who are capable of functioning in the real-world when confronted with situations that forced them to think in new contexts.

Role of the Teacher

In addition to the classroom instruction and pedagogy, the research showed that the teacher played a significant role in moving a student from knowledge to capability. This section will explore the role of the teacher in that process.

The teacher only acted as a guide, or facilitator, for the discussions. The classes were student-led and student-centered. The discussions were set up in a safe environment, with no criticism, no right or wrong answers, and where each student's opinion was considered important. The goal was for the students to decide for themselves what they believed. The only requirement was that a reason had to be provided for every decision or comment the student

made. Thus, perfect English was not the objective, but higher-order thinking skills. By providing multiple activities and projects, the students automatically began thinking in advanced English, while at the same time, learning skills such as teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, listening, public speaking, and confidence.

The following excerpt illustrates how the teacher supported student dialogues and in-class debates. This excerpt was selected because it was typical of the instruction and is given here because the focus of this study was on the exploration of indirect communication as a means of moving students from simply having knowledge *about* something to becoming capable of *doing* or acting on that knowledge.

Excerpt: Debate of a moral dilemma. (T = teacher; S = student)

> **T**: (read the scenario): Mr. Allen's son is seriously injured, but he has no car to take him to the hospital. He approaches a stranger and asks to borrow his car, but the stranger refuses saying that he has to go to an important appointment. Mr. Allen steals the car by force to take his son to the hospital. Was it right for Mr. Allen to steal the car? What do you think he should do?
>
> **S1**: Steal the car because a life is more important than stealing.
>
> **S2**: I don't think it's right to steal the car, because it isn't yours and stealing is wrong.
>
> **S3**: Yes, he should definitely steal the car. It's his son!! I would do anything for my child.
>
> **T**: So, the class consensus is that it's OK to steal the car because it's life and death, right? (The entire class agrees with this solution.)
>
> **T**: Let's change the scenario. Instead of being the father, you are the owner of the car and the man wants to borrow it. Now, what do you do?
>
> **S1**: Give it to him because I don't want to be responsible for someone's death.

S2: No! My parents would kill me. He can use someone else's car.

S3: I would make him steal it, then it wouldn't be my fault.

S4: Flag down another car and ask them for help.

T: So, the class consensus is NOT to give him your car, right? (The entire class agrees that they would not give the man their car.)

T: Let's change the scenario again. Now, you are a student on campus and stranger needs help. Do YOU steal the car in order to help a stranger?

S1: No! I don't know him, so I'm not responsible.

S2: No, it's not right to steal the car.

S3: Yes, we should still help him, even though he's a stranger.

S4: If it was another student, I'd help him, but if it's a strange man, then 'no'

S5: If it was a girl or a woman, then I would steal the car, because it's a girl and she's helpless.

T: (The class consensus is not to steal the car for a stranger). So, at the beginning of the discussion, you said that saving a life was the most important thing. Now, you're saying, "it depends." You can't have it both ways. Either a life is important or it's not. Are there any other options that you haven't considered? (The class is now in a dilemma about how to answer the question, is mumbling and discussing with their teammates. Everyone in the class is now fully engaged).

T: Ok. I want you to go back to your teams and discuss what other options might be available.

S1: If it was my car, I would drive him to the hospital myself and skip the meeting.

S2: We could call an ambulance.

S3: I would let him use my phone to call someone or to call for help.

In this example, at the beginning of the discussion, the students had not considered any options other than the scenario that was presented: to steal or not steal the car. Upon further discussion, and sharing ideas, the group was able to come up with an acceptable solution that everyone could agree with.

After class, the students had to answer the two questions in their reflexive journals: How did this activity help you be able to use what you learned in the real world? How did this activity help you solve problems, think of creative solutions, or help you work with others? Here is an example of their answers.

Becky: Moral dilemma surely was a difficult topic, even when I discussed it in a group of three. However, it may also be an inevitable problem in real life. Real-life moral dilemma problems might differ in difficulty because of other conditions to consider. In real life, I'd make the choice which I would not regret and accept the consequences.

Tim: The activity moved me from simply having knowledge about ethical decision-making to making it meaningful for me by putting me in a realistic scenario where I had to make a difficult ethical decision. During the activity, I was thinking about the different options available to me and trying to weigh the pros and cons of each. This activity helped me be able to use what I learned in the real-world by giving me a framework for making ethical decisions. The activity would help me solve problems by giving me a systematic approach to making ethical decisions.

Lydia: Thinking the problems in different person's point of view is meaningful. Thinking things in different perspectives, I can put myself in others' shoes.

> **Maggie:** During this activity, I have various thoughts and emotions, such as confusion, frustration, empathy, or enlightenment, as I explore moral dilemmas and consider different perspectives and values. This activity helped me to develop critical thinking skills and enhance my ability to make informed and ethical decisions in different contexts. In the real-world, I often face complex problems and conflicts to make difficult decisions and collaborate with others. The skills and insights gained from this activity can be applied to other situations to help me to solve.

As shown in the above examples, the dialogue represents an indirect style of teaching that shows a balance between the teacher as a guide and the movement of the student from knowledge to meaning, and thus to capability.

It is now necessary to go back and address the results of the findings surrounding the three pedagogical themes represented by the first ring of the thematic wheel. The combination of indirect communication as a teaching method and the role and attitude of the teacher, revealed three overarching pedagogical themes leading to the ability of the students to move from memorized knowledge to becoming capable in new contexts: Student presentations, Teamwork and sharing ideas, Discussion/debates on real-world topics.

Student Presentations

In-class presentations were recognized by the students as an activity that helped them develop conceptualization, critical thinking, confidence, and command of the English language. For example, one student stated,

> The in-class practice of preparing the presentations and speaking in class, helps me think about how to solve some questions that happen in the real world. It makes me have more confidence to speak English and not be afraid.

