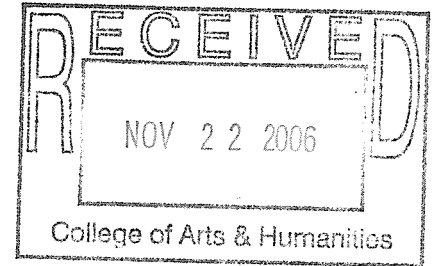


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**IPEL Grant Application**  
(Initiative to Promote Excellence in Student Learning)  
Minnesota State University, Mankato



**PROPOSAL COVER PAGE**  
1 of 2

Title of Project: **Infusing Critical Thinking Throughout SPEE 100: Fundamentals of Speech Communication**

Names: **Kristen Treinen**  
**James Dimock**  
**Daniel Cronn-Mills**

Are you full-time faculty in 2006-2007?  
(fixed-term faculty are not eligible to apply) **Yes** (for all 3 faculty involved)

Do you plan to return to MSU in 2007-2008? **Yes** (for all 3 faculty involved)

e-mail: **kristen.treinen@mnsu.edu**  
**james.dimock@mnsu.edu**  
**daniel.cronn-mills@mnsu.edu**

Campus Address: **230 Armstrong Hall**

Campus Phone:  
**Treinen: 389-5535**  
**Dimock: 389-5533**  
**Cronn-Mills: 389-6160**  
**Department: 389-2213**

College: **Arts and Humanities**

Department: **Speech Communication**

**Treinen's Spring Semester Schedule:**

Mondays: xxxxx

Tuesdays: 9-Noon

Wednesdays: 10-Noon

Thursdays: 9-Noon

Fridays: 10-Noon

**IPESL Grant Application**  
(Initiative to Promote Excellence in Student Learning)  
Minnesota State University, Mankato

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**PROPOSAL COVER PAGE**  
2 of 2

Title of Project: **Infusing Critical Thinking Throughout SPEE 100: Fundamentals of Speech Communication**

**Dimock's Spring Semester Schedule:**

List times when available to participate in Learning Communities and workshops.

Mondays: 2-4 p.m.

Tuesdays: 10:30-3 p.m.

Wednesdays: 9-Noon; 1-3 pm

Thursdays: 10:30-3

Fridays: xxxx

**Cronn-Mills' Spring Semester Schedule:**

List times when available to participate in Learning Communities and workshops.

Mondays: 10-2

Tuesdays: xxxxx

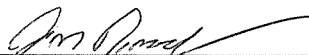
Wednesdays: 10-3

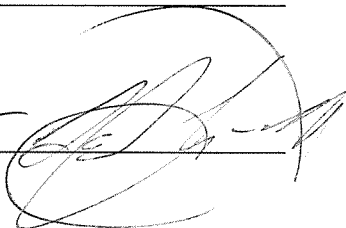
Thursdays: xxxxx


Fridays: 10-3



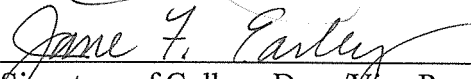
Signature of Applicants







Signature of Department Chair/Director/Supervisor



Signature of College Dean/Vice President

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## IPESL Grant Application Proposal Details

1. **Title of Project:** Infusing Critical Thinking Throughout SPEE 100: Fundamentals of Speech Communication

2. **Explain the purpose of your project (e.g., need, project goals or outcomes, significance, affected student population) and include a definition of “critical thinking” as appropriate to your project.**  
(maximum 250 words; word count = 247)

The principles of effective communication are intrinsic to critical thinking. Studies have indicated critical thinking is necessary to succeed in our society. According to Allen et al. (1999), education in communication processes has a positive impact on critical thinking development.<sup>1</sup> In fact, a met-analysis by Allen et al. found explicit education in communication may enhance critical thinking by 44 percent. Our project goal is to build on Allen et al.'s findings by incorporating critical thinking concepts and strategies throughout the SPEE 100 curriculum during the entire semester.

