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"One Shots" or "For-Credit" Teaching Information Lliteracy, Communication is Key

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Implications of Voluntary Communication Based on Gender, Education Level and Cultural Issues in an Online Environment

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OVERVIEW

ଔ Introduction and Placement of this Research in its Theoretical Threads and Rationale

ଔ Literature Review

ଔ Methodology

ଔ Research Findings

ଔ Conclusions

INTRODUCTION

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⅋ Social Informatics

⅋ Feminist Approach to Social Studies in Technology

⅋ Continuing Research with a Grounded Theory Approach

Literature Review

Gender and Cultural Differences in Communication

ଓ The underlying social meaning of communication is imbued with culture.

ଓ Cultural misunderstanding often occurs when communicating with a member of the opposite sex as well as from cross-cultural communication. (Gefen and Ridings, 2005)

Gender and Cultural Differences in Communication

- Although speaking what may seem on the surface as the same language, men and women *unconsciously* insert gender-specific social messages. (Herring, 2000; Tannen, 1994)
- It is the basic premise of sociologists that communication is interpreted through the prisms of culture, and that these cultural lenses apply to men and women just as they apply across cultures. (Yates, 1996, 1997).

Gender and Cultural Differences in Communication

One of the prominent gender-based cultural differences in language is that during *oral* discourse men, more than women, communicate to establish social standing, control the conversation, and exchange information, while women, more than men, communicate to create rapport (Tannen, 1994; and Tannen, 1995).

Gender and Cultural Differences in Communication

- Research has also shown that, at least to some extent, these cross-cultural misunderstandings between women and men carry over to electronic media in discussion lists. (Herring, 1996; Stewart, 2001).

Methodology

- Content analysis of the voluntary or for extra points communication among graduate students and undergraduate students.
- Used a selection of the categories from Burnett's (2000) work on communications within virtual communities.
- Planned to perform a chi-square statistical test to analyze the differences between males and females in both the graduate and the undergraduate classes separately – next study.

Research Questions

Our research examined the patterns of voluntary communications among undergraduates and graduate students in web-based discussion boards, blogs and wikis to see if these same gender and cultural issues occur there as in the required weekly postings forums.

❧ Do male and female students styles of information postings the same in a voluntary settings as in the required postings for the class?

❧ Does the pattern for undergraduate students (regular and athletes) differ from the patterns we have found in graduate classes?

Brief Summary of our Earlier Research Studies

- Our initial research into student communication patterns looked at gender, minority status and age. We used only two categories: dominant and supportive messages.
- Dominant messages were determined by tone and length.
- Supportive messages were ones agreeing with another student, encouraging another student and generally short.
- Messages are categorized, not the student.

USF School of Information Findings - Male

Number of --	White Male	Minority Male	Total Male	Dom-inant	Sup-portive
Students	12	4	16		
Postings	167	185	352	302	50
Text Chat Messages	27	19	46	29	17
Voice Chat Messages	30	10	40	35	5

USF School of Information Findings - Female

Number of ---	White Female	Minority Female	Total Female	Dom- inant	Sup- portive
Students	43	25	68		
Postings	487	265	752	473	308
Text Chat Messages	20	2	22	4	18
Voice Chat Messages	40	12	52	10	42

Communication of Male vs. Female Students at the Graduate level

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- Both males and females posted dominant and emotionally supportive messages.
- Females were more likely to post emotionally supportive messages.
- Females were more likely to post "chatty" messages.
- Males were more likely to post dominant and "information rich" messages.
- Males tended to dominate the VoIP sessions, especially given the male/female ratio in the classes

Voluntary Compared to Required Communication – Beginning Class

Discussion Board	Voluntary Male	Voluntary Female	Required Male	Required Female	Total
Hostile Posts - Flaming	0	4	0	1	5
Non-information Specific Pleasantries, Humor, etc.	0	12	5	0	17
Supportive or Empathic	0	5	5	45	55
Announcements	0	5	0	1	6
Queries & Responses	2	14	53	78	147
Directed Group Projects	0	0	0	0	0
Social Media					
Hostile Posts-Flaming	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Information Specific	0	18	NA	NA	18
Information Specific					
Announcements	0	5	NA	NA	5
Queries and Responses	20	14	NA	NA	34
TOTALS	**22**	**77**	**63**	**125**	**287**

