



NEWSLETTER

April 2008

Mark Your Calendar!
MCA Annual Conference
Saturday, October 11, 2008
The Universities at Shady Grove
Rockville, Maryland

Welcome from the MCA President

by Jennifer Kafka Smith

Let me introduce you to our new online newsletter. Future plans include at least one newsletter each year. We welcome your ideas for future newsletter content.

Three months have already passed since the 2007 conference at the Community College of Baltimore County-Catonsville and plans are underway for our 2008 conference. In the box above, we're announcing the Fall 2008 MCA Conference at The Universities at Shady Grove on October 11, 2008. This conference is co-sponsored by the University of Maryland and Montgomery College. Thanks to Rose Piskapas, MCA 1st VP, for her hard work securing this 'green' facility and the participation of both schools. Watch your email, check-in with your MCA campus liaison, or visit the MCA website (www.md-comm.org) for details and updates on the conference. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

If you haven't yet had the chance, visit our website to view the post-conference information including the online discussions that were posted live at the conference. Content is also available from Tracey Jamison's keynote address on transfer and articulation in the State of Maryland. She presented a lot of valuable information that can be viewed online.

In our feedback sessions at the 2007 conference, we heard you ask for more GIFTS [Great Ideas For Teaching Students] ideas. This newsletter and our website present a vehicle for just that type of exchange. I'd like to invite content for the Late Summer issue of our newsletter specific to GIFTS - regarding the 2008 presidential election. By sharing GIFTS during the summer months on the political communication leading up to the Presidential Election, we will have time to incorporate new ideas into our syllabus plans for the fall 2008 semester. With sufficient participation, a breakout group at the conference could compare notes about their experiences implementing these GIFTS. Send your election-based GIFTS ideas as an online newsletter submission. We'll include as many of your ideas as possible in the Summer '08 issue.

We appreciate the role you play as a member of The Maryland Communication Association. Please communicate your ideas and your requests for content. Enjoy the newsletter, have a productive Spring semester, and help us maintain a running dialog on communication in Maryland.



Jennifer Kafka Smith
MCA President

Inside this issue:

1. Welcome from the MCA President (1)
2. Comment: "A Part of Something Bigger" (2)
3. Editor's Note (2)
4. Conference Awards 2008 (4)
5. G.I.F.T.S. Presentations (3-9)
6. Contributors (10)
7. MCA Executive Board (10)
8. Help Wanted (10)
9. Board Photos (1-11)
10. Study Abroad (10)
11. A "Green" Conference, MCA 2008 (11)
12. Call for G.I.F.T.S. (11)



Comment: “A Part of Something Bigger”

by Jody Morrison, Immediate Past President



Jody Morrison

Immediate Past President



Ben Fisler

Newsletter Editor

As Immediate Past President, I volunteered to investigate the States Advisory Council (SAC) meetings at the NCA convention this past year. Longtime MCA member and former executive board member, Shirlee Levin, participated in these meetings for many years, yet had other duties as head of the Community College Division this time around.

I had no idea what to expect, as there's little information about the SAC that's easy to find (at least for me) on the NCA website or active via Google. My primary stop was the SAC business meeting, and I was joined by MCA web guru Paul Scovell.

I learned that the SAC, quite simply, is comprised of representatives from each of the State Associations across the country including MCA. The SAC nominates an executive board and is usually given three presentation slots at each NCA convention, one for the business meeting, and two for presentations. As in any other NCA division, anyone can submit ideas for a panel or individual presentation which will then be competitively selected for an SAC slot (the deadline is Feb. 13th this year).

The SAC also accepts nominations for annual awards including Administrator of the Year, Scholar of the Year, and Service to the State. MCA will discuss making nominations in time for next year's deadline.

The highlight of the business meeting was reports given by reps from each state. This was a wonderful way to get a quick snapshot of the successes of each State Association, including the number of members, updated financial info, conference highlights and plans for the next year. Many reps distributed handouts which will be uploaded to the SAC website (a work in progress).

I look forward to investigating more about the SAC, how MCA can further participate, and how they can offer support as we set our future goals and plans.

