Active involvement: A brief media literacy approach to substance use prevention

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Introduction: Contributions of Communication

- Many fields focus on prevention and/or interventions

- Communication expertise in content but how to apply?

- How to optimally refine programs to use theory to maximize interventions and message content
Example: Active Involvement Interventions

- Limited intervention opportunities (time, cost)
- Little theoretical guidance for which intervention components are crucial or “active”
- Emphasize how to involve participants in interventions
- What is the theory behind using message planning or production?

Active Involvement Interventions (AIIs)

- Two categories of interventions using message planning

- 1. Adolescents create messages as strategy for message development (e.g., CBPR)

Active Involvement Interventions (AIIs)

- Two categories of interventions using message planning

2. Adolescents develop/plan as a strategy for influence within an intervention

- Develop Theory of Active Involvement (TAI)

Theory of Active Involvement (TAI)

- Grounded in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986)
- Notion of self-regulation
- Create intervention to emphasize multiple perspective taking and evaluating discrepancy
- Emphasize engagement with intervention as a key missing component to date [and knowledge and skills as secondary to lasting change]

Media Literacy (ML) as an example of AII

New and promising avenue for prevention

- ML expands traditional literacy and uses literacy tools to analyze media
- ML training can include analysis and production (or planning) components

ML training/interventions addressing alcohol
- Overall favorable results (i.e., reduction in specific beliefs, attitudes, and intentions) for elemen. and middle school kids
- Can improve cognitive resistance to ads
Curriculum Ad to Generate Discussion
Critiques of ML Interventions

• Lack of clarity about the causal process
  – No explanations of why and how the participants change attitude and/or behavior when exposed to these programs

• Failure to form students’ engagement
  – ML interventions generally fail to form students’ motivation to resist such influences (focus on knowledge or skill acquisition)

• Unclear optimal dose and length of expected effects

• Rarely tailored
  – Missing adequate tailoring to the cognitive capabilities and developmental stage of the target audience
Initial Study: Smoking

- Targeting middle school smoking using ML intervention in 2 schools, 2 lesson intervention (about 75 minutes)
- 3 conditions: control, analysis, planning
- Planning reported negative anti-smoking attitudes and lower intentions to smoke; analysis also less favorable smoking attitudes and intentions than control
- Thus:
  - Planning > Analysis > Control

- Produce evidence that involving adolescents actively in generating messages provides a more powerful strategy of using ML in prevention


NIDA Study 2010-2012

- Grounded in theories of persuasion and information processing; designed to test hypotheses about the process of cognitive change
- Feasibility of a brief ML intervention (limited resources)
- Planning versus analysis conditions
- Alcohol-focused
- Brief (90 minutes)

Greene, K. (2010-2112), Principal Investigator. Grant #R21 DA027146 from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) for project "Active Involvement in Creating High School Substance Use Prevention Messages."
Structure of *YMD* Curriculum (+ ex’s, discussion)

- Introduction
- Target audience, persuasion techniques (4 main ones), claims
- Activity 1: Analyze alcohol ad in group
- Counter-arguing or missing from ads, anti-ads
- Attention, production techniques
- Activity 2: Planning anti-alcohol poster
- Conclusion (and evaluation)
Phase 1 – 2010 Pilot of preliminary curriculum: Students

Method
• 149 10th grade high school students (ages 14-16; $M = 15.57$, $SD = .61$)
• 32 schools across Pennsylvania attending Leadership Institute

Results
• The pilot poster planning students viewed the intervention as more novel ($t(146) = -2.92, p < .001$) and more involving ($t(146) = -2.23, p < .01$).
• Perceptions of novelty and involvement were significantly correlated with perceived gain (novelty $r = .18$, involvement $r = .41; p < .001$), reflectiveness (novelty $r = .24$, involvement $r = .47; p < .001$), alcohol use intentions (involvement $r = -.15, p < .01$), and alcohol expectancies (involvement $r = -.16, p < .01$).
It's Saturday morning...

Which seat will you be using?

Make this decision Friday night! Don't drink.
Phase 2: 2010 Pilot of preliminary curriculum: Mentors

Method
• Mentors accompany students ($N = 40$; ages 20 to 65, $M = 37.38$, $SD = 13.05$) also evaluated the curriculum.
• Teachers (64%), counselors (14.5%), administrators (6.5%), youth agency workers (4%), or other (11%).

Results
• Mentors reported planning was more involving ($t(38) = -3.48$, $p < .001$), enjoyable ($t(38) = -2.57$, $p < .01$), interesting ($t(38) = -3.24$, $p < .001$), less boring ($t(38) = -3.39$, $p < .001$), more likely to work well in their school ($t(38) = -2.81$, $p < .001$), different from the regular classes ($t(38) = -1.91$, $p < .05$); perceived structure would facilitate curriculum adoption ($t(37) = -1.75$, $p < .05$).
Refining Curriculum: Additional Formative

Method:
- 2 teacher focus groups,
- 2 student focus groups,
- 20 student interviews,
- 6 mentor (teacher) interviews.

Results
- Specific ads to incorporate (e.g., Pdiddy), balance main ads
- Activity Sheets restructured to improve involvement
- Clarify curriculum procedures, Activity 2 instructions
- Refine measurement
Additional test of YMD curriculum (2011)

3 waves using Leadership Program students in PA

Analysis vs. Planning (with small control)

171 10th graders, 34 schools across PA

Revisions emphasized planning component of the poster planning activity
Additional studies

• **Focus on measures of motivation** to tap involvement

• **Focus on analysis of posters planned/produced in interventions**

• **Focus on measure of counter-arguing**
  – Validity study of skills measure to ascertain overlap with scales
Future Research

• Active involvement interventions
  – Theory about process
  – Necessary and sufficient components

• Ensuring that interventions can be utilized by community partners

• How communication scholars can contribute to this question
• Questions?

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