



The Newsletter

Scholarship Supplement

Editor's Welcome

SARA BAKER BAILEY - SOUTHERN CT STATE UNIV

In this issue, our reviewers, Tim McKenna-Buchanan and Sarah Riforgiate, review two books published by CSCA members:

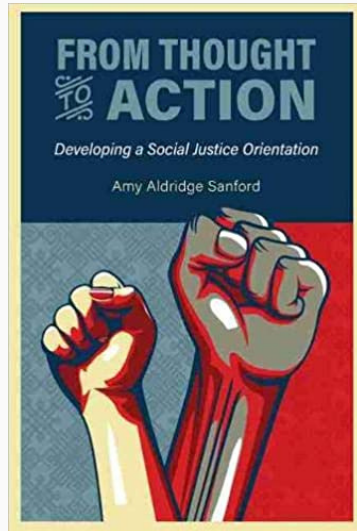
From Thought to Action by Amy Aldridge Sanford

Communication Is... by Adam Tyma and Autumn Edwards.

We are seeking reviewers for our next edition, which will feature:

- *Queer Communication Pedagogy* by Ahmet Atay & Sandy Pensoneau-Conway (Eds.)
- *Beyond Gender Binaries: An Intersectional Orientation to Communication and Identities* by Cindy L. Griffin
- *Reimagining Black Masculinities: Race, Gender, and Public Space* by Mark C. Hopson
- *Interpersonal Communication and Human Relationships* by Mark Knapp, Anita Vangelisti, and John Caughlin
- **Your recommendation!** Email Sara at bakers21@southernct.edu

If you are interested in reviewing any of these publications email **Sara Baker Bailey** at bakers21@southernct.edu.



From Thought to Action: Developing a Social Justice Orientation

REVIEW BY TIM MCKENNA-BUCHANAN

Aldridge Sanford's book takes students on a social justice journey providing a framework to help "students manage the discomfort that accompanies a newly raised consciousness" (p. xviii). As many students may be reflecting critically on what they can do to be better social justice activists, this book can help them harness their passion. Its organization provides students with a historic, cultural, and societal background, and in turn, creates a framework toward taking meaningful action. As students move through the chapters, they develop an understanding of their personal social justice orientation (SJO).

Aldridge Sanford engages the reader through reflection and education. She begins by highlighting social justice movements of the 19th and 20th century. Students will learn about social justice movements over the years and will have space to reflect on what can be remembered and embraced from these social movements of the past. Aldridge Sanford also engages the reader by integrating personal stories of her social justice journey throughout the book and includes the stories of more than 25 social justice activists. She even includes the Twitter handle for activists who were living at the time the book was published to encourage students to follow and interact with someone who inspires them. All of this is to Aldridge Sanford's credit in raising her reader's awareness and guiding them to learn about our history of social justice in the United States.

In the latter half of the book students learn social justice vocabulary and are encouraged to choose a cause and take action. The book carefully walks students step-by-step through a process of first recognizing a social justice cause connected to their social justice values, identifying a problem, setting short and long-term goals, and then seeking out a personal action in collaboration with a local activist or activist organization (continued on p. 3).

The book explores over a dozen different actions students can take toward social justice activism. This is important because it helps students navigate different levels of comfort as they embrace their journey. As she states, “activism looks different to everyone, depending upon where they are on their social justice journey” (p. 96). More importantly, Aldridge Sanford does not stray from the uncomfortable and dives deep into important conversations related to confronting others and cynicism. She details approaches toward dialogue and the importance of setting boundaries when interacting with others, all in hopes for students to embrace a willingness to be vulnerable in moments when they expect others to do the same.

What is most exciting about this book is the opportunity for project-based learning that gets students moving beyond the classroom and involved in their campus and community in meaningful ways. This book provides students with the background and resources to not only learn and reflect on their own social justice consciousness, but to begin down a path toward action. Aldridge Sanford provides instructor resources that include a Group Activist Project (GAP) that helps students plan a social justice activist action/event in partnership with a local activists or activist organization. Again, this continues fostering the journey toward social justice activism as students not only reflect and learn about social justice, but also gain the confidence to move toward social justice activism. This book is powerful because it takes students that one step deeper to move beyond just talking about injustice toward taking action on things that matter to them the most.

On the whole, this book is an excellent addition to any course that seeks to explore social justice and is approachable to students at various degrees of social justice knowledge. The text could be utilized to create a new course around social justice, or it could be supplemental to reframing a course toward a social justice orientation. It serves as an innovative resource for teachers who seek to challenge their students to get involved in the world they live in. This book is highly recommended as it is both engaging and practical in helping students understand and embrace a social justice consciousness and move that raised consciousness toward meaningful action.

Tim McKenna-Buchanan

(PhD, Ohio University) is an Associate Professor of Communication Studies and the Director of the Honors Program at Manchester University. He teaches courses in Organizational Communication and Public Relations with a focus on project-based learning. His research focuses on how the stories of marginalized and underrepresented individuals create, maintain, and expose constructions of [organizational] life. He also draws from his teaching to promote pedagogy that motivates life-long learning.



However, most importantly, every chapter challenged me to understand a different viewpoint of communication to stretch my thinking and appreciation for the work others are doing in the field. In short, the authors accomplished what they set out to do – encourage thought, understanding, and conversation about the possibilities the discipline of communication offers.

Each chapter is well written, substantive, and provides support for the argument of what communication is. The writing is accessible and would be useful for undergraduate, Masters, and PhD courses, as well as seasoned scholars interested in how the field is evolving. I particularly like the idea of using this text in communication theory or introductory graduate courses to explore ideas across the discipline and invite conversations that honor different ways of thinking. As Tracy (2015) explains, it is important to “understand how different people... see the world in such different ways” (p. 38). The many perspectives offered in Tyma and Edwards’ (2020) book enrich the communication discipline and offer thoughtful perspectives to mark where our discipline is now and how we can understand and imagine communication scholarship into the future.

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