Editor's Note

Here it is! Our first issue of the newly designed MCA newsletter is complete! We have a variety of interesting contributions from the Executive board and the membership, including comments from our current and past president, Great Ideas for Teaching Students (GIFTS) presentations, photographs, and advertisements. We hope this document will give our members and prospective members a better sense of MCA's mission, activities, and contributions to our field, but more importantly, will encourage all communications professionals to get involved in this important association. Enjoy!



GIFT: “So that’s my Worldview?”

by Scott Britten

Goal: To actively engage students in (1) thinking about their own worldviews, (2) the significance of worldviews in communication, and (3) critically thinking about the limits of the worldview construct.

Rationale: When students encounter lessons on worldviews in argumentation, intercultural or other communication courses, their experience may be an unreflective one, where they are taught that worldviews are important, and influence communication. Students often have a difficult time articulating their own values and religious, epistemological, or social worldviews. This exercise allows students to actively measure their own worldviews, and critically question the limits of the worldview construct.

Time: 1 hour outside of class; 1 class period for discussion

Directions:

1. In concert with assigned readings and/or lectures on worldview, direct students to visit one or two websites that offer on-line measures and feedback about their worldviews. If possible, you could have students do the assignment in laboratory groups. This creates interaction, emotional involvement with the exercise, and climate building.
2. Paper and pencil instruments along with scoring and interpretation directions can be assigned as well, if available. To offer students a variety of choices on the web, check ahead of time to see what’s available, or use your own favorite. At this time, such sites include:
http://quizfarm.com/test.php?q_id=23320
http://www.geocities.com/worldview_3/
http://www.nehemiahinstitute.com/peers_test.htm
<http://faculty.tfc.edu/elkins/Apologetics/WORLD%20VIEW%20SURVEY.doc>
<http://www.student.nada.kth.se/~d93-tol/worldview/>
http://www.commongood.org/worldview_quiz.htm
3. Have students bring their results and the survey questions to class and discuss as a group, e.g., which tests they took and the results. Encourage students to disclose their individual results, if they are comfortable with that. Possible discussion questions are:
 - What is your worldview?
 - How do you see the world?
 - Were you surprised by the results of your worldview test? How/Why?
 - Were any of the questions difficult to answer? Which ones? Why?
 - Do you think this worldview is really like you? Why/Why not?
 - What does your worldview test leave out about you, if anything, that’s important?
 - How is your worldview going to affect how you communicate in _____ situations? (fill in the blank to connect the students’ worldviews to the contextual focus of the class)

Caveats: The www is replete with “worldview” surveys that operate with very particular agendas or foci, and several are designed to be thought provoking as opposed to being valid measures of worldviews. For me, the main value is to get students to think about and wrestle with the questions and their worldviews. Just know what the students are working with.

Explanation: Through the process of selecting, taking, interpreting and discussing results and limitations to the worldview construct, students acquire a personal and experiential understanding of worldview.

Typical Results: Students will typically engage in lively and animated discussion about the worldviews of themselves and their classmates and acquire an enhanced understanding of the worldview construct.



Awards for 2008!

MCA is announcing the following awards, to be presented to winners at the 2008 MCA Conference:

- 1) **MCA Liaison of the Year Award**
Presented to the MCA Liaison who best connects MCA to their institution
- 2) **MCA Adjunct of the Year Award**
Presented to an adjunct instructor in recognition of their teaching and commitment to the institution and their students

Look for eligibility information and nomination forms on the web in 2008.

GIFT: “Developing Ethical Guidelines for Public Speaking Assignments”

by Roxanne Davidson

Goal: The objective of this assignment is to facilitate discussion about the student’s role and ethical responsibilities for public speaking assignments.

Rationale: Students develop their own set of ethical guidelines (code), take ownership of it and are therefore more likely to adhere to it.