Voluntary Compared to Required Communication – Last semester

Discussion Board	Voluntary Male	Voluntary Female	Required Male	Required Female	Total
Hostile Posts - Flaming	0	0	0	0	0
Non-information Specific Pleasantries, Humor, etc.	4	42	1	3	50
Supportive or Empathic	0	0	2	29	31
Announcements	0	2	2	2	6
Queries & Responses	1	13	21	111	146
Directed Group Projects	6	52	NA	NA	58
Social Media					
Hostile Posts-Flaming	0	0	0	0	0
Non-Information Specific	0	0	NA	NA	0
Information Specific					
Announcements	0	0	NA	NA	0
Queries and Responses	0	0	NA	NA	0
TOTALS	11	109	26	145	291

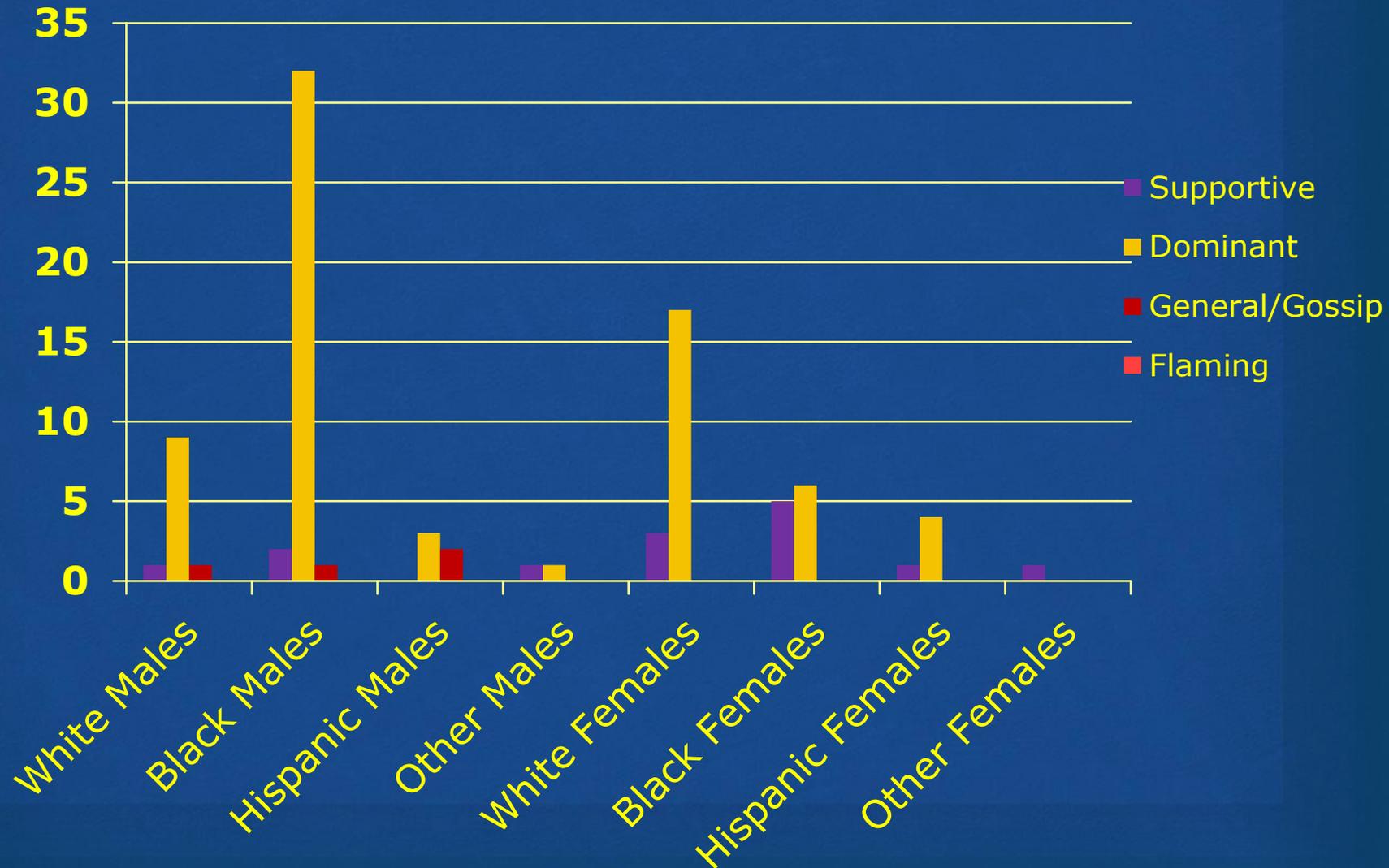# Communication of Male vs. Female Students at the Graduate Level

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- In the purely voluntary or for extra credit communication options, the first few posts were important as to later participation. If the females started a chatty forum or blog, the male students tended to stay away.

