SPEAKING FOR A CHANGE

Using Speaking Centers to Amplify Marginalized Voices in Building Sustained Community Movements for Social Justice

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I have heard now from several people about a workshop hosted by The University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) Speaking Center to assist citizens who want to present at the Board of Education, City Council, and other public meetings (during those few minutes when people from the floor can speak their minds). I would recommend that someone write about this and urge other speaking centers around the country to work with grassroots organizations to do the same thing. This is so exciting!

—Spona Jovanovic (Professor, Department of Communications Studies, UNCG, personal communication, July 8, 2008)
Curricular and extracurricular communication programs are poised to move toward educational models of outreach and service that cultivate and support social justice activism by students, faculty, and community members. Such models should be rooted in pedagogical practices (e.g., social justice with and reflection on urgent needs of community life through activism). This chapter focuses on a curricular/extracurricular communication program initiative (specifically, a speaking center) that shifted from traditional outreach to communication activism for social justice. According to Prey (2006), communication activism refers to "communication scholars using their disciplinary resources (e.g., their concepts, theories, methods, and pedagogical practices) and their institutional resources (such as Communication Centers) to intervene directly into discourses to make a positive difference in the people’s lives who are affected by injustice" (p. 3; see also Carregon & Prey, 2012; Prey & Carregon, 2007; in this volume, see Prey & Palmer-Simpson). By taking a communication approach to social justice, speaking centers become a pedagogical medium for accomplishing the purposes of communication activism.

This chapter examines the 10-year evolution of community outreach turned social justice activism at the University Speaking Center (http://speakingcenter.uncc.edu) at UNCC (a public university in the southeastern United States) with a central focus on one particular partnership that became highly active in its orientation. That initiative took a systematic approach to employing social justice theory, research, and practice to strengthen marginalized voices and to sustain community social justice movements. We tell the story of the UNCC Speaking Center’s partnership with a group of education activists to illuminate the application of communication activism pedagogical principles inherent in this type of community outreach and to offer lessons learned to other speaking centers (and for curricular and extracurricular programs, more generally) that are interested in engaging in communication activism outreach efforts. Two of us, Curry (UNCC Speaking Center Director) and Nadia (Center Graduate Assistant, at the time) facilitated the programming featured in this chapter, Thompson (education activist) is a community organizer who participated in this program.

In examining the UNCC Speaking Center’s activism initiative, this chapter reveals principles of communication activism embedded within the outreach initiative by focusing on the audience served and the implementation of the project with support from Center staff volunteers. We start by explaining communication/speaking centers (or labs) and the speakers they serve. We then explicate the genesis and initial outreach efforts of the UNCC Speaking Center. We subsequently focus on the social justice nature of the Center’s outreach and its interventions, with an emphasis on a particular project, “Speaking for a Change,” conducted with a local community resource known as the “HIVE.” We conclude the chapter by discussing lessons learned about communication activism pedagogy (CAP) and explaining current activism pedagogy projects that the Speaking Center is pursuing.

COMMUNICATION CENTERS AND SPEAKERS SERVED

A communication (or speaking) center (or lab), according to Holbrook et al. (2021), typically provides services or support for oral communication activities in students’ course work at a college or university. Many centers also provide services to other clients such as faculty, staff and administration, alumni, or even outside groups. The center thus is the place for providing resources and assistance to its campus for a variety of communication needs. Such assistance includes, for example, tutoring for students’ [sic] preparing oral presentations for participation in group activities, interviews, discussions, or debates. A center frequently provides assistance for faculty members wishing to incorporate oral communication into their teaching or to develop and refine their own presentation or other communication skills. Some centers also assist outside clients, perhaps as part of a service learning program or on a fee-for-service basis.

Centers often provide services to students through peer tutors, variously referred to as coaches, consultants, tutors, associates, or mentors, under the direction of staff, faculty, or both. Faculty and staff directors or coordinators may provide services for faculty, staff, alumni, or other speaker groups. A communication center also may provide reference resources and materials to assist students and others in preparing oral presentations or for effective participation in other communication activities. In addition, resources and materials may also be provided to assist in the design, preparation, and assessment of oral communication assignments in a variety of courses. Communication centers or labs are variously housed in department(s) of communication, academic services, student services, or specially designated centers or programs. (pp. 3–4)

Communication labs and centers have existed for a number of years. Historically, they were created to improve individuals’ speaking skills, usually in conjunction with public speaking courses (McClenken, 2006). According to Preston (2006), the grassroots movement of communication center faculty members and their hope for growing into viable operations
led to establishing centers across the United States. The National Association of Communication Centers (n.d.) identified 73 centers across the United States that offer support for public speaking and, in some cases, listening, group/team communication, storytelling, and/or interpersonal communication.

Communication centers, according to Yook and Atkins-Sayre (2012a), are both for students and of students, in that students comprise the majority of the staff. Communication centers are part of courses and separate courses, freeing the student to explore communication outside of the classroom and separate from their discipline. The centers both teach communication skills, but also use communication skills in the difficult tasks of peer tutoring, thus granting peer tutors an enhanced learning experience. (pp. 22)

Because of the complex nature of their work and their structural position within universities and colleges, Emery (2006) noted that “successful communication centers are developed in line with the needs of particular institutions and their students, and that this degree of contextual specificity always stands in the way of efforts at direct comparison” (p. 63). However, the great majority of the work conducted at communication centers involves assisting student speakers with oral communication assignments (see essays in Yook & Atkins-Sayre, 2012a). Services most often are rendered through peer tutors who are trained to listen to the needs of student speakers and their assignment requirements, and to provide targeted “feedback for improvement during simulated speaking event practice sessions” (Yook, 2006, p. 66). The goal of these centers, thus, is to help students develop their oral communication skills to meet their academic requirements, but to promote social justice, although, as explained below, the genesis of the UNCG Speaking Center speaks otherwise.

THE UNIVERSITY SPEAKING CENTER AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO

Although some university communication centers stand alone, at UNCG, the Speaking Center was founded as part of the Communication across the Curriculum (CXC) program—which refers to “the implementation of communication instruction in disciplines other than communication—typically in the form of a university program or initiative” (Dannels & Housley Gaffney, 2009, p. 125; see also Dannels, 2005). Most of the planning and implementation work for the establishment of this Speaking Center was accomplished by the CXC faculty development coordinator, Joyce Ferguson and Amanda Gunn, a communication faculty member (W. Beale, personal communication, February 2, 2010).