Directions:

1. Begin the activity with a discussion of the definition of ethics, how we learn ethics and what ethical standards have to do with public speaking. (I often show my students a copy of The National Communication Association’s (NCA) Credo for Ethical Communication.)
2. Divide students into groups of 4 – 6 students.
3. Give each group 1 -2 pieces of large size paper (I use paper from a flip chart) and a felt tip maker.
4. Ask each group of students to label three columns:
 - Ethical responsibilities of the speaker
 - Ethical responsibilities of the listener
 - Ethical responsibilities in giving feedback
5. Students are to compose a bulleted list of guidelines for each category and then present their list to the class with an explanation about why they chose each guideline.
6. After each group presents, students can accept or reject (with reason) any of the guidelines proposed.
7. After all of the groups have presented their guidelines, we create a common list of “ethical responsibilities” that students adopt for their class

Explanation: This activity puts the responsibility for determining ethical guidelines (be prepared, don’t plagiarize, clear your desk so that you can give full attention to the speaker, be honest but tactful in your criticism, etc.) on the students. They then hold each other to those guidelines.

Typical Results: The students seem to like this activity, and they earnestly discuss the guidelines in their group. Groups typically come up with different guidelines. They often create a high set of standards that they expect their classmates to follow. Throughout the course, students will refer back to these guidelines when giving feedback to their classmates. This activity usually takes a 50-minute class period

Note: This activity is adapted from The Instructor’s Manual to accompany The Art of Public Speaking (9th ed.), by Stephen E. Lucas.



GIFT: “Multicultural Festival Event Planning: Connecting Service Learning & Civic Engagement”

by Bryan K. Horikami

Content presented in many Intercultural Communication courses include such concepts as: (a) comparing and contrasting cultural values (e.g. Geert Hofstede, Edward T. Hall, etc.); (b) investigating verbal and nonverbal styles across cultures; (c) (re)introducing communication theory (e.g., Accommodation Theory, Uncertainty Reduction Theory, Face-Negotiation Theory, etc.); and (d) applying course context through in-class activities (e.g. Bafa Bafa, Inventing your own culture, etc.). As more external and internal initiatives to enhance courses increase, teachers must consider lessons that integrate activities that go beyond the walls of the classroom. This activity supports university/community service through a Multicultural Festival that is organized by students in the Intercultural Communication class.

- I. Goal: The focus of this activity is to use content from the Intercultural Communication class to plan a Multicultural Festival program on campus. Individual instructors may develop their own goals and objectives by using this activity. The following are a few examples:
 - A. To have students develop several cultural booths to illustrate Accommodation Theory and Uncertainty Reduction Theory via information dissemination and interactive games.
 - B. To have students plan and organize a “quiz bowl” tournament that uses Hofstede’s Cultural Values of individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance.
 - C. To have students demonstrate international cultures and Co-cultural groups in the United States and use various artistic performances/exhibits while applying intercultural communication concepts.
- II. Rationale: Developing a Multicultural Festival allows students to apply their classroom learning and contribute to university and community outreach. Many colleges and universities have “Multicultural

Festivals” that are organized and planned by Student Activities offices. Instructors may simply coordinate with the sponsor and act as a “sub-contracted” unit of the larger event. Other institutions have “Cultural Awareness” months/weeks/days that can include a festival day. Institutions that do not have any organized event will benefit by the novelty of such an endeavor on campus. Importantly, this is a way for the students to showcase what they have learned to those outside of class.

- III. Directions: There are many formats that can be used. For this presentation, the attached Multicultural Festival case study illustrates the project conducted at Salisbury University.
- IV. Explanation: This activity addresses course concepts in the instructions to the students when they engage in their respective group tables. Moreover, there is a reflection paper assignment that requires the students to discuss how this project synthesized course content in intercultural communication studies.
- V. Typical Results: Students enjoyed this activity because it demonstrated their understanding of intercultural communication. It gave the class a public forum that contributed to diversity issues to the university and community at-large. The participants were engaged through learning about international cultures. Response from the university administration was also very positive.