- If a male posted first with some technology or other technical information, the males tended to respond to each other and to largely ignore the postings of the females.

Undergraduates –
# Athletes and non-Athletes

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- There were major differences between the athletes in the blended classes (4) and the "regular" students in the fully online classes (3). The fourth athletic section was added to keep the numbers similar.

- 88 students in athletics and 98 non-athletes in the study.

- 61 male and 27 female students were enrolled in the student athletes courses and 29 male and 69 females were enrolled in the online courses
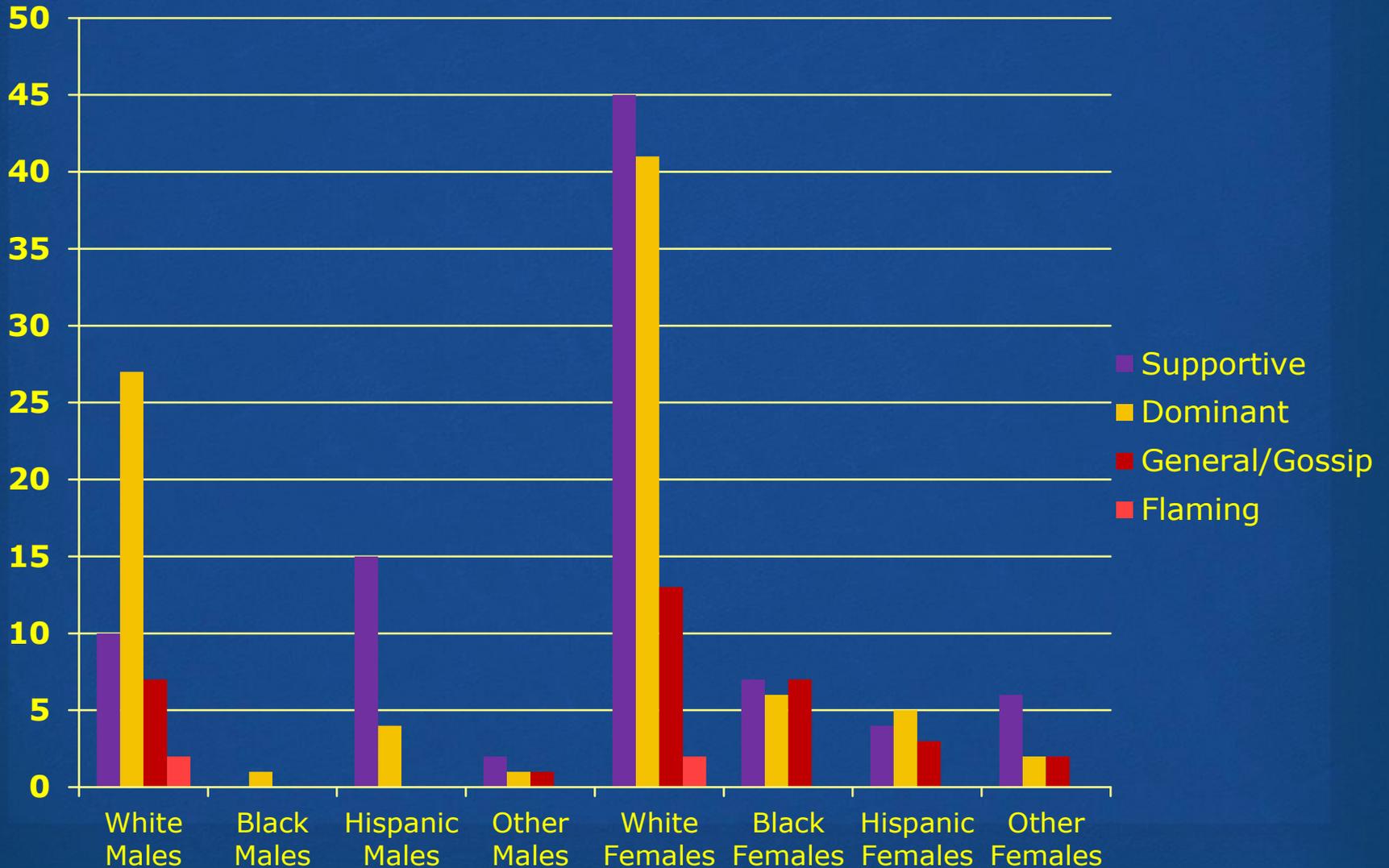
History of IL at USF-SI