The UNCG Speaking Center was opened in 2001 by Gunn (2002) as the focus of her dissertation. Gunn noted that the economic, social, and political landscape of American culture are fraught with tensions between those that are wealthy and those that are just getting by. There are tensions between those that occupy the center of privilege as a result of their sex, their relational preference, their physically able bodies, the color of their skin and those that are stationed on the margins. The realities of the inequities that dichotomize Americans are the motivations for this study of a speaking center. (p. 8)

Gunn’s (2002) statement closely relates to the definition of social justice offered by Frey, Pearce, Pollock, Arzt, and Murphy (1996): “The engagement with and advocacy for those in our society who are economically, socially, politically, and/or culturally underresourced” (p. 110). Gunn’s passion for social justice, thus, resulted in starting a speaking center at UNCG. In the development stages, Gunn advocated for the support of oral communication competencies (public, group, and interpersonal) to be included in every college classroom, but she also envisioned a center that extended oral communication support to its nonprofit neighbors off campus, especially to promote social justice.

Gunn’s (2002) initial vision continues to be met by Curty and the current staff at the UNCG Speaking Center. Individual peer tutoring sessions supporting the oral communication needs of students across the curriculum have grown from 81 during the first year of operation to more than 2,500 each year. The staff also regularly develops and facilitates 100 faculty-requested oral communication workshops for courses across the curriculum tech academic year. Additionally, new community outreach partnerships are forged each semester.

The mission of the UNCG Speaking Center is to support speakers in their ongoing process of becoming more confident and competent oral communicators through instruction, collaborative consultation, and feedback. The Center is staffed by nearly 50 undergraduate students, two graduate students, and two faculty directors who have reduced teaching loads. All staff members complete a required 3-credit-hour communication course that is taught by Curty and is taken before staff members become either paid part-time employees or students interns enroled in a 1-credit hour experiential education course of study. By its very existence, the Center serves as an experiential
education laboratory where student staff members first learn to work at the Center and then learn through their work at the Center; doing so offers all staff members a unique perspective on students as educational learners.

Because "the training of communication center staff members is vital not only to a center's success but also to the success of the clients they serve" (Trochel & McIntyre, 2012, p. 257), a number of pedagogical practices are used to educate staff to be tutors at communication centers. The UNCG Speaking Center employs necessary disciplinary and institutional resources to prepare staff to meet speakers' oral communication goals and needs. The 3-credit seminar course, which serves as the staff's initial training experience, is called "Speaking Center Theory and Practice." The course, rooted in the notion of knowing yourself before knowing or helping others (Roz, 2006), explores and applies CXC principles to peer tutoring, interpersonal communication, listening, group communication, public speaking, training, and pedagogy to enhance students' public, group, and interpersonal communication competencies. A large effort is spent teaching enrolled students about "how peer-to-peer tutoring incorporates empathetic listening to build important and lasting relationships" (Cony, Wilde, & Stephenson, 2012, p. 249) between consultants and their speaker-clients. In addition to developing students' communication competencies, knowledge, and attitudes, the course prepares communication consultants for the hands-on learning that they will do as they support speakers both on and off campus. Students who enroll in this semester-long course do so with the intention of working for the Center as paid employees or as interns for one to two semesters after they complete the course. It is both our strength and our weakness that we change not just what staff members know, or "even what they can do but also who they are" (Sprague, 1999, p. 18).

Borton's (1970) "What? So what? Now what?" approach to processing new material is used by staff-in-training. Specifically, staff members constantly are asked to contemplate and make distinctions between the intended effects of new material and their reactions to that material (the "what" stage), to identify the value of new material as they prepare to be communication consultants (the "so what" stage), and then to decide what they will do with that new material (the "now what" stage). In facilitating the academic course that serves as training for the staff, tensions between staff members' knowledge about oral communication and being able to communicate (Sprague, 1999) are ever-present. To manage that tension, students constantly evaluate their performance. Although student staff members have access to theory through Center resources, they have more direct and practical experiences (in the work they do at the Center) that knowledge of theory, although staff members who follow the training course.

with additional communication courses have an increased understanding of communication theory and practice (as discussed previously).
involved one-on-one tutoring. The Center provided outreach services to groups and organizations that included (in chronological order) Disasters, Greensboro Public Library, Girl Scouts, Guilford Technical Community College, Center for New North Carolinians, Family Services of Forsyth County, Christian Life Center of Greensboro, Haven Women’s Shelter, Greensboro Truth and Reconciliation Project, Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy, Greensboro Youth Leadership, Lutheran Family Services, Boys & Girls Club, Nausbaum Center for Entrepreneurship, Black Child Development Institute of Greensboro, National Conference for Community and Justice of the Piedmont Triad, and the Greensboro Youth Council. Many of these workshops and, in some cases, one-on-one training, had the effect of re-branching participants by developing their communication competencies to speak for themselves against dominant discourses about social issues that most affected them.

Although the Speaking Center’s community outreach in its first year, generally, was service oriented (thought of as merely providing a service), outreach projects during the second year took on more of a social justice focus. At that time, Curny formed a partnership with the Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Greensboro (see http://www.arcgreensboro.org) that involved Center staff working with men who spoke publicly at houses of worship during mental retardation awareness month about how the ARC supported or sustained their independent living. The goals of these speeches were to raise awareness of mental retardation in Greensboro and to gain resources for ARC.

A similar partnership was formed with Joseph’s House (http://www.josephhouse.net), a local home for high school males who are homeless. Initially, the partnership with Joseph’s House involved a long-term plan to mentor the young men who lived there via public speaking coaching, as these young men often spoke in public settings about their experiences in the community. Through this partnership, Center staff members were interested in finding connections between self-efficacy and Lucas’s (1999) thesis that the process of instructing students to construct speeches with accuracy, order, and rigor also teaches them to think with those characteristics. However, unexpected personnel changes at the Center caused this project to end abruptly, leaving Lucas’s theme untapped.

Two years later, the director of Joseph’s House invited the Speaking Center back to facilitate a workshop on public speaking, in large measure, because the collapse of the economy found Joseph’s House leaning on the kindness and monetary donations of individuals more than ever. Under the supervision of Naidoo, the goal was to help everyone at Joseph’s House get a speech together for immediate use in the community. An initial workshop developed and facilitated by Center staff took place and was to be followed by one-on-one tutoring, which would happen at the Speaking Center’s campus offices. However, the tutoring phase never occurred, as residents did not make follow-up appointments. The Hive partnership (described in detail in the next section) benefited greatly from these prior experiences, as that Curny and Naidoo learned to place themselves more thoroughly in the physical space of communities to which they wanted to be connected.

As a result, we seek to do our activist work in spaces that already are in use by the communities that we support.

