NCA’s Monthly Teleconference Series
CARD Calls: Communicating About Research and Professional Development

Communication Scholarship and the Public

Featured Speakers:
Kathleen Jamieson, Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor of Communication, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania; Joann Keyton, Professor, Department of Communication, North Carolina State University; and Katherine Rowan, Professor, Department of Communication, George Mason University

Moderator:
Melissa Anderson, Coordinator for Research & Educational Initiatives
National Communication Association

Tuesday, January 18, 2011
1:00pm Eastern time
Communication Scholarship and the Public

Kathleen Jamieson, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Ware Packard Professor of Communication
Annenberg School for Communication
University of Pennsylvania
Communication Scholarship and the Public

Joann Keyton, Ph.D.
Department of Communication

NC STATE UNIVERSITY
Differences in audiences

**Other Scholars**
1. Peer reviewed scholarship
2. Journals and scholarly books
3. Specialized language
4. Disciplinary knowledge assumptions
5. Research for research’s sake

**The Public**
1. Credible experts
2. Magazines, newspaper, and radio
3. Generalized language
4. Little disciplinary knowledge
5. Research for application
What can we communicate?

1. Report our research findings
2. Synthesize the research of others
3. Connecting our issues to current events
4. Raising the awareness and relevance of scientific findings to public policy issues
Identifying your core message

1. One sentence
2. Adjust terminology
3. Does it have a hook?
Identifying stakeholders

- Who are they?
- What are their needs?
- What do they know?
- What do you want them to know?
Modifying core message for stakeholders

1. What types of support should be included?
   – Percentages, frequencies
   – Facts, examples

2. Do you need visuals to help make your point?
Are you ready for their response?

• Bio
• Picture
• Website
Joann Keyton (Ph.D., The Ohio State University, 1987) is Professor of Communication at North Carolina State University. Her current research examines the process and relational aspects of interdisciplinary teams, the role of training and influence of culture in organizational interventions, and how messages are manipulated in sexual harassment. In addition to publications in scholarly journals and edited collections, she has published three textbooks for courses in group communication, research methods, and organizational culture in addition to co-editing an organizational communication case book. Keyton was editor of the Journal of Applied Communication Research, Volumes 31-33, and founding editor of Communication Currents, Volumes 1-5. Currently, she is editor of Small Group Research. She is a founder and vice-chair of the Interdisciplinary Network for Group Research. For more information, contact Joann at jkeyton@ncsu.edu or www.joannkeyton.com
Communicating Slow-Onset Risk

Katherine E. Rowan, Ph.D.

krowan@gmu.edu

Department of Communication, George Mason University

Presentation for the

National Communication Association’s Teleconference on “Communication Scholarship and the Public”

CARD Calls: Communicating about Research and Professional Development

January 18, 2011
The challenge

• Tale of two oil spills:
  – The British Petroleum Gulf spill in 2010
  – Guadalupe Dunes, 170 miles north of LA

• We perceive immediate risks differently than we do slow-onset, gradually worsening hazards.
  – Risk = hazards, physical or financial.
What counts as ‘slow onset’?

• “Slow onset” but likely U. S. hazards:
  – Crumbling infrastructure (sewers, roads, bridges)
  – Over 50 % U. S. population lives near coastlines—and sea levels are rising, future storms severe.
  – The U. S. national debt will exceed its output (Gross National Product) in a matter of decades.
  – Cancer incidence increases with age; people live longer.
  – The number of U.S. residents educated in science, technology, math, and engineering (STEM disciplines) is too low to meet job demands.

• Communication scholarship can help to analyze and address these challenges.
Immediate risk
Consider immediate risk

- *We see, hear, taste, or feel it.*
- Seeing fire, hearing an alarm, or tasting something foul evokes immediate response.
- But what happens when a hazard is *less immediate*? Do we always exit buildings when we hear fire alarms?
- Suppose we encounter ONE small child in distress? Suppose we encounter TWO?
Consider distant risk

• The more distant a harm—emotionally and experientially—the harder it is to detect, care about, and address.

• Hazards like the growing national debt are hard to experience emotionally—at least for those fortunate to have money now.