The project will have a significant impact on excellence in undergraduate education and necessitates the involvement of more than one faculty member for three reasons: (1) The number of students affected by the project is significant. The large lecture component of SPEE 100 reaches approximately 750 students each semester. (2) SPEE 100 is a core general education course and, therefore, the advancement in critical thinking will reach into all majors. (3) The breadth of the project is significant. We plan to infuse critical thinking instruction throughout the semester.

Our plan is to utilize a definition of critical thinking offered by Scriven and Paul (2004): “Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or *communication*, as a guide to belief and action”<sup>2</sup> (emphasis added). The definition is appropriate and useful as it directly addresses the intrinsic link between communication and critical thinking.

3. **Describe your project and how it will enhance students’ critical thinking through one or more of the following activities:**  
(maximum of 250 words; word count = 231)

We plan to develop, implement and assess new instructional and curricular materials designed to enhance how students use communication to develop their critical thinking abilities. We plan to integrate into the course such concepts as mind-maps, cognitive biases, evidentiary analysis, argument analysis, and other concepts/techniques we shall learn as part of the IPESL learning communities and workshops.

SPEE 100 is the department’s introductory survey speech course and satisfies general education category 1B. SPEE 100 may be the only communication course many students take

at the university. Students learn in SPEE 100 about public speaking, interpersonal, nonverbal, listening, intercultural, conflict, and group communication processes. As noted above by Allen et al., communication is critical for advancing critical thinking. Therefore, all aspects of speech communication have the potential for incorporating critical thinking. The potential breadth of critical thinking application students may learn during the course is compelling. Instead of developing a stand-alone unit on critical thinking, our agenda is to incorporate critical thinking pedagogy throughout the entire semester coursework.

We envision using D2L functions to for the implementation and assessment of the critical thinking components within the course units. We also plan to utilize the graduate teaching assistants who teach the recitation sections of SPEE 100 for further implementation and assessment of critical thinking. Thus, an ancillary bonus of the project will be the critical thinking development of the GTAs in our department.

4. **How will you assess the results of your completed project?**  
(maximum of 150 words; word count = 108)

We will use formative assessment techniques. We will assess students' critical thinking development using Classroom Assessment Techniques (Angelo & Cross) throughout the semester. We will employ pre/post tests and surveys to assess student knowledge, attitudes, and dispositions as related to critical in speech communication. We will compare and contrast with data from other general education courses in speech communication. The department assessment plan will be used for longitudinal assessment, as appropriate. Our yearly departmental assessment plan includes students in the capstone course analyzing, synthesizing, and reflecting on their learning. The department assessment plan provides an additional method for analyzing data derived from formative assessment and from pre/post tests.

5. **How will you disseminate your project and its results?**  
(maximum of 100 words; word count = 99)

- a. We will submit the project to the Communication and Theatre Association of Minnesota (CTAM) conference and to the *CTAM Journal*. The CTAM membership is composed of communication instructors from secondary and post-secondary institutions in Minnesota. The journal has a section dedicated to instructional practices and is an appropriate publication outlet.
- b. We will submit the project to the Basic Communication Course conference. The BCC is composed of basic course directors from across the country.
- c. The project will have impact across the university. SPEE 100 is a GE foundation course and may impact *any* MSU student in *any* program.

6. **How will your project support department/university goals?**  
(maximum of 50 words; word count = 49)

A department goal is for students to have “competency in reflective construction and analysis of arguments and discourse intended to influence beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices.”<sup>3</sup>

Our project will be instrumental toward achieving this goal. Our project supports the University's goal to "enhance academic offerings for all undergraduate students."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, M., Berkowitz, S., Hunt, S., & Loudon, A. (1999). A meta-analysis of the impact of forensics and communication education on critical thinking. *Communication Education, 48*, 18-30.

<sup>2</sup> Scriven, M., & Paul, R. (2004). Defining critical thinking. Retrieved November 15, 2006, from Foundation for Critical Thinking, The Critical Thinking Community Web site:  
<http://www.criticalthinking.org/aboutCT/definingCT.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> [www.mnsu.edu/spcomm](http://www.mnsu.edu/spcomm)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.mnsu.edu/president/priorities/definitions/priority5.html>