Without making direct comparisons, UNCG’s outreach-mentored-activism approach sets this communication center apart from most others. Working within the perspective articulated by Frey and Carrigan (2007; see also Carrigan & Frey, 2012), this volume, see Frey & Palmer-Simpson, we view communication activism as public self-expression about a community issue in the pursuit of social justice. Our communication activism led UNCG’s Speaking Center to move from a model of service for “the community” to one of collaborating with communities in joint efforts to make needed changes in the social order. From a CAP perspective, although the Speaking Center does not take an activist orientation, the outreach initiative does show social justice sensibility and commitment. The outreach initiative helps the Center to pedagogically accomplish communication activism in two ways: (a) by offering opportunities to address social justice as a communication issue that is concerned with the interests of those who are underrepresented and in need of services offered by the Center and (b) by serving as a platform for Center staff members to employ their resources to promote social justice. In line with Frey et al. (1996), the Center’s outreach initiatives are grounded in the “fundamental realization that we share and identify a world with others, and thus ethical conduct requires consideration of the stories of others” (p. 111). The Center, consequently, adopts a cooperative model of serving. Working with local communities to bring about needed social change, using communication competency education as an activist tool. Although a few other communication centers have significant outreach partnerships, activism as the focus of outreach is unique to the UNCG Speaking Center. The Center, thus, applies communication activism principles through its services by engaging in interventions into discourses that assist grassroots groups and communities to secure social justice (Frey, 2005). When approached by those looking to advance causes that do not support our view of social justice, Center directors point them to internet resources available to the public (see https://speakingcenter.uncc.edu/resources).

The Speaking Center is able to sustain activist partnerships because of a range of circumstances and conditions that work together to keep such a focus on that agenda: faculty/director and student staff interest in supporting efforts of off-campus grassroots organizations through Center services, the
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Center, by itself, certainly cannot create any social justice movement; rather, we look for opportunities to support communication activism that, over time, become part of more organized and sustained movements that are characterized by their use and valuing of grassroots democratic methods.

From a communication perspective, we approach social justice in terms of assisting individuals, groups, and organizations in need of communication resources and advocacy for the production of appropriate speech acts (Frey et al., 1996). Thus, we extend our understanding of the communication dimensions of social justice in describing relationships formed between Speaking Center staff members/student volunteers and community activists who participate in the persuasive speech-making workshops offered. The communication dimension also emphasizes pedagogical processes and practices that key into critical pedagogy (see Simpson, this volume) and grassroots democratic approaches to popular education, as described by Freire (1970), who emphasized learning in which people, rather than simply reproducing words that already exist, create words that lead them to become aware of the need to fight for their emancipation from oppressors (see Onnes & Blasing, this volume). Although not in a literal sense, the workshops that the Center offers create a framework for participants to learn to formulate their ideas clearly and coherently using the tools of persuasion rather than just stating what they hold in mind. As explained next, we made an effort to apply these principles, processes, and practices in implementing the HIVE “Speaking for a Change” project, with the awareness that “community emerges from communication; that is, it is realized in and through talk” (Jovanovic, 2003, p. 81). Hence, in and through communication, people relate to and identify with each others’ stories and experiences, engage in conversations about issues that concern them as individuals and as groups, and, as a community, find ways to become advocates for social change.

“Speaking for a Change” at the HIVE

In Summer 2008, UNCG’s Speaking Center played a pivotal role in a community organizing campaign to confront the “academic achievement gap” in the Guilford County Schools (GCS), a widely used term that is meant to capture a range of pervasive and longstanding educational achievement differences between students who are White and students who are Black and Latino/a. These differences tend to show themselves in grades, graduation rates, standardized test scores, placement in honors courses, and disciplinary measures (e.g., school suspension and expulsion). GCS hardly is alone in showing wide achievement differences; the gap has been well documented

university’s public commitment to support the greater Greensboro community, and, to the extent that community members can learn about the Center by word of mouth (it does not advertise services), their interest in Center support. Despite these supportive circumstances, there are many tensions and challenges related to the Center’s activist outreach, including organizing payroll funds to support staff involvement, and, therefore, relying on staff volunteers, turnover at the entry-level assistant director position, increased usage of the Center by on-campus speakers; personnel and reorganization of three community agencies; staff members graduating; and low interest shown by community members in coming to campus for support. Even with these barriers, committed Center staff, along with Center alumni, always have been found when a call is put out by the Center’s director. Each of the Center’s outreach-oriented-activism projects has been made possible through a combination of donated time from staff, alumni, and directors, plus internship credit-earning staff members who do a portion of their work without pay, in accordance with the design of the Center’s internship program. In fact, the experiences have given a momentum to other outreach initiatives, such that they have become part of the Center’s modus operandi.

The UNCG Speaking Center advocates for and tries to implement communication educational models of outreach that take a collaborative approach to amplifying marginalized voices, which represents one strategy among many within larger efforts to move beyond remote forms of activism toward sustained social justice movement building. The acts of self-expression evident through the Center’s model of activism outreach may be individual or collective, and, generally, they are not sustained or stitched into a framework larger than the immediate issues or circumstances that gave rise to public response. We see community organizing as a further, deeper step that can stitch together people, groups, organizations, and communities in a sustained movement, such that activist efforts build on previous successes, weather setbacks, and draw on prior relationships and knowledge to create more effective interventions. This movement-building approach works best when organized on the principle of participatory democracy, which propels individual efficacy with a tie to broader participation rooted in the organizing principles of long-term strategy, patience with base and coalition building, personal engagement among people, full democratic participation, and education and development of people’s leadership capabilities. In other words, as Rudd (2009) asserted, the developmental organizing method is based on the premises of organizing, which argue that “movements happen as a sort of dramatic or spectator sport after a small group of people express themselves, large numbers of bystanders see the truth in what they are saying and join in,” thus contributing to a broader participation. The
in school districts across the United States and has gained particular notoriety with a growing number of citizens over the last decade (see, e.g., The Education Trust, 2006; Jacobson, Olsen, Rice, Swetzland, & Ralph, 2001; Jencks & Phillips, 1998), largely because those differences call into question the fairness of U.S. schooling and society, in general, and they have great implications for the lifetime opportunities of Black and Latino/a students.

Despite almost universal agreement that the academic achievement gap should be narrowed, there is little agreement on its causes and, hence, how to close the gap. Nevertheless, some communities are attempting to hold their local school systems accountable for the gap, with the assumption that unfair school policies and practices are major contributors to it. These citizens reason that school systems have the power to rectify many of the inequalities that result in poor academic outcomes for many Black and Latino/a students, as compared to White students.

