NCA’s Communicating Common Ground initiative having an impact on communities, participants

Participants in NCA’s national Communicating Common Ground project are making their mark in communities throughout the country. In partnership with NCA, the Southern Poverty Law Center, Campus Compact, and the American Association for Higher Education, colleges and universities are working in partnerships with local schools to teach students how to counteract hate and racism.

CCG Partnerships

The CCG partnership at Monmouth University, for example, has made a tremendous impact on its community. Monmouth professors and college students are working with children in local schools using a storytelling approach. Thanks to Bristol Myers Squibb and GPU Energy, they are able to donate tolerance-themed library books to two community organizations. In addition, they are currently working with Tiffin University to develop a storytelling course, and they are eventually planning to establish a Storytelling Community Institute that will take an interdisciplinary approach to fostering an appreciation of diversity.

Other colleges and universities have been hard at work as well. At the College of Wooster, students work on conflict resolution skills with 50-80 preschool and daycare children. At Bowling Green University, college and high school students watched the movie, “What’s Cooking” and had discussions about identity and independence. Finally, in its third-semester partnership with area Boy Scouts, Ripon College students are striving to raise awareness, understanding, and use of effective intercultural communication skills.

Call for Participation

Are you doing similar projects on your campus? Are you interested in starting a CCG program? If so, please submit a short proposal that contains the following information:

1. A description of the partnership’s goals and proposed activities, with some discussion of plans to extend its impact, linking where possible to other school or community efforts with similar goals.
2. Documentation of the willingness of the relevant college/university/department members and community partners involved to participate (a mutually signed letter will suffice).
3. A commitment for some representation of the partnership at an orientation and training seminar to be held at the New Orleans NCA convention. (The inaugural partners recommend that at least two individuals from the university/college level attend. We also recommend that community partners attend, if possible. However, at this point, funding for community members is not available.)
4. Indication of willingness to participate in an assessment of the project.

Deadline: June 30th

Your proposal must be postmarked by June 30, 2002. Submit to:
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By Sherry Morreale
NCA Associate Director

RCA invites partnership with NCA members

By Sherry Morreale, NCA Associate Director

The new affiliation of the Russian Communication Association (RCA) with NCA (See January 2002 Spectra) offers rich opportunities for NCA members to participate in strengthening the study of communication in Russia. In addition to the first RCA conference in June at Pyatigorsk, Russia, other partnerships between U.S. and Russian teachers and scholars can enhance both Russian and American educational and research goals. Specifically, the RCA invites NCA member participation with two projects.

First, Russian scholars and educators seek books (including textbooks, instructor’s manuals, and other educational materials), journals, and other communication literature (CD-ROMs, videotapes) that would help Russian communication students and teachers learn more about the communication discipline. Several Russian universities, including Volgograd State Pedagogical University, Shadrinsk State Pedagogical Institute, and Pyatigorsk State Linguistic University, need communication resources that would enhance their new curriculum in communication studies. NCA members interested in providing materials should contact Michael Hazen, the U.S. coordinator of this project (hazen@wfu.edu), or RCA President Olga Matyash at Indiana University-Purdue University by e-mail at omatyash@purdue.edu.

In addition to soliciting books and other educational resources, several Russian communication scholars would welcome e-mail collaboration, as well as the development of faculty and student exchange programs that could benefit both Russian and American universities. Although communication studies as a distinct discipline is relatively new to Russian higher education, Russian scholars have a long and strong tradition of studying human communication within the framework of such disciplines as linguistics, psychology, sociology, pedagogy, mass media, and political science. Scholars from the U.S. who are interested in developing research partnerships, visiting scholar programs, or other exchange programs, as well as those who would be willing to volunteer to help coordinate this project should contact RCA President Olga Matyash at the e-mail address provided above or Steven Beebe at Southwest Texas State University, SB03@swt.edu, who is chair of the RCA International Committee.