

spectra

A Publication of the National Communication Association

Making the Connection Between Research and Public Policy

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A publication of the National Communication Association



ABOUT

spectra

About Spectra

Spectra (ISSN 2157-3751), a publication of the National Communication Association (NCA), features articles on topics that are relevant to communication scholars, teachers, and practitioners. Spectra is one means through which NCA works toward accomplishing its mission of advancing communication as the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific and aesthetic inquiry.

The NCA serves its members by enabling and supporting their professional interests. Dedicated to fostering and promoting free and ethical communication, the NCA promotes the widespread appreciation of the importance of communication in public and private life, the application of competent communication to improve the quality of human life and relationships, and the use of knowledge about communication to solve human problems.

Spectra is published four times a year (September, November, March, and May), and all NCA members receive a subscription. Spectra is also available via individual subscription for non-members.

In addition to feature stories about career development, external representation of the discipline, funding, higher education/disciplinary trends, pedagogy, public policy, and publishing, Spectra offers readers a column from NCA's president, as well as job advertisements. Each September issue focuses on a particular theme.

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Value of civility in public discourse

P.M. Forni, Johns Hopkins University
Formality and formal expressions in all aspects of life

Janie Harden Fritz, Duquesne University
Civility in the workplace setting

Valerie Manusov, University of Washington
Civility in interpersonal relationships

President



As I sit down to write my second presidential column, I am again honored by the privilege to voice my thoughts in this manner. I am delighted to share what's on my mind. Right now, what I'm thinking about is living a good and productive life professionally and personally. So, to begin...

Not long ago, I was watching two of my grandchildren (ages

7 and 4) play with some of their friends. I was struck by the presence they exhibited as they played—how “in-the-moment” they appeared as they laughed and ran around the backyard. More recently I was given an article written by Ken Leinbach, the director of the Urban Ecology Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The article was subtitled, “The meaning of life based upon the letter ‘P.’” Leinbach characterized his organization as 1) representing the collective *passion* of many in the community, 2) fulfilling a mission, or *purpose*, derived from that passion, and 3) satisfying this purpose through being 100 percent *present* to the people they serve and taking a *playful* approach to their work. The Urban Ecology Center serves children, mentoring youth in Milwaukee to an environmental ethic, so Leinbach concludes his paper with a quote from Michael Weilbacher:

Eight-year-olds should not be asked to become warriors or worriers. Children have much more important work to do: Watch ants. Grow flowers. Dance between the raindrops. This is sacred work, and childhood needs to be preserved just as much as rain forests and wetlands.

When I read these words, I thought about that day I watched my grandchildren at play and I also thought about our association, and how we represent our passion and purpose. I wondered how present in the moment and how playful we are as we engage in our mission, and whether our mission truly engages us on an emotional level.

NCA's mission is as follows:

The National Communication Association advances communication as the discipline that studies all forms, modes, media and consequences of communication through humanistic, social scientific and aesthetic inquiry.

The NCA serves the scholars, teachers, and practitioners who are its members by enabling and supporting their professional interests in research and teaching. Dedicated to fostering and promoting free and ethical communication, the NCA promotes the widespread appreciation of the importance of communication in public and private life, the application of competent

communication to improve the quality of human life and relationships, and the use of knowledge about communication to solve human problems.

In many ways, especially the last sentence, our mission does speak to my passions—my reasons for choosing a career in teaching communication studies. In addition, embodying this mission, both as an NCA member and as president, is an absorbing struggle that requires me to be totally present in the moment if I am to have any hope of doing it well.

Here is where the real work begins: How do we mediate among many resolutions that seem at cross-purposes? How do we reconcile seemingly opposing ideas among members that all stake a claim to our credos and principles? How do we really and truly be present to one another and enact our passions and our purpose?

Although it does not begin with a “P,” maybe the beginning of an answer to this huge question comes from the practices of reconciliation. While reconciliation has been practiced in many contexts, I am most familiar with how it has been applied in churches interested in redressing racism. Reconciliation requires the presence that Leinbach spoke about because, according to Paula Cole Jones, an independent anti-racism consultant for the Unitarian Universalist Association, it “transforms the present moment as well as the future of a relationship.” As Cole Jones notes, reconciliation has close ties with ethical communication practices, and practitioners have to break through the barrier of “safety by avoidance” and begin to encounter each other through empathy, mutual resolve and “right relations.”

Throughout my comments so far, all the “P” words of Leinbach's philosophy have been echoed with the exception of play. Here's where I think we sometimes fall short and where my grandchildren's example is useful. Although young children argue as they play, they tend not to hold grudges and they seem not to let arguments get in the way of the main business at hand—joyful, exuberant play—at least not for long. When I think about my favorite times in the classroom, during research, or even in a committee meeting, I think about laughter and insight that feel a lot like play. But, many times, in the heat of disagreement while pushing the relevance of my points and I forget to play nice with others. In the future, I am going to try to remember.

That's what I'm thinking about now. What's on your mind?

I am gratified to serve as NCA president this year. I hope to hear from you with ideas for me to muse. Please contact me at lynn.turner@marquette.edu.

Lynn H. Turner, Ph.D.
NCA President



MAKING THE BETWEEN RESEARCH

By Howard

Many commentators have noted that making public policy is akin to making sausage. It is not a pretty process. Lately, we have heard much about the lack of civility among our nation's lawmakers and the power of lobbyists to influence that process. At the same time, there are more calls for "evidence-based policy" that incorporates "sound science." As someone who has spent almost 30 years trying to help policymakers understand how research can help make better policy and why such research requires federal funding, I hope in the next few pages to relate some experiences that will help communication researchers make that connection.

As the executive director of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), of which NCA is a governing member, my staff and I spend significant time and energy devoted to promoting attention to and federal funding for the social and behavioral

sciences. This has not been easy as these sciences have for many years been at the periphery of U.S. science policy and many times have been the subject of attacks for their "softness" and their alleged "liberal bias."

One of COSSA's goals has been to move these sciences to a seat at the table in discussions of U.S. science policy. We have succeeded in changing the structure of the key science agencies by helping to create the Social, Behavioral and Economic Sciences Directorate at the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). COSSA also convinced the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to add an assistant director for these sciences. COSSA also has advocated for the elevation of the social and behavioral sciences in the research and statistics offices at the so-called mission agencies, such as the National Institute



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AND PUBLIC POLICY

J. Silver

of Justice, the Institute of Education Sciences and the National Institute for Food and Agriculture.