Another student commented, “I think just doing the speeches every week makes someone more capable.” During one class, the students had to research an infographic, present it to the class, and explain the importance of the data. After completing the assignment, one student wrote,

> Creating an infographic presentation can move us from simply knowing a topic to making it meaningful by requiring us to condense and visualize information. In this era of information explosion, we need this skill very much--the skill of organizing information and presenting it simply. It encourages us to think critically about the information we want to convey and find creative solutions to present it effectively.

This learning environment created capability by allowing the student to birth their own ideas and to share those ideas in class. Because the students were able to choose their own topics, they had to do a considerable amount of research for each presentation. One student commented in his interview,

> For this assignment, I spent many hours just researching my topic for the presentation. I learned more from doing the research, than in doing the presentation itself. Although, having to present my research to the class gave me confidence to express my ideas.

The majority of students had never been asked, or been given the opportunity, to give a presentation in any of their other classes. Thus, this activity was a novelty for them. One student said,

> I used to be nervous because I’ve never had an opportunity to give a speech in front of others. Although it was a forced situation and I must do it in class, I gained knowledge about myself from the experience and learned to have confidence.

Giving weekly presentations was one of the most important activities in contributing to a student’s move from knowledge to capability.

Teamwork and Sharing Ideas

In addition to in-class presentations, there were weekly activities which allowed the students to express and share their ideas as part of a team. The thematic analysis revealed that teamwork and sharing ideas was the second most valuable activity in making the students more capable. This is reflected in student comments such as: "I realize that a person walks fast; a group of people walk far." Another student stated:

> Working in a team helped me approach problem solving in a creative and innovative way. By discussing ideas with my teammates, we were able to think outside the box and come up with unique solutions that others may not have considered.

One of the team-based activities was called the Marshmallow Challenge. The students had to build a tower out of spaghetti, tape, and string, and put the marshmallow at the top. Each member of the team had to contribute in order for the project to be a success. One student's response after class was,

> The marshmallow challenge taught me that each individual can have their own thoughts and ideas. Then, it's the team's job to compile the ideas into one concrete solution. It's about bringing ideas into a conversation, discussing it, and executing it.

Another student stated it this way,

> Through this process, I was able to move beyond simply thinking about something to making it meaningful in several ways. I learned how to work collaboratively with others to generate new ideas and solutions, approach problems with a more open and creative mindset, and develop innovative solutions to complex challenges.

Many students experienced a revelation, of sorts, because they had never been asked their opinion in a classroom setting. One student commented, "I realized for the first time that I have

an opinion and that others thought it was valuable. I do have something to contribute and my ideas are important." Another student commented, "The group discussion brought out ideas I had never thought of. In listening to others, I changed my mind about what I thought and was able to adopt new ideas." Thus, the use of teamwork developed the ability of the students to share ideas, and fostered cooperation, collaboration, conceptualization, and confidence.

Discussion and Debate using Real-World Scenarios

The discussion and debate of real-world scenarios was the third most important aspect students said helped them move from knowing about the material to living the material. For example, in one activity, the students were part of a Taiwan university admissions committee and were given the task of choosing who got into medical school. In another activity, the students were part of a medical team at a hospital in Taipei, with the choice of choosing who got the heart transplant. An additional activity required the students to be part of the Nantou school board with the job of deciding which school programs to cut, based on a budget. These types of real-life decisions created student comments such as: "Instead of simply reading or hearing about it, this hands-on experience allows for a deeper understanding and connection to the subject, making it more meaningful." Another student stated it this way: "This activity moved me from simply having knowledge about decision-making to making it meaningful by putting me in a realistic scenario where I had to make a difficult ethical decision."

Discussion and debate required students to weigh the pros and cons, to give reasons for their choices, and to think about the criteria they used to make their decisions. First, the students had to choose their own answers individually. They then had to share their answers with their team and come to a consensus. Finally, each team shared their results with the class and had to come to a group consensus. This led to insightful comments from the students, such as:

> During this activity, I was thinking about the different options available to me and trying to weigh the pros and cons of each. This activity helped me be able to use what I learned in the real-world by giving me a framework for making decisions.

Other comments reveal the difficulty of this assignment:

> During this activity, I have various thoughts and emotions, such as confusion, frustration, empathy, or enlightenment, as I explore moral dilemmas and consider different perspectives and values. In the real-world, I often have to face complex problems in different contexts. This is the type of decisions I will have to make in the future, so I need to know what criteria to use to make those decisions.

Another student stated:

> This activity forced me to consider the impact that my actions and content could have on others. This activity be able to use what I learned in the real-world by giving me a better understanding of the responsibilities that come with being in a leadership position.

The use of real-world scenarios made the students utilize their critical thinking and conceptualization skills. The ability to develop confidence resides in their ability to give valid reasons for their decisions and to learn to approach solutions from both sides of a situation. One student summed it up this way:

> We must find solutions that align with both sides of a situation. For example, splitting expenses, or deciding who gets the visa, or the heart, or the loan. There is no universally correct answer, thus we must approach these discussions with empathy and an openness to different perspectives and find mutually agreeable arrangements.

Utilizing in-class discussions and debates created an environment where the students could share their opinions, requiring them to listen to others, and participate in real-world

solutions to real-world problems. The three pedagogical themes of student presentations, teamwork, and discussions gave students a concrete method of moving from simply talking about something to doing something with that knowledge.

There is one last unifying factor that was revealed in the analysis. In addition to indirect communication as a teaching method is the theme of classroom environment. It is cast, along with feedback and the role of the teacher, at the center of the wheel, as a critical aspect of moving students to capability. Without a positive environment for growth, transference and capability cannot flourish. Feedback was also seen as a major theme in the students' interviews and reflexivity journals.

