When her doctoral work is completed, she expects to head to Washington, DC to pursue policy related work there. Having resolved to no longer live according to others’ expectations, she consciously rejects an academic career: “I’ve learned that to continue doing this kind of work, I also have to have a life. I could see myself as a young faculty member in pursuit of tenure and not making time for much else. That’s not how I want to be.” One outlet for Kelly’s very social nature, possibly as a reaction to the relative isolation of her early family life, is bringing together people and resources to create networks and new activities. Two past examples are the student brown bag mentioned earlier and an electronic journal she co-created. She recently employed this talent (for connecting like-minded people) when she introduced two Washington, DC SCRAers – both talking vaguely about wanting to organize a local SCRA network. So it was at her impetus that a DC-area network has been organized. Its members are eagerly anticipating her arrival in Washington, her Ph.D. diploma in hand, to join the group that she was instrumental in creating. Kelly Kinnison can be contacted at kinnison@uic.edu

Entertainment Education and Multicultural Audiences: An Action and Research Agenda

May G. Kennedy, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Communication
Sheila T. Murphy & Michael Cody, Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California
Vicki Beck, Hollywood, Health & Society, Norman Lear Center, University of Southern California

There is often a trade-off between the number of people that can be reached by a prevention intervention and the intensity of the experience the intervention can provide. Television can help resolve this dilemma, offering a promising channel for prevention messages (Jason, 1998). Television broadcasts reach vast audiences and have been shown to increase health-relevant knowledge (Brodie et al., 2001), foster healthful attitudes and norms (Kalichman, 1994), and model health-promoting behaviors (Basil, 1996). If the television show is part of an ongoing dramatic series, prevention themes can be developed and reinforced over time. Moreover, embedding a message into a compelling narrative helps make the message salient and memorable (Papa et al., 2000; Waugh & Norman, 1965).

The strategy of leveraging interest in popular media offerings in order to transmit pro-social information broadly has been called Entertainment Education (EE). Pioneered by Miguel Sabido, a Mexican producer of telenovellas (a form similar to American soap operas, but with storylines that last approximately six months), the EE approach is consistent with Social Cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Serialized dramas using this approach were widely watched, financially successful, and educationally effective in Mexico (Singhal & Rogers, 1999). The Sabido method has been adopted in developing countries around the world, prompting changes in health behaviors as well as their psychosocial antecedents (Rogers, Vaughn, Swalche, Rao, Svenkernd & Sood, 1999).

In broad outline, the Sabido method involves waiting until audience interest is well established before introducing the prevention message. Then, over many episodes, one character heeds the prevention message and makes with good fortune, while another character ignores the message and faces punishing consequences. A transitional character, one with whom viewers can identify, faces barriers to engaging in the health behavior but surmounts them and is rewarded in ways that are culturally valued.

There are major obstacles to employing the Sabido method in the United States, however, not the least of which is the prohibitive cost of television air time. In order to insert prevention messages into popular television shows in this country, it has been useful to forge a partnership between public health professionals and Hollywood writers and producers.

Under a contract from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Norman Lear Center of the University of Southern California has nurtured such partnerships through a program called Hollywood, Health & Society (HH&S) (http://www.learnercenter.org/html/projects/?cm=hhs). The program links writers and producers with experts from public health settings who can provide accurate health information and storyline ideas, some of which reflect findings of behavioral research. The two major goals of HH&S are to increase the accuracy of health content in TV storylines and to encourage the inclusion of public health issues in future storyline development. To accomplish these goals, HH&S has created an entertainment industry advisory board, presented panel discussions at meetings of the Writers Guild, presented the Sentinel for Health Award for Daytime Drama, and consulted with writers and producers on a number of storylines. HH&S is now reaching out to programs popular among minority audiences (e.g., daytime dramas and the UPN Monday night shows) and to Spanish language programs. Recent examples of storylines featuring minority characters include “Raul’s Diabetes” on *The Young and the Restless* and “Tony’s HIV” on *The Bold and the Beautiful.*

Another obstacle to employing the full Sabido method in the U.S. is that shows that are potential vehicles for prevention messages have pre-existing premises, characters and plotlines, many of which are inconsistent with traditional EE. In addition, the EE approach may have to be adapted for use in new entertainment formats and technologies (e.g., rental DVDs) in which viewers have greater control over exposure. It is important to learn whether prevention messages in these contexts can be effective, how they work best, and how to tailor offerings for various risk groups and multicultural audiences.

