UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCE: PUBLIC RELATIONS INSTRUCTORS'
CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DIVERSITY AND ITS USE IN THE CLASSROOM

by

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(Under the Direction of   Karen Miller Russell)

ABSTRACT

There is currently little scholarly research on public relations education, less on diversity education in public relations and none that looks at how professors define diversity and how they pass the message to their students. In-depth interviews, via telephone, were used to understand how public relations instructors conceptualize diversity, specifically ethnic and racial diversity, and how they present the message to their students. Definitions of diversity proved just as diverse as the people providing them. However, the definitions were not all in line with Banks' conceptualization of truly embracing difference. Some instructors saw the value in diversity, but their inclusion of diversity was not effective according to Critical Race Theorists standards. Identity played a major role both in the conceptualization and the practice of diversity.

INDEX WORDS: Diversity, Public Relations, Identity, Race, Ethnicity, Sex, Instructors, Instructional Materials, Critical Race Theory

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DEDICATION

To Helen Rutland, Jimmie Bell and Pamela Bell;

you were not able to get here, but you made sure I did.

Thank you for your sacrifices.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For many people, skin color is often the first thing observe when meeting new people or groups. Next, often subconsciously, we affix certain ideas, characteristics, and stereotypes to those people or groups. These ideas may differ, but we all have them, and they are conveyed both overtly and covertly through our thoughts, words, actions and associations. They are passed from parents to children; from managers to subordinates; peers share them among one another; and different media and social institutions transmit and perpetuate ideas about individuals and groups. This process happens throughout higher education as well; in fact curricula and content often show preference to certain groups while neglecting others. Not only does the content exclude and shape characteristics for some groups, but educators also pass along their personal ideas to students often unknowingly. Looking specifically at public relations educators, this analysis seeks to understand how instructors conceptualize diversity. Moreover, it looks to see if and how they disseminate these conceptualizations, both overtly and covertly to their students and throughout their courses.

This topic is important for several reasons. First, in a press release, by the U.S. Census Bureau, dated May 17, 2007, "about one in three U.S. residents is a minority..." (Minority Population Tops 100 million, 2006). Racial and ethnic minorities are expected to make up 50 percent of the population by 2050 (Pollard & Mather, 2008). The growing number of minorities not only means increased diversity in the work force but also among college students making it important for higher education to be culturally inclusive. Secondly, regarding public relations specifically, in the 2007 Annual Survey of Journalism and Mass Communication Enrollments,

public relations accounted for approximately 15.1 percent, second to Journalism by .1 percentage point (Vlad et. al., 2008). Because public relations students will, at some point, have internships in conjunction with their courses, public relations professors may have a great deal of influence in preparing students to deal with the various publics they will encounter.

<u>Purpose of the Study</u>

This analysis will allow educators to say, in their own words, what diversity means to them, what role they play and how they convey that message to students and throughout the academy. While the idea of diversity encompasses all differences among people, this analysis focuses primarily on racial and ethnic differences.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

<u>Social Construction of Race</u>

Many people treat race as an objective fact, neglecting the fact that race is "a socio-historical construct which is neither objective nor static." Subject to varying interpretations and recreations, race is composed of different social meanings, subjectivities and practices, all organized around human physical characteristics (Omi & Winant 1983, p. 31). "Racial classification is a matter of identity," which allows us to determine "who a person is" and "suggest how we should relate to him or her" (p. 49). The majority still "[predicate] interaction on racial assignments thought to reflect deep psychological differences," and this tolerance and continuous acknowledgement of the belief that differences exist physiologically deems all people "racist" in some regard (Muir, p. 339). These beliefs serve as an "amateur biology" and help explain differences in human nature and behavior (Omi & Winant). "Kind" or "Liberal" racists have an "anti racist attitude that coexists with support for racist outcomes," (Gordon & Newfield, 1994, p. 737) they practice "racial etiquette" which is learned without overt teaching and becomes "common sense" ways of managing perceptions of race in our society (Omi & Winant, p. 49). "Foundations of prejudice are laid before the ordinary child enters school…while adult patterns are internalized by the early teens" (Muir, p. 346). "Racism is like a gun. While mean racists use it to coerce or kill, kind racists help keep it loaded by supporting the underlying racial concepts" (p. 347). This means that all people, by perpetuating distinctions based on race take part in racism; while many would claim not to subscribe to racism, it would be more

appropriate to say that they do not reinforce their understanding of racial differences in a negative or violent way.

Race as understood today was conceptualized by Europeans in 1508 as *racis* to reference lineage or common descent and was used to classify populations with similar history and origin. This classification did not affix any biological characteristics (Gates 1997, p. vii). The term became connected with human taxonomy in 1648 by French physician, Francois Bernier, when he noted differences in skin color, hair and facial features (Muir 1993, p. 342). Used as an arbitrary convenience to describe geographic groupings of humans, Buffon and Lennaeus, both naturalists classified six and four groups of man respectively (p. 339).

Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, a German anatomist and naturalist, developed the racial classification that serves as the foundation for identification in modern society. In his treatise on racial classification (1775), and his final taxonomy (1795), Blumenbach, inspired by his teacher, Carolus Linnaeus, divided all people into five classifications based on geography and appearance which included color, humor, and posture, and invented names for each group. Named after a mountain range between Russia and Georgia, Caucasian was used for the light skinned-people of Europe and parts of Asia and Africa, because of the "maximal beauty of the people…and the probability that humans were first created in this area" (Gould, 1994, p. 65). Mongolian described other parts of Asia, including China and Japan. Ethiopian described the dark-skinned people of Africa and the American variety for the natives in the New World. Later the Malay variety was developed to classify Polynesians and Melanesians of the Pacific and aboriginals in Australia (this classification was initially grouped under the Mongolian classification). Used most notably for slavery, these classifications have served as "scientific" proof for other social, political and economic oppression (Muir, p. 339).

Race in America

It must be made clear that the differences we subscribe to due to color are actually more based on the political and legislative policies put into place to favor one group over another. In America, racial identity dates from the initiation of European colonization. Although Europeans came to America with their own hierarchical distinctions that separated them among one another, "the fixing of the correspondence between African and unfree labourer was a change for 'Europeans' as well as 'Africans'" (Segal 1991, p. 7). In Virginia and the other agricultural colonies, distinctions by race served to divide the underclass. The grouping of Africans as a single race meant that people from Europe had to become a singular race. The grouping into racial categories, and the subsequent hierarchy imposed, made race a substitution for ennoblement, and made white racism the "basis for claiming full political rights, and to be subordinate to none…it left the Virginia's planters free to be a bourgeoisie" (p. 8).

Identity & Difference

The racial classification system is important because there are different ways and different standards by which people are classified and choose to classify themselves. Kathryn Woodward (1997) writes that "Identities are produced, consumed and regulated within culture – creating meanings through symbolic systems of representation..." (p. 2) With respect to identity, difference "takes place both through symbolic systems of representation, and through forms of social exclusion." As such, "identity depends on difference" (p. 29). It is not enough to acknowledge how and in what ways people differ, society to some extent maintains its social order through placing value on some and taking value from others. Through binary opposition, "the most extreme form of marking difference," "insiders," "outsiders," and the construction of different categories within culture are created. The "outsiders" are looked at in terms of "other"

in relation to what that particular group is not. As such, Woodward highlights Derrida's 1976

argument that binary oppositions create a "necessary imbalance of power between…two terms."

A clear example is found with the historical associations of man versus woman. Woodward also

presents Cixous' 1975 conception that women are associated with "the heart" and emotions

while men are associated with "the head" and logic. The same power imbalance can be

associated with minority and all the terms associated with the non-majority.