Classroom Environment and Feedback

Indications of enhanced student capability involved the encouragement they received from both their classmates and the teacher and the importance of feedback. According to one student: "Feedback from the teacher and my classmates encouraged me and gave me good ideas for improvement." Other important aspects of indirect communication centered around the ability of the student to "choose my own topics," "think for myself," and, "learn to persuade."

The teacher also played a large role in moving the students to become more capable. For example, student comments included things such as: "The teacher was easy to talk to," or "She teaches more than just conversation," and "The teacher thinks every idea is important." Other comments were, "The teacher treats us like adults," and "You'd better come to class ready to talk because the teacher asks lots of questions." One student stated, "This is the only class I've taken where we can discuss politics, different world-views, and current events, without criticism or judgment."

The environment of the classroom also played a significant role in developing student capability with comments such as, “Every class was fun and exciting,” or, “This class isn’t boring,” and, “This is one of the only classes I look forward to every week. There is always some interesting projects and discussions.” Such comments demonstrate that a collaborative environment with both teacher and student feedback are critical elements in moving a student to capability.

Summary

In this chapter, three major pedagogical themes, six student-recognized competencies, and sixteen outcomes were recognized as moving students from knowledge to capability. The impact of the teacher, the classroom, and the various methods of indirect communication, have been shown to play a large role in moving students from simply having knowledge about something to being capable of using that information in real-world situations. The findings indicated that the classroom activities provided an opportunity for the students to think for themselves, learn how to make choices, and be confident in sharing their ideas. In addition, the research showed that the students’ English ability was moved to a higher level, due to the use of new vocabulary and the nature of the discussions. The analysis of the data reveals that the salient factor of utilizing indirect communication methods had a direct impact on the students’ ability to provoke thought, engage the imagination, utilize critical thinking and problem-solving, and stir the emotions, rather than simply imparting objective information.

This study revealed that indirect communication methods are a sustainable method of teaching capability and enhancing those soft skills that employers need and expect from university graduates. The next chapter will provide a discussion and conclusion of the findings along with recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

The goal of this study was to explore indirect communication from two angles: First, as a teaching method for Taiwanese college students and second, how indirect communication affects a student's ability to transfer memorized facts into meaning and thus develop capability that can be used in new contexts and in real-world situations.

The first consideration is how a person develops capability. Teaching a baby how to walk offers a simple example. First, the parent (or teacher) explains the process of how to walk to the baby, providing not only the knowledge about what walking is, but going into great depth explaining the physiological aspects of how a person walks. Next, the parent demonstrates how to walk, making sure the baby pays strict attention, so the baby can duplicate his example, because he will be tested on it later. Once the baby has been given all the knowledge he needs for success, the parent sets the baby on the floor and…he falls down. He fails. Why? Because knowledge alone does not create capability.

This may seem like a ridiculous scenario. It is! No one would do this in real life! However, that is exactly what happens in the classroom. The educator provides all the facts and information necessary for capability. The student memorizes the information and may even receive an 'A' on the test, proving to the teacher and the university that the student has internalized the knowledge and is capable of acting on that information. However, like the baby, when the student is placed in a real-world scenario, he often fails. Why? The student does not have the capacity to transfer the knowledge he has learned in school into a real-world situation.

The purpose of this research was to understand how indirect communication can not only be used to teach the baby (the student) how to walk, but how indirect communication can be used to help the baby (the student) be able to walk in new contexts--not just in the parents' living

rooms, but be able to navigate hills, steps, and terrain that may be slippery, have rocks, or other obstacles. It is the same for the student. The student must be able to solve problems, work with others, be creative, and function in new contexts. This requires the ability to transfer knowledge. This discussion centers around three pedagogical themes involving indirect communication that emerged from the student journals and interviews: Teacher attributes, the classroom environment, and indirect communication as a teaching method.

Teacher Attributes

There appears to be a profound difference in Western and Eastern teaching styles. Western teachers tend to be more student-centered and interactive with their students, and have a low-power distance. These attributes lend themselves to being more proactive in encouraging students to ask questions and analyze information, fostering a more exploratory approach to learning. The data collected from the students identified four distinct teacher attributes that have an effect on student capability: developing partnerships; a sense of humor; encouragement, which entails a focus on trying and not perfection; and helping the student find their own voice, without criticism or judgment.

Partnership: Because of the low-power distance, the teacher was able to employ a more collaborative approach between student and teacher, emphasizing a partnership in learning. Dialogue, participation, and open discussion (and in some cases, open debate about differing cultural ideas) were important aspects, providing an enjoyable challenge for both the students and the teacher. Because of the teacher's Western background, engaging in open discussions and dialogue allowed the teacher to understand their students and to change the teacher's perspective.

This was a new experience for the students. They had never been treated as equals. In their reflexivity journals, the students commented that the teacher treated them as friends and

appeared to really enjoy talking to them and hearing what they had to say. The students felt that every comment they made and every idea they shared was taken seriously and was valuable. For example, Bethany wrote that it was the first time a teacher was interested in her viewpoints and took her comments seriously even though not everyone in the class completely agreed on everything. Coming from a background where the teacher plays a central role as the authority figure whose job is to impart knowledge, the idea that the teacher was there to hear what *they* had to say, created a phenomenal shift in the students' paradigm, allowing them to incorporate ideas from both Eastern and Western thought.

Sense of Humor: Another attribute that contributed to the students move from knowledge to capability was the teacher's sense of humor. In the Eastern classroom, education tends to be considered a serious endeavor and requires a serious mind. In the teacher's classroom, it was imperative that students learned to laugh at their mistakes and not take themselves too seriously. The idea that English was simply a tool to play with, and not something to be mastered, was also new for the students.

