

Communication Arena: Editor's Focus



The World Communication Association, sponsor of the *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research (JICR)* is pleased to announce its partnership with Routledge, Taylor and Francis. As current editor of JICR, I have assembled a world-class group of communication scholars to serve as reviewers and members of the journal's editorial board. Along with these scholars I am committed to publishing first-rate quality research that focuses on the dynamics of human symbolic exchange in cultural contexts.

Whenever people from different cultures come together and exchange messages they bring with them a whole host of cognitions, affect, and behaviors that were planted and cultivated by culture. From my perspective, intercultural communication is a symbolic activity where the thoughts and ideas of one are encoded into a verbal and/or nonverbal message format, then transmitted through some channel to another person who must decode it, interpret it, and respond to it. This process of encoding, decoding and interpreting is filled with cultural noise. During intercultural communication, culture acts as a filter through which all messages, both verbal and nonverbal, must pass. To this extent, during intercultural communication, the message sent is not the message received.

Moreover, I believe that intercultural communication necessarily involves a clash of communicator style. In many cultures talk is a highly valued commodity. People are routinely evaluated by their speech. Yet silence; that is, knowing when not to speak, is a fundamental prerequisite for linguistic and cultural competence. To be sure, the use and interpretation of silence varies dramatically across cultures. In many cultures silence can carry more meaning than words, especially in the maintenance of intimate relationships. Some cultures value and employ a very direct and personal style of verbal communication. Personal pronouns are an essential ingredient to the composition of just about any utterance. Other cultures, however, prefer an indirect and impersonal communication style. In these cultures, there is no need to verbally articulate every message. True understanding is implicit, coming not from words but from actions in the environment where speakers provide only hints or insinuations. Chinese say, "One should use the eyes and ears, not the mouth." They consider the wisest and most trustworthy person as the one who talks the least and who listens, watches, and restricts his/her verbal communication; "Noisy outside, empty inside." Articles published in *JICR* elucidate this complex culture-driven process of message encoding, decoding, and interpreting.

During my editorship, *JICR* will publish qualitative and quantitative research that focuses on interrelationships between culture and communication. Generally, research published in JICR emphasizes non-mediated contexts. Published manuscripts may report results from either cross-cultural comparative research or results from other types of research concerning the ways culture affects human symbolic activities. Studies reporting data from within a single nation/culture focus on cultural factors and explore the theoretical or practical relevance of their findings from a cross-cultural perspective. Such findings should be theoretically and socially significant. Research that generates new or refines existing theoretical ideas is also encouraged. Published manuscripts will be written in a style that is accessible to a varied and international academic audience.

For more information on *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research* please visit <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/17475749.asp>. For further details on the World Communication Association, including how to become a member, please visit <http://facstaff.uww.edu/wca/Home.htm>

If you interested in contributing to the Editor's Focus or to other sections of this Communication Arena please email communicationarena@tandf.co.uk

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