Often used synonymously, race and ethnicity have distinct definitions. Webster's

dictionary defines race as:

> a family, tribe, people, or nation belonging to the same stock; a class or kind of
> people unified by shared interests, habits, or characteristics; a taxonomic category
> representing such a group; a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive
> physical traits.

Ethnic, as defined by Webster's, means "of or relating to large groups of people classed

according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or

background."

Kornblum (1988) defines ethnicity as "the genetics, lineage, nationality, national origin,

culture, or religion," ethnic group as "a population that has a sense of group identity based on

shared ancestry and distinctive cultural patterns" and race as "an inbreeding population that

develops distinctive physical characteristics that are hereditary" (p. 315). Caldwell and Popenoe

(1995) distinguish race as "differences of biology," and ethnicity as "differences of culture and

geographic origin" (p. 615). Ethnic differences are often more telling, than race, of true

differences between individuals. Culture, according to Banks (2000), can be seen as a "set of

theories held in common about how social life works and recipes about how social life is

conducted." It involves how people make sense of their experience and differentiate those

experiences with other groups (p. 9).

Ethnocentrism, the characterization by or based on the attitude that one's own group is superior, is often a problem because it prevents people from understanding one another because of the judgments based on an individual's culture, ethnicity and race (Geest 1995, p. 869). Society passes these ideas of one group's superiority subconsciously. Among the many institutions under which this takes place; education has often reinforced the idea of superiority by deeming some things and people worthy of learning about while excluding others.

Diversity

To recognize and embrace the differences in our culture, Banks (2000) provides two different conceptualizations of diversity. One meaning is difference from the Latin *divertere*, which translates to, "to turn in different directions, or to move apart." When applied to humans, "the underlying semantic heritage of the term tells us that the differences that 'make a difference' are the factors that separate people" (p. 16). Diversity in this sense connotes separateness creating disharmony and inequality. Given the hierarchical structure built into racial classification, diversity is seen, by some, as the difference between the "culturally normal" and the "deviant", but is used and applied as a culturally neutral word used to explain the difference.

Diversity can also be thought of as "variety or multiformity." With this conceptualization, diversity is "a proliferation of subtypes of one overarching group, maintaining commonalities while recognizing dissimilarities" (p.18). Banks suggests that this definition of diversity should be embraced, especially in public relations and communication careers.

The term, now synonymous with different is being ingrained throughout organizations of all types as a means of making all people feel welcome. But as Banks mentioned many view diversity in terms of what is normal and what is not. Within organizations this understanding of diversity further separates people because the majority is taught to "accept" what is different

without seeing how they fit within diversity and understanding what contributes to everyone's differences.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory began as a legal movement that evolved in the 1970s in response to the "stalled progress of traditional civil rights litigation to produce meaningful racial reform" (Edward, 1998; Delgado & Stefanic, 2001; Yosso, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001; Litner, 2004). As defined by Solorzano (1997), critical race theory is:

> A framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society that maintain the subordination and marginalization of people of color (p. 6)

Originally, CRT focused on "challenging the dominant discourse(s) on race and racism with reference to the study and practice of law" (Delgado, 1996; Bell, 1995). Critical Race theorists pulled away from legal studies because "the critical legal framework restricted their ability to analyze racial injustice" (Delgado & Stefanic, 2001). Authors of CRT consider it a form of "oppositional scholarship," because it "challenges the experience of whites as normative standard and grounds its conceptual framework in the distinctive experience of people of color" (Edward, 1998, p. 123). Social change is implicit within CRT (Dixson, 2004, p. 30); considered a "social justice project," Critical Race theory attempts to unify "theory and practice, scholarship with teaching, and the academy with the community" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001, p. 3). Pompper (2005) writes:

> Critical Race Theory argues that liberal civil rights incrementalism obscures the construction of Whiteness as the power-dominance benchmark, the standard wherein color remains different, other, and marginal—and people of color are discouraged in naming their reality or in pointing out racism (p. 144).

While critics of CRT say that "the focus on race eclipses other aspects of difference that serve to marginalize and oppress people of color" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 30), other groups

have expanded CRT studies to incorporate other racialized experiences (Yosso, 2001, 95).

Critical Race Theory challenges curriculum "experts" who attempt to squeeze "multiculturalism" into texts about the foods and holidays of people of color, or "adding ethnic content to the curriculum in a sporadic and segmented way" (Banks, 1993, p. 202), instead of looking at "how 'difference' serves to disadvantage some and advantage others" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p.17). While some universities, undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as textbooks attempt to promote colorblindness, CRT scholars argue that doing so "ignores the fact that inequity, inopportunity, and oppression are historical artifacts that will not be easily remedied by ignoring race in the contemporary society" (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 29). They also believe that there should be a "shifting of the frame" or "look to the bottom" (Mastuda, 1995, p. 63) and begin to value the knowledge of people of color. As well as "uncovering the myriad ways that race continues to marginalize and oppress people of color, identifying strategies to combat these oppressive forces and acting upon those strategies is an important next step in within CRT" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 23).

CRT scholarship is marked by a number of specific themes:

The Centrality and Intersectionality of Race and Racism. CRT of education recognizes the central role of racism has played in the structuring of schools and schooling practices, and that racism intersects with other forms of subordination including sexism and classicism. CRT acknowledges how notions of objectivity, neutrality and meritocracy, as well as curricular practices have historically been used to subordinate students of color. Critical Race theorists take the position that racism has at least four dimensions: (1) it has micro and macro components; (2) it takes on institutional and individual forms; (3) it has conscious and unconscious elements; and (4) it has a cumulative impact on both the individual and the group (Davis, 1989; Lawrence,

1897). "The critical race curriculum insists that the knowledge of people of color be a central rather than marginal part" of education (Asante, 1987; Banks, 1997; Chicano Coordinating Council on Higher Education, 1969).

The Challenge to Dominant Ideology. CRT examines the system of education as part of a critique of societal inequality. In this, critical race educators challenge dominant social and cultural assumptions regarding culture and intelligence, language and capability, through research, pedagogy and praxis. Critical Race theorists argue that traditional claims of objectivity and meritocracy camouflage the self-interest, power, and privilege of dominant groups in U.S. society (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

The Commitment to Social Justice. The framework is committed to social justice and offers liberatory or transformative response to racial, gender, and class oppression (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). CRT theorists envision a social justice research agenda that leads toward the elimination of racism, sexism, and poverty and the empowering of underrepresented minority groups.

The Centrality of Experiential Knowledge. CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of women and men of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing and practicing, and teaching about racial subordination (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

The Interdisciplinary Perspective. CRT challenges ahistoricism and the unidisciplinary focus of most traditional analyses and insists on analyzing race and racism by placing them in both a historical and contemporary context using interdisciplinary methods (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

The goal of CRT in education is to:

>   Develop a pedagogy, curriculum, and research agenda that account for the role of
>   race and racism in U.S. education and to work toward the elimination of racism as

a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination in education. (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001, p 3).

Many CRT scholars have offered recommendations "for changes in educational policy and practice," but whether these recommendations have been carried out has not been clear (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 23). Included in the critiques of CRT, is the fact that it is considered "too cynical, nihilistic, or hopeless" (Edward, 1998, p. 124).

Critical Race Theory has many implications for Public Relations education, Tara Yosso (2002) believes that Critical Race Theory can be a "guide for educators to expose and challenge contemporary forms of racial inequality" (p. 93).