• Slowly worsening hazards are hard to detect: Only experts see correlations between increasing carbon dioxide and increasing sea levels or increasing cancer as people age.
More illness as climate changes

**Waterborne Disease**
As the climate warms and heavy rainfall increases, sewers will more frequently contaminate water.

- **Communities** with sewers that overflow into local watersheds during heavy rainfall.
- **Outbreaks** of waterborne disease (1948-1994)
- **Outbreaks** of waterborne disease associated with extreme rainfall (1948-1994)

**Giardia**, found in sewage and contaminated streams and lakes, can cause severe gastrointestinal infections.

**Pathogens** (1985-2000)
- Virus
- Bacterium
- Protozoan
- Flatworm

**Drinking water outbreaks**
- Cryptosporidium: 10%
- *E. coli*: 6%
- Campylobacter: 2%
- Shigella: 2%
- Other: 7%
- Unknown: 31%

**Recreational water outbreaks**
- *E. coli*: 13%
- Naegleria fowleri: 17%
- Cryptosporidium: 4%
- Giardia: 4%
- Norwalk-like virus: 4%

Data: EPA, CDC
Graphic: Washington Post
Risk perception

• Scholars such as Paul Slovic, Peter Sandman, and Elke Weber, and many others have shown that the risks that upset us most are often not those most likely to kill us:
  – Concrete vs. abstract hazards
  – Imposed vs. chosen hazards
  – Unfair vs. fair hazards
  – Man-made vs. natural hazards
  – Immediate, acute vs. chronic, slow onset, in future.
Parable of the frog

• The upsetting “boiled frog syndrome” says a frog in a pot of water simply sits there if temperature increases gradually to boiling (Gordon & Suzuki, 1990).

• Like the frog, we must feel risk before we address it (Slovic; Weber).

• Gradual or slow-onset hazards are hard to feel and see. Therefore to manage them, we must marshal all assets: Both knowledge assets [expertise concerning these harms] and communication assets [expertise in understanding publics, their values, their emotions, and their preferences].
Marshalling assets (NOAA)
Communication assets

• We know some communication factors **AMPLIFY** perception of a physical or financial hazard (e.g., immediacy, lack of perceived fairness)

• Other factors **DAMPEN** perception of a hazard (e.g., slow onset, apparent fairness or naturalness; large impact; e.g., Slovic; Pidgeon, et al.).
  – Use the CAUSE Risk Communication Model to analyze public perception of the risk.
  – Support publics in understanding and managing the risk that are consistent with their values.
CAUSE Model

Rowan et al.’s CAUSE Model
Consider:
• Lack of Confidence (in communicators’ values, competence)
• Lack of Awareness (of danger)
• Lack of Understanding (of danger)
• Lack of Satisfaction (with solutions)
• Lack of Enactment (of sound practice, habits)
  – To locate solutions, identify studies addressing each challenge.
  – Many assume wrongly that disseminating information by itself solves problems. It does not.
## Locate solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Easy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Earn Confidence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Create Awareness</strong></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deepen Understanding</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gain Satisfaction</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivate Enactment</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rowan et al. (2009)
The C in CAUSE

• C in CAUSE = confidence in communicators
• WHO is communicating about rising sea levels and dwindling wetlands in my coastal community? Do local leaders trust these communicators?
• Publics have a right to know their choices for managing a risk and a right to make choices consistent with their values (Botan).
• Which local opinion leaders can best support these rights?
The A in CAUSE

Create Awareness with

- Simple
- Unexpected
- Concrete
- Credible
- Emotional
- Stories
  - Make slow-onset risk as concrete, precise, and emotional as possible.
The U in CAUSE

• THREE frequent sources of confusion when complex topics are shared (Rowan, 1995, 2003):

  – **Familiar concepts not well understood**: e.g., words such as cancer, risk, debt vs. deficit, climate change.

  – **Complexities hard to envision**: e.g., that likelihood of cancer increases with age; how cancers develop; why carbon dioxide levels affect temperature, climate.