Parents, students, and community members in Guilford County have been very concerned for decades about the performance of Black and Latino/a students in GCS, and, in recent years, some have begun to focus on closing the academic achievement gap as a priority. To that end, a GCS school board committee, the Achievement Gap Committee (AGC), spent more than a year exploring possible causes of and solutions to the academic achievement gap in GCS. Comprised of school system administrators, school board members, university professors, and a large number of citizens, the AGC planned to make a major presentation to the school board and general public in June 2008. A specially called school board meeting to hear the report was scheduled for the week of June 23, 2008.

Some members of the AGC were community activists, who, in turn, were part of a wider circle of activists who believed that any understanding of solutions to the problem that the school system came to would be more sound and sustainable if the discussion became a community-wide discussion, not just one held among professional educators and a few other citizens. Hence, as the date for the achievement gap presentation drew closer, various activist groups sought ways to engage more citizens in the conversation. The basic plan was threefold:

1. To promote the June 23 AGC presentation in segments of the community that were concerned about what was happening with Black and Latino/a students in GCS, especially trying to reach people who might not normally attend a school board meeting.

2. Because no time was scheduled for the community to respond in the specially called school board meeting, to flood the next regularly scheduled school board meeting (June 26) with speakers who would demonstrate their concern and give their viewpoints on causes of and solutions to the academic achievement gap.

3. From there, to work to build the various local education activist groups, to springboard off people, energies, and ideas in the two meetings.

The long-range, continuing goal of activists who formed the plan is to successfully pressure the school system to fund, implement, and sustain educational policies and practices that will close the achievement gap by improving academic outcomes for Black and Latino/a students. Because discerning such solutions and building the political will to reform deep-seated educational patterns and traditions is not something that happens quickly or without broad community support, the immediate goals of the plan were more modest:

- To bring more people, and a more diverse mix of people, into sustained dialogue about causes of and solutions to the achievement gap
- To build the capacity of often-marginalized community members to discern and communicate their thinking in ways that advance the wider community's understanding of issues, in general, and, ultimately, affect public policy
- To provide opportunities for networking and relationship building among various activist education groups as they worked on this short-term common project
- To communicate to the school board the urgency and importance of making tangible headway in closing the achievement gap, such that GCS would prioritize it in funding and other policy decisions

It is important to note that activists had a big advantage in this endeavor in terms of receiving local support to enable their goals. In particular, they had strong connections to a local community resource: the Greensboro HIVE. The HIVE is a nonhierarchical, collectively operated community space located in a low-income neighborhood that is located not far from UNCG. The HIVE's vision is "to foster relationship building, dialog, and resource sharing among individuals, groups, and communities working to build grassroots democracy and community power in and around Greensboro, North Carolina" (Greensboro HIVE, n.d., para. 1). One way that the HIVE achieves its mission is by offering its sizable meeting space to
grasp classroom groups. The HIVE sometimes cosponsors community learning and empowerment events, but it depends mightily on the ideas and energies of other individuals and groups to provide knowledge, personnel, and organizational frameworks. This approach leads the HIVE to have fluctuating numbers and types of people involved in a range of cultural and political activities that tend toward a strong commitment to social transformation. Examples include biweekly meetings of a local campaign to raise the minimum wage, daylong workshops on writing grant proposals to support social justice activities, film screenings that offer alternative views on topics ranging from gangs to the war in Afghanistan, meetings of farm workers organizing for better conditions in tobacco fields, a twice weekly Food Not Bombs meal, periodic Really Really Free Markets (where no money changes hands), a children's play group, and "skill-shares" on topics ranging from how to make hazelnut cream to how to fix a bicycle.

The HIVE's governing ethos rests in notions of mutual aid, "do-it-yourself" (DIY), collective action, and individual empowerment. Thus, the HIVE is not an agency, does not have "speakers," and does not work with a "target population"; in fact, the HIVE collective would strongly reject such terminology. The HIVE's "membership" is very loosely constructed, with no formal way to "join"; one becomes a member by participating at any level of engagement—in activities taking place at the HIVE and/or by becoming part of the always-changing committee that functions as its governing body.

In an average week leading up to the AGC presentation, the UNCG Speaking Center had reached out to offer its services to the HIVE. The Center initially approached the HIVE (the Center's first contact with it) to explore ways to support the HIVE's multifaceted efforts to achieve its social justice objectives. The primary goal was to help HIVE members in their ongoing efforts to become confident and competent oral communicators. A member of the HIVE collective suggested that the Center's resources be used for the community follow up to the AGC's presentation. It was agreed that HIVE members were organizing around the June 23 and 24 school board meetings at the time that the offer of Speaking Center services was made—and an instant and compelling partnership was formed. This type of cross-fertilization of issues and organizing campaigns is common in the HIVE environment, where multiple groups operate with different yet often overlapping resources and agendas.

In the span of about a week, community activists and staff at the UNCG Speaking Center worked to organize a 2-hour workshop, called "Speaking for a Change," to be held at the HIVE on Friday, June 20, a few days before the AGC's presentation. Given the short time span between workshop facilitation and participants presenting their speeches to the AGC, the program had to result in participants being able to construct speeches quickly. On campus, the Center had much success in offering training and development models. Drawing on that campus work, Curby determined that if citizens were to be successful in their persuasive attempts, the workshop had to include rhetorical proofs for supporting arguments. Monroe's (1935) motivated sequence (as explained later) was chosen because Center staff already knew that it was an organizational pattern that can be taught quickly in the tutoring environment. Center members work together as a cohesive unit, with the two faculty directors working shoulder-to-shoulder with student staff, and this community endeavor would have to take the same approach if it were to work, especially given the quick turnaround between putting out a call for volunteers and presenting the workshop. Center staff included Curby, who developed the programming and coaffiliated it with Nadia, and LaShawnda White, an undergraduate staff member, community activist, including Thompson, publicized the workshop. Roughly 20 people attended the workshop, with participants drawn from three local education activist groups—APPLE, Title I Moms, and the Community Dialogue on Education—and the Black and White caucuses of a local Undoing Racism project. The age, race, gender, and class diversity of the group was significant. Workshop participants organized speeches to present their arguments at the AGC school board meeting. It is the custom of the school board to offer members of the public time to address the board on any matter not on that meeting's agenda. That time, called "Speakers from the Floor," scheduled early in the meeting, has very strict rules, such that each speaker must sign up in advance and, when called, must stand at a podium facing the school board and speak into a microphone for no more than 3 minutes. This segment of school board meetings, like all school board business, is televiscd on a community access channel.