<u>Multiculturalism in Higher Education</u>

Multicultural curriculum began as a "radical challenge to the ways in which a particular hierarchy of power and privilege was simultaneously perpetuated and rationalized by traditional curricula and scholarship across the disciplines" (Rothenberg, 2007). This movement was a result of organizations interested in hiring diverse employees to work in international markets and needs of corporations have played a pivotal role in reshaping the changes that have taken place in the curriculum. Some faculty embrace the "elementary school" version of multiculturalism which "urges us to celebrate American pluralism by sharing our traditions and cultures" (p. 47). According to Rothenberg, many colleges and universities in the United States continue to make diversity a "campus climate issue rather than an academic imperative." They adopt the "color-blind" approach which may allow people to see their similarities, but do not "acknowledge them, not to pretend they do not exist" (p. 48). Examples of this are seen in ethnic food festivals, fashion shows and reggae and rap concerts which "sensitize[s] students to difference" and continues to "place white students (and faculty) at the center, striving to make them comfortable with difference" (p. 47). Instead, U.S. campuses should be looking at ways in

which race, ethnicity, gender and class difference operate in the curriculum and around the world to privilege some and disadvantage others.

Multiculturalism in higher education should "combine celebration with attention to issues of dominance and subordination, hierarchy, power, and privilege" (p. 49).Grillo (2005) thinks educators should approach diversity as an action and not a concept. She defines embracing diversity as "honoring and respecting men and women whose life experiences may differ from our own but are equally important." To do this she says that faculty must "listen to, seek to understand and validate others' point of view and cultural experiences" (p. 45). Administrators as well as faculty must take the charge to change the climate on U.S. campuses. Quaye and Harper (2007) suggest that faculty can create a more culturally inclusive curricula by "holding themselves accountable." This starts with a critical self examination of personal biases, assumptions, and knowledge insufficiencies. It requires that faculty "step outside of the constructs of [their] own cultural realities and self-perceived worlds to freely view life through another's lens" (Grillo 2005). There must also be an examination of classroom practices and assigned course materials, including diverse reading materials in coursework, and soliciting input from students on ways to create the environment for diversity conversations (Quaye & Harper, 2007, p. 36). According to Grillo, the goal as faculty is to

> dissect mainstream constructs…seek research initiatives whose ultimate aim is to empower cultural groups…not feed into or support existing research the subjugation of culturally diverse individuals or groups…include all groups… [and] fully integrate the value of diversity into the fabric of the organizational culture (p. 45).

Among the suggestions for improved diversity on college campuses, Anderson (2007) places equal responsibility on academic officers, deans, department heads and instructors. He suggests the best impacts will come as a result of "linking diversity to the institution's teaching,

learning, and research" (p. B37). To reinforce accountability, Quaye and Harper suggest that

department chairs, deans and administrators engage faculty in dialogues and exercises that

"illuminate the urgent need to diversify curricula within their schools and departments." To help

instructors, administrators should "identify ways to motivate faculty members to take ownership

of diversity efforts" (Anderson, 2007, p. B37).

Factors that adversely affect inclusion of diversity curricula include the fact that it is safer

to avoid friction between students; many faculty "maintain autonomy over what and how they

teach" neglecting diversity and cultural inclusion; and the lack of support and engagement by

department chairs and deans (Rothenburg, 2007, p. 53).

The first step for educators is to incorporate "multicultural perspectives…that expose

students to racial and ethnic diversity." Research has shown that education is enhanced by

"extensive and meaningful informal interracial interaction," providing students with cognitive

development, perspective-taking, critical and active thinking skills, academic achievement,

problem solving skills, and intellectual engagement.

Diversity in Adult Education

The increased attention on diversity initiatives and training efforts in many organizations

in the U.S. and abroad has led to some research on diversity in adult education. Wentling and

Palma-Rivas (1998) found that definitions of diversity range from narrow to very broad:

> Narrow definitions tend to reflect the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) act,
> defining diversity in terms of race, gender, ethnicity, age, national origin, religion,
> and disability. Broader definitions may include sexual and affectional orientation,
> values, personality characteristics, education, language, physical appearance,
> marital status, lifestyle beliefs, and background characteristics such as geographic
> origin, tenure with the organization, and economic status.

Diversity in Public Relations Education

Public relations practitioners deal with a multitude of diverse publics; they often find themselves crossing ethnic and gender lines as well as interacting with mainstream and subcultures. The Report of the Commission on Public Relations Education (2006) defines diversity as "the differences that exist between and among people." This definition is further divided into primary dimensions (gender, age, nationality, sexual/affectional orientation, ethnicity, and race) and secondary dimensions (religion geographics, and marital status). The challenge in educating public relations graduate students "is to train [them] to be professionally competent while [being] provided an academically rigorous curriculum including conceptual courses related to [their] career goals" (Hon, Childers & Hall, 2004, p. 129). The public relations curriculum should also provide proper training to prepare students for their future work environment. Currently, it is believed that "public relations curricula is still out of step with multicultural world realities, to the degree that it is detrimental" to both students and to the publics they stand to work with (Pommper, 2005, p. 310).

Public relations is a relatively young discipline that is growing rapidly; the first course on public relations was offered in the 1920s. In 1956, there were 136 institutions offering at least one course in public relations, the number increased in 1964 to 280 institutions (Simon, 1966). The 2006 annual survey on Journalism and Mass Communication Studies enrollment in the United States, conducted by the Cox Center and the University of Georgia, reported that public relations programs were being offered at approximately 472 institutions, making it the largest discipline within Journalism and Mass Communication studies. (Becker, Vlad, McLean, 2006).

Since its development into a discipline, scholars have questioned whether it does a sufficient job of preparing future practitioners. Simon's 1966 report on public relations called

for more practitioner support for educators, and more theoretical research and development rather than "practical and descriptive" scholarship (Simon, 1966 p. 5). "The need for public relations curriculum improvement was firmly established in 1975" by a commission appointed by the Association for Education in Journalism's Public Relation Division and the Public Relations Society of America. The Commission (1989) was made up of instructors, professionals, and scholars with the goal of highlighting some of the issues and gaps within the curriculum that continue to hinder the creation of strong public relations students. Among the recommendations made for PR education, the Association for Education in Journalism's Public Relation Division (1989) suggested a foundation in liberal arts, including math, english, science and foreign languages; it also suggested students that have training in marketing, business, economics, and finance to receive proper management training, lastly it called for a balanced amount of practical, in-the-field experience. And in his critique of PR education in 1987, Dirk Gibson contended "Even a cursory examination of public relations journals and textbooks reveals massive dissatisfaction with contemporary public relations education" (Gibson, 1987, p. 25).

Presently, for the most part, it seems that public relations still lacks some of the components necessary to develop well rounded future public relations practitioners. In the summer of 1998, the National Communication Association sponsored a conference dedicated to public relations education. Problems addressed at the conference were "how to teach" issues and "increasing teaching related materials" (Coombs, 2001). Not only is this the sentiment of scholars and educators, but practitioners also believed that while "most [students] enjoy their courses…they do not believe their training prepares them for their eventual careers" (Hon, Childers & Hall, 2004, p. 126). Professionals, researchers and scholars added to these

recommendations; less emphasis on journalism, increase in managerial theory and skills, and an increase in social science theory and practice (Gibson, 1987; Hon, Childers &Hall, 2004).

The 2006 report highlights the new standards for accreditation of public relations programs as well as journalism and mass communication programs, one being a greater emphasis on diversity. Public relations looks at diversity in terms of intercultural/multicultural communication and diversity management. The first is concerned with an organization communicating with different cultural groups. Appreciating how culture and diversity play a role in a public relations project is crucial for intercultural/multicultural communication. The second aspect "involves human resource, staffing, team, vendor and personnel functions" (p. 27). Effectively managing diversity positively affects the retention of diverse groups. The report recommends that organizations and scholars "become familiar with, be able to apply and be willing to research the best practices in both aspects of diversity.…" (p. 41)

Public Relations Curriculum

What does a public relations curriculum entail? Tara Yosso (2002) writes:

Understanding that curriculum includes both formal and informal methods of presenting knowledge means that we also understand decisions are made about what knowledge is presented and who will have access to that knowledge. Thus, it is important to broaden understandings of curriculum beyond the visible materials teachers present in their class rooms to include less visible curricular structures, processes, and discourses (p. 93).