For photos of the May 2007 event, please go to the following website:

<http://faculty.salisbury.edu/~bkhorkami/mcf07.htm>

Service Project: Multicultural Festival Booths

Date: Tuesday, May 1, 2007

Location: Pergola Area - Wicomico Rm, if rain

Weight: 50 points
(30 points for planning and attending + 20 points for reflection essay)



Horikami (continued from previous page)

This is a service project to the SU and Salisbury community. We expect many elementary and middle schools to visit our campus. There will be music, food, and other venues throughout the day.

CMAT 300 – Intercultural Communication classes will participate in the following way:

There will be 6 Cultural booths that represent International Cultures. An additional booth is the Passport Table.

Students will sign up for shifts and are responsible for reporting to the booth at their appointed times.

In addition, students in both CMAT 300 sections must collaborate with each other to decide what aspects of the culture you will be presenting and what interactive activities you will do. Although the participants who are attending will not know the course concepts that we covered in class (e.g., Hofstede, Hall, Ting-Toomey, Gudykunst, etc.), you should design your booths to somehow illustrate the values and communicative patterns of the international culture you are showcasing.

Here are some ideas:

- Design a poster board with cultural aspects to give information (popular or folk culture, pictures, artwork, etc.).
- Have participants take a cultural “quiz” of your nation and win a prize.
- Face painting cultural symbols and incorporate cultural differences in nonverbal communication.
- Rubber stamp paper or participants’ hands that represent aspects of the culture.
- Give away words like “Good luck” or “Peace” in the language you represent on card stock paper.
- Have participants draw or replicate a certain type of cultural art form.
- Display music from that culture and teach participants the dance of that culture.
- Elaborate on the meanings of the music.

EACH GROUP HAS A \$20.00 BUDGET – YOU MUST SUBMIT A RECEIPT TO GET ANY MONEY BACK!

Reflection Essay (20 Points):

Submit a 3-page reflection essay that describes and integrates the experience with the course concepts you set out to illustrate. A few questions to answer might be: How did your group incorporate course concepts into your activities? How successful did you think your group was in terms of productivity and cohesiveness? If you were to design another event, what might you do?

Content of Evaluation

	<u>E</u>	<u>V</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>G</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
1. Procedures and background (cultural descriptions) clearly articulated and justified.	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Interpretations and descriptions presented in a clear and reasonable manner	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Course concepts used to explain the subject matter (accuracy, breadth, and depth of ideas used)	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Overall effect (organization, writing, use of course concepts)	—	—	—	—	—	—

Make-up activity:

Going to an SU or Community Cultural Event (50 points total)

If, for any reason, you are unable to participate in the Multicultural Festival, you may go to a cultural event. You will write a 4-5 page, word-processed essay that includes: a summary of the event and applications from CMAT 300 (use concepts and theories from readings to explain the culture that you are observing). Essays will be due by the last class day, May 15, 2007.



GIFT: “The Intercultural Worldview”

by Fran Mindel

Goal: To present students with the opportunity to interact with persons from a different cultural background than their own and analyze their results in the form of a speech presented to the class

Rationale: Despite the long-used analogy, America is not often a “melting pot.” As a result, many of our students have little or no contact with people from co-cultures different from their own. They also have little to no experience with interviewing, outside of the workplace.

Most hybrid courses attempt to include brief units on intercultural, interpersonal, and business communication, yet largely concentrate on public speaking. This assignment attempts to integrate all of these areas into one cohesive project.

Directions: The assignment is introduced after students have presented one speech and have covered the fundamentals of intercultural communication.

The Process as Explained to the Students:

1. Interview two people from a different culture (defined as: not from your cultural background, someone who was born and raised for over half their life in another country, or someone at least 40 years older than you). Both people should be from the same culture (i.e.: two senior citizens, two people from Malaysia, etc.). You may not interview your relatives or close friends.
2. Arrange to ask them questions in a dyad situation. You may start with the list of questions provided in class, but feel free to ask additional questions in order to make the interview less formal and to follow up on the most interesting answers they give you.