Another new concept for the students was the idea that no one cares about their accent. In America, for example, there are different accents depending on whether one is from the South, New York, Boston, the Midwest, or California. This created a breakthrough in the students' willingness to try and fail. For example, at the beginning of each class period, the teacher would let the students give her a brief Chinese lesson. This usually ended in magnifying the teacher's inability to grasp what the students considered to be simple tones and phrases. Once the students observed that the teacher was willing to look foolish and be self-deprecating, it opened the door to greater student success and willingness for the students to try it for themselves. Adam put it this way, "The teacher was willing to laugh at herself, which made us comfortable to also laugh

at ourselves." After the teacher's 'Chinese lesson,' the students were given a tongue twister to try and master, creating another moment of humor, breaking the ice for the rest of the class period. The ability to laugh at oneself, and with the teacher, was a useful indirect communication method in moving students towards capability.

Encouragement: The teacher's attitude towards the students as a guide, mentor, or "midwife" in helping them birth their own ideas, played a significant role in moving students to capability: first, in the assumption that the students *are* capable of great ideas and contributing to society; second, that failure (not being perfect) is OK; and third, in helping students overcome fear. Thus, the concept of 'just try it' became a classroom motto.

Fear was a major roadblock for student capability. Once the teacher removed the fear of failure, of losing face, of making mistakes, of their ideas being rejected, and the fear of criticism, capability could multiply. Krystal was a good example of a this. She wrote in her journal, "My first day, I felt anxious, but the teacher's response really helped me improve and overcome my fears. Now, I am still shy, but I know I can do it." Thus, one of the most important teacher attributes is the ability to indirectly imbue the student with the courage to try, to experiment, to be unique, and to instill confidence.

Helping Students Find their Own Voice: Individuality, uniqueness and bringing different ideas to the table, are encouraged in Western education. This was a third concept that was foreign to the students. Because of the tendency to be collectivist thinkers, the idea that the student could be praised for proposing, inventing, and sharing their own thoughts and ideas was a unique paradigm. The data from the students' journals and interviews emphasized how important this concept was for moving students from knowledge to capability. Because the students were able to express their own voice, other students became interested in hearing their

opinions. The students commented that the lack of criticism or judgment for self-expression was a major contributor to the teacher helping the student to birth their own ideas. Once students adopted the attitude of "you can do it" and realized that they were proud of themselves, it was much like the baby that knows he is going to be praised no matter how many times he falls down. Capability starts with an enthusiastic teacher and is achieved using the indirect communication methods of humor, praise, and the encouragement of the student to give birth to their own ideas.

These are characteristics that can only be demonstrated indirectly. The teacher cannot directly impart this type of knowledge to a student. It must be discovered for themselves. The teacher must also demonstrate these attributes, in his or her personal life. Once the teacher can communicate the concept that the student *is* capable, the student *becomes* capable.

Classroom Environment

In Eastern classrooms, emphasis is often placed on discipline, with all attention geared towards the front of the classroom. The classes in Taiwan are very large, with theater-like seating and microphones for each student--much like the U.S. Senate or House of Representatives. The environment is set up for the 'speaker of the House' (the teacher) to be front and center. Half of the teacher's classes have 50 or more students in each class. There are no individual desks and the tables are set up in long rows. The classroom environment is not set up for the students to ask questions or participate in team activities such as dialogue or discussion. There is no room for experimenting, group projects or games. In fact, the classroom design is almost a detriment to trust and the creation of student openness. The classroom is constructed with the purpose of positioning the teacher as the authority, with microphones at the podium to assist the students in hearing the teacher's lecture.

Moving students from memorized facts to capability requires the creation of an environment that encourages freedom of expression and experimentation, one that is non-judgmental and not critical. This type of indirect communication environment fosters room for growth, creating an environment where the students do not fear to try and fail. The classrooms in Taiwan, due simply to the large classroom sizes, tend to instill a feeling of intimidation and isolation. With 50 people in a class, it is difficult to create an environment that feels intimate, where every student feels that they have a chance to be heard. Thus, the students place a high priority on the creation of a safe space. George is a great example. He commented in his journal that he felt the teacher contributed to making the classroom a safe space to experiment with different types of speeches. He stated, "The teacher and my friends helped me have courage. I think I can give a speech if a company asked me and not be afraid."

In order to overcome the obstacle of such large classroom sizes, the students were divided into teams, with no more than 5 students in a team. For group projects, dialogue was encouraged within each team, with the team's results brought to the entire class for discussion. For example, in a group of 50, the classroom would be divided into 10 teams. Thus, the permanent structures and tables no longer became a barrier, The teams were designed for each member of the team to play a role and/or answer a question. For example, one of the group projects involved designing a robot (in theory, on paper). Each team had to decide: (1) What kind of robot is it? (2) What is its purpose? (3) Who does it help? (4) What does it look like? (5) What special skills does it have? The team had to come up with a robot that would improve the quality of life, and each person on the team had to answer one of the above questions, which they then had to present to the entire class. After each team had presented, the class then discussed the pros and cons of each teams' ideas, offering feedback for improvement and suggestions for enhancing

their robots. The students said they still felt nervous having to present, in English, in front of 50 people, but because they were able to present as a team, the feeling of being alone dissipated. Jenny is an example of a student who had never spoken in public. Jenny said that she felt a sense of accomplishment and pride. Not only did she realize that she could do it, but she also felt that she had contributed to the team and that her ideas and opinions were valuable.

One of the most important aspects of creating a classroom environment, that was conducive to meaningful learning, was the ability for the students to listen to others' ideas. Many of the students felt they learned more from listening to each other than listening to the teacher. Incorporated into the listening environment was receiving feedback, both positive encouragement and suggestions for improvement. The classroom environment moved from one of fear, to one that the students felt was fun.

The idea of an entertaining classroom environment was also a novelty for the students. Their comments centered around the idea that, once one got to college, learning was no longer fun. Their thoughts were that college is a serious endeavor because now one had to be intentional about learning in order to get a good job. Evelyn, for example, shared in her journal and in her interview that she had no idea that one could have fun and learn at the same time. A classroom that was fun and entertaining became an important facet of a student's growth and learning. Consequently, student attendance and participation were higher. Koki commented to other students that he could not skip class because he might miss something interesting, since he never knew what kinds of projects, games, or situations he was going to encounter in class.