Defending Attacks on Social Science

The attacks on these sciences started in the late 1970s with former Sen. William Proxmire's (D-Wis.) Golden Fleece Awards mocking individual research projects and former Rep. John Ashbrook's (R-Ohio) assault on "liberal" research. In 1981, the Reagan Administration proposed severe cuts to funding social and behavioral sciences. COSSA was formed as a response to those proposed reductions and succeeded in thwarting most of them.

During the mid-1990s, former House Science Committee Chairman Robert Walker (R-Pa.) tried unsuccessfully to eliminate the directorate at NSF, an idea that Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas) picked up on in 2005. In 2009, Sen. Tom Coburn

(R-Okla.) tried to eliminate the NSF's political science program. In the early years of the 21st century, there have been a series of attempts to defund already awarded grants at NIH and NSF because of their silly sounding titles or subject of the research. All these assaults have also been turned away, although in some cases significant legislative maneuvering was necessary, while in others we had strong leadership from Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) and former Reps. Brian Baird (D-Wash.) and Vern Ehlers (R-Mich.).

Now, with the new Republican majority in the House, both the funding and individual grants may be targets again. House Speaker John Boehner of Ohio and Majority Leader Eric Cantor of Virginia have suggested that NSF focus on the "hard sciences" and therefore support for social and behavioral science research should be cut in half. Individual grants may also face more scrutiny as

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a result of YouTube efforts such as You Cut and Citizen Review, both of which encourage citizens to decide what grants are wasting taxpayers' money.

COSSA's activities in promoting the social and behavioral sciences and defending them from attacks involve both routine behaviors and special actions. The goal is to convince policymakers that these sciences make important contributions to the public policy arena.

Routine Advocacy Behavior

The routines include testifying to Congress on spending levels for key agencies that support social and behavioral science research. To reinforce these messages, meetings are often held with key congressional staff. In addition, congressional committees hold many hearings during the course of a session. They often seek witnesses to help provide them with research results and evidence to help them prepare legislation. Sometimes these witnesses are from academia. COSSA has often been asked, particularly by the House Science and Technology Committee, to find witnesses. For example, in 2005, the committee asked Dan O'Hair, dean of the College of Communications and Information Studies at the University of Kentucky and former NCA president, to testify on the role of social science research on disaster preparedness and response.



Former NCA President Dan O'Hair testified before a subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives' Science Committee on Nov. 10, 2005, in support of funding for social sciences, specifically about the need to understand risk communication.

COSSA is also active with those executive branch agencies that support social and behavioral science research. Meetings with their key leaders provide opportunities to help present their research agendas and results, as well as support their budgets. Often these leaders at NSF, NIH and many other agencies have spoken at COSSA's annual meetings. Our interactions with these agencies also involve participation in their advisory committee meetings.

At the same time, COSSA leads and works with numerous coalitions whose members include many scientific societies and professional associations. The Coalition to Promote Research, which COSSA co-chairs, has played a special role in defending peer review as the basis for research funding at NSF and NIH. The Coalition for National Science Funding, which I led from 1994 to 2000, serves as a rallying point for funding NSF. Every year, its exhibition includes displays from associations and universities touting scientific discoveries and their applications to public policy. The Coalition for the Advancement of Health through Behavioral and Social Science Research, which COSSA also co-chairs, has worked with behavioral and social science officials at NIH to promote a health and behavior research agenda.

COSSA has also organized and leads a Collaborative on Enhancing Diversity in Science. A retreat held in February 2008 produced a report that has been sent to policymakers. In addition, follow-up activities have included a briefing on Capitol Hill and surveys of the activities of professional associations' activities in this area.

Communication Researchers Participate in Hill Briefings

To serve its role as a bridge between the academic research community and the Washington, D.C., policy community, COSSA has sponsored many briefings on Capitol Hill to bring the results of research to decision makers. Many of these have been presented in conjunction with our members. With the cooperation of the NCA, COSSA has organized sessions on protecting privacy, with Sandra Petronio, Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, as one of the speakers; detecting deception, with Judee Burgoon, University of Arizona, as a participant; risk and crisis communication with former NCA President Dan O'Hair, University of Kentucky, and Katherine Rowan,

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contributions social and behavioral scientists can make to coping with and solving some of these challenges are substantial. Federal agencies are increasingly recognizing that. A recent report from the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology concerned with enhancing energy technologies asked the Department of Energy to begin a social science research program so that new energy initiatives recognize the human factors that would lead to the adoption of alternative sources.

The NSF's Science, Engineering and Education for Sustainability initiative includes many opportunities for social and behavioral scientists. Adaptation to and mitigation of climate change clearly needs social science input. How to communicate those strategies will need social science expertise.

Demographic changes occurring throughout society, whether it is the aging of the U.S. and other societies across the globe, the changing nature of families or the enormous migration both across borders and within borders in places such as China, raise significant questions crying out for social and behavioral science research.

Helping to develop human capital that includes learning, skill formation and the nature of the workforce needs sustained research from these sciences. At the same time, examining the presence or lack of social capital in communities and how that affects relationships is another area ripe for research.

The whole area of health and behavior concerning such public health issues as obesity, health disparities and AIDS is also part of the nation's research agenda. Communication between doctors and patients and adherence to medical regimens are other areas of interest. We know that public campaigns such as those that reduced smoking depend on social research, particularly in communication. Moreover, global issues of conflict, cooperation, terrorism, economic growth and the role of international institutions remain part of the research agenda for which social and behavioral scientists can proffer suggestions for better policies.

Research on decision making affects individuals, businesses and government. Risk analysis and risk communication are special parts of these studies. At the same time, organizational changes in institutional and individual arrangements in this Internet era and age of globalization foster issues ripe for investigation by our sciences. Networking, including the social kind, provides even more opportunities.

Finally, a special area where social scientists play an important role is in examining the ethical, legal and social implications of technology. Information technology, biotechnology and nanotechnology will continue to transform society. As these advances take hold, there are many social, health and safety consequences that need investigation. In addition, ethical questions regarding privacy, protection of health records and other issues require thoughtful studies.

In conclusion, communication researchers face a multitude of issues in disseminating their research. The science has been invigorated by new techniques and increased capacity for data collection and analysis. Policy makers are hungry for evidence to help them produce policies that work. The attacks will continue to come, but they are stoppable. Communication researchers should disseminate the results of their studies not just to scientific colleagues, but to decision makers as well. ■



For more information about the Consortium of Social Science Associations, visit www.cossa.org.

Howard J. Silver, Ph.D., is the executive director of the Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA), a position he has held since 1988. He previously served as the organization's associate director for government relations from 1983 to 1988. Prior to joining COSSA, Silver was a consultant for legislative and political research, a political campaign manager and a legislative analyst in the U.S. Department of Education. He has taught political science and public policy at a number of colleges and universities.