Within the context of the public relations curriculum, this includes coupling theory with practice as well as providing accurate resources, up-to-date examples, and exposure to the realities of the practice, the scholarship and the expectancies of employers and publics. Certain aspects of this idea seem to be understood in many public relations programs by attempting to incorporate formal, in-class as well as informal, external training, to allow students to study theory and gain practical experience. Supplemental materials, internships, outside speakers, and workshops are

ways in which public relations programs attempt to expose students to the many components of the public relations practice.

Public relations researchers are called to adjust the content of public relations curriculum to reflect more true-to-life encounters as well as to have a firmer grasp of diversity throughout public relations landscape (Pompper, 2005), especially in its history. "We cannot adequately prepare future leaders to achieve these goals if we avoid exposing them to issues of race…and demonstrate to them how these issues still permeate the educational landscape" (Parker & Shapiro, 1992). Failure to do so will result in one-sided, inaccurate and inadequate training of future PR practitioners.

Although "Connections between multicultural diversity, curriculum, and pedagogy in preparing public relations practitioners have received little scholarly attention" (Pompper, 2005, p. 300), a number of scholars, professionals and students have focused on the misrepresentation and under representation of women and ethnic minorities in public relations. For example, in an examination of public relations scholarship, Pompper (2005a) found that "data sets have underrepresented minorities…ethnicity variables have been homogenized and ethnic identities obscured…and comparatively lesser attention to race, ethnicity and culture in published research." Because many researchers and professors are White, there is a tendency to overlook the implications of excluding the minority opinion. This, she claims, does a disservice to the study of public relations.

As for the curriculum, Pompper (2005b), in another study, found that a number of female African American practitioners felt that although "public relations curricula…often fail to attend to multicultural diversity," diversity in the curriculum, "serve all public relations students." Researchers and instructors have recommended an increase of women, ethnic minorities and

overall multiculturalism in PR education (Fox-Kernworth, 1989; Hon, Childers & Hall, 2004; Pompper, 2005). "Studies analyzing verbal and pictorial content of textbooks reveal that male research and theory are more frequently represented" than that of female researchers (Kimmel, 1993; Peterson & Kroner, 1992).

Jalianjana Bardhan (2003) surveyed approximately 22,000 students for their opinions on "international and multi (inter)cultural perspectives in undergraduate Public Relations education." The results showed, "[students] feel that the current public relations curriculum does not help enhance a sense of global and cultural connectedness." And according to Pompper (2005), "Connections between multicultural diversity, curriculum, and pedagogy in preparing public relations practitioners have received little scholarly attention" (p. 300).

Among its recommendations for the undergraduate curriculum, the 2006 Report of the Commission on Public Relations suggested that global concepts be incorporated into the curriculum "because many students will be addressing issues related to globalization, diversity and multiculturalism as they enter the practice of public relations education" (p. 44).

Because they serve as a basis for the scholarship/curriculum, textbooks provide a backdrop for public relations discourse and instruction as well as filling the voids that instructors may create (Litner, 2004).

PR Textbooks

As early as the 1970s, it was found that U.S. history textbooks often distort, omit, and stereotype the histories of communities of color (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1977). And although Hurd and Brabeck (1997) found an increase in the references of women from 1982 to 1990, they found no increase in the number of references of ethnic minorities in that same time frame. As a result they concluded, "College textbooks reinforce essentialist

claims about women, ignores individual differences and denies the inextricable relations among ethnicity class and gender" (p. 173).

Regarding public relations textbooks, Dr. Marilyn Kern-Foxworth conducted two studies in 1988 to highlight that most textbooks either "totally ignored these topics or did not cover them sufficiently." She found that of sixty books (21,841 pages) published between 1979 and 1989, only 103 contained information about women and 152 pages with information about people of color (Kern-Foxworth, 2003, p. 63). This type of study is important because the fact that "textbooks [are] the dominant instructional tool[s] make them powerful vehicle[s] for introducing and perpetuating racial stereotypes" (Litner, 2004, p. 30). Duffy argues that they often portray a "totalizing metanarrative of harmony and organizational success…" (Duffy, 2000, p. 5). In the discussions of public relations history, authors present a "seamless story" often relating historical narrative around certain individuals and events (p. 297). On the issue of culture, public relations textbooks portray "society" and "the public" as "relatively homogeneous" (p. 302), and they "ignore critical power and resource differences among entities in society" (p. 304). Additionally, "textbooks define and determine what is important in American history…in essence [they] dictate what is to be taught." Romanowski (1996) asserts that textbook authors, like instructors "are shaped by their own personal biases and perceptions… [they] prescribe positive and negative interpretations to historical figures and events and, thus, assert a distinct set of values." As a result, "Teachers may not be able or willing to incorporate a challenge to the traditional, Eurocentric versions of history conveyed by textbooks" (Yosso, 2002, p. 94). Gewinner, et al (2000) suggests that "textbooks should be carefully reviewed with 'attention to what is said, what is not said, and what is implied." Practitioners in Pompper's (2005a) focus group agree that "authors [should] promote

multiculturalism throughout their public relations textbooks and not devote just one chapter to it"
(p. 311).

Previous Research

Maria E. Len-Rios (1998) interviewed 13 public relations practitioners of color to understand the status of minority practitioners, identify areas of concern for scholars and professionals and suggest areas for further investigation. Results of the interviews revealed that practitioners felt there has been progress toward including minorities in upper level management but that there still barriers that exist. Len-Rios concludes that both educators and practitioners should take responsibility to creating change.

> Educators can include cultural diversity in the classroom by using examples and choosing textbooks that include minorities; by teaching the importance of research in learning about target audiences; by inviting successful minority practitioners to share their experiences within the classroom; and by fostering and mentoring minority public relations students (p. 553).

Research Questions

- How do public relations professors define diversity?

- How are their ideas about diversity reflected in the tools and resources used in their courses?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

To answer the research questions, a 27-question protocol was developed. The two main questions asked instructors to provide a definition of diversity in their own words and if they thought about diversity when choosing instructional tools. In addition several questions were designed to check the consistency of the answers provided for the first two questions. For the diversity definition question, the questionnaire also asked for key terms, ideas and elements of diversity; personal or professional experiences that shaped the definition; whether age, sex or ethnicity influenced their thoughts on diversity; and where instructors felt they fit within the definition they provided.

To verify the consistency of the answers for whether instructors think about diversity when choosing their instructional tools, the questionnaire asked; the types of tools used; how they selected the tools they used; the main ideas instructors want students to leave with; and the appropriateness of expressing thoughts about diversity to students. To support these questions, several questions were included to understand the influence the institution or department had on instructors. Opinion of the department or institution's current diversity efforts; and the frequency and type of conversations had with other faculty was included as well. Finally several demographic questions were asked for classification purposes. To see if any patterns existed, those questions included, age, sex, ethnicity, professional versus academic experience, the types of classes being taught, to whom and involvement in diversity initiatives. The demographic questions were also used to see if any patterns existed between demographic characteristics and the instructor's thoughts and opinions on diversity.

Qualitative in-depth-interviews via the telephone were used to gather the data. According to Kvale (1996), research interviews are based on the conversation of "the daily life" and serve as "professional conversation," which is used to "understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences" (p.1). They involve "alternative conceptions of social knowledge, of meaning, reality and truth in social science research" (p.11). This qualitative method is used to "understand themes of the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspective" (p. 27).