3. After the interview, arrange your notes in a logical order and write a response paper discussing, (a) what you have learned from the interviewees, (b) differences between and within the culture of the two interviewees, (c) any surprises you encountered during the interviews (based on any pre-conceived notion you might have had about their culture), and (d) both similarities and differences between their culture and yours.
Length: 4-6 pages
4. Next, prepare a version of your response paper as an oral presentation to be given in class. The speech will be assessed on aspects of content, organization, and delivery, and how well you have fulfilled the assignment. Length: 4-6 minutes

Explanation: Theoretical Underpinnings:

1. In the basic hybrid course, the assignment is used to address theories of empathy, self-disclosure, and uncertainty reduction in initial interactions with people of different cultures
2. During the interview, students are, employing active listening skills, and looking for nonverbals that may be influenced by culture.
3. And, of course, students are minimizing their communication apprehension, both on an interpersonal and public communication level and these concepts are also discussed as part of this project.
4. For many students, just venturing outside of their familiar world to ask an “other” to speak with them, is a challenge. Yet, once the ice is broken, the results are almost always extremely positive.
5. When this assignment is adapted for upper division courses, such Intercultural, Interpersonal, Theory, or Rhetoric, other theories can be explored such as Standpoint, Narrative, Dramatism, Rules, and Muted Group, to name just a few.



Mindel (continued from previous page)

Typical Results: I have been doing variations on this assignment for over a decade and the results are always extremely positive. The most common student response is that the assignment turned out to be much more interesting than they had ever imagined. A second comment heard frequently is that the students are surprised that two people from the same culture can turn out to be so different. Of course, one of my underlying goals is to teach students that there are intra-cultural differences, so that it is harder for them to stereotype.

As might be expected, many students complain at first that they do not have access to anyone who meets the criteria to be interviewed. However, class discussion always uncovers resources on campus, at

their places of work or worship, and even family members of their classmates. I do warn them about asking strangers on the street and against meeting in non-public places. Interestingly, each semester, at least a few students get invited to the home of an interviewee to taste a meal of delicacies from their homeland (and a few home-cooked meals from American grandmas too, of course).

Both papers and speeches show evidence that the students understand the concepts being studied, and that they have completed all elements of the project. Comments after speeches show that students see more similarities between cultures than before they began the project - definitely a hopeful outcome.

GIFT: “Using Soap Operas to Explain Nonverbal Communication”

by Stacey A. Peterson

Goal:

To illustrate certain characteristics and types of nonverbal communication.

Course:

Fundamentals of Oral Communication, a hybrid course required by all students. This can also be used in a Nonverbal Communication course or any course where aspects of nonverbal communication are addressed.

Rationale:

In a low context culture such as the United States, verbal skills and proficiency are privileged as evidenced by the number of public speaking requirements in most colleges as well as the abundance of public speaking seminars offered in the workplace. Yet, in everyday society, the influences of nonverbal communication have not been given the same focus, in many cases being relegated to workshops on reading body language. Non verbal communication has immense communicative value, occurs continuously, makes up the largest percentage

of a person’s communication activity, and when occurring concurrently with verbal communication, has higher levels of validity. Soap operas are an effective means for examining nonverbal behaviors because they are filmed with many extreme facial close-ups, and the characters display several emotions, make gestures, and interact face-to-face for many of their conversations. Also, their contexts and environments are focal to the plotlines of the episodes.

Directions:

This activity should take place during the part of the semester when the basic nonverbal communication material is being covered. During a class period, students will be asked to watch a 5-10 minute recorded segment of a television soap opera with the sound turned down. The instructor should have recorded the program prior to the class period. It is not necessary that they be familiar with the particular soap opera.

Peterson (continued from previous page)

The segment should not be any more than 10 minutes long, since students will be asked to recall the meanings they attributed to the actors on screen. Students can take notes during the screening but are not required to. Once the segment has been viewed, the instructor will guide the students through a class discussion in which they describe the events that took place on the show. These events should include: the emotions of the characters, relationships to others, social class, activities taking place, etc.

Then, students will watch the segment again with the sound turned to normal volume. During class discussion, their accuracy will be determined.

Explanation:

Students will be lead through a class discussion where the following questions will be answered and addressed.