Specifically, Center staff assisted in preparing 3-minute persuasive speeches using Aristotle's (367/3584) three means (or tools) of persuasion: ethos, pathos, and logos. In the process, participants learned ways to reorganize their thoughts, ideas, and evidence. Hence, in training participants how to be capable, responsible speakers, they also were becoming capable, responsible thinkers, in line with Luas's (1999) thesis. One of the student volunteers who worked with a group on the organization of the speeches commented that "there was no one was clear and their thoughts were well organized after the workshop. They had fun coming up with ideas for attention-getting devices and examples of ethos, pathos, and logos to really persuade their audience" (L. Honeycutt, personal communication, July 30, 2010). The persuasive tools that participants brought with them were complementary. For example, Thompson and education leaders from
the community had access to GSC’s achievement gap data, and persons and a few African American male students from nearby North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University had firsthand stories. The process employed involved Center staff facilitating a whole-group workshop on tools of persuasion and the motivated sequence (defined below), followed by individual consultation sessions on organizing and/or delivering individual speeches. Hence, the workshop focused on mobilizing and sparking collective ideas and tactics on this particular social justice cause, and the individual consultation sessions honed participants’ presentation abilities. Given the collaborative nature of the HIV/E, Center staff members were careful to remain a cohesive group that worked together; there never was a time when any one staffer appeared to take charge. The student volunteers for this summer project, all of whom were trained by Speaking Center staff members during the school year, were recruited by Curry. They facilitated the workshop to help community members organize clear and coherent 3-minute persuasive speeches using the five steps in the motivated sequence as the form of speech structure. Monroe (1938) defined the motivated sequence as “the sequence of ideas which, by following the normal process of human thinking, motivated the audience to respond to the speaker’s purpose” (p. 329). Handouts, created by Curry, were designed to be useful to participants before, during, and after the workshop. Mindful of the possibility that some participants might not read or write, the facilitators never forced anyone to use or even look at the handouts available at http://speakingcenter.uncg.edu/resources/speakingchange); consequently, the program had to be facilitated in such a way that use of the handouts was not essential. Remaining informal and having a dialogue about public speaking instead of offering a lecture was important to the success of this endeavor. From the perspective of social justice, the motivated sequence led activists to identify the injustice/need for change; offer a solution/plan, help the audience to visualize possible outcomes of how things should be; and, finally, to state actions or changes that they would like to see in their community. Hence, the process offered activists a structure to situate themselves within the narratives of HIV/E vision that were exchanged and reinforced through the mediums of conversations and speeches.

To keep the overall learning climate relaxed and casual, and because participants had varying experiences with public speaking, facilitators sat at a circle with learners, omitted academic terms, and engaged in immediate behavior. This was not the same workshop approach employed on campus, in that the pace was set by participants, with facilitators observing participants’ nonverbal behavior to ensure that they were not moving forward to cover material too quickly. Participants who previously had addressed the school board were given time to share their experiences, and facilitators were careful to move forward only after answering any questions asked by attendees. TC Muhammad, a participant who had spoken at previous school board meetings, noted 2 years later that making sure one knows what one wants to say before giving a speech, practicing the speech to make it clear, and being sure that the most important aspects of one’s argument are included were among the most important things that he learned at the HIVE workshop (personal communication, August 2, 2010).

After the workshop ended, there was widespread agreement among participants that it had been very helpful, and many people who never before had thought they could give a speech now felt on their way to doing so. In during the workshop, Curry asked if they felt helped or were overwhelmed with information, and a community member replied, “This was great, I can do this.” However, everyone also agreed that more speech preparation time and support was needed; consequently, a follow-up program was scheduled for Wednesday, June 25, the night before the public would have its chance to respond to the AGC’s presentation.

Word of mouth and other forms of publicity led to an even larger turnout at the second program, with 40 people attending. Alerted ahead of time about the increased attendance, the UNCG Speaking Center arrived with more student volunteers for the second night at the HIVE. Three programs ran at the same time: some of those returning after attending the first workshop had paper drafts of speeches that needed reading and feedback, whereas others practiced their speeches in private and received feedback as those programs took place, Curry and Nadia repeated for newcomers the previous week’s persuasive speech-making workshop.

Cherie Avent, Kristen Hanley, and Lauren Honeyscutt split the student-staff work by offering feedback to those who had speeches written out on paper and to those who were ready to practice presenting their speeches. There was a significant difference between these consultations and the sessions that take place on campus, as Center staff helped to write the speeches, whereas students helping students on campus necessitates adhering to an honor code that prohibits staff from cowriting speeches during consultation. Staff members who helped to write workshop participants’ speeches noted that difference, reporting that they felt as if they were helping even more than they do on campus. The work done by these students took place in an open lounge and in the office space rented by the Fund for Democratic Communities (a private foundation that supports community-based initiatives and institutions that foster authentic democracy to make communities better places to live, see http://fdc.org). A podium and microphone were borrowed from campus, which allowed speakers to experience presenting in the way that they would at the school board meeting. The workshop for newcomers was set up just as it had been the week before. This session marked the last time that Center staff worked with the participants.
The following night was the school board's regularly scheduled meeting. At the start of the meeting, the chamber was packed (for the second time that week), a larger than usual number of people signed up to speak from the floor (18), and all but one addressed the academic achievement gap. Most of them had attended one or both Speaking for a Change workshops, but many of them had never before addressed a public body. The lead speaker, CJ Driehaus, gave a powerful speech, one he had written, practiced, and fine-tuned with the assistance of the Speaking Center coaches at the HIVe. He set a good example to follow, as he forcefully made his arguments and stayed within the 3-minute limit (see his speech at http://speakingcenter.osu.edu/resources/speaking/change). Speaker after speaker then came to the podium and presented a speech. Thompson later learned that school board members were a little surprised by the forcefulness of the speeches and the diversity of the speakers, which may explain why the chair allowed the speakers from the Floor segment to continue well past the time normally reserved for it.

As people gave their speeches, audience members often clapped in signal their support for points made. Speakers returning to their seats were greeted by handshakes and backslaps, often from people they had never met before. At the conclusion of the Speakers from the Floor segment, several school board members commented on the effectiveness and forcefulness of the speeches, and they took time to state their concerns about closing the academic achievement gap. One Black school board member, who had shared with Thompson that she often felt isolated in her attempts to push the school board toward taking stronger action to close the gap, referred to the many powerful speeches as proof that the community was demanding that the school board act decisively to close the gap, and the school board chair agreed.

The school board then turned to its planned agenda. At that time, a critical mass of 42-state people exited the building and convened in an impromptu meeting on the steps leading to the school administration building. Participants exchanged contact information and planned their return to the next school board meeting; several people who had attended the workshops but had not felt ready to speak that night now said they would do so. At the following school board meeting, a large crowd, again appeared in support of another dozen speakers who addressed the achievement gap. Most important, buoyed by their sense of efficacy in articulating long-buried concerns and ideas about the achievement gap, the group planned to continue meeting.