The classroom environment empowered the students to develop confidence, experience freedom of expression, overcome fear, feel free to make mistakes, and receive positive feedback and encouragement. The classroom environment was moved from an atmosphere of lecture and

direct instruction, and replaced by indirect communication. In this way, it became a safe space for experimentation, acceptance, sharing, and speaking English, as well as the development of soft skills.

Again, the message was clear: student capability was heavily influenced by indirectly controlling the design and set up of the learning environment. The final factor in helping the student transfer memorized knowledge to capability was in using indirect communication as a pedagogical teaching method.

Indirect Communication Teaching Method

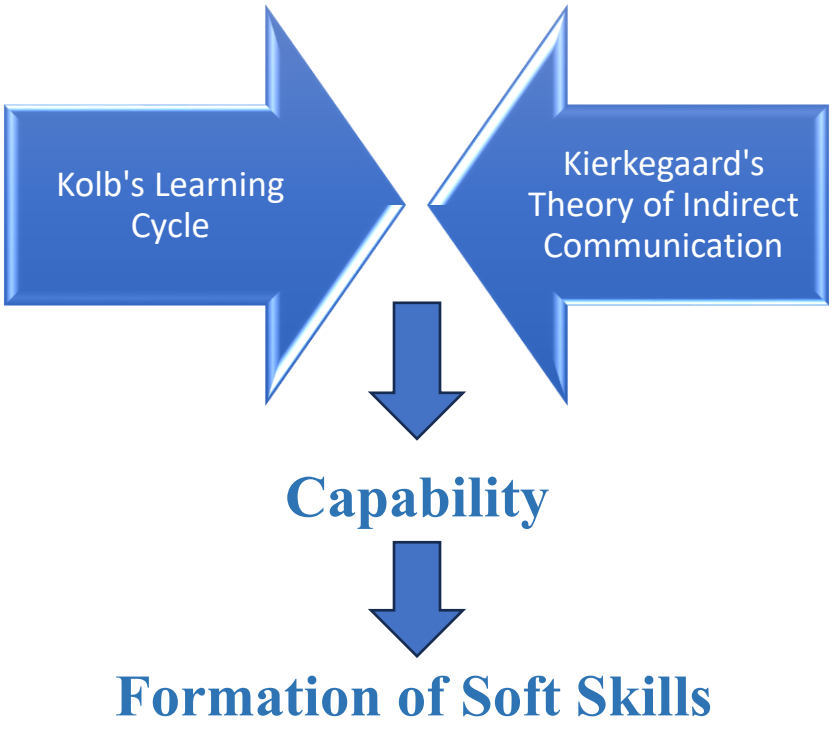
Indirect communication involves the maieutic method of instruction, where the teacher's job is to help the student give birth to their own ideas. This involves letting the student be in charge of their own education. This was a novel approach of instruction for the Taiwanese students and could not be accomplished by simply changing the curriculum to a more hands-on approach. A pedagogical model involving indirect communication must incorporate the attitude of the teacher and the classroom environment. It does not matter what textbook materials the teacher chooses to use; an indirect approach to teaching capability can be used in all subjects, not only English.

The classroom curriculum focused on 'doing' and applying every concept to a real-life scenario. The students were able to experience real-world situations in the classroom as they read, presented, analyzed, and reflected on issues such as moral dilemmas and real-life situations. This experience gave the students the capability to move from simply having knowledge about something to being able to transfer and use that knowledge.

Every aspect of the class curriculum involved the students engaged in doing an activity that involved discussing, presenting, analyzing, reflecting, collaborating, conversing, and

evaluating. In each activity, space was made for the students to take control and responsibility for their own learning, which created an environment for transference of knowledge to capability because of their own discovery about themselves. Transference is the process of moving knowledge to meaning and takes place when one's existing knowledge affects the performance of new tasks. For Kierkegaard, the utilization of indirect communication was critical for students in the development of transference. This teaching method allows a teacher to awaken the student indirectly. This aspect results in a 2-prong approach to capability which utilizes Kolb's learning cycle and Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication, as seen in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4
2-Prong Approach to Capability



Kolb's experiential learning cycle provided the framework for a learning process strategy, while Kierkegaard's indirect communication provided the method of application. Kolb's learning cycle used texts that provided cases based on real-life situations. Kierkegaard's

theory of indirect communication offered challenging issues and real-world scenarios to the students without providing them with the solution. As a result, the students were forced to use reflective thinking that led to the formulation of theses and hypotheses. As the concepts began to gel, the students began to formulate an opinion and were required to present that opinion to their colleagues. Stella felt that doing an in-class presentation in front of her peers was a mile-stone moment because it was at this point that she recognized that she had ideas, that other people were willing to listen to those ideas, and that she could actually think. According to the students' journals and interviews, it appeared that the students had never been asked their opinion and were not given much of an opportunity to formulate their own ideas. This two-pronged approach created capability by allowing the students to formulate and share their own ideas.

The use of real-world scenarios, moral dilemmas, and problem-solving activities were a means of applying Kolb's learning cycle, but the teacher's method of delivery, such as avoiding direct communication and lecture were the means of applying Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication and ambiguity. This resulted in classroom conditions where students were encouraged to dialogue. It provided a comfortable environment where the students would not lose face, while it also produced a sense of intrigue that motivated students to engage with the process.

The same idea can be seen in reverse. The students thought they were coming to class to learn English, but they were indirectly shaping their worldviews, learning to solve problems, making decisions, and overcoming their fear. Thus, this study revealed that using indirect communication as a teaching method creates a double aspect of capability--the formation of soft skills and an increased capacity to use English in a variety of contexts and real-world applications. In addition, students developed higher-order thinking skills and learned how to

work in a team. This all happened without the students' being consciously aware that they had acquired these skills, or the realization that they had fundamentally changed either their behavior or their way of thinking.