To gather advice about maximizing scarce EE research resources, the CDC held a conference in May 2000. Mass communication scholars came together to assess existing research and theory on Entertainment Education, identify research gaps, and propose an applied research agenda (see http://www.cdc.gov/communication/ercr/hr.htm for the full report and references). Conference participants pointed to research showing that televised health messages can bring about positive changes in health-related behavior in this country. In the late 1980’s, for example, the Harvard Alcohol Project was able to insert the designated-driver concept into more than 80 television episodes. In combination with network-sponsored public service announcements, these shows sparked significant increases in awareness of and compliance with the dedicated driver message.

Among the research gaps noted during the 2000 conference was a dearth of information about the effects of EE strategies on children eight years of age and older. Participants also saw a need
for new theory and evaluation methods to guide EE interventions in this country. They considered it important to understand (a) the impact of pairing EE messages with structured interpersonal communication, and (b) the effects of multi-channel message integration (e.g., sending consistent messages through the internet and through television). They acknowledged a need to explore the potential for “mixed messages,” given the message-contradicting nature of many entertainment offerings. Finally, they framed specific research questions including:

- How do EE messages influence knowledge, attitudes and health-related practices?
- What levels and types of exposure to EE content are necessary for adoption of pro-health practices?
- What types of television characters are considered credible sources of health information?

Three years later, the CDC once again brought together experts on EE, this time to develop a research agenda for minority audiences. In the U.S., African Americans and Hispanics suffer disproportionately high rates of a whole host of preventable diseases (see [http://www.cdc.gov/omb/AboutUs/disparities.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/omb/AboutUs/disparities.htm)). Reducing such racial and ethnic disparities is one of the two major public health goals in Healthy People 2010 (DHHS, 2000). EE may be a particularly promising strategy for addressing health disparities because members of racial and ethnic minority groups report watching more television than whites, and are more likely than whites to say that they get health information from television. Minority women are also more likely to discuss what they have seen with others (Beck, Pollard & Greenberg, 2000).

This second conference was held in Santa Monica, California in May 2003. It included not only researchers but also television writers and producers. In a summary report ([http://www.cdc.gov/communication/erproch.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/communication/erproch.htm)), Murphy and Cody conclude that, although stories that deal with health issues are ubiquitous on television in the U.S., very little is known about their accuracy or their effects on minority audiences. Thus, the primary tasks of the conferees were:

1. To determine the specific criteria that should be used to judge the merits of future EE research with respect to both general and minority audiences;
2. To generate a list of potential research questions, ensuring that key questions were not overlooked; and
3. To prioritize the list. Some of the top-priority questions are listed at the end of this article.

Descriptions of related lines of research, the types of entertainment programs that target African Americans and Hispanics in the U.S., and the perspective of the entertainment industry were provided to conferees prior to the agenda-setting process. Some of this briefing information is summarized below.

### Increasing the Impact of Health-Related Storylines

Health-related storylines can have an even greater impact when paired with a public service announcement dealing with the issue portrayed and/or a toll-free number where viewers can seek additional information. For example, one study (Kennedy, O’Leary, Beck, Pollard & Simpson, in press) showed that providing an 800 number in conjunction with the airing of “Tony’s HIV” resulted in the highest spike in callers to the national AIDS hotline during that calendar year. Likewise, analysis of callers from a PSA that aired following the Young and the Restless storyline “Ashley’s Breast Cancer” showed a much higher percentage of Hispanic and African American callers than usual and a much higher rate of requests for prevention information (Davis & Bright, 2003).

### International Experience

Vibert Cambridge, Chair of African American Studies at Ohio University, informed participants that, worldwide, at least 163 EE projects have been launched in recent years, and many have been evaluated. Common health themes in these projects have been family planning, HIV-AIDS and preventable diseases. Lessons learned in one cultural context have been successfully translated and transferred to another context; experiences in South Africa, Ghana and the English-speaking Caribbean could be instructive in reaching Black America. Nonetheless, it is necessary to remember that there is diversity within ethnic categories, as well as between them.

### Impact of Rap Music Videos on African American Teens

Teens heavily exposed to rap music videos, compared to those with less exposure, were more likely to engage in an interrelated set of health risk behaviors and adverse outcomes (Wingood, DiClemente, Bernhardt, Harrington, Davies & Hook, 2003). Further exploration of this association in gender, race and age subgroups is needed, as well as investigation of the effects of rap music by groups that incorporate pro-social messages (e.g., Salt ’n Peppa).