Over the next few months, two of the three education action groups—APPLE and the Title I Moms—began meeting together and pooling resources. APLLEPE had originated in a Reclaiming Democracy court that was cosponsored by six local universities in Spring 2008, and it was comprised mostly of White progressives. The Title I Moms group, in contrast, consisted mostly of Black mothers and grandmothers whose children attended Title I schools (schools under a federal program in which a large number of students come from economically struggling households). Following the shared experience of the Speaking for a Change workshops and the sense of mutual empowerment created from the speeches, these groups continue to exist as separate entities, but there now is substantial overlap in their memberships, and they often work together on projects. The groups' actions, following the workshops, aimed to address social concerns.

The first project that the groups worked on together was advocating for the school system to release federal dollars that were earmarked for Title I parent education activities for a group of Title I parents to travel to a nationally recognized organizing conference that provided people who are poor with information and tools to help them advocate for their children in Title I schools. This project was connected to the larger goal of closing the academic achievement gap, with research suggesting that stronger engagement and advocacy among Black and Latino/a families leads to stronger academic outcomes for Black and Latino/a students (see Gregory, 2010). This campaign involved more public speaking at school board meetings, and it was moderately successful—a few parents got to attend, although not as many as hoped by those involved. Speaking Center staff members visited this group to make the Center's support services known, but the Center never was invited to participate in any of the projects that followed the workshops.

Another postworkshop product of the joint efforts of APLLEPE and the Title I Moms (now called Parents Supporting Parents) to distance itself from the federal label of "Title I," which does not express members' strengths or successes) is a carefully researched contract that spells out rights and responsibilities of Title I parents, and the obligations of Title I school personnel. It is not unusual for GCS personnel to require parents to sign a contract listing their family's obligations to the school; now, in some Title I schools in Greensboro, parents say that they will not sign the school's contract until school personnel sign their contract.

Assessing the impact of "Speaking for a Change" on the Social Justice Activists' Agenda

To assess the impact of the Speaking for a Change effort, we examine the outcomes against the four goals, identified previously, of the activist
organizers who worked with the UNCG Speaking Center to sponsor the project. With regard to the first goal, the number and diversity of voices engaged in community debate about causes of and solutions to the academic achievement gap certainly increased, at least in the short term. Not every person who spoke at the two school board meetings, or who attended to support speakers, still is actively engaged in such dialogue but many still are, especially through increased commitment to one or more of the activist groups that participated.

With regard to the second goal, the sense of efficacy and empowerment that was felt by speakers in the immediate aftermath of the school board meetings in June 2008 was obvious. Furthermore, the quality of the speeches given, although uneven, was strong enough that school board members provided assurances of their commitment to solving the academic achievement gap. Hence, the goal was met of building capacity among often-marginalized groups to express their thinking in ways that make a difference. Not only were the speeches of June and July 2008 effective but many of those first-time speakers have gone on to make other speeches at school board meetings and to other public bodies. Thus, capacities developed in the workshops still are being put to use to promote social justice causes.

The two examples of ongoing collaboration between participants in the Speaking for a Change workshops illustrate that the third goal of providing opportunities for networking and relationship building was met as well. This “movers” aspect of community organizing often is overlooked, but it is critical to movement building, a step beyond raw activism that nurtures sustainable change and resilient communities. Although workshop participants already were motivated to close the academic achievement gap—otherwise, they would not have attended the workshops or school board meetings—the workshops, offered in a way that respected participants’ capacities, knowledge, and interests, deepened their motivation and commitment—both to the cause and to each other. These were good conditions for nurturing new relationships and renewing established bonds. Furthermore, having all participants—including the leaders—be learners leveled the group and made it easier to build cross-race and cross-class partnerships. The common focus of preparing for a single event—the June 26 school board meeting—also provided a sense of immediacy that drew people together toward a common cause.

Community organizers have their knowledge base comprised of social change principles, tactics, and folk wisdom based on experience, including knowing that just showing up matters—a lot. In this case, the UNCG Speaking Center “showed up”—with its resources—at just the right time. Had the Center not intersected with the HIVE community, there would

have been no focus or framework on which to center the organizing for the Summer 2008 school board events. Additionally, the fruitful partnership between APPLES and Parents Supporting Parents probably would not have developed at that time or at all. One of the student volunteers, reflecting on her insights from the HIVE experience, stated:

The energy in their push for something bigger than us, to help someone other than just ourselves, speaks louder than many speeches I have heard.

In my mind, when I think about the energy of this group, I can’t help but think this is the same energy that put an end to slavery, the same energy that gave equal rights to women, the same energy that moved us to vote President Barack Obama into office, the same energy we need to progress.

(White, personal communication, July 21, 2010)

The outcomes with regard to the fourth goal, to communicate to the school board the urgency and importance of making tangible headway in closing the academic achievement gap, are mixed. The immediate reactions of school board members in the meetings at which speakers forcefully addressed the gap suggest that the effort lit a fire under the majority of them. However, it is much murkier whether that fire still is lit and whether the school board made any concrete commitments to plausible solutions. In November 2008, the AGC, perhaps emboldened by the spirit and urgency of the speakers, folded a radical plan to create a small subset of schools in which the “normal” rules for benchmark testing, pacing guides, and other districtwide activities would be suspended in exchange for the faculty’s commitment to studying and implementing a range of alternative instructional and community-building approaches that had shown promise in other communities. These schools, in essence, would serve as proving grounds for more radical changes in educational practice, which many on the AGC believed were needed, as the achievement gap had proved itself quite durable in the face of smaller reforms. However, a change in the school system’s top leadership (a new superintendent), accompanied by a budget crisis brought about by the general economic meltdown, resulted in the dismantling of those plans. The new superintendent has since announced a plan to break the system’s 150 schools into zones with individual leadership structures, and the creation of a special zone, called the “Enrichment Region,” for schools in which students of color have not performed well over the past several years. Closing the achievement gap is one of four foci to which GCS has committed Enrichment Region resources (GCS, 2010). Whether this current solution being pursued will close the achievement gap remains to be seen, but the ideas and concepts expressed by the community in the 2008 school board meetings do not seem to figure in the new approach.
LESSONS LEARNED ABOUT COMMUNICATION ACTIVISM PEDAGOGY

The lessons learned from the Speaking for Change initiative are promising and insightful, with implications for CAP. From the perspective of non-disciplined resources, the initiative offered the UNCG Speaking Center opportunities to apply traditional public speaking pedagogical concepts and practices, and other Center resources, in the HIVe setting as an alternative extracurricular communication program that promotes social justice. In contrast to the traditional view of educational institutions as the means of the transmission of an effective dominant culture” (Williams, 1973, p. 9) because of their historical alignment with industry, the initiative accomplished the purposes of CAP, creating a shift from the prominent view. From an institutional perspective, the initiative provided an exceptional opportunity for the UNCG Speaking Center to examine and experience the application of CAP principles beyond the confines of conventional classroom settings. The HIVe experience not only met the mission of the Center and its staff but the experience also allowed the Center to adopt an activist orientation to community outreach, with staff coaching participants, organizing their ideas and thoughts effectively to meet their objectives of persuading the school board to develop something about the social justice issues of academic achievement gap. To do so, the Center and its staff used traditional public speaking/rhetorical pedagogical techniques to intervene into discourses to promote social justice rather than invent new rhetorical techniques to pedagogically promote and accomplish communication activism.