In essence, the students became interested to the point that they were not even thinking about learning English, they just *did* learn English. In addition, the students also learned soft skills, such as critical thinking, conceptualization, and transferability; most importantly, they gained capability, and, as Kierkegaard suggested, the teacher simply disappeared in the process. This is the objective and aim of indirect communication.

Answering the Research Questions

There are two distinct findings that answer **RQ 1**: How can Western teachers use indirect communication as a method for Taiwanese college students to transfer memorized facts into meaning, and thus develop capability, that can be used in new contexts and in real-world situations?

The first key finding showed that replacing an atmosphere of lecture and direct communication with indirect communication curriculum and teaching methods caused students to move from simply having knowledge to being able to use that knowledge in the real-world and in new contexts. The second key finding was that teacher attributes, such as developing partnerships with students, a sense of humor, encouraging the student to birth their own ideas, and encouraging the student to be unique and find their own voice, play a key role in moving students from knowledge to capability. These findings demonstrate that a Western teacher, using indirect communication methods in a Taiwanese classroom, can be successful in moving students from knowledge to capability.

This study revealed three important findings that answer **RQ 2**: How does indirect communication affect a student's ability to transfer facts into capability so students can apply that knowledge in new contexts and real-world situations?

First, creating a classroom environment that is conducive to discussion group projects and activities, team-building, collaboration, sharing ideas, and which is also fun, produced an atmosphere that enhanced student capability. Second, combining Kolb's learning cycle and Kierkegaard's theory of indirect communication methods produced two types of capability: the formation of soft skills as well as an increased capacity to use English in a variety of contexts and real-world applications. Students thought they were coming to learn English, but they indirectly developed soft skills in areas such as critical thinking, conceptualization, problem-solving, and teamwork. This allowed them to transfer memorized knowledge into capability. Third, using indirect communication methods fundamentally changed the students' worldviews, created higher-order thinking skills, and increased student capability without the students' awareness that they had acquired these skills.

These findings demonstrate that indirect communication methods are effective for the transference of memorized knowledge to capability in Taiwanese college students.

Implications

The implications for this study demonstrated that the combination of Kolb and Kierkegaard provided a useful means of moving students toward capability. Kolb provided a description of the framework for experiential learning and knowledge acquisition, while Kierkegaard provided an array of tools not available in direct communication that could be used, either individually or collectively, to help students gain capability. These methods include everything from the didactic, in the form of YouTube videos, such as Ted Talks, to the dialectic in the form of dialogue, debates, teamwork activities, moral dilemmas, humor, projects, and in-

class presentations. Kolb provided the practical aspect of learning, while Kierkegaard provided the methodology for the practical application. Kolb prescribed "doing" for learning to take place, while Kierkegaard prescribed indirect communication for "uncovering" the meaning that leads to capability.

Merging the experiential with indirect communication produces students who are able to move from simply having knowledge to being capable of using that knowledge in the real world. Indirect communication methods make this transference possible. The implications are that indirect communication methods provide a wider variety of tools than direct communication methods for moving students toward capability by creating an environment for them to birth their own ideas, not simply parroting memorized facts.

Limitations

This study has the following limitations: First, it is limited in scope, as it was created in the context of a single university in Taiwan with students who had limited command of the English language. Second, the transferability of the findings to other Asian countries needs to be considered. Even though there are similarities in cultures across Asia, differences do exist that could impact the outcome. Third, the study was conducted over one 16-week semester, which is a short period of time for moving students from memorized knowledge to full capability.

Recommendations for Future Research

The significance of indirect learning as a communication model could be of value as Taiwanese educators move towards solving the problem of rote-memorization and knowledge-only-based learning. This dissertation could be very helpful to any teacher attempting to teach Taiwanese students, or any students who have been schooled in a teacher-centric culture. There are further areas of study worthy of investigation as a result of this research. The study could be expanded to include indirect communication methods in other Asian countries or areas where

students are learning English as a second language. While there are similarities in cultures across Asia, differences also exist that may affect the outcome. Also, a quantitative study could be conducted measuring the growth and/or strength of transferability between a classroom conducted in indirect communication and a traditional classroom. Finally, indirect communication methods of instruction could be conducted with a Taiwanese teacher to determine whether the same outcomes would be achieved.

Summary

One of the main purposes of higher education is to prepare students to enter the workforce; however, studies have shown there is a disconnect between the soft skills employers are looking for and the method of instruction in higher education institutions. This is especially prevalent in Asian countries where the education system is based on rote memorization. Employers are stating that graduating university students are not capable of using that information in new contexts or in real-world situations. The purpose of this narrative inquiry was to explore how indirect communication can be used as a teaching method for developing transference and capability in Taiwanese college students.

This study demonstrated that indirect communication was an effective tool in moving students from simply having knowledge about something to being capable of using that knowledge in new contexts and in real-world situations. The findings suggest a pedagogical approach based on Kolb's experiential learning theory and Søren Kirkegaard's theory of indirect communication that has been shown to be effective in creating students who are capable of doing new things and not simply repeating the thoughts of others.

The thematic analysis revealed three pedagogical themes that contribute to a student's ability to transfer knowledge to capability: Teacher attributes, the classroom environment, and indirect communication as a teaching method. Radiating from those three themes were six core

competencies, giving the students the ability to dialogue, speak better English, develop confidence, share their ideas and opinions, and use these skills in real-world scenarios. This led to sixteen outcomes the students reported as making them capable of not only having knowledge but being able to use that knowledge in the real world. The data showed that the students developed critical thinking skills, were better at decision-making and problem-solving, were more creative, were able to collaborate and listen to others, and most importantly, were able to overcome their fear. The indirect communication method was practiced in a student-led classroom through reading, in-class presentations, and activities involving real-world scenarios.