### Impact of Mass Media Messages on Hispanic Audiences

According to Rina Alcalay, Professor at the UC Davis School of Medicine and School of Communication, there is evidence that Hispanics pay particularly close attention to television and believe what they see. A recent survey by New California Media showed that 89% of California Latinos say they rely on Spanish language television as their primary source of information. In the past, Spanish language telenovelas have increased knowledge, but few behavior changes have been documented. However, information-seeking behavior increased when the intervention was theory-based and supplemented with interpersonal channels (Alcalay, Alvarado, Balcazar, Newman & Huerta, 1999). A telenovela may be the most appropriate vehicle for emotionally gripping material whereas a fotonovela (comic book) that allows a reader to proceed at his or her own pace may be a better choice to convey complex information.

### Impact of TV Movie Ms. Evers Boys on African American Audiences

For African Americans, the Tuskegee Study of Untreated Syphilis in the Negro Male, a medical experiment involving 600 African American males in Alabama between 1932 and 1972, continues to create distrust of the public health and medical establishments. Participants in focus groups conducted after a television program dramatized the experiment were found to have incomplete knowledge and to hold mistaken beliefs about what actually took place in Tuskegee (Freimuth, Quinn, Thomas, Cole, Zook & Duncan, 2001). For example, participants believed that the U.S. government actually gave men syphilis in order to study them. The film tended to reinforce participants’ fear of medical research. Programs to increase scientific literacy in the African American
community should be funded, and community members should be
given trustworthy assurances that appropriate safeguards are now in
place. Otherwise, they may avoid participation in potentially
beneficial medical research.

An Introduction to Spanish Language Telenovelas

Telenovelas produced in Latin America are translated into
multiple languages and broadcast around the world, currently
reaching 500 million viewers, including many U.S. residents.
Jaime Escandon, president of Renata Productions, commented that
this meant that, "...we are all the same in the end." As in the U.S.,
ratings drive decisions about content, and maintaining strong
viewership is of paramount importance. Programming on Spanish
channels in the U.S. is also dictated by time slot, with certain kinds
of stories at various hours of the evening, drawing different
audiences. Knowledge of these audiences and their motivation for
viewing should inform the positioning of health-related messages.

Miguel Sabido emphasized that, when a telenovela creates a
demand for a health product or service, adequate supplies of that
product or service should be available to viewers. It will be
challenging to do that while following a recommendation made by
Alejandro Ochoa, Director of Programming and Marketing of
Telenovelas for TV Azteca: reach Mexican and Latin American
immigrants not through programming on the major U.S. networks,
but from "...where they come from."

Additional Industry Perspective

Industry representatives argued that it was difficult to build health
messages into comedies, and they communicated a general sense of the
importance of genre. For example, soap opera viewers may be looking
primarily for escape from reality while talk show audiences may be
seeking information. Industry spokespeople explained that they do not
see sending health messages as their job. However, they described
feelings of personal and professional satisfaction when they were able
to incorporate meaningful messages into their work. Writers and
producers also appreciated being acknowledged for their prevention
efforts and informed about their outcomes.

Overarching Principles and Examples of Priority Research
Questions

Panelists in the 2003 agenda-setting conference agreed that EE
research with minority audiences should meet certain criteria (e.g.,
it should be applied, timely and culturally sensitive). They also felt
it should also be guided by an awareness of the diversity of cultures
and groups and their core values, age and developmental issues, the
concerns of key stakeholders such as local communities, the
specific media environment in question, work in related disciplines
such as psychology, sociology and public health, and the ethical
implications of both intended and unintended outcomes.

Examples of research questions that were considered priorities
by the group were:

- Under what conditions are unintended effects (e.g., boomerang,
  confusion, stigmatization) most likely to occur?
- What levels of analysis other than the individual level need be
  considered?
- What indigenous institutions and practices can help amplify,
  enhance or reinforce EE efforts among Hispanic and African
  American audiences?
- What impact will acculturation have on EE efforts?

Finally, there was a strong consensus that minorities must be
centrally involved in all aspects of future EE research.

