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the newsletter for public relations minors

Relay

Peter M. Smudde discusses PR messages

By Katie Hull

Using message formation and framing to keep the audience's attention was a topic presented by Peter M. Smudde, Ph.D., at the Central Illinois Master Communicator Awards Dinner, Thursday, March 23, at the Decatur Hickory Point Banquet Center.

The emcee, Julie Staley, WICS-TV, also presented awards to 49 outstanding Central Illinois communicators.

Smudde is an assistant professor/coordinator of the public relations program at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater. Smudde is also co-editor of *Power and Public Relations*, which will be published soon.

Master Communicator was sponsored by the Central Illinois Chapter of PRSA and the Bloomington and Springfield Chapters of the Association for Women in Communication.

"Message design uses mostly art and some science when being created," Smudde said.

The message's thesis is the single statement everything revolves around, he said. The thesis should fit on the back of a business card.

The next important step after the thesis is the support and detail for the message. Focusing on the key information and public view allow for the

message to be remembered. He said to "avoid the 'nice to know' information." The message should have continuity with support, which keeps it flowing and reinforces the importance.



Peter M. Smudde, Ph.D.

Smudde also said the action made with publics and stakeholders is communication based. The power is relational and is done with symbolic action within communication.

The context of the message needs to be in a very specific way to fit the needs of the audience's perspective,

Smudde said.

With that in mind, cultural consideration of the message is another important factor in framing the message. Some of the same words are used with different meanings in different cultures. He said not to embarrass your organization by looking past the cultural differences when creating messages. By spending the extra time reassuring the message fits into the desired culture of the audience, the attention will last longer. The message will also be retained longer in the minds of the audience, he said.

"Message design uses mostly art and some science when being created."

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Julia Bourque gains experience in PR

By Hannah Plevka

Julia Bourque, a senior journalism major, decided to give public relations a try when she took on an internship position at Consolidated Communications in Mattoon.

One of her biggest duties is writing articles for the Connection, the monthly company newsletter. The articles include anything from service anniversaries, employee spotlights and promotion stories to covering company events, like the Customer Service Representative Annual Meeting.

“I really like the people I work with and I like the change of pace from newspaper writing to this type of writing. It’s just something different and new,” Bourque said.

Bourque joined the Public Relations Student Society of America last fall and

is the publicity chair. She is in charge of designing fliers to put around campus for meetings and works as the media relations person for events.

Through this internship, Bourque hopes to gain enough experience in the public relations field to help her in deciding what to pursue after college.

“I would love to find a job doing public relations for an environmental organization, since I have a biology major, and I would also love to write for a science publication.”



Julia Bourque



Katie Hull, left, senior communication studies major, and Julia Bourque, senior journalism major, talk to Dick Adorjan, APR, at the Central Illinois Master Communicator Awards Dinner on Thursday, March 23, in Decatur.

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The last idea Smudde discussed was the battle for attention when creating a message. He said our society is over communicated, receiving 3,400 to 10,000 commercial messages per day. People have selective processes that help them decide what is important. He said to account for the clutter when designing the message and differentiate from competition.

“Dr. Smudde’s combination of practitioner and academic experience provided immense value to the public relations professionals who received awards, and everybody else in the room was duly impressed,” said Dr. Brian Sowa, assistant professor in communication studies at Eastern.

Smudde concluded by reminding the practitioners to stay on message and to use strategies to keep the attention of their audience.

“What’s not said is as important as what is,” he said.



Jenny Ketchmark, senior communication studies major and WEIU-TV News Watch weather anchor, reports the weather at WAND-TV in Decatur, Ill. Ketchmark is in the top three for an award for the best collegiate weather broadcaster in the nation by the Broadcast Education Association. The awards will be given on Wednesday, April 26, in Las Vegas.

Student up for national weather award

By Courtney Stanley

Jenny Ketchmark was chosen as one of three finalists for the best collegiate weather broadcaster in the nation.

Ketchmark, a senior communication studies major with a concentration in meteorological broadcasting, applied for the annual award given by the Broadcast Education Association in December.