Using Communication Research to Mitigate Homelessness: Emergence from Outreach Work

by Phillip K. Tompkins

There was no vision, no opportunistic motive, not even a preconception of combining communication research and outreach work when I, a recently retired professor, walked into a converted warehouse renamed the St. Francis Center (SFC) on a brilliant day in October 1998. I wasn't looking for a place to do communication research; rather, I was hoping that serving as a volunteer in a homeless shelter could become a "calling" and replace what teaching had meant to me.

I had been keeping a daily journal long before beginning my service and naturally included my new experiences in it. Epiphanies can occur while writing about everyday experiences. The first, which occurred almost immediately after I began writing about the shelter, is that SFC, open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., is a communication center for its clients, called "guests." Among many other services, the guests can send and receive mail and messages, as well as phone calls—services vital to people with neither a phone nor an address who are trying to find a job and a place to stay, and keep in touch with relatives and friends. In addition, the organization has an employment office that tries to connect the guests with employers. Outreach workers roam the streets of Denver looking for homeless folks to inform about available services and sleep shelters.

The second epiphany occurred later in my first year. One by one, seven homeless men in Denver were savagely murdered, most of them decapitated. Our homeless guests, as well as some staff members, were frightened and concerned about how to cope with the continuing threat.

I had become friendly with a guest, Joe Mendoza, who would soon become a victim as well. I was asked by

a police investigator to write a report based on my journal entries, including what Joe told me about the time he felt threatened by a potential assailant while sleeping in a field near Union Station. I cooperated. When the Police Department later announced

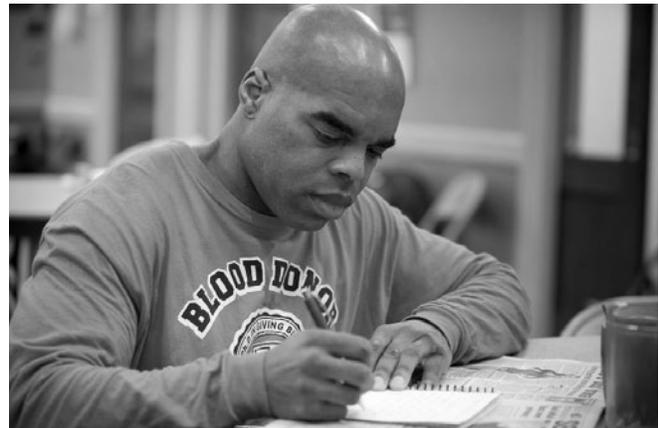


PHOTO CREDIT: GEOFF DUDGEON, MIRIAM'S KITCHEN, WWW.MIRIAMSKITCHEN.ORG

A homeless man takes advantage of social service assistance at a shelter. By offering many vital services, including phone and mail, shelters are communication centers for their guests.

they had formally decided to treat these virulent killings as "crime," I was aghast, outraged that the department believed such a formality was necessary.

The police also felt the need to tell us the victims were "human beings," assuming the public regarded them otherwise. Would the murder of middle- and upper-class citizens have required such actions? It came to me that homeless people needed advocates. I became one, an abolitionist, joining several organizations working to end homelessness.

A third epiphany came in the realization that once again I was in a complex organization, something I had been trained to analyze in terms of organizational



PHOTO CREDIT: GEOFF DUDGEON, MIRIAM'S KITCHEN, WWW.MIRIAMSKITCHEN.ORG

A guest works on his art project while talking with a volunteer. Supplying such “social capital” in the lives of the homeless is essential to addressing the problem.

communication. Largely staffed by volunteers, SFC was a fascinating organization. Social theorist Max Weber had made an important division between bureaucracies that have a value rationality and those with an instrumental rationality. The first is an organization that bases its decisions on major premises that are basic human values, often religious in origin. The second calculates even goals and premises—a mode that Weber accurately predicted, with lamentations, would come to dominate our world.

SFC adopts the Golden Rule, respect and equal treatment for all, as the source of its value rationality. An interpersonal communication rule is at the heart of this organizational culture: No one is allowed to express disrespect to a staff member, volunteer or guest. Any such message, whether verbal or nonverbal, makes one liable to be “86ed,” expelled for a varying period of time depending on the degree of disrespect.

Thus, there was an unanticipated emergence of communication phenomena that compelled me to assume the role of researcher, as well as advocate. I found myself making “scratch notes” on the back of my work schedule and conducting “research conversations” with guests, later expanded into complete, formal field notes, just as I had done in my

studies at NASA and elsewhere. Experiencing the self-persuasive process of identifying with the organization, its values and goals, I shifted from the first-person singular to the collective “we,” and was empathically ecstatic when a guest told me he or she got a job or an apartment. I felt rapport with guests and became close friends with volunteers and staff members.

My identification with SFC and deep interest in the problems it faced led me back to prophets, philosophers and the technical literature on the subject; research and theories by social scientists; and memoirs of writers who experienced epiphanies during bouts of homelessness. One researcher stayed in a homeless shelter for enough time to complete a study. When he later returned, he was surprised he didn’t know most of the homeless people in the shelter. They had moved on. His research, and that of others, helped us understand that the largest percentage of people who fall into homelessness do so for only one or two nights.

The research showed that the homeless population doesn’t fit the bell-shaped curve. It is more like a hockey stick, with 80 percent of the public money being spent on 20 percent or so of the distribution, the chronically homeless people. They are the ones who are disabled or drink too much, sleep on the streets, catch pneumonia or wind up either in jail or a hospital. The city pays for all this and their doctors’ fees. A chronically homeless alcoholic in Reno, Nevada, cost the city so much money that when he died he was called “Million Dollar Murray.” Experiments and studies in New York looked at the concept of Housing First, an idea based on the assumption that if we subsidize rent for the chronically homeless and then try to help them with their problems and addictions, it costs significantly less than giving them crisis care on the streets. This has been confirmed in Denver.

This finding is related to an important concept called social capital (as contrasted with financial capital). It is about the connectedness of society. Social capital entered my field notes as a communication concept, interpersonal in nature, the networks of people with strong ties who give help to people needing guidance and support. The amount of social capital

is said to be declining in the United States. Along with low financial income, high housing costs and disabilities, I find social capital to be a major cause of homelessness—homeless people have less social capital than the rest of us, the domiciled. It is true they have friends with whom they interact on the streets and in shelters, but they are not the ties that can make a spare room available during tough times.

