

## Communication Apprehension and Mindfulness: Can a Negative Correlation Help Us Improve?

Brandy Willett

Faculty: Lisa Parcell, Min Xiao

*Department of Communication, Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*

Strong communication skills are vital in the modern workplace, and in fact impact numerous aspects of a person's life. In order to prepare students, many colleges and universities require an introductory-level communication or public speaking class. Unfortunately, for a significant portion of these students, their communication apprehension level – defined as the fear and avoidance of real or perceived communication interactions – is already so high that they have difficulty benefiting from these courses. This study explores the idea that adding basic level mindfulness skills and techniques to introductory-level communication courses may help students cope with their apprehension and as a result be more successful at developing communication skills. Mindfulness techniques and skills have been found to benefit college students in other areas where they face anxiety. This study looks for a link between a student's level of communication apprehension and their mindful mindset. This will be done by administering the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension – (PRCA-24) and the Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale- Revised (CAMS-R) to undergraduate students taking an introductory-level communication course. The results of the CAMS-R will then be compared with students overall PRCA-24 score, which determines their level of communication apprehension, and a subscale which looks only at public speaking anxiety. The goal being to determine if those with high communication apprehension and/or public speaking anxiety score low in the area of mindful mindset. An inverse correlation between the scores would suggest that further study of mindfulness intervention in introductory communication courses would be warranted.