A self selected sample was solicited from a list of universities determined to have "premier" public relations programs (Graduate study in Public Relations, 2001). One of the prominent Historically Black Universities (HBCU) with a public relations area of study, program or department was added to this list, to see if there was any difference in the message of diversity where minorities are in the majority. An instructor from each ranking – adjunct, associate professor, assistant professor, and professor – was chosen. For programs with more than one instructor per ranking a coin was flipped to determine who would be contacted (if this person did not respond the other would be contacted). For programs with two or more instructors per ranking, their names were drawn from a hat (if this person did not respond, the remaining names were drawn from a hat and contacted till the list was exhausted).

Instructors were then contacted via email. The email described the nature of the study, emphasizing the focus on racial and ethnic diversity and instructors were invited to participate. They were asked to provide dates and times that would suit their schedules for a telephone interview. Two follow-up emails were also sent, since initial response was low. Phone calls were then used to try to make contact with those who did not respond to the email requests. Due to the lack of response, IRB approval was sought to go beyond the list. After receiving approval,

schools were chosen based on faculty recommendations and online research. An additional HBCU was added as well. Based on email and telephone solicitations, 17 educators ranging in age, racial and ethnic heritage, sex and years of academic and professional experience agreed to be interviewed. Before being interviewed, instructors were told the purpose of the analysis; the thesis chair was identified, and they were informed of their rights as participants. Instructors had to provide verbal consent before the interview began.

Respondents were given the name of the interviewer as well as educational status and the name of the institution. They were not however, told that the interviewer was a 23-year old, African American female. By providing a name they may have been able to determine the sex, but they were not told the interviewer's ethnicity or age. This was done intentionally, as to not make them feel uncomfortable or be more candid in their responses. The interviewer's voice did not seem to provide any clues as to her ethnicity but may have suggested her age or age range. Although none asked, instructors sometimes assumed the age and race of the interviewer. The interviews were semi-structured, which means they are neither "open conversations nor a highly structured questionnaire," but focused on certain themes and included suggested questions. In-depth interviews were preferred because of their "structure and a purpose, careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge" (p. 6).

Interviews ranged from 18 to 80 minutes. The large difference in time was based mainly on how much an instructor chose to share. Some instructors used the interviews as an opportunity to vent, to share stories from their youth. This often provided answers to questions they had a difficult time answering or provided an example and context to the point they were trying to make. For the shorter interviews, the interviewer attempted to probe instructors to develop their answers, provide further explanation and elaborate on their points, though many

chose not to. It is fair to assume that for the shorter interviews, instructors may have been pressed for time or may have been uncomfortable and were in a hurry to finish the interview. Notes were taken during the interview, and transcription was done after each interview.

The data was analyzed using an ad hoc, or "interplay of analysis techniques." The outcome of this meaning generation came in words, numbers "and in their combinations" (Kvale, 1996, p.193). Analysis of the in-depth interviews began at the moment document notes were created. After interviews were transcribed, formal data analysis involving "creation of categories and a coding scheme" began (Lindolf and Taylor, 2002, p. 214). While some researchers alternate between intense data collection and coding, for this analysis, coding did not begin until all interviews were completed and transcribed. Standard categories were developed based on demographic information (age, sex, and ethnicity) position and years of professional and academic experience and whether the instructor was from an HBCU or not. High inference categories were developed based primarily on the individual questions. Those categories were then based on the research questions; responses were coded by their relation to the two research questions. The responses were examined question-by-question and then in terms of how they fit with the research questions. Banks' conceptualizations of diversity were used to code the research question regarding definitions of diversity. Based on the definition provided, as well as the terms, ideas and elements of diversity instructors listed, their definitions were placed in either category one or category two. To determine whether instructors thought about diversity, the level at which they included diversity in their courses as well as how they included diversity was considered. Interpretive claims and conclusions were then constructed and included in the analysis and conclusion sections.

To ensure anonymity each instructor was given a pseudonym. The following is a key

listing the instructors' demographic information:

Pseudonym	Sex	Race/Ethnicity	Position	Region
Jessica Adams	F	Black	Assistant Professor	East
Heather Green	F	White	Lecturer	East
Najat Amal	F	Arab	Assistant Professor	East
Gretchen Myers	F	Mixed	Associate Professor	East
Samantha Hobbs	F	White	Lecturer	South
Nancy King	F	White	Associate Professor	South
Blair Williams	F	White	Professor	South
Dawson Witter	M	White	Associate Professor	South
Brooke McCarthy	F	Black	Former Associate Professor	HBCU
Rachel Morgan	F	Black	Assistant Professor	HBCU
Natasha Jones	F	White	Professor	HBCU
David Cruise	M	White	Assistant Professor	MidWest
John Anderson	M	White	Professor	MidWest
Michael Smith	M	White	Professor	West
Jim Bass	M	White	Lecturer	West
Jack Sutherland	M	White	Assistant Professor	West
Hui Li	M	Asian	Assistant Professor	West

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

A total of 17 in-depth interviews were conducted. Instructors were chosen from institutions in the South, the East, the Midwest, the West and from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). Most of the instructors teach a 2-2 load, although some teach 3 courses and others teach on a rotating scale. There were 4 Full Professors, 4 Associate Professors, 6 Assistant Professors, and 3 Lecturers or Adjunct instructor's interviewed. The instructors interviewed included 11 females and 7 males; 11 people who identified themselves as white, 3 people who identified themselves as Black or African American, 1 person who identified herself as Arab, 1 person who identified himself as Asian, and 1 person who identified herself as being of mixed heritage. Their ages ranged from 29 to 72, and their teaching experience varied from a year to 48 years. Many of the instructors also had professional experience outside the academy which ranged from 2 years to 30 years and included public relations, journalism, finance, consulting, public administration, political campaigning, and publishing.

The public relations courses taught varied in level as well as by topic. In addition to being asked which courses they taught, instructors were also asked what key ideas and understandings they wanted their students to take away from the course. This question lent itself to more comparable answers depending on the type of course taught (lecture vs. technical) and the level (undergraduate vs. graduate). Most instructors wanted their students to leave with a greater understanding of public relations strategies, concepts and tools as well a broader and more critical view of the world. Other instructors wanted their students to be able to think more

strategically and be able to synthesize. Specifically instructors mentioned that they wanted

students to be aware of subjectivity, the role of scholarship in teaching, the role of media in

society, audience segmentation and human persuasion.

Research Question One: How do public relations professors define diversity?

Instructors offered a wide range of definitions for diversity. Responses varied from broad

to specific and from domestic to international. Some of the most broad were "everything you

could imagine," from Samantha Hall and from Dr. Rachel Morgan, "all the differences that exist

within people." Instructors chose one of four platforms from which to define diversity: 7 based

their definition on practices and thought, 4 defined diversity based on one or more aspects of

personal identity, 3 instructors defined diversity in relation to public relations as a profession or

academic discipline, 2 looked at diversity in terms of the tools instructors or practitioners use,

and 1 defined diversity based on a global or world view. When using public relations in the

professional or academic sense, Heather Green described diversity as "a wide range of public

relations specialties…" and "representing the population that we serve." Dr. John Anderson

stated, "We should have the classroom, faculty, or university representing the population that we

serve…." Instructors also spoke to diversity in terms of people; Dr. Blair Williams defined

diversity as the "representation of members of a society," and Dr. Najat Amal, as the "inclusion

of different people with different demographic and psychographic characteristics." As an

example of those that used tools, practices and thoughts, Dr. Hui Li stated, "Variety of view

points and the instructional material, different points of view." Dr. Brooke McCarthy relayed,

"Diverse ideas, practices, teaching styles and methods;" Dr. Gretchen Myers said, "broad

spectrum of perspectives, identities and living experiences," and Dr. Nancy King said, "looking

at a problem from different directions." From a global or world view, Dr. Natasha Jones said

"understanding the global experience…" and Dr. John Cruise explained diversity as "coming together in the same place in a common environment."