The missing social capital must be supplied by volunteers, social workers, outreach workers and advocates. Housing First, for example, would not work without case workers assigned to the chronically homeless people whose housing is subsidized. Case workers remind the clients to take their medications

observed, so an essay here and a lecture there motivated more writing. I began what grew into a long narrative, drawing on my boxes of field notes about my homeless neighbors as well as what I learned from scientists and scholars and philosophers during a decade of study. The manuscript grew to more than 120,000 words and still lacked an ending. The publisher that accepted it remarked that only professors and graduate students would read that many pages and wanted to reach readers other than academics.

While cutting and rewriting, it became clear that the beginning of the ending had started in 2003. SFC had sponsored a political forum for candidates for the office of mayor. They were asked what the city of

“Homeless people have less social capital than the rest of us, the domiciled. It is true they have friends with whom they interact on the streets and in shelters, but they are not the ties that can make a spare room available during tough times.”

for mental illness, sometimes easy to forget because of unpleasant side effects. They help with budgets and keep the clients informed about available services.

It recently occurred to me that these findings indicate that homelessness must also be considered as a public health problem. The chronically homeless are susceptible to respiratory ailments such as pneumonia when they sleep on the streets or in their camps. We know from a study in Camden, New Jersey, that one percent of the 100,000 people who use the hospitals and emergency wards account for 30 percent of the city’s costs. This makes clear the subfield of our discipline known as “health communication” has a deep interest in homelessness.

As I gained knowledge by reading and learning about the problems of homeless people, I became an advocate. A professor who knew of my service invited me to write a chapter about homelessness for a book he was putting together about social justice and communication. One act motivates another act, as literary and rhetorical theorist Kenneth Burke

Denver could do about homelessness. One candidate paused and said, “This is a problem we can do something about. This is a problem we can solve.” That candidate was elected and appointed a Commission to End Homelessness within the Decade, a group of 42 people with diverse interests and affiliations.

The group worked for two years to come up with far-reaching recommendations within eight general strategy areas, which included preventing people from losing their housing, building affordable housing and providing social capital. The recommendations, called Denver’s Road Home, were accepted by the mayor (now governor), John Hickenlooper.

A new research question emerged from the newly discovered conclusion. How did 42 diverse members of a commission agree to such far-reaching recommendations? It was a job for a person with knowledge of rhetorical theory to explain how such different people—business owners, homeless people, service providers, politicians—could persuade each other to vote

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unanimously in favor of every recommendation, at least to the point of “I can live with this.”

Having met many members of the commission during their deliberations, I knew something about what happened within this large group. I also knew the commission chair, Roxane White, who was head of human services for the city. Part of her training made her a certified group facilitator. I learned enough about her group discussion leadership techniques to remember a 1980 article Donald Cushman and I had written for *Philosophy and Rhetoric*. We developed a theory of rhetoric for contemporary society, adapting to the radical heterogeneity we know, in contrast to the radical homogeneity of Athens when Aristotle wrote.

When I tested the theoretical explanation on White, her reply was “Correct, absolutely correct.” The implementation of Denver’s Road Home began in 2005 and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development declared it a model several times. Five years later, in 2010, reports indicated that chronically homeless people in Denver had dropped from 942 to 343, thousands had been prevented from losing a home, panhandling on the 16th Street Mall had dropped by 83 percent and significantly less money in services was needed for each homeless person.

When my book was published in 2009, we were somewhat surprised to see the first review in a newspaper, the Boulder (CO) Daily Camera. Although favorable, it had a tone of surprise that a book was written by a professor who wasn’t just studying a problem, he was also trying to fix it. A review by Omar Swartz in the *Journal of Communication and Religion* also praised the book’s informed advocacy.

A discussion of the book by Stephen Hartnett in an article in the *Western Journal of Communication* was also favorable, but pointedly asked why the author waited until retirement to write a book advocating social justice for homeless people. My answer is that I hadn’t decided to get involved in outreach work in order to write a book. The epiphanies expressed in the lectures, essays and book emerged only after I moved into downtown Denver and became personally and

directly aware of homelessness. Only when I began to work as a volunteer in a shelter did the significant communicative phenomena emerge.

Because of the book, I was invited to give a keynote address on November 10, 2010, for “Homeless Awareness Week” and a workshop for students at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. Asked to address homelessness specifically in the context of social justice, I was surprised by the breadth and continuing growth of the literature about the concept. Many writers complained, however, that social justice was ill-defined and ideological. I kept searching until I found three definitions, each of which had a term or a new meaning I would borrow.

The first, offered by Lawrence Frey and associates, stressed the importance of communication to the concept and process. The second, by Michael Novak, made the concept ideologically neutral by stipulating that “social” also means that the outcome of the action must be beneficial to the city, not just an individual agent. The third, by Thomas P. Rausch, insists on respect for, and participation by, all in society. My definition borrows from all three: “Social Justice is the process of communicating, inspiring, advocating, organizing and working with others of similar and diverse organizational affiliations to help all people gain respect and participate fully in society in a way that benefits the community as well as the individual.” I later realized that three senses of social—communication, civic participation and the city as the unit of analysis—had emerged, thus implicating the subfields of the discipline of communication. ■

Phillip K. Tompkins, Ph.D., is professor emeritus of communication and comparative literature at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He is the co-author, co-editor and author of several books, including “Apollo, Challenger, Columbia” (LA: Roxbury/Oxford University Press, 2005). He is a past president and fellow of the International Communication Association. The book that grew out of the experiences described in this article is “Who is My Neighbor? Communicating and Organizing to End Homelessness” (Paradigm Publishers, 2009). Half of the royalties from the book go to the St. Francis Center.

President Obama's Community College Initiative: Can We Meet the Challenge?

By Barbara Clinton

Low-income community college students face substantial financial challenges when earning an education, and community colleges have far higher levels of low-income students than do four-year colleges and universities, according to research by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). In fact, the Institute for College Access & Success reports that 40 percent of low-income community college students have absolutely no resources to pay for their education. In addition, NCES research shows these low-income students have a higher probability of dropping out compared with their higher income peers.

While financial aid can help to fill the gap, many low-income students are woefully uninformed about such resources. The Institute for College Access & Success notes that 80 percent of community college students with documented need still require additional financial resources after all the financial aid is awarded.

When I completed my Ph.D. in 1990, I expected to spend my career at an elite Research I institution. Instead, I landed at a community college that is the most diverse college in Washington State. My students in this exciting venue, while similar to my former



PHOTO CREDIT: JOSHUA ROBERTS/BLOOMBERG VIA GETTY IMAGES

President Barack Obama spoke at the White House Summit on Community Colleges with Dr. Jill Biden on Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2010. The meeting focused on the role of community colleges that Obama says are crucial to future U.S. economic growth.