The research indicated that not only is indirect communication an important method for knowledge transference but that the role of the teacher is also a significant factor in developing capability. Teachers who act simply as a guide or facilitator, ask questions, probe the students for their ideas, allow dialogue and provide an interactive classroom capture the attention of the students and create a learning environment that fosters the transfer of knowledge to capability. When the teacher allows the student to develop their own conclusion, capability becomes a reality.

One of the most relevant findings of this study was that using indirect communication as a teaching method fostered development in two areas of capability--the formation of soft skills and an increased capacity of the student to use English in a variety of contexts and applications. This happened without the students' awareness that they had fundamentally changed their way of thinking. The findings indicated that the students were aware that they had become capable. They could speak better English, make decisions, solve complex problems, work as a team, overcome their fear, and create and share their own ideas. They could not, however, articulate exactly *when,* during the semester, this had taken place. What the students could articulate was

how they became capable: through ‘doing’ and applying learned knowledge to new situations and contexts. The students had become capable without thinking about it. This study showed that indirect communication as a teaching method creates an environment which allows the student to give birth to their own ideas. As Kierkegaard would have suggested, it is *how* the message is presented and not *what* is being presented that creates capability. That is the purpose and goal of higher education.

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APPENDIX A: IRB Approval

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

April 6, 2023

Melynie Tooley
Sheri Parmelee

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY22-23-734 Indirect Communication as a Teaching Method for Developing Transference and Capability in Taiwanese College Students

Dear Melynie Tooley, Sheri Parmelee,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: April 6, 2023. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, PhD, CIP
Administrative Chair
Research Ethics Office

APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form

Title of the Project: Indirect Communication as a Teaching Method for Developing Transference and Capability in Taiwanese College Students
Principal Investigator: Melynie Tooley, Doctoral Candidate, School of Strategic Communications, at Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be a student at National Chi Nan University and be enrolled in an English class taught by Teacher Tooley, in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature. Taking part in this research project is voluntary. Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to explore how teachers can use indirect communication as a method for helping college students transfer memorized facts into meaning, and thus develop capability.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an in-person, audio-recorded interview that will take no more than an hour. You may be asked to review your transcripts for accuracy or to make sure your comments were recorded correctly. This should not take more than 30 minutes.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study. The benefits to society include helping other higher education professors/teachers help students transfer memorized knowledge and facts into meaning. It will also benefit the research on using indirect communication as a method for developing capability/

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The expected risks from participating in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential by replacing names with pseudonyms.
- Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data collected from you may be used in future research studies and/or shared with other researchers. If data collected from you is reused or shared, any information that could identify you will be removed beforehand.
- Data will be stored on a password—locked computer in a locked cabinet. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then deleted. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

How will you be compensated for being part of the study?

Participants will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Is the researcher in a position of authority over participants, or does the researcher have a financial conflict of interest?

The researcher serves as a teacher at National Chi Nan University. To limit potential or perceived conflicts, the interview will be conducted by a proxy, who speaks both English and Chinese. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate or not participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or National Chi Nan University. If you decide

to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the IRB. Our physical address is Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA, 24515; our phone number is 434-592-5530, and our email address is irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio-record and/or video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____

Printed Subject Name

_____

Signature & Date

APPENDIX C: Course Syllabus – Public Speaking

COURSE SYLLABUS
English Public Speaking & Presentation Skills
Spring 2023

Course Objectives
In this course, the student will be learning the tools to be an effective communicator. We will utilize the *Toastmaster* format for speech giving and will practice giving formal presentations, as well as impromptu speaking. Each student will be required to give 10 speeches each semester. Every speech will be recorded and each student will keep a reflexive journal as a self-evaluation process. In addition, the student will also be evaluating other students' speeches and learning techniques for providing constructive feedback.

Course Textbook:
1. *Effective Presentation Skills* – 3rd Edition; 2020; by M. Moslehpour; TungHua Books ISBN: 978-957-483-8950
2. *Speak Like Churchill Stand Like Lincoln*; by James C. Humes ISBN: 978-0761-563518

Class Agenda:
Conduct a Full Toastmaster Session
a. Speeches using Toastmaster format
b. Table Topics (Impromptu speaking practice)
c. Speech evaluations
d. Tips and techniques: *Effective Presentation Skills*
e. Evaluation of *Ted Talks* and other famous speeches
f. Discussion of textbook: *Speak Like Churchill Stand Like Lincoln*

Course Grading
50% Speeches (teacher evaluation of table topics, speeches)
10% Peer Evaluations
10% Reflexive Journal
15% Attendance
15% Class Participation

Late Assignment and Attendance Policy
Because this is a public speaking class, and requires weekly class participation, **attendance is required**. Absences will be handled on a per-student basis. Missing 3 speeches will result in a failing grade.

Grading Scale
A = 94-100 A- = 90-93 B+ = 86-89 B = 83-85 B- = 80-82
C+ = 76-79 C = 73-75 C- = 70-72 D = 60-69 F = 0-59

ENGLISH PUBLIC SPEAKING & PRESENTATION SKILLS
Course Syllabus: Speech Topics

First Semester: Speech Topics
Intro to Speech Class
Speech #1 – Ice Breaker
Speech #2 – Organizing Your Speech
Speech #3 – Get to the Point
Speech #4 – How to Say It
Speech #5 – Your Body Speaks
Speech #6 – Vocal Variety
Speech #7 – Research Your Topic
Speech #8 – Get Comfortable with Visual Aids
Speech #9 – Persuade with Power
Speech #10 – Inspire Your Audience

APPENDIX D: Course Syllabus – English School-wide Elective Course

COURSE SYLLABUS
English School-wide Elective Course
Spring Semester 2023

Course Objectives:

The aim of this course is to help non-English major students to improve their listening, speaking, and presentation skills. Students will be exposed to real-life business situations, with in-class discussions about real-world topics, through activities such as short conversations, video clips, and other reading materials. The emphasis will be on moving the student from a beginning conversational level to an advanced elementary level. It aims to teach the fundamentals of the kinds of conversations the student will face on the street and in the real world.