Next Steps

The group felt that EE research with minority audiences
deserved additional attention, and that future meetings should
involve a wider range of minority media representatives. Group
members proposed establishing a network of individuals and
institutions interested in promoting EE domestically, and discussed
mechanisms for exchanging ideas. Participants called for the
identification and training of minority EE researchers, and for
concerted and sustained support from funding agencies to answer
the questions laid out in the research agenda. The skills and
interests of Community Psychologists should enable them to play
an important role in this exciting work, and they are encouraged to
follow relevant scientific and funding developments.

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Judy Primavera, Regional Network Coordinator
Fairfield University
jprimavera@mail.fairfield.edu

Hello to all. There is lots of exciting SCRA happenings to share. But before that I must give another plea to those of you living in the Southeast and the Southwest to get involved and volunteer to be a regional coordinator. It is a good way to get involved with the division at the grassroots level and a perfect opportunity to network with colleagues sharing your geographical identity. We would welcome people either relatively new to SCRA as well as “seasoned” veterans. Those interested in either filling the position themselves or nominating someone else should contact Lorraine Taylor for the Southeast region position (ltaylor@email.unc.edu, phone 919-962-8774) or Susan Wolfe for the Rocky Mountain/Southwest position (swolfe@oig.hhs.gov, phone 214-767-1716).

I would like to thank outgoing regional coordinator Mary Prieto Bayard for her years of service to SCRA in the Western region. I would also like to welcome the first year regional coordinator in the West - Bianca Guzman from CHOICES in La Puente, CA (dr.bec@verizon.net). Joseph Berryhill (jberryhill@unca.edu) at the University of North Carolina-Ashville has agreed to serve as Southeast region’s RC.

The SCRA mini-conference at the annual meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association will be in Washington DC on Friday, April 16, 2004 and will feature a keynote address by Anne Brodsky. The program looks to be an exciting day filled with symposia, paper sessions, roundtable discussions, and a poster session. The RCs will report more specifically on the events in the next TCP Regional News column. Kudos to Joy Kaufman (joy.kaufman@yale.edu), Rhonda Boyd (rboyd@mail.med.upenn.edu), and Cindy Crusto (cindy.crusto@yale.edu) for what is sure to be a successful program.

News from the Midwest

Steven Howe
University of Cincinnati
steven.howe@uc.edu

Midwestern community psychologists are responsible for organizing two major research conferences: Midwest ECO, which is noteworthy because it has been organized entirely by students for many years, and the SCRA program at Midwestern Psychological Association.

Last year’s Midwestern Ecological Community Psychology Conference (ECO), “Development, Strategy & Ethics,” was held the weekend of October 10-12, 2003, at the Lindenwood Conference and Retreat Center in Donaldson, Indiana. The graduate students of DePaul University were honored to host last year’s ECO conference. With approximately 85 attendees, the conference provided a forum for exchange and dialogue about community-related topics. Participants utilized the theme - Development, Strategy & Ethics - as a springboard for examining how their own work and ideas are impacted by and influence their experiences working in with communities. The keynote address was given by Nicole Buchanan, an assistant professor at Michigan State University. Invited talks were given by Erin Green and Kristin Valerius of the University of Cincinnati and Mariolga Reyes-Cruz of the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. The ECO torch was passed to the graduate students at Michigan State University who will be hosting the conference in October 2004.

This report on the Midwest ECO conference was contributed by Andrea M. Flynn and Elizabeth V. Horin from DePaul University.

Midwestern community psychologists will once again hold an all-day program at annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association on April 30, 2004. This year’s program is being coordinated by Steven Howe (University of Cincinnati) with the help and advice of last year’s program chair (Renee Taylor, University of Illinois at Chicago). Bernardette Sanchez of DePaul University has responsibility for the annual evening social at the Berghoff Restaurant.

The program this year includes six roundtable discussions, three symposia and 27 poster presentations. Presenters come from DePaul University, Metropolitan State in Minneapolis, Michigan State University, Northwestern University, the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Wayne State University. In keeping with our profession’s mission and values, many other community organizations are represented on the program, including schools, foundations and grassroots organizations.

For detailed program information, please go to http://condor.depaul.edu/~psych/mpa.

News from the West

Eric Mankowski
Portland State University
mankowskie@pdx.edu

In terms of current western regional activities, Ken Miller, Bianca Guzman and I are developing a program of events for the Western Psychological Association meeting in April, 22-25, 2004 in Phoenix, Arizona. There is a symposium in the works focused on career pathways for people working as community