Community College Initiative: Can We Meet the Challenge?

students in many ways, are also significantly different in others. This is a new academic culture for me. Almost none of my students come from my comfort zone, where education is valued for its own sake, valued for the wisdom and perspective it can provide. Almost none come from my comfort zone where a college degree simply is an expectation for every child and where mentors abound in family generations and social surroundings.

At the start of my administration I set a goal for America: by 2020, this nation will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world... Today, I am announcing the most significant down payment yet on reaching this goal in the next 10 years. It's called the American Graduation Initiative. It will reform and strengthen community colleges from coast to coast so that they get

“It no longer is a matter of communication studies professors struggling to justify the importance of their field; business, industry and the professions know that skillful communication is a key to success.”

In this new culture, I find myself, instead, teaching many students who are actively struggling to complete requirements and amass credits for the sole purpose of qualifying for the piece of paper that is a diploma; they are not seeking to get an education. They often see “college” as a foreign land and view themselves as interlopers there. And, if they persist in this new land of higher education, they do so merely because of the “spoils” that the place promises—a two-year degree that leads to “greater riches and power.” They are willing to work 40-hour weeks to pay for the luxury of a 15-credit quarter in higher education that in some cases is viewed as “uppity” by their families and actually cuts them off from social networks.

This is the culture I came to in fall of 1994, and it is a culture that persists today, one that perhaps even has become more exaggerated by the growing economic disparity in our nation. It is a place where I found and continue to find unusually satisfying opportunities and riveting challenges as a communication professional. And today those challenges also have become a national focus.

In July 2009, President Barack Obama announced the American Graduation Initiative, which called for an additional five million graduates at the community college level by 2020 to better meet the needs of today’s work force and strengthen America’s economy in the world market:

the resources students and schools need—and the results workers and businesses demand.

Clearly, if community colleges are able to graduate an additional five million students by 2020, it will be a boon for the field of communication. In fields ranging from engineering to nursing to social work and government, competent communication skills are being listed overtly as a job requirement. It no longer is a matter of communication studies professors struggling to justify the importance of their field; business, industry and the professions know that skillful communication is a key to success. So, clearly, the national push to move an additional five million students through the community college system should matter to readers of Spectra. But is this goal achievable?

In spite of the dismal statistics about financial need and drop-out rates, success is possible. The key is communication: informative, persuasive and interpersonal. And I offer my own college and the Honors Program I now direct there as both evidence and template.

In May 2002, serving Highline Community College (HCC) as department chair for communication studies, one of my favorite



For more information on the Highline Honors Program, visit <https://flightline.highline.edu/honors/HONORS100/Toolkit2/index.html>.

public speaking students stopped by my office to say goodbye. He was leaving Highline, having earned his associate's degree after only three quarters—a feat he had accomplished by taking 20 credits a quarter and applying the numerous AP class credits he'd brought from high school. When I asked him where he was going to school next, he said he wasn't going to school anymore—he was going to work. He couldn't afford to pay the two more years of tuition that would allow him to earn a bachelor's degree. That was the problem then and it remains the problem today—the single greatest barrier to the success of Obama's American Graduation Initiative is a lack of knowledge about financial resources.

I couldn't imagine wasting that kind of mind. So, that same day, the student and I started filling out scholarship and financial aid applications. Are scholarships and aid scarcer in today's economy? Yes. But are they still widely available and often not used? Yes. The answer for low-income, first generation college students often comes in the form of competent, skillful, informative communication. These students—bright, motivated and wholly capable of earning a bachelor's degree—simply lack the “insider knowledge” of financial aid and scholarships to make transferring seem possible.

Highline's Honors Scholars Program and its “Bootcamp” Honors 100 course take on that challenge, training students how to navigate the higher education system (informative communication) and then move them forward by giving instruction and motivation for forming relationships with college faculty (interpersonal communication) and hitting them with a “conversion” experience to hoist them out of “the imposter syndrome” (persuasive communication).

Our college president, Jack Bermingham, likes to tell the story of the day I presented the idea of this Honors Scholar Program to him. He was academic vice president at the time and says, “We probably had about two minutes of conversation before I realized that this was a brilliant idea...We shifted the conversation quickly from, ‘I need you to sell me on this,’ to ‘How can we implement this?’”

This HCC program is unique in a number of ways. Perhaps most unique is the fact that it is “open access.” The program is not elitist—faculty do not choose the students. Students self-select, choosing to enroll in the Honors 100 “Bootcamp” whenever their GPA reaches at least 3.2 and undertake Honors Option Projects in any courses where they are earning a 3.5 or better. In this way, the program exhibits the principle of “inclusive excellence” that both NCA and Association of American Colleges and Universities are working to advance at all kinds of colleges. The result at Highline is a diverse body of honors scholars who closely mirror the college's overall student population. While honors programs nationally are predominantly white and female, more than 40 percent of HCC honors participants are nonwhite, and one-third are male.

A hallmark of this Honors Scholar Program, which I now direct, is that it provides in a community college setting the type of broad-based liberal arts education commonly found in small, private institutions. It gives students personal advising and mentoring, as well as extensive accurate information about academic and economic opportunities, and teaches the “Bootcamp” participants how to locate the information they need to “open doors” for themselves.

Additionally, students who elect to graduate as Honors Scholars are required to complete at least 30 credits of Honors Options, with at least five credits coming from humanities, five from social sciences and five from science/math. But these Honors Options are not pro forma; they are negotiated individually with each professor, so that students develop and practice the interpersonal skills needed to form relationships with faculty as they develop and refine their academic interests.

Finally, honors students enroll in a colloquium series called “Opening Doors,” where weekly speakers, who most often are graduates of the program themselves, introduce students to academic, community and professional opportunities. The motto of the program is “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire,” a quote from poet William Butler Yeats. We want students to leave our



program with enthusiasm for their academic goals, clear information about how to achieve those goals and absolute conviction that success is possible.

The Honors Scholar Program is as much about the development of high achievers who don't have role models as it is about the study of academic subjects. Students at community colleges often are there not for lack of intelligence, but for lack of knowledge of how to achieve, how to find the money, how to "open doors" for themselves and how to form the relationships with faculty that will insure undergraduate research and internship opportunities to create the positive spirals that lead to success.

a new experience for most of these students. Erik Scott, a mathematics instructor at Highline, finds his honors students may have strong work ethics and focused interests, but simply haven't been exposed to the research journals or academic literature that would prompt them to learn to synthesize complex information from multiple sources. So, one of Scott's honors student who was interested in criminal justice, for example, looked at probability distributions, logic structure and the type of rigorous proofs used in legal proceedings.