"I didn't think I would get it. Just knowing I made it in the top three was just awesome, she said. "But it doesn't take a plaque for me to know that I'm doing something decent."

However, that is not all. Ketchmark, from Sullivan, Ill, also just signed a two-year contract as a weekday reporter and weekend weather anchor for the 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. newscasts for WCIA-3 in Champaign, Ill. She will start this

summer and continue to attend Eastern and work full-time until she graduates in December of 2006.

She said it will be nice when she graduates because she can just move and keep working, without having to deal with the stress of job hunting.

Ketchmark said weather has been a hobby of hers since she started chasing funnel clouds and tornadoes since she got her driver's license.

"My parent's thought I was crazy," she said.

To even be up for the award "is kind of like a pat on the back for all my hard work," she said.

"But it takes everyone to make things work, so I am kind of representing everyone in the newsroom," she said. "I couldn't have done it without them."

Ketchmark first started as a business

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PRSSA wraps-up spring project for CARE



EIU's Dan Thornburgh Chapter of PRSSA wrapped up its spring service project for the Coles County Animal Rescue and Education Center with a fundraiser, The CARE Feud tournament (like Family Feud), on April 22, raising \$200.

Participants paid a fee and competed in teams to play in the championship and win prizes.

The sponsorship committee asked local organizations to either donate prizes to the event or to CARE, and the funds raised will buy necessary items such as special kitten food, shampoo, etc., that CARE needs.

CARE is a small not-for-profit county animal shelter, according to www.petfinder.org. PRSSA members volunteered at the CARE Shelter, too.

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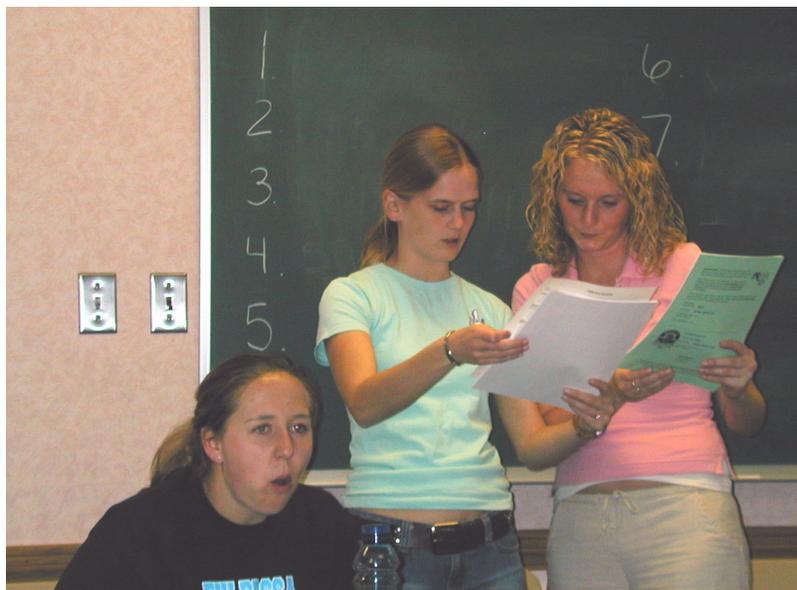
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PRSSA members from left, Katie Hull, Tara Mauk and Julia Bourque go over questions at the CARE Feud tournament.

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major at Eastern in the fall of 2003, but “fell in love” with broadcasting when her friend, J.C. Fultz, Eastern communication studies alum, persuaded her to check out the news station.

Since then, Ketchmark has done the night-cap news at WEIU-TV News Watch and is currently a weather anchor for the station. She reports the weather at 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

She also works at WAND-TV in Decatur, Ill., as a morning weekend weather anchor.

But she said it might be kind of

weird now because Fultz, who also works at WAND-TV, will go from her mentor, teacher and co-worker to her competitor when she starts at WCIA.

“I hope to work hard for them and get into a higher market. Everyone wants to go big, like Chicago, New York,” she said.

The first, second and third place winners will be awarded on Wednesday, April 26, in Las Vegas at the Broadcast Education Association’s National Convention. The convention will also include a luncheon, a technology exhibit and networking opportunities.