Many of the terms used in the instructor's definitions were personal characteristics or personal preferences one must possess or consider when approaching diversity. These characteristics included what Jim Bass would call "…a very genuine approach…honesty, transparency, understanding…." Dr. Jessica Adams commented, "…orientation…the term orientation is more inclusive…the term black [versus] African American…it is more inclusive," and Samantha Hobbs said, "…it's an openness a willingness to learn…and understand…."

Instructors also noted elements of diversity they thought were important. These included, "…racial diversity, diverse thought processes and practices…idle intellectual diversity and…diversity in practices," from Dr Brooke McCarthy. Dr. Najat Amal added that diversity is "…comprehensive...it does look at more than one angle at the same time…includes gender, it includes also race and ethnicity as well as religion and…also disability…demographic and psychographic characteristics." Dr. Blair Williams considered, "The acknowledgement that society is not homogeneous…but is made up of many different parts," and Dr. Morgan included "…primary characteristics…and secondary. Primary being the things that you can't change and secondary being the things that you can change…."

Some instructors expressed key ideas involved with diversity, which also varied from general to specific, and some were based within the public relations discipline and profession. The most general were, "…notions of difference," mentioned by Dr. Jones to "The opportunities that are availed to us to learn different things about each other and to understand those ideas." Samantha Hobbs added "…that people of different backgrounds have different experiences, different value systems…" Dr. Witter added "The acknowledgement that society is not homogeneous…but is

made up of many different parts." Regarding public relations as an academic discipline, Dr. John Anderson contended:

> …you have to make sure nothing you do or say and no examples or other materials that you include would be offensive to a wide variety of students that would be in your classroom…not just offensive but also not leaving out elements of society as represented in your classroom.

For public relations practitioners, one instructor included the idea that "just understanding that there's a diversity of opinions, backgrounds in the different types of publics…" And Heather Green, remarked "Having people at the table who have different perspectives…"

Key to understanding the instructors' conceptualization of diversity is to consider what shaped the definition; the personal and professional experiences that may have influenced their ideas about diversity. Instructors who attributed their conceptualization of diversity to personal experiences looked to their children, students or being influenced by the media, their parents or instructors. Dr. David Cruise focused on his youth: "My own background…media…my window to the world was pretty much television [it] broadened my horizons…I grew up watching different groups of people on the television…." Dr. Adams included other people's opinion of her, "…the way people have responded and reacted to me…," and Samantha Hobbs attributed her upbringing to her ideas about diversity:

> …fairly well educated parents…a lot of things came into the home in terms of books, newspapers and magazines…I was very interested in history and very interested in other people….

Dr. Hui Li mentioned how during his doctoral studies, instructors "openly revealed their political beliefs" and seemed to have a political agenda they pressed on students, which he disagreed with and had an influence on is thoughts about diversity.

Others cited their experiences living during a certain time or in a certain environment. A number of instructors cited the civil rights movement as having an effect on their

conceptualization of diversity. Dr. Brooke McCarthy talked about her experiences as a child in the South. "…Multiple experiences in my lifetime. I am a child of segregated schools...my experiences as a learned person going to various universities from the South to the Northeast and the northern Midwest." Dr. John Anderson used his early career as example. "… [Being] a professional at the height of the Civil Rights Movement…the women's liberation movement as well…." Having lived in other countries, Dr. Amal said "My own academic background…my reading…my personal experiences...a lot of international experience... [Living] in different countries different continents…."

Working in the either public relations or a related field was also the source of influence. Samantha Hobbs referenced her early career, "…working on newspapers…working in colleges and universities that the people I've met…broadening my horizons…." Dr. Jones cited her "Personal and professional background and the environment in which we operate." "My own experiences, problem solving and working in an organization," said Dr. Nancy King. A large number of instructors cited their roles in the academy, their research and their role as instructors. Dr. Jack Sutherland talked about his teaching career including "…as an instructor…situations I've had to deal with as an instructor…some of the material we get from the university…things I read about in research…" Regarding his classroom, Dr. Michael Smith commented, "Sensitivity to the issue…awareness and active promotion of the need to incorporate diversity into courses…" Heather Green focused on her courses, "…trying to help prepare students to look at how they will deal with different publics…noticing a wider range of students we have in class and trying to be more inclusive…" Dr. Williams referenced "Scholarly work …my membership in professional world, my monitoring trade publications…talking to senior practitioners…monitoring diversification in the field." Dr. Dawson Witter listed, "My academic

training…research experiences, my professional experiences, my experiences as an educator…"

Four instructors mentioned the training or materials they received from their institutions and one

instructor received diversity materials as part of a job she held before teaching.

Some instructors have a personal connection toward diversity and focused inward when

asked where they fit. They looked at how their thoughts have evolved and a result of their life

experiences. "I feel very comfortable, well positioned, confident…," Samantha Hobbs said "I'm

just constantly learning and evolving…I still don't understand, you know, so much about things

and people and dynamics…," and "I can bring my own views…I've become more sensitized to

look for other views, to try to seek them out and listen to them and I don't think everybody

necessarily has that skill…."

Other instructors referenced the role they play as either educators or professionals and the

effect they have on students. Dr. Amal feels that "…As teacher I act as a guide, an advisor for

students who are learning how to understand diversity and what it means for themselves as

teachers and researchers and students," Dr. Witter feels that "…on a professional level I think

my role as an educator is to expose and train our students to have a not just superficial but an in-

depth understanding of diversity …," Dr. Natasha Jones commented, "I think my role as an

instructor is to raise the awareness of diversity,"

Dr. Anderson also referenced his career as an instructor:

…as a faculty member I have a very important role in all this because I have
essentially a captive audience and if I am going to teach effectively then I have to
reach that audience effectively….

Dr. Williams considered her life and her experience:

…as an individual who has…observed and experienced and appreciated
diversification, as a professor…who has brought those observations, experiences

and appreciation into my classroom…my responsibility extended beyond individual ones but that as a teacher for future public relations practitioners.

Personal characteristics that exemplify diversity were also explored. For Dr. Brooke McCarthy that meant physical or psychological characteristics that solidified her place as a "diverse" individual. "I am racially diverse…I have different ideas…I do see myself living in probably several worlds…I do not seek to fit in, I do seek to push the envelope…." Dr. Jessica Adams believes she crosses different areas: "…I'm a double minority…I grew up middle class…I feel like I fit right in the middle of that situation." Dr. Natasha Jones describes herself as "Smack dab in the middle, …I am a white woman working at a historically black institution…as a child I lived in a different culture…not in a metropolitan area that also had sort of a melting pot," Dr. Rachel Morgan said this about her place in diversity "…everyone is part of diversity, no one is excluded…I recognize what my elements of diversity are, my characteristics, I know how people perceive me and how I perceive myself and the differences that live there…."

Dr. Najat Amal reflected on her personal life to explain where she thought she fit:

 …I exemplify a lot of diversities…having lived before in so many different countries…a lot of international traveling…exposure in terms of international and cultural relations…my definition is very much related to my own personal experience…

Alternatively some instructors talked about their lack of diversity in terms of physical, ethnic and cultural elements. Dr. Li talked about his political affiliation "…I consider myself a moderate and I don't want to go to either extreme…" Heather Green saw herself as "…the prototypical public relations professional, in that I am white middle aged female…we have to identify with our publics and where they fall…" Dr. Sutherland talked about is lack of difference: "…I don't see myself as being representative of a very diverse group of people…I

don't see myself being different or unique…I am tolerant…understanding…respectful…and try to communicate the importance of that to my students."