  – **Hard-to-understand because counter-intuitive**: e.g., that cancer need not be a death sentence; that many minorities less likely to GET certain cancers but more apt to die when cancer is not caught soon enough.
The S in CAUSE

S (gain satisfaction with solutions):

• Sample questions: Do communities see this problem as severe? Do they believe the problem affects them and see themselves as capable of solving it?

• Answers: Support communities in coming to their own consensus about their priorities. Tap research on ways of supporting community consensus building (McComas) concerning problems and solutions (Witte).
The E in CAUSE

• Make action easy
  – Cut 100 calories a day, not lose 10 pounds.
• Make action simple
  – Fill out this postcard and we will call you.
• Give deadline
• Reduce cost
• Routinize the solution, “embed the behavior” [Booth-Butterfield]
  – Make reducing the debt automatic.
  – Make increasing coastal wetlands an annual requirement.
In summary,

• Slow onset hazards are hard to feel, detect, communicate, and solve. Experts see them. Affected publics may not.
• Use communication scholarship to move beyond assuming that publics simply need information about these harms.
• Support publics in consensus building about the choices available to them (McComas).
• Use the CAUSE model to identify factors that may distort perceptions of risk and find ways to illuminate real choices.
References, 1

**Aging Infrastructure**


**CAUSE Model and Risk and Science Communication**

Climate Change and Communicating Climate Change

- Center for Climate Change Communication at George Mason University. [www.climatechange.org](http://www.climatechange.org). Director: Dr. Edward Maibach.
Communication and Health Psychology


Public Relations, Listening, Deliberating with Publics about Priorities, Preparedness


References, 4

Risk Communication: Approaches and Overviews

Risk Perception, Climate Change, and Communicating Climate Change
• Tinker, T., & Galloway, G. E. (n.d.). *How Do You Effectively Communicate Flood Risk?* Available from tinker_timothy@bah.com
References, 5

Upsetting Boiled Frog Syndrome and Guadalupe Oil Spill

Voter Behavior
To register for one or more of the teleconferences, please fill out this form and return it to Melissa Anderson via email manderson@natcom.org or fax (202) 464-4600. Please note that the registration deadline for each teleconference is 72 hours prior to the start of the teleconference. However, there will be a registration limit of 100 phone lines (more than one person can be participating from a single phone line), so please register for the teleconferences that interest you as soon as possible to ensure that you get spots. You will receive a registration confirmation email within 48 hours of submitting this form. Slides for the presentation and dial-in information will be sent to all registered teleconference participants 48 hours before the teleconference.

Name:  
Affiliation:  
Email Address:  
Phone Number:  

Registration for: (please X all teleconferences for which you would like to be registered)  

- **Research Presentation- Title TBD**  
  Joseph Turow, Professor, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania & NCA Distinguished Scholar  
  Thursday, February 17, 2011—2:00pm Eastern  

- **Technology and the Discipline**  
  Christina Yoshimura, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Montana  
  Friday, March 18, 2011—3:00pm Eastern  

- **Research Presentation- TBD**  
  John Daly, Professor, Department of Communication Studies, University of Texas, Austin & NCA Distinguished Scholar  
  April—12:00pm Eastern  

- **The Post Ph.D. Job Search**  
  William Elwood, Scientific Review Officer, Community-Level Health Promotion Study Section, Center for Scientific Review, National Institutes of Health; Robert Leonard, Associate Professor, Department of Communication, Sinclair Community College; and Don Stacks, Professor, School of Communication, University of Miami  
  Thursday, May 12, 2011—1:00pm Eastern  

If you have any questions about the teleconference series, please contact Melissa Anderson at manderson@natcom.org or (202) 534-1111.
January 18, 2011 Conference Call: Dial-In Information

• Dial the Access Number: **1.800.920.7487**
• When prompted, enter the Participant Code followed by #
• Your Participant Code is **66623635#**

**Participant Star Commands**

• ***4**- Volume: Pressing *4 will increase/decrease the volume

• **Q &A Session:** Participants press *1 to ask a question, and the moderator will take your questions in the order that they arrive

• For technical assistance during the teleconference, contact Customer Service at **1.800.989.9239**