"The students provide the lead, and I provide some of the structure," Scott says. And the students are not the only ones who benefit. "[Working with honors students] helps me reignite my own passion for my discipline. I go toward what I would do in my own research, investigating connections.... Sharing that with a student is exciting," Scott adds.

While the Highline Honors Scholar Program has been functioning for only seven years, I am proud of its record so far. From its pilot group of 15 students in

"The single greatest barrier to the success of Obama's American Graduation Initiative is a lack of knowledge about financial resources."

In the Honors 100 "Bootcamp," participants write personal statements and scholarship essays, create several versions of their resumes and complete extensive research on four-year colleges and college scholarships. We talk about the culture of higher education in the United States, sharing information about this culture so that our low-income, first-generation students can begin to feel like "insiders." After all, higher education has become increasingly more exclusive, according to William Bowen in "Crossing the Finish Line" (2009), with parents' income and degrees being the strongest predictors of college degree-earning. That's not democracy; our country can't afford that kind of intellectual divide.

HCC honors students benefit from close collaboration with faculty members who have graduate degrees,

2003, the program has grown to 200-plus participants each quarter. In the past several years, it has produced four Gates Millennium Scholars, a USA Today Academic All-American and two Jack Kent Cooke Foundation scholarship recipients, along with students who have matriculated to Tufts, Amherst, University of Michigan, Princeton, Pomona, Occidental, the Air Force Academy and West Point, as well as the University of Washington Honors Program. More than 90 percent of past honors scholars have gone on to earn a baccalaureate degree, and the 70 or so scholars who announced their two-year graduation plans in June 2010 reported receiving a combined \$3.5 million in scholarships and other financial aid.

Those students whom we manage to convert, who begin to recognize both their own talents and their

RESOURCES FOR COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

For federal student aid:

www.fafsa.ed.gov—This is the starting point. Every student should fill out a FAFSA application. All institutions that accept federal dollars require this form to be filled out before awarding any scholarships—even merit ones. Some low-income students have no idea this kind of funding is available (students whose families make less than about \$40,000 yearly often earn full financial aid). Medium- and high-income students may think they do not need to fill out this form because they do not qualify for Pell grants, but they do.

For 529 plans:

www.savingforcollege.com—This website provides information for 529 plans, which are savings programs designed to help families set aside funds for college tuition.

For scholarships:

www.fastweb.com—This is a useful website for scholarships. Students need to fill in their information sheet carefully and wade through advertising, but the site provides a wide range of scholarships that can be grouped to provide substantial aid.

www.questbridge.org—This site provides a great opportunity for low-income, high achieving students to earn substantial scholarships to elite schools.

http://apps.collegeboard.com/cbsearch_ss/welcome.jsp—Another good source for scholarships.

own potential, move on to great things. We now have graduates working at Amazon, Boeing and Microsoft; teaching for AmeriCorps; studying in graduate school at Johns Hopkins, University of Michigan and University of Washington; working in various Seattle law firms; and even running for public office. The student who originally inspired me to start the Honors Program is now a college graduate, after earning enough financial aid to put a bachelor's degree easily within his reach, and is working in financial planning while contemplating his own graduate degree. "Too often we think of 'developmental' programs only in terms of curriculum," Highline President Bermingham says. "But it's also about helping students see possibilities."

We, as educators and communicators, have the opportunity to help our students recognize and unleash the possibilities of transformation. Such transformation for community college students, as well as achievement of Obama's "five million graduates" goal, is only possible if we:

- Improve community college retention rates by lessening financial concerns through such methods as increasing Federal Work Study Program funding at community colleges, incorporating income-based repayment plans and increasing the number of maximum Pell Grants;
- Strikingly improve and update the communication messages and mediums used to convey this financial aid information to those students for whom it is most applicable;
- Develop high-impact programs of community college support that build a strong sense of self-efficacy, as well as specific academic skills, in students;
- Attack the issues of retention and failure to transfer to four-year colleges that are the hallmarks of our nation's "higher education divide" with targeted programs that train low-income, first generation college students to navigate the higher education system and form relationships with college faculty so they can become "insiders" and feel they belong on a four-year college campus.

Communication is the key to success for Obama's Community College Initiative. ■

Barbara Clinton, Ph.D., has served the unique multicultural environment of Highline Community College since 1994, first as chair of the Communication Studies Department and now as director of the Honors Scholar Program. NCA chose her as the 2006 Community College Outstanding Educator, an award given to faculty who demonstrate an unparalleled commitment to higher education and an outstanding contribution to teaching at a community college.

Analysis of the NRC Report on Ph.D. Program Quality

By Edward L. Fink, University of Maryland; Marshall Scott Poole, University of Illinois;
Sabine Chai, Western Kentucky University

Editor's Note: For the first time, the National Research Council (NRC) has included the discipline of communication in its report on the quality of Ph.D. programs across the country. The following is an analysis commissioned by the Council of Communication Associations. NCA is one of eight members of the council. As a service to communication professionals, the council's Task Force on the NRC Report Subcommittee on the Data analyzed the NRC study, thus reducing the need for duplicative evaluation.

Background

The National Research Council (NRC) released its long-awaited report on the quality of Ph.D. programs (*A Data-Based Assessment of Research-Doctorate Programs in the United States*) on September 28, 2010. Prior to this study, the NRC issued reports on the same subject for a smaller number of disciplines in 1982 and 1995. Most of the student and faculty data employed in the current study concern the 2005–2006 academic year, with some data (e.g., publications, citations) going back much farther. Faculty publications included those from 2000–2006, and citation counts were based on faculty publications that occurred from 1981–2006 and were cited from 2000–2006, assuming that the publication met other criteria, described below.

The present study includes 62 fields (21 more fields than the 1995 report); five additional fields were studied, but not rated. Overall, about 5,000 programs at 65 institutions were included based on the criterion of graduating a minimum of five Ph.D.s total in the five years prior to 2005–2006. For the first time, the report includes communication programs; 83 communication doctoral programs participated in the study. There can be more than one doctoral program at a given university. Communication was categorized as a social and behavioral

science, and all indices for the field were calculated based on the criteria and procedures for the social and behavioral sciences rather than for the humanities.

Different questionnaires were distributed to institutional coordinators (university-level administrators), programs (which could be departments or schools or colleges, depending on how doctoral degrees are administered on a given campus) and faculty members. Faculty questionnaires were sent to all core and new faculty members (i.e., tenured and tenure-track faculty members, as well as those supervising doctoral dissertations or serving on admissions or curriculum committees for their doctoral program) from the 83 programs.