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⁢ Originally our 3 credit 200/2000 level course taught in large lecture classroom 1 class meeting per week with lab meeting in computer lab 1 meeting per week.

⁢ Bored everyone and lag time between teaching and practicing meant we lost many teachable moments and we often had to reteach because students forgot the how-to instruction.

History

Moved to offering more sections of IL class and holding entire class in a computer lab

- Worked better-allowed students to practice skills as instructor was discussing them.
- Allowed students to interact with each other, instructor and tools. Maximized teachable moments.

History

Demanded from students and from University caused SI to move course all online
- First iteration mimicked graduate online courses
  - Lectures formatted in ppt
  - Reading from textbook and articles
  - Discussion boards
  - Assignments
  - Quizzes

Communication Issues

- Discussion board not well used
- Email to instructor over used
- Like teaching hundreds of classes of one instead of a few classes of many
- No shared learning experience
- Lack of Communication cause a decrease in learning
  - Noticed that student-athletes performed far worse in online classes than others

Rethinking the Class

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ൠ Changed format of totally online course

ൠ Created a specific Student athletes course

ൠ Flipped the classroom

Changes in Online Class

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- Did away with credit bearing discussion board
- Synchronous online office hours using Eluminate
- Synchronous online instruction
- Podcasts
  - Works best when treated as a weekly podcast and not just a video series
  - Video tutorials produced by USF Library and others to explain "how to" tasks communication

Social Media

- Twitter
  - Worked great as a means of sending reminders and tidbits of interesting IL news
  - Didn't work as a way to conduct instruction or assignments
- Wikis
- Blogs

Outcomes

Flipping the Classroom

- Student athletes don't thrive in online class
  - Poor attendance
  - Yet data shows that passing IL course helps in overall GPA and retention
- Led to offering a special section just for student athletes in blended format
- Flipped classroom

Flipping the Classroom

- Used patterns of communication noticed during live and online courses to help inform decision to flip the classroom
- Student athletes are responsible for reading/watching course materials prior to attending a live lab
- Labs are offered typically twice a week and students have the flexibility to attend either or both labs each week

Flipping the Classroom

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❦ Usually they attend with their team mates

❦ The team leaders are typically leaders in the class

  ❧ Identifying them and getting their buy in helps everyone do better in the course

  ❧ Design materials to be completed in a group setting

  ❧ Allow the groups to present their findings to the class which means the team leaders will have the spotlight they often want

Lessons Learned

- Integrating video and podcasts into lecture materials better reaches more students
- Don't expect students to be tech savy
  - In all 3 classroom settings we found that while almost all students have a facebook page, regularly watch youtube and have a smart phone most lack even basic computing skills such as proficiency using a word processor
  - Social Media is a fun addition but at the moment doesn't have much affect on outcomes

How Does this help you?

∞ The traditional one-shot or lecture class doesn't cut it.

∞ Consider having video tutorials accompanied by a wiki as prep for one-shot IL sessions

∞ Use the majority of your IL session to practice using the tools discussed in your pre-session materials

∞ Use multiple formats to deliver the same content. Keep these materials in a way they can be used repeatedly

Move Away from Lots of Reading/Lecturing

- Try Prezi or Vimeo/Youtube video
- Use wikis
- Identify team leaders if possible and use them to help teach material
- Don't expect discussion boards level the playing field or to empower anyone to respond who wouldn't respond in the classroom
- Remember that there are limitations to social media ie The Blog and Twitter Failures

Conclusions

- Providing the right communication tools is important
  - allow students to develop social networks with other students despite geographical boundaries.
- Additional research to determine the right mix of communication tools needed.
- Initial postings seem to be very important with voluntary discussion in terms of male participation.