In line with Frey et al.'s (1996) communication approach to social justice, developing a sensibility in this social justice pedagogical endeavor involved enfranchising activities from groups and organizations via the production of social acts (the public speeches), and, thereby, providing opportunities for them to empower themselves. UNCG Speaking Center staff focused on maintaining the production of those speech acts by designing the workshops with the primary understanding that not all participants come with the same experience, or background in speech writing and presentation. By enfranchising the activists with speech-writing and presentation tools, they obtained resources to create and deliver their speeches, and to be heard and respected, which is what they needed to persuade their audience. Cohen (1991) claimed that “justice is done when those who should have, do have; when each gets as or her due; when what people do have is appropriate to what they should have” (p. 240), and from the Center’s perspective, justice was done because participants were given tools and guidance to produce effective speeches in their quests for social justice. For example, the Center’s leadership realized that the two-stage process (first facilitating a whole-group workshop on developing a clear and coherent 3-minute persuasive speech, followed by individual consultations) deepened a sense of common purpose among participants on issues that mattered most to them, as well as for the wider community. As TC Muhammad, one of the participants, stated, “I remember the powerful energy in the room as we initially expressed our ideas to one another” (personal communication, August 2, 2010). The two-stage process approach to coaching, thus, is a pedagogically sound practice for preparing effective speakers confronting social justice issues.

Furthermore, the two-stage process approach informs CAP by means of offering workshops where participants express their voices and situate themselves within conversations about issues of concern that affected them the most, both as individuals and as a community. The workshop experience created a much-needed space for community members to hear each other, accept others’ points of view, and sustain their collective interest as a community seeking social justice. Participants also had the opportunity to improve their individual speeches and, thereby, enhance their confidence in communicating their thoughts to others. A community was developed in the process that helped participants to experience a sense of togetherness in their quest for social justice. The Speaking for Change workshop ultimately helped participants to weave their individual concerns into a collective yet still differentiated voice, thus strengthening the overall effort to mobilize people to achieve their social justice objectives.

From an applied communication perspective, the pedagogical initiative principally allowed Speaking Center staff to practice and theorize CAP principles as applied within the HIVe context. The process described in this chapter empowered us, as communication scholars, to engage in pedagogical practices that called for a communication approach to social justice. The initiative, thus, allowed for theorizing applied communication principles from a social justice perspective grounded in the rhetorical notion of prudence, or the use of knowledge in action, as suggested by Italian Renaissance humanists (see, e.g., Garver, 1987).

Furthermore, the experience provided a strong motivation for identifying resources for engaging in outreach initiatives as a long-term goal in meeting the Speaking Center’s desire to promote social justice. The Center has seen a marginal yet steady success in initiating and implementing several outreach projects since the Speaking for Change initiative, including new activism partnerships. For example, contacts made in the grassroots community at the HIVe have led to an ongoing project with staff and those using the Interactive Resource Center (IRC), a day center in Greensboro that assists people who are homeless or facing homelessness to reconnect with their lives.
and with the community at large. What distinguishes the IRC from many homeless assistance projects is that it draws on many of the same mutual aid approaches employed at the HIVE, placing people who are homeless in positions as guests, teachers, and leaders, not as clients. In early 2009, a UNGG Speaking Center staff member taught IRC staff members and volunteers to tell their stories through a storytelling workshop, for the purpose of assisting IRC’s guests seeking aid. The volume of guests interested in this program and the IRC’s desire for continued support identified a need to have a Center representative at the site on a more ongoing basis, and by the next semester, the Center had a graduate student assistant on site for a few hours each week. Thus, the HIVE project led to benefits for the Speaking Center, the IRC, student staff volunteers, and all of those who spoke at the Board of Education meeting.

The Speaking for a Change experience also enabled the UNGG Speaking Center’s staff members to personally and professionally apply and experience what they teach mainly to their peers on campus to their off-campus neighbors. That off-campus environment—quite different from what they experience in their classrooms and at the Center—gave them opportunities to dialogue with people who often are marginalized and to critically examine and understand the impact and significance of issues of concern to those community members. The students who participated had the chance to see that they are part of a wider community and that they can play the role of responsible citizens as they engage in this work. LaShawndra White, a Center staff volunteer, commented that “this experience has heightened my professional development by allowing me to hone my communication and training skills in a community setting with adults seeking to take action for a cause they personally feel strongly about” (personal communication, July 21, 2010). The experience gave Center staff members a sense of making a difference through civic engagement directed toward social justice and, thereby, enabled them to make connections to what they learn on campus in and out of classrooms, and to see how they can apply that knowledge in practical ways. Staff members who participated in the initiative reported feeling personally rewarded after the workshops. As Lauren Honeycutt, another Center staff volunteer, noted, “This was a next opportunity...I enjoyed being outside of the Speaking Center environment, putting my skills to use in an everyday setting” (personal communication, July 30, 2010).

The Center’s community projects, therefore, provide experimental learning opportunities for both student staff volunteers and faculty.

Although the experiences at the HIVE laid a strong foundation to engage in more activism outreach projects with other Greensboro grassroots organizations, the Center also faces challenges sustaining the momentum.

Continued budget restrictions have further limited the Center’s ability to use paid student staff for community outreach, challenging the Center’s leadership to find creative ways to sustain such projects. However, recognition of the Center’s work by faculty peers, donors, and other campus leaders led Curry to seek resources, such as additional payroll, fellowships, and flex time, to continue engaging in CAP. The Center, thus, serves to identify and employ strategies, such as awarding fellowships, providing internships for undergraduate students, and offering graduate assistantships with community outreach projects, as it continues to pool the institutional and disciplinary resources to its advantage.