In addition, a questionnaire rating program quality was completed by a volunteer subsample of the faculty. Forty-nine out of the 83 programs were rated by 28 to 57 raters each; the program quality questionnaires were used to establish the R-ranks, discussed below. Student questionnaires were distributed in a few fields, but not in communication. Communication faculty members also responded to questions on communication subfields, of which there were 13, but the data in the NRC report do not use this information. The subfields for communication were:

- Broadcast/Video Studies
- Communication Technology and New Media
- Critical and Cultural Studies
- Gender, Race, Sexuality and Ethnicity in Communication
- Health Communication
- International and Intercultural Communication
- Interpersonal/Small Group Communication
- Journalism Studies
- Mass Communication
- Organizational Communication
- Public Relations/Advertising

- Social Influence and Political Communication
- Speech and Rhetorical Studies

Faculty members were classified as core, associated, new and allocated. The student data are for doctoral students, but the definition of doctoral student can differ from program to program: If a student is in a doctoral program and receives a master's degree along the way, is that person a master's student or a doctoral student? These and other classifications and definitions play a crucial role in the indicators listed below.

Primary Output

The report provides confidence intervals for three dimensional ratings, which represent research activity, student support and diversity, as well as for two overall measures of quality (the R-rank and the S-rank). Twenty indicators were used to derive the overall measures and the dimensional measures; below we list only those indicators that entered into the dimensional ratings. (One measure, whether a program collects data on student outcomes and placements, was collected but not used in the overall rating.)

Research activity of program faculty. The indicators for this dimension were publications per faculty member (primary source: Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) for publications from 2000–2006); citations per publication (primary source: ISI citations from 2000–2006 for publications that appeared from 1981–2006); percent of faculty holding grants; and honors and awards per faculty member (collected from scholarly societies). Because communication is listed within the social and behavioral sciences, the data regarding publications did not include books.

Doctoral student support and outcomes. The indicators for this dimension were percent of first-year students fully funded, percent of students completing their degree in six years, median time to degree for full- and part-time students and percent of students with plans for an academic position.

Diversity of the academic environment. The indicators for this dimension were percent of non-Asian minority faculty, percent of non-Asian minority

students, percent of female faculty, percent of female students and percent of international students.

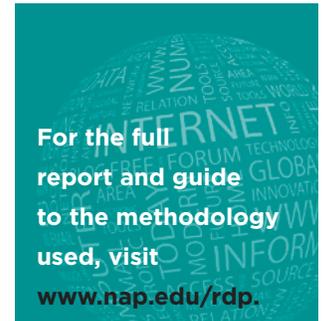
Weights for indicators. To assess the importance of each of the indicators of each dimension, faculty surveys asked all core and new faculty members in communication doctoral programs to rate the importance of the indicators. Faculty members were asked to select the most important indicators for each dimension to assess program quality and then provide weights for the three dimensions. These ratings resulted in the weights used for the indicators for each dimension and for the S-ranks. These weights are field-specific; in other words, the weights for the indicators assessing communication are not the same as the weights for other fields. Not all indicators were used for the dimensional or overall measures. The indicators used were converted to z-scores for computing rankings.

Overall measure of quality: S-rank (explicit weighting of indicators). Based on the weighting procedure described above, weights were created for each of the 20 indicators, and these weights were used to compute the S-rank.

Overall measure of quality: R-rank (implicit weighting of indicators). Using the program quality questionnaire, a subset of faculty members was asked to rate the program quality of 49 programs. Each faculty rater evaluated 15 programs. Next, a regression analysis was conducted. For the programs for which program quality was assessed, the regression used, as independent variables, the 20 program indicators. This regression then determined the weights to be used to assess (“predict”) program quality for all 83 communication doctoral programs. Thus, the R-ranks indirectly employ reputation to determine the implicit weights used by faculty members when they assess quality.

Creation of Confidence Intervals

The NRC was concerned about the various sources of uncertainty in the rankings. Among these sources are



Analysis of the NRC Report on Ph.D. Program Quality

differences among faculty regarding the importance of the indicators and the quality of the programs, over-time variability in programs and statistical uncertainty (i.e., every coefficient is a point estimate, but the estimate has uncertainty as represented by its standard error). Therefore, the NRC recalculated each program's ranking (the R-rank, the S-rank and the dimensional ranks) 500 times, each time taking random halves of the faculty respondents. Each replication produced rankings. The rankings were ordered, and the bottom 5 percent of the rankings (the lowest 25/500) and the highest 5 percent (the highest 25/500) of the rankings were used to create 90 percent confidence intervals for the rankings. In the report, what is called the fifth percentile represents the top of the confidence interval for a given ranking (top rankings mean lower numbers: the best possible rank is 1, the worst possible rank is 83); what is called the 95th percentile represents the bottom of the confidence interval (indicating poorer quality).

Criticism of the NRC Results

Various researchers, administrators and faculty have begun to list problems with the NRC data and its reported outcomes:

1. The data are dated. There may have been many changes in programs and program faculty since the data were collected.
2. The communication discipline includes humanists whose primary publication outlets are books. But books were not included in assessing faculty publications.
3. The NRC used only publications from the database of the Institute for Scientific Information. As a result, many journals were systematically excluded.
4. The relations between the variables were assessed using linear models (e.g., regression, principal components analysis). But many of the relationships are expected to be nonlinear. This failure may significantly distort the assessments.
5. Only a small sample of faculty members rated a small sample of programs to be used for determining the R-ranks. In communication, 49 programs were rated by 28 to 57 raters each, with an average of 50 faculty raters per program. The coefficients from the regression analysis based on these 49 programs were then applied to all 83 programs to determine the R-ranks.
6. The views of the faculty might diverge from the views of students, deans, etc. But only faculty members provided the information that weighted the items used to create the summary measures.
7. The multidimensionality of the data—all the indicators—may be poorly summarized by the overall measures, and the reputational assessments, which are only indirectly employed, may actually be more valuable.
8. The fuzziness of the reported ranges and the lack of a very strong correlation between the measures of program quality make it difficult to assess the quality of a given program. Using communication program data, the S-ranks correlate substantially with the research activity ranks and moderately with the student support and outcomes measures; the R-ranks do not substantially correlate with any of the dimensional ranks.