In addition to where a person may fit, or personal or professional relationships that may affect a person's thoughts about diversity, instructors also talked about how personal characteristics (i.e. sex, age and racial/ethnic classification) influence their thoughts on diversity. Five instructors referenced their age, attributing to the fact that being younger or older has had some affect on their thoughts. Samantha Hobbs felt her age is important because "…the older you get the more you realize you don't know…" Dr. Nancy King also talked about age saying, "I think older people see it more clearly than younger people, just simply because younger people have been born in to a more inclusive society…" Jim Bass talked about being older: "…for someone who's 66, you feel like you've been there and done just about everything there is to do and that background certainly has an effect on how you look at the world." Dr. Jessica Adams talked about her parents' ages: "…because my mom and dad, what their age is, they are baby boomers…their perspective on race very much has colored my perspectives."

Just as influential as age was the time or environment in which the instructors grew up. Dr. Rachel Morgan told of her experiences growing up as a minority. "I was raised around primarily Caucasian environment, but being African American, I had this whole dual consciousness thing going on." Dr. Michael Smith focused on his college experience, "…I'm a product of the 60s and I very much think that that's part of my college experience…and I think my personal value systems." Dr. John Anderson talked about the religious prejudice in his neighborhood. "I grew up with a kind of a feeling of sort of being embattled and I think that helped make me more sensitive to others that I

wouldn't do to them what people were doing to me because of my religion," he said.

A number of instructors, particularly women, also talked about their sex in some sense. Five women talked about being female in their institutions or during their professional careers. But Dr. Dawson Witter talked about being a male teaching a majority of female students. "…In my more specific subfield I'm in the minority but having to interact and educate students that are of a different gender background than me," he said. Alternatively Dr. Gretchen Myers discussed being a white woman in the U.S., "…as a White woman ultimately I engage in several privileges in society…."

Two instructors considered one or more the characteristics in their reply. Dr. Najat Amal felt that her age, sex and ethnicity affect her feelings on diversity: "…they make me more sensitive to the issue of diversity; they make me more able to appreciate to really comprehend the concept itself and to really live it in my own life…" Dr. Jack Sutherland felt that his personal characteristics make him "more keenly aware or self conscious" of the differences that exist between himself and others. And as a result he feels "an obligation to be sensitive about these issues…."

Instructors were also asked if they were involved in any diversity initiatives, panels, organizations or taskforces in their institutions. The vast majority stated that they were not currently involved, although some of those instructors stated they had been in the past. Some instructors were involved on strategic planning committees, or on hiring committees that discussed diversity but it was not the main issue. Those who were involved with diversity initiatives and activities at their institutions included mentoring, advising multicultural organizations and running multicultural programs on campus. A few instructors reported having professional involvement in diversity related initiatives

with the Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication, the Public

Relations Society of America, and the Arthur W. Page Society.

Research Question Two: How are their ideas about diversity reflected in the tools/resources used in their courses?

Instructors were asked to think about a course they teach most often or a course they taught the longest when answering the questions pertaining to this research question. First, it was important to know what tools are being used in different public relations courses and the basis on which they were chosen by instructors. To answer the research question, instructors were asked if they consider diversity when planning for and teaching their courses and if they felt it was appropriate to express their thoughts about diversity in their classes.

Instructional materials varied by instructor, as well as by the course that was being taught. Most instructors use lectures that are presented via PowerPoint or handouts, textbooks, additional and supplemental readings compiled in a course pack, the Internet and current events they found in newspapers, magazines, or trade publications. Internet use included blogs, WebCT or Blackboard, and Google Alerts. To a lesser extent, instructors used films and television, role playing, guest speakers and cases, exercises or experiential learning. Few instructors noted using their colleagues' perspectives or software such as the Adobe Suite. Instructors may not have named all the tools they actually use, but these may be the ones that are either used most often, resonate in the course or important to the instructor.

Just as important as instructional tools is how instructors choose those tools. Some instructors based their answers on all the courses they taught, while other focused only on one. When choosing the materials, many instructors stated that they look for tools that the students can relate to, or that relate the topics in a meaningful way, or tools that best illustrate the points they try to make. To do this almost all of the instructors look at recently published articles and

use professional connections, trade publications and current events to find out what is going on in the industry. Many instructors focused on the curriculum and department specifications. Dr. Gretchen Myers said, "…the topics I address are based in the curriculum that is expected from the department strategic plan…." Some instructors selected their materials based on things they felt were either missing or really needed focus in their department or institution. Dr. McCarthy commented, "…I choose to connect theory and research in actual practices…" Some junior faculty cited tradition or using the same materials used by a mentor or the person who taught the course before them. Dr. Amal said, "…I actually consulted with some of my colleagues here…who have been teaching the course before me, and who know a lot about the curriculum and about the text book…," and Dr. Sutherland said, "…the book was a book that the professor I mentored with was using…and I actually liked it enough that I carried it over…"

Most instructors stated they do think about diversity, in some sense, when planning for their courses. The focus, for some, is teaching students about diversity or providing examples that are inclusive and easily understood. "I want my students…to understand some of the challenges that will face them…," so Dr. Myers thinks specifically about "how to make students think about intersecting identities when they go and put forth their own voice…." Dr. Jones used her doctoral courses as an example, "I want my students who are preparing for the academy to understand some of the challenges they'll face…" Dr. Adams had a strategy for thinking about and using diversity in her courses; "I need to be sure to bring in scholars that maybe the students aren't aware, they haven't heard of…I feel like I have to meet them where they are…" Dr. Morgan wants her students to be aware of their differences. "I want them to know how to manage diversity within their teams", she said "…I want them to bring their differences to the table…" Dr. Amal added that she tries "to bring examples that could be understandable to

explain things to them in a way they could find meaningful," and Dr. Anderson also said that

"…probably with examples I am more cognizant of diversity…" For others, it was more about

looking at their students and making sure they are being representative. Heather Green looks "…

at the class roster and the students in it and trying to make sure we have cases and role models

that sort of fit that profile…." Some instructors focus on a particular element of diversity as a

result of their personal experiences or characteristics. Dr. Williams thinks about a certain aspect

of diversity; "…gender has probably had traditionally a great deal of affect on my preparation for

teaching...I feel it an obligation," Dr. King feels, "…it's that bringing different points of view,

different ways of seeing things to the table…diversity to me is so far beyond race and gender."

No instructors said they did not think about diversity at all when planning and teaching

their courses. Many discuss diversity if the topic they cover has a specific place for it; Jim Bass

said; "I haven't said to myself, I'm going to find a case that illustrates diversity, but it

happens…a lot of that is driven by content…." Dr. Anderson replied, "…planning overall

content, theories that sort of thing, not very much, I am very much aware of examples…," and

Bass mentions diversity as it comes up: "…I don't think I ever consciously sit down and, you

know, plan a lecture around it necessarily, but we'll be talking about other issues and it'll come

up."

While most instructors feel it is appropriate to discuss diversity, not all feel it is

appropriate to share their thoughts with students. For those who do, they feel it's appropriate

because they feel the students can benefit from their thoughts. Dr. King explained, "I think it's

totally appropriate, I think that's part of what we're here for…." Dr. McCarthy believes that

given the fact that she is at an HBCU, her opinion is very much invited; "…This university, a

predominantly black student body, need to know my story to understand the possibilities for

themselves." Dr. Jones also believes that, "my students want to know my opinion…," and Dr. Myers feels compelled to "increase what I assume might be a level of discomfort by half our students…because they don't see themselves reflected in the leadership of the department…" Dr. Morgan feels that as the instructor it is her role to "profess things…I profess my perspective…and the students are allowed to express their perspectives, too." Dr. Li stated that the "…United States is a multiracial country…so students need to understand, it's a reality…." Dr. Witter feels that much of his role as an educator is to "ensure that our students have an understanding of diversity…" Dr. Amal believes it "perfectly alright…I don't feel any kind of restriction from addressing these issues, and I think they are quite informative to the students and they always enjoy them;" Samantha Hobbs sees herself as a role model, "…I don't mind, I think people know where I stand", she said "…I can be myself in the classroom because I think that's part of mentoring, of giving them a piece of yourself…."