The goal is to assist the student into becoming a competent communicator. Students will learn to speak effectively by engaging in the process of every day conversations. Class participation and presentations will be incorporated into regular class activities to help students monitor their own progress. In addition, this course will help students increase their English vocabulary and extend their English grammatical knowledge. **Because this is a conversation class, attendance will be mandatory**.

Teaching Approach

Project-based learning; Weekly presentations; Team projects; Group discussions

Textbooks – **Spring Semester 2023**

1. *21st Century Reading* – Book 2; Cengage/National Geographic Learning
   ISBN #978-1305-265707
2. *Impact Issues 1;* 3rd Edition; Tung Hua Books (this book will be used both semesters)
   ISBN #978-981-313-4379
3. *Matilda,* by Roald Dahl
   ISBN #978-0142-410370

Grading Criteria:

50% Attendance, In-class Discussion & Class Participation
30% Homework Assignments and Reading
20% Final / Midterm Test

Late Assignment Policy:

Assignments turned in **after class** or 1 week late will receive 20% off; 2 weeks late will receive 30% off; 3 weeks late will receive 40% off; 4 weeks late will receive 50% off. No assignments will be accepted if they are more than 5 weeks late.

Attendance Policy:

Students who are absent for 2 class periods will receive a 10% grade reduction. Missing 3 class periods will receive a 20% grade reduction. Missing more than 3 classes may result in a failing grade.

Course Schedule – Spring 2023

Week 1:	Teacher Introduction: Taiwan vs. America PPT; Student Needs Analysis Presentation: Students Introduce their Classmates Reading Assignment: *Who Moved My Cheese* Matilda: Ch 1
Week 2:	Class Discussion: *Who Moved My Cheese*; Unit 1 – What Makes a Great Team? + Ted Talk Team Project – Marshmallow Challenge Matilda: Ch 2&3
Week 3:	Unit 2 – Inspired Leadership + Ted Talk Class Discussion: Impact #1 – Guy with Green Hair Matilda: Ch 4&5
Week 4:	Presentation from Unit 2 – "A Movement" Team Project – Desert Island (What articles do I take?) Matilda: Ch 6
Week 5:	Unit 4 – Gaming + TedTalk Class Discussion: Impact #3 – I'm Not Addicted Matilda: Ch 7&8
Week 6:	Presentation from Unit 4 – "Design an Online Game" Team Project – Starting a New Civilization Matilda: Ch 9
Week 7:	Unit 7 - Power Poses + Ted Talk Class Discussion: Impact #15 – To Tell or Not to Tell (When is it OK to lie?) Moral Dilemma: "Steal or Not Steal the Car" Matilda: Ch 10
Week 8:	Presentation from Unit 7 – Power Poses Exercise (student judges) Unit 9 – Changing Your Perspective (Rethinking Disabilities) + TedTalk Matilda: Ch 11
Week 9:	Presentation from Unit 9 – Research a Person with Disabilities Who Overcame Class Discussion: Impact #5 – Who Pays? Matilda: Ch 12&13
Week 10:	NO CLASS (Google Earth Assignment)
Week 11:	Presentation – Google Earth Online Tour Matilda: Ch 14&15
Week 12:	Unit 5 – Success + TedTalk Class Discussion: Impact #7 (What is success?) Matilda: Ch 16&17
Week 13:	Unit 10 – Big Data + TedTalk Team Project: Who Gets the Loan? Matilda: Ch 18&19
Week 14:	Presentation from Unit 10 – Research an Infographic Team Project: Which School Programs Do We Eliminate? Matilda: Ch 20&21
Week 15:	MOVIE: *Matilda*
Week 16:	Final Exam: Book vs. Movie

Reading: *Matilda* - In-class Discussion Topics

Lesson 1 – Someone who has made a big difference in your life
Lesson 2 – Dishonesty and Revenge
Lesson 3 – Genius (Is it born or learned?)
Lesson 4 – Vanity vs. Pride vs. Confidence
Lesson 5 – Fitting in with others – Is it OK to be different?
Lesson 6 – Teacher's influence (What teacher most influenced you and why?)
Lesson 7 – Education vs. Indoctrination (Plan for your life after graduation)
Lesson 8 – Bullying vs. Intimidation
Lesson 9 – Oppression (Common good vs. Individualism)
Lesson 10 – Reward vs. Punishment
Lesson 11 – Power and misuse of power (Do you have power?)
Lesson 12 – Rich vs. Poor
Lesson 13 – Upbringing (How does it affect someone? Can you change the results of your upbringing?)
Lesson 14 – Practice vs. Skill (Does practice make perfect?)
Lesson 15 – Emergency plan vs. Contingency plan (What is your plan?)
Lesson 16 – Do people always get what they deserve? Are there always happy endings?

APPENDIX E: Open-Ended Student Interview Questions

English School-wide Elective Course

1. Why did you choose to major in English and/or take this class?
2. What were you hoping to learn in this class?
3. What activities in this class helped you move from simply memorized knowledge to being capable of using that knowledge?
4. How were you able to apply what you learned?
5. What skills have you learned and/or developed this semester that you will be able to use in the future?
6. What activities did the teacher use to help you put what you learned into practice?
7. In what ways can you apply this knowledge to real-world situations?
8. Describe the process and/or activities that helped you become more capable of using English in the real-world?

Public Speaking Class

1. What activities in this class helped you become a more capable speaker?
2. Describe the process and/or activities that helped you go from a beginning speaker to a capable speaker.
3. What actions did you take to achieve becoming a better presenter?
4. How did you learn to be a better speaker?
5. Explain the teacher's role in helping you be a better public speaker.