Regarding the fuzziness, one program, for example, has an S-rank range (the 90 percent confidence interval) of 1–83. But the study ranks a total of 83 communication programs. Thus, all the NRC study tells us is that the program is, indeed, among the 83. Similarly, the correlations between the R-ranks and the S-ranks are not that high (given what should be expected), and the NRC has indicated no preference between these rankings. Indeed, the NRC expects that people will use the data to calculate their own program rankings.
9. The interdisciplinarity of programs was not an indicator examined. Some programs might have been rated differently if the interdisciplinary activity of their students and faculty had been considered.
10. The study did not measure what students actually learned, their productivity or the reputation of where they were placed.
11. An entire cottage industry has critiqued—and criticized—the significance of citation data, but it won't be reviewed here.

12. Given the magnitude of the undertaking, there are likely to be errors—reporting errors, transcription errors, etc.—that may invalidate the information about particular programs. At the present time, the study staff is reviewing the data for programs that have claimed that their data had errors.
13. As discussed above, the lack of clarity regarding the definitions of key terms may result in the data not being comparable from university to university or, even within the same university, from program to program. What the NRC questionnaires were actually asking for was often not obvious. If different programs or universities used different definitions for key terms, the outcomes across programs would not be comparable.
14. Finally, some faculty members reject the whole notion of ranking, for various reasons. One view is that programs differ in many ways, such as in missions, subfields that are represented and teaching loads. Therefore, the business of ranking such diverse programs may be foolish and those doing the ranking subject to vilification.

Next Steps

The subcommittee expects to obtain the NRC data and do some additional analyses. Among the questions we hope to examine are:

How do communication programs differ with regard to the set of subfields that the programs offer? For example, is a program likely to be more highly rated if it has few subfields or if it has many? Similarly, to what extent are faculty specialists, focusing on a small number of subfields, versus generalists, having research interests in several subfields?

The GRE data used in the NRC report is a combination of quantitative GRE scores from three academic years (2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06). The GRE scores are for students who entered the program. The median scores over the three years were aggregated into one median score per program. The verbal GRE scores were not used to assess program quality.

RESOURCES TO CHOOSE OR EVALUATE DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

Students and their faculty advisers can use <http://graduate-school.phds.org/> to sort through the NRC data using the characteristics they wish to employ in selecting a doctoral program. Faculty and students can obtain the NRC tables at <http://chronicle.com/article/Tables-Doctoral-Programs-by/124789/> and can explore almost all the data quickly at <http://chronicle.com/page/NRC-Rankings/321/>.

An excel spread sheet of the data, as well as the reports on the research methodology and assessment, including the questionnaires that were used, can be downloaded for free at <http://www.nap.edu/rdp/>. This site also includes tutorials on the features of the spread sheet, as well as example scenarios for analyzing the data. Frequently asked questions of the NRC can be found at http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/Resdoc/pga_051962.

To what extent do verbal GRE scores cause or reflect program, for example, quality?

What is the effect of excluding books from the publications per faculty member data?

We welcome any questions about the report and suggested questions we should try to answer about the NRC study or the NRC data as applied to communication. The subcommittee has requested data from the study staff, but does not know when the data might be forthcoming. ■

Edward L. Fink, Ph.D., is a professor of communication, affiliate professor of sociology, affiliate professor of psychology, affiliate professor in the Ph.D. program in second language acquisition and distinguished scholar-teacher at the University of Maryland. Marshall Scott Poole, Ph.D., is David and Margaret Romano Professorial Scholar, senior research scientist at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications and director of the Institute for Computing in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Illinois. Sabine Chai is an assistant professor of communication at Western Kentucky University.

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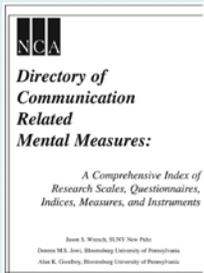
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A Communication Assessment Primer

Phil Backlund and Gay Wakefield, Editors

A Communication Assessment Primer is an excellent resource for any department that wants to improve student learning by developing effective assessment programs. This primer is designed to help communication departments create the right assessment program and ensure that their students are learning everything they need to know. Each chapter is written by professors who have extensive interest in, and experience with, successful assessment programs.



Directory of Communication Related Mental Measures: A Comprehensive Index of Research Scales, Questionnaires, Indices, Measures, and Instruments

Jason S. Wrench, Doreen M.S. Jowi, and Alan K. Goodboy

The Directory of Communication Related Mental Measures features over 500 mental measures that have been published in communication journals, this volume is an important resource for communication scholars including graduate students, applied researchers, communication instructors, and seasoned investigators. Divided into 27 chapters that cover a wide range of mental measures in various communication contexts and featuring a comprehensive index, this collection brings together available mental measures published in peer-reviewed academic journals in a singular volume.

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or contact conference co-directors:

Ted Sheckels (tsheckel@rmc.edu) or Joan Connors (jconnors@rmc.edu)



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The NCA Insider is a quarterly e-newsletter that provides information about professional and academic resources that are created by and through the association. The newsletter includes information about the following, among other resources:



CARD Calls (Communicating About Research and Professional Development) – Information on our monthly teleconference series

Chairs' Corner – Updates for department chairs on all aspects of chairing the academic department, ranging from faculty development to making the case for and advancing the discipline

Conferences – Announcements of and details about NCA-sponsored conferences

Data About the Discipline – Notices of new and updated data about the field of communication

Discipline Advocacy – Reports of partnerships with other associations in Washington, D.C., and beyond to disseminate knowledge about communication

Funding 101 – Updates on external funding sources and other information on applying for funding

Publications – Details about current NCA publications, including calls for special issues, editor announcements and resources available from our publisher

Virtual Faculty Lounge – Updates on teaching and assessing communication courses, including sample syllabi and interviews with master teachers

Additional Resources – Announcements on other association-wide activities such as the RFP for funds to advance the discipline

See past issues and learn more at www.natcom.org/insider.

About e-Newsletters

NCA sends e-newsletters to all NCA members periodically throughout the year that feature much of the content previously found in Spectra and much more. Please read these e-newsletters when you see them in your inbox. They are the primary source of information from the association to its members and the best way for you to learn about the many resources available to you through your membership. Learn about the other e-newsletters below.

NCA Convention Newsletter

This e-newsletter features business items related to the convention, such as deadlines and travel information, as

well as substantive content related to programming. The frequency of distribution of the NCA Convention Newsletter varies depending upon the time of year.

NCA News and Member Notes

This is similar to the News and Notes section that formerly was in Spectra. It focuses on Member Notes, including awards, quotes or appearances in the news media, memorials, transitions (e.g., promotions and appointments), new books and miscellaneous items of interest. In addition, these messages include news about the association's governance, such as calls for leadership nominations. You will receive these messages every one to two months.

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