Those who do not feel it is appropriate simply do not want students to feel obligated to feel or think a certain way, or believe that it is more important to have the conversation, without pushing students in one direction or another. Dr. Adams said, "I don't feel like it's appropriate to express my personal opinions about diversity. I feel like it's appropriate to express the importance of everyone's perspectives…." Heather Green answered that she is comfortable with discussions "…in terms of saying there is more diversity and making sure that we cover a gamut of issues, but not in terms of how I feel about any of those issues…." Dr. Smith feels that the issue is important, but "I am guarded in terms of not trying to impose my political view points on students. Students need to be encouraged to consider the issue…."

Other instructors felt that diversity was not an easy fit due to the nature of their courses For example Dr. Cruise said, "…in some ways I touch on it but I also know that there are classes

specifically devoted to that topic…I try to stay true to the mission of this particular course….”

Dr Anderson would rather “let the content do that…that's not the place to preach diversity. What

you do is show it by example.”

Most instructors indicated that from what they knew, their colleagues shared the same

feelings about diversity. For those that felt their colleagues shared their same ideas about

diversity, these ideas were a result of their colleague's experiences and the environment of their

department or college. Jessica Adams commented that her colleagues' ideas are “very similar” to

her own and that “their definition would be, on the whole, richer than just one because of their

diverse backgrounds and perspectives.” Dr. Smith commented that there is “a variety of

emphasis on diversity” among the faculty at her institution.” It was noted by some instructors

that while most share these same ideas, there may be some colleagues that do not share their

same ideas about diversity. Dr. King highlighted the political correctness involved with diversity.

“I think people say they're open to diversity,” she said, “…I think it's politically correct to say

that you're open to diversity.” Dr. Jones also recognized that not all her colleagues share the

same ideas about diversity: “…there may be some that have tunnel vision and are in their own

cultural situation…and that's harder for them to break out and see more, embrace many

cultures.” When asked about her colleagues, Dr. Myers replied “No, not at all…” and when

asked to explain why she felt that way, she replied, “…80% or so of my colleagues do not think

about diversity when they teach or conduct research or perform services in the department….”

Most instructors said they discuss diversity with their colleagues primarily in a

professional or academic setting, and most often during the hiring process or the selection of

students applying to their programs. Dr. David Cruise said that this comes up “because that's

when it comes to the forefront, when philosophies about this certain thing come to the

forefront…." Dr. Williams said that the diversity conversation "permeates [their] work, both when [they] talk about student enrollment…recruiting graduate students…and examining the curriculum." Other than professional and academic conversations, 3 instructors mentioned having some personal conversations about diversity with colleagues. With regard to such conversations, almost all instructors said that both they and their colleagues initiate the conversations and that they have educated others and have been educated themselves at some point. Dr. Morgan said her reason for initiating the conversation is "because my research expertise is in diversity in public relations so I think about it often." Dr. Witter said the conversation can be initiated by anyone: "…sometimes it's initiated by faculty members…administrators…students…and professionals," Jim Bass said, "I think that it works both ways…every time we interview new staff people everyone learns something from the process." Dr. Sutherland says he is educated "more in terms of how [he] should address it in the classroom or how it is a consideration in terms of being on a search committee…."

The majority of instructors felt that their school, department, college and institution as a whole made diversity a priority. When asked how they knew this, seven instructors referenced their department or university specifically. At Samantha Hobbs' university, not only is there a lot of conversation on diversity, but also they "meet about it" and "…discuss it…." Due to its significant international contingent, her institution has also had a major diversity push, "in terms of projects internationally this school is, the university is too, but the school of communication has global projects going on…." Dr. Najat Amal feels it is "taken into account even in [their] decision to recruit new faculty …." Heather Green spoke specifically about international diversity and gender. "They have done a lot especially in the area of women's studies…regarding international especially Middle Eastern and Asian studies," she said. At Dr.

John Anderson's university "…the notion of diversity does not just "sit there…" according to him, "…it's preached all the time." Jim Bass mentioned the dean's influence as motivation, "…through the actions and conversations with the dean and his approach to his work with diversity is an obvious priority and interest…" he said. According to Dr. Blair Williams, both "…the university and [her] own college and department have really adopted diversification as an important goal." From the perspective of an HBCU, Dr. Brooke McCarthy feels that her institution has to be more committed than larger, predominantly white schools. She feels that "by having the presence of others from a more Eurocentric culture be a part of what" they are trying to do "certify us as being legitimate." Dr. Michael Smith contends "there are efforts to raise visibility and to raise consciousness among the students and the faculty about diversity issues." Dr. Jessica Adams talked about diversity in a secondary relationship; "…there's actually a task force university wide and it has looked at salary overall…" and found, through looking at salaries, gender and ethnic disparities."

Some instructors feel that while their institutions are doing some things in the area of diversity, they can do more. Dr. Dawson Witter feels "There are efforts to raise visibility and to raise consciousness among the students and the faculty about diversity issues" he said. Dr. Jack Sutherland says his institution provides a lot of training to new faculty members and "…they stressed to be sensitive, to be aware of, to think about it…," and his department values and addresses diversity in the classroom. However, he feels "…they never really come out and say, this is exactly why diversity's important, why we put such a premium on it, this is what you need to do, this is how we define diversity…it's almost taken as a given…." Dr. Nancy King feels her department has missed chances to increase diversity; "…We've had opportunities time and time again to increase the diversity of our department, and our department head has not been receptive

at all to this….” When asked about her institution, she said “it talks the talk…I don't think it walks the walk.” Similarly Dr. Gretchen Myers did not “see many places where diversity is more than just a few lines of rhetoric” in a lot of things they plan.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS/DISCUSSION

Conceptualizing Diversity

One step of the analysis included comparing demographic characteristics to conceptualizations of diversity to try to identity patterns. But no patterns linking demographic characteristics, including race-gender-etc., were found. Instead, identity emerged as the most important factor.

Banks' explanation of diversity provides two different conceptualizations; one focusing on the fact that certain differences "make a difference" which connote separateness and the other focusing on "variety or multiformity," with diversity serving as a "proliferation of subtypes of one overarching group, maintaining commonalities while recognizing differences." The definitions provided can be split almost equally among the categories, with 8 instructors falling in the first conceptualization and 9 instructors in the second conceptualization. Although the interviews were coded by the researcher it is believed that the classifications would have been made by another coder due to the clear use of terms. Definitions falling into the first conceptualization included terms and phrases such as: "the inclusion of different people…," "people of different backgrounds have different experiences…;" "…respect for all individuals, regardless of background, origin, race; "Representation of alternative voices or perspectives…notions of difference…;" "…tolerance, I think empathy…;" "…an appreciation or at least tolerance for their diverse viewpoints…;" "…ethnicity, gender and orientation…;" "…treating all these people fairly, equally, and recognizing the value of their diversity…." While these definitions may seem harmless enough many of the terms allude to a difference or "other."

The idea of "accepting" or "tolerating" connotes a certain order or the idea of there being "outsiders" (Woodard, 1997).

Instructors whose definitions are in this conceptualization may not have feelings of superiority or inequality, but their definitions may be little more than "racial etiquette" where they have only developed ways of dealing with perceptions of race, without going beyond that (Omi & Winant ,1983). It serves as only part of understanding and embracing diversity. Many people who claim to "know" diversity would probably, unknowingly, be classified in this conceptualization. And as a result instructors teach their students to be nothing more than "kind" or "liberal" racists (Gordon & Newfield, 1994); people who have anti racist attitudes that coexist with support for racist outcomes. Banks states society has made diversity in this sense a "culturally neutral" word used to explain difference. When in fact it perpetuates the idea of "other" instead of "us."

The remaining definitions fell into the second conceptualization: "the representation of members of a society;" "a variety of perspectives;" