

ODU-UNCG at ECU presents



# Positive Communication Graduate Student Symposium

Saturday, December 7, 2013  
12:00 noon – 5:30 pm

Old Dominion University—Thomas Socha and Gary Beck  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro—Peter Kellett

With Many Thanks to our ECU Hosts:

**Linda Kean, Director, ECU School of Communication**  
**Linda Privera, Graduate Program Director**  
**Deborah Thomson, Rebecca Dumlao and students—**  
**ECU Health Communication Puppetry Program**

And special thanks to;

**Stephen Pullen, Department Chair, ODU Communication & Theatre Arts**

This Symposia features the papers of graduate students enrolled in positive communication classes at Old Dominion University (Dr. Socha and Dr. Beck) and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (Dr. Kellett)

## Schedule

12:00 noon	<b>Welcome</b> Dr. Linda Prividera, ECU, GPD		
	<b>Introductions and Thanks!</b> Dr. Thomas Socha, ODU		
	Room: JE 202		
12:15– 12:45	<b>Special Presentation</b> Deborah Thomson and Rebecca Dumlao and students- Health Communication Puppetry Program Room: JE 202		
1:00 – 2:00	Positive Lunching! Room JE 202		
	<b>Room JE 201</b>	<b>Room JE 212</b>	<b>Open</b>
2:00 – 2:50	“Play” Discussant: Kellett  Mathers (ODU) Sprinkle & Edinger (UNCG) Mitchell (ODU)	“Positive Media” Discussant: Socha  Maillet (UNCG) Goode (ODU) Dam-Regier (UNCG)	Beck
3:00 – 4:00	“Humor, RAKs, & Positive Relating” Discussant: Beck  Buckely (UNCG) Sutton (UNCG) Reeder and Williams (UNCG) Eller (ODU)	“Positive Social Media and Applications” Discussant: Kellett  Moore (UNCG) Caldwell (ODU) Ponche (ODU) Wenner (ODU)	Socha
4:15 – 5:15	“Positive Potpourri 1” Discussant: Socha  Saunders (ODU) Erickson, Hollingsworth & Wright (UNCG) Hancock & Hamdan (UNCG) Poole (ODU)	“Positive Potpourri 2” Discussant: Beck  Ciampoli (ODU) Outcalt (UNCG) Mundzic (ODU) Lee (ODU)	Kellett
5:30 pm	Closing JE 202		

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## Paper Titles and Abstracts

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**2:00 – 2:50 pm**

**ROOM JE 201**

**Appreciative Discussant: Kellett  
Play**

**LIFE ON THE PLAYGROUND – A STUDY OF PLAY AND COMMUNICATION ACROSS THE LIFESPAN**

Whitney R. Mathers, ODU

This is a study of the concept of play and how it is understood, accepted and communicated within each life stage. I analyze social norms and behaviors associated with the play experience, as well as the consequences when play “rules” are broken. I also look at how the concept of play evolves across the lifespan and if we still “play” in adulthood and later life.

**GAYBRO: A STUDY OF A GAY STRAIGHT ‘BROMANCE’ WITH THE USE OF PLAY, HUMOR, AND AFFECTION**

Nicholason Sprinkle, UNCG; & Michael Edinger, UNCG

This paper explores the positive impact of play, humor, and affection in a gaybro (gay-straight bromantic) relationship. Specifically we are interested in how they help to alleviate tensions, prevent breakdown of communication, and create a safe place for growth and learning that is central to friendship.

**COMMUNICATION, FUN, AND PLAY ACROSS THE LIFE SPAN**

Shantonee’ M. Mitchell, ODU

This paper is going to examine the understandings and meanings of “fun” and “play” across the lifespan. By taking a closer look at fun and play, I hope to reveal how the methods timing and importance of these kinds of episodes across the lifespan. Factors that facilitate and inhibit fun and play will also be considered.

**ROOM JE 212**

**Appreciative Discussant: Socha  
Positive Media**

**BEAUTIFUL LOVE: POSITIVE MEDIA ACTIVISM IN "SHE KEEPS ME WARM**

Christie Maillet, UNCG

This paper explores the question: how has Mary Lambert's "She Keeps Me Warm" fit into virtuous communication's idea of courage, as well as hope discourse? Also, how does positive communication work as a mode for social change? I hypothesize that "She Keeps Me Warm" embodies the themes of courage, hope, love, and beauty, as well as positively communicates social change through the music video's unspoken actions, lyrics, and YouTube comments that provide social commentary toward change in the LGBT community.

**SOCIAL MEDIA DATING: EHARMONY, BET ON LOVE**

Michelle Goode, ODU

Certain characteristics can predict compatibility. According to EHarmony's branding, compatibility makes long lasting happy relationships. This paper will analyze specific characteristics used to describe oneself on social media and how compatibility is predicted and develops an authentic happy relationship. I will use secondary evidentiary data to research dating through social media.

## TALKING WITH THE DEAD: AN ANALYSIS OF POSITIVE COMMUNICATION WITH THE AFTERLIFE IN TLC'S LONG ISLAND MEDIUM

Elizabeth Dam-Regier, UNCG

Through a content analysis of a series of episodes, this paper explores the specific perceived benefits by living loved ones after encountering "readings" by the so called Long Island Medium. Achieving closure, receiving permission to move on, gaining assurance of wellbeing in the afterlife, and other benefits, add to our understanding of positive communication in important ways.

**3:00 – 4:00 pm**

### **ROOM JE 201**

**Appreciative Discussant: Beck**

**Positive Relating**

## A LAUGHING MATTER: USING INSIDE JOKES TO CREATE HEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

Alison N. Buckley, UNCG

This study analyzes the use of humor in friendships to determine how inside jokes function in creating positive interpersonal connections. More specifically, I evaluate the positive emotions that arise from inside jokes to determine how they are instrumental in the creation of strong friendships.

## SURVIVING AND THRIVING WHEN RECEIVING REJECTION FOR THE EMPLOYMENT SEARCH: EXPERIENCE WITH ESTEEM SUPPORT MESSAGES

Crystal U. Sutton, UNCG

This paper is concerned with the impact of positive messages during the difficult time of a job search. Specifically, the study focuses on patterns across responses to the following questions: What or who has helped you to remain positive in work search when you have received rejection from jobs? Are you receiving emotional-focused messages that are associated with the job search regarding self-esteem? & what type of messages or emotional support do you need to receive during your job search?

## VULNERABILITY AND OPENNESS: HOW DISCLOSURE LEADS TO POSITIVE OUTCOMES IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Ranata Reeder, UNCG; & Natasha Williams, UNCG

This research paper examines conversations that have taken place within the context of interpersonal relationships. The conversations examined will be ones in which the participant(s) felt vulnerable by disclosing information. We explore how vulnerability and disclosure lead to specific positive outcomes within interpersonal relationships.

## RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS: STUDYING THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Angela Eller, ODU

This research is based on a small, pilot study conducted at Old Dominion University where students were could choose to receive a "Free Hug" or a "Free Compliment" and were encouraged to pass along a kind gesture or kind word to someone else. The gesture/words were recorded on a card, and passed along to whomever received the act of kindness. Student reactions and returned cards were analyzed to determine how far this positive communication could spread in 24 hours (diffusion of positivity).

**ROOM JE 212**

**Appreciative Discussant: Kellett**

**Positive Social Media and Applications**

**THE LIGHT AND DARK SIDE OF SOCIAL MEDIA: EFFECTS ON POSITIVE HEALTH COMMUNICATION**

Chantel Moore, UNCG

This research focuses on the bright and dark side of social media use in health communication. Specifically, I focus exploring on how using social media can impact one's health, well-being, and self-esteem in positive and negative ways.

**NEW OLD-AGE INTIMACIES: THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTIMACY AMONG SENIORS VIA THE INTERNET.**

Alma V. Caldwell, ODU

Online communities offer seniors a new and alternate platform to give and receive intimacy from a romantic partner. Investigating senior blogs about dating as well as senior dating websites, I will review how seniors are actively seeking to maintain intimacy with others, through positive communication, self-disclosure and reciprocal support.

**POSITIVE FERTILE THOUGHTS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SUPPORT FORUMS FOR COUPLES GOING THROUGH INFERTILITY TREATMENTS**

Lisa Ponche, ODU

This paper will seek to examine how positive and supportive communication received online through public discussion forums provide infertile couples with an outlet to discuss their struggles and seek information from others who are going through similar circumstances. Also examined is the phenomenon of how others that have been successful in fertility treatments come to the forum to provide positive emotional support to those still struggling with infertility.

**WONDER: A CATALYST FOR LIFESPAN LEARNING**

Rachel Wenner, ODU

This paper explores the use of wonder to spark student interest in the grade-school science classroom. Specifically the paper focuses upon the precedent set by the scientific and educational fields and the potentially fruitful research implications for the communication field.

**4:15 – 5:15 pm**

**ROOM 201**

**Appreciative Discussant: Socha**

**Positive Communication Potpourri 1**

**THE ACT OF LOVING KINDNESS**

Angela Saunders, ODU

This paper will examine how the state of “loving kindness” can be achieved through introspective and meditative means such as prayer, readings, spiritual teachings, self-help literature and meditations. This paper will explore the implications of “loving kindness” for positive intimate relating.

**BRIDE or BRIDESZILLA: CELEBRATION OR COMMODITY**

Jessi Eriksen, UNCG; Sarah Hollingsworth, UNCG, & April Wright, UNCG

This paper explores the following research question: How do brides and bridesmaids expectations surrounding wedding celebration positively or negatively influence celebratory communication? We hypothesize that extravagant celebration may come with what we argue to be the dark side as well as the bright side of celebratory communication

**POSITIVE ORGANIZATIONAL BEHAVIOR BY UNIVERSITIES**

Theresa Hancock, UNCG & Dana Hamdan, UNCG

Our research focuses on positive communication in upper level university leadership—specifically chancellors and presidents. We are interested in exploring how the positive organizational behaviors of university leaders can impact the stakeholders and culture at a university especially during policy changes and crises.

**CREATING RESILIENT ADULTS: THE IMPACT OF POSITIVE SOCIAL SUPPORT DURING ROLE TRANSITIONS**

Ashley Poole, ODU

This study focused on the use and impact of positive social support messages given by friends, family, and relational partners during emerging adulthood. Specifically, this paper examined how positive social support messages are used to help recent college graduates stay optimistic during the often bumpy and difficult transition between graduation and receiving a career offer. This pilot study examined the various messages offered by one individual's social network to further understand the importance that each member plays in building the emerging adults' resilience in light of rejection as well as how each member's messages intersect and vary creating multiple emotional supportive messages.

**ROOM JE 212**

**Appreciative Discussant: Beck**

**Positive Communication Potpourri 2**

**HUGGING IT OUT**

Lauren Ciampoli, ODU

Exploring hugs as positive touching across the lifespan. How do we learn to hug and what implications does hugging have on our emotional wellbeing? How is hugging behavior similar in childhood and later life? Hugs as a means of intergenerational communication that transcends speech.

**SETTING UP AESTHETIC COMMUNICATION: CREATING CONDITIONS FOR MOMENTS OF TRANSCENDENCE AND BEAUTY.**

Adrienne Outcalt, UNCG

Though beautiful communicative encounters are often fleeting and singular, it stands to reason that there may be ways to set conditions to allow for the occurrences of such moments. In this paper I ask the question "Can moments of aesthetic communication be created? If so, what are the conditions by which one experiences and re-experiences these moments?"

**DEFINING AND INTERPRETING HOPE**

Nikola Mundzic, ODU

This paper will focus on determining levels of hope among disadvantaged people, particularly located in poverty stricken areas. Additionally, this study will also focus on in-depth analysis of different interpretations of hope between wealthy and underprivileged societies.

## DO OPPOSITES REALLY ATTRACT? SYNCHRONY IN INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

Germaine Lee, ODU

This is a study that examines the concept of synchrony, how it manifests itself, and how it affects relationships with people who play significant roles in our lives across the lifespan. I analyze the ways in which synchrony, or a lack there of, leads to (mis)understandings within our communication encounters with those people. In other words, how important is being similar in communication style in its effect on our ability to communicate, and understand the messages communicated, within significant relationships at each life stage?