In terms of other challenges and limitations, the Speaking Center continued to meet local community needs through various projects at the HIVE, until its close in early 2011. At that time, we offered a repeat of the two-step process program to the Greensboro Neighborhood Congress to support that group’s efforts to bear citizens’ voices about opening a city landfill. Currently, the Center’s off-campus efforts are conducted only at the IRC because of resources tied to the state budget. The Center also continues to rely heavily on volunteers among the staff and assistantship funding to keep alight the spirit of collaborating with community members.

To continue the spirit of providing Speaking Center services to those who are underserved and in need of advocacy, Greensboro community members continue to be invited to a version of the Speaking for a Change workshop that has also been added to the already existing “Strictly Speaking Workshop Series,” which offers additional programs on communication-related topics, such as interpersonal and group communication, as well as public speaking anxiety. The workshops are interactive and open to all students, staff, campus faculty, and community members. The Speaking for a Change workshop has been modified and renamed as “Speak Your Mind,” and now is offered as a 3-hour workshop to aid people who want to speak from the floor at public meetings. However, because attendance at that workshop has been low, there is an effort underway to offer it at an off-campus venue. The HIVE outreach initiative, no doubt, provides the medium for the Center to extend its services beyond the academic environment. Such independent outreach efforts are necessary to add momentum to the Center’s pedagogical endeavors to promote social justice. However, the decision to offer additional workshop programs also highlights the continued need for the Center to concurrently identify and respond to Greensboro community needs in need of the Center’s services as a corresponding pedagogy in the ongoing efforts to promote communication activism.

Curry, however, missed the opportunity to seek feedback from participating staff early on to better understand this form of CAP. Seeking feedback...
about student staff volunteers' experiences immediately after the project could have helped to understand better and further the motivational needs for their participation. Overall, the HIV experience continues to encourage Cuny to identify ways to invite and encourage new and established student staff members to participate in future outreach turned activism endeavors.

As a result of follow-up meetings between the UNCG Speaking Center's leadership and then HIV-related activities, the Center is in the process of applying for an AmeriCorps Vista award to sustain its CAP initiative. Specifically, we created a partnership with a branch of the Greensboro Public Library, in which a Speaking Center-sponsored Vista worker could be placed. The branch can provide type of stability that the HIV needs offered, which should encourage activists and other citizens to seek the support offered by a Center-trained consultant who also is a Vista worker. In 2013, two Center staff members began offering speech preparation support at the McGirt-Horton Branch of the library, which is located in northeast Greensboro, an area of town that, largely, is African American and low income. Our goal in selecting McGirt-Horton as a location is to engage in communication activism with a group of citizens who have struggled to have their voices heard in local government meetings.

Moreover, in 2011, then Mayor Knight moved the Speakers from the above portion of city council meetings from the start to the end of the meeting, with the result being that citizens from Northeast Greensboro were silenced, as the end of the meeting occurs after the last buses home have left downtown Greensboro. Mayor Perkins's 2011 campaign promise to move that portion back to the start of the meeting, however, was realized in early 2012. The Center worked with Perkins to provide a support mechanism for citizens who wish to speak to the city council. In February 2012, the Center received a citizens' request to help speakers address the city council about the North Carolina marriage amendment. Center directors, along with three consult volunteers, offered coaching in the lobby, outside of the in-session council meeting. A citizen receiving help that night noted how encouraging it was to know that people had such support if they needed it. Beginning in May 2012, Center directors and volunteer consultants have been outside of council meeting to support the needs of speakers from 5:30-7:00 pm, and this effort will continue as a result of redefining the parameters of the Center's graduate assistantship. Some of the lessons learned from the "Speaking for a Change" initiative point to clear implications for future CAP. Frey et al. (1996) contended that communication scholars must strive to conduct research that yields practical wisdom, wherein the results are useful to the people studied. Frey et al. further argued that "research needs to become a tool for social action, that is, a practical means of advocating, especially on behalf of the underrepresented in the society" (p. 117). As Frey (2008) explained, "It is incumbent on us to be citizen-scholars who are connected with our communities and the significant issues that confront them" (p. 4). The Speaking for a Change initiative shows that a focus on communication and social justice research demands a corresponding curricular and co-curricular pedagogical approach that communication centers can provide.

Finally, our experiences suggest that educators cannot wait for social justice causes to present themselves; promoting social justice demands taking a proactive approach. Those engaged in CAP initiatives, thus, need to be aware of the issues and forums of their local communities. Reaching out to local activists to ensure that they know that universities are interested in this type of work is a first step. The next step might involve an immediate call to action by a group that is looking to speak within a week, as was the case for the program discussed here. We learned to embrace such a call on services are offered. We witnessed the transformation of participants' communication competency as they moved from that first workshop to actually presenting speeches in a public forum, which inspired us to engage in even more CAP. Although we might think of the competencies that we taught as being simple, we have been humbled by the notion that not all citizens are even aware of these competencies. As a result, we are drawn to find ways to aid unheard voices of Greensboro to advocate for the changes that they seek.

CONCLUSION

The Speaking for a Change initiative and the other social justice outreach efforts engaged by The University Speaking Center at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro show that extracurricular programs can provide ample opportunities for faculty and students to employ communication activism pedagogical principles and practices to promote social justice. We continue to engage in this work because "a free society gives birth to both freedom of speech and the study and application of the principles of effective public communication" (Tufte, 1991, p. 12). By helping citizens to effectively convey their points of view, communication centers can equip citizens to participate in the democratic process. We, thus, urge administrators of other communication centers to engage in communication activism for social justice pedagogy with local groups and organizations that are marginalized and oppressed.
NOTES

1. In 2011, UNC-G began plans to add a Digital Literacy Center to its Speaking Center and University Writing Center. Lindqvist and Cuny (2012) noted that adding a new center to an already outdated organizational structure demanded an evaluation of how the writing center and speaking center, in their current configurations, aligned with the new digital literacy center (p. 97). As a result of this evaluation, a new unit emerged: A Multiliteracy Center comprised of the three centers, which more accurately reflects national trends in the centers field.

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Gordon Parks, an African American photographer and filmmaker, wrote an autobiography titled *A Choice of Weapons* in 1961. He wrote the book while serving as a Marine officer in the South Pacific during World War II. In the book, Parks reflects on his early life, his experiences in the military, and his early career in photography. The book was published in 1961 and has since been reprinted several times.

Throughout his career, Parks aimed to capture the black experience on camera, and his work often focused on the lives of African Americans in the United States. He was particularly interested in the struggles of African Americans who were subjected to racial discrimination and prejudice. Parks believed that photography could serve as a powerful tool for social change and a means to expose the realities of African American life.

This chapter chronicled the life of Gordon Parks and his impact on the African American community through his work in photography and filmmaking. It also explored the challenges faced by African Americans during the time period in which Parks lived and worked.