1. What was going on in the scene?
2. What relationship(s) did the people share?
3. What emotions did people show?
4. What environment(s) were they in?
5. Could we tell the socioeconomic status of the people? How?
6. Did people touch? Why? What did it mean?

7. What aspects of nonverbal communication were represented?
8. In this discussion, students will discuss many of the characteristics of nonverbal communication including: it exists in interpersonal communication, it has communicative value, it defines relationships, it allows a person to manage impressions, it expresses attitudes and feelings, it has validity but it is ambiguous
9. Also, students will discuss some of the types of nonverbal communication as they apply to the soap opera scene and what is meant in the context observed: Kinesics, Touch, Physical Attractiveness, Clothing, Proxemics, Chronemics, Status

Typical Results:

Students find this assignment useful as it allows them to have visual images to apply to the nonverbal concepts and it allows them to see how influential and pervasive nonverbal communication is. During the debriefing discussion, it is helpful to be able to stop the recording and focus on specific nonverbal actions on the video. Students also find it fun and humorous to use soap operas to illustrate the elements of nonverbal communication and were impressed with the fact that much of what they had surmised was actually true. Since soap opera acting tends to be a bit exaggerated, this genre provides an effective way to demonstrate the communicative value of nonverbal codes.

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**MCA is looking for
“MCA Liaisons” for
2007-2008.**

Key Responsibilities:

- distribute information about MCA to colleagues at your campus
- serve as a contact person between MCA's Executive Board and your institution

Please contact

Donna Rongione,
2nd Vice President
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*if you are interested in
representing your institution.*

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**2008
Maryland
Communication
Association
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Sherry Tucker
Secretary

Study British TV in Britain this Summer!

A mass media class being offered at Salisbury University will visit London this June. We'll tour the British Broadcasting Company, the British Film Institute, the British Museum and much more. We will then attend courses at the University of Reading for one week.

Among other things, we will analyze similarities between British and American TV shows such as the Office, Wife Swap, Dancing with the Stars, and discuss audiences in both nations.

Students will also develop a video presentation of their trip with the help of the University of Reading staff.

The cost includes tuition, travel, some meals, books, and accommodations in London and Reading.

If interested, please write Dr. Darrell Newton at dmnewton@salisbury.edu or go to:

<http://faculty.salisbury.edu/~dmnewton/2008-Summer-Program-in-England.html>

A “Green” Conference: MCA 2008 at the Universities at Shady Grove

In fall 2000, The University System of Maryland (USM) introduced a new concept in advanced education. This was the beginning of the Universities at Shady Grove (USG) — currently a collaboration of nine, public degree-granting institutions brings some of the top programs from across the state to one convenient facility in Montgomery County.



USG is a different kind of learning community. It's designed for students who are professionally focused who want to fast track their degree. Everything about USG is aimed at helping students complete their degree and start their career. Programs are exclusively upper level and graduate; daytime classes are offered either full-time or part-time; the facilities are state-of-the-art; and the USG staff is student-focused and highly experienced with transfers.

USG has established its own Shady Grove Business Alliance and has formed relationships with organizations such as the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce and the Technology Council of Maryland.

During the next few years, USG plans to expand its program offerings, build even more community partnerships, develop a student internship network and begin construction on a new facility, Building III.

The Universities at Shady Grove (USG) is committed to environmental stewardship. As educators, it is our responsibility to promote and encourage eco-friendly practices. Working with our partner institutions, local schools, and businesses, it is our goal to act as a facilitator and heighten awareness regarding sustainability to our students and surrounding community. USG is a place where students and community members can learn about greening initiatives and exchange ideas through a collaborative effort of staff, faculty, and students. We will strive to make each member of our community more cognizant of their environmental footprint.

Great Ideas For Teaching Students (G.I.F.T.S. 2008)

Watch the Maryland Communication Association website (www.md-comm.org) as the conference approaches. MCA will be looking for **gifted** educators to share their ideas for teaching across the discipline.

This summer, we are especially interested in projects, lessons, or discussion exercises related to the 2008 presidential election.

Send your GIFTS submissions to the Executive Board via our website at:
<http://www.md-comm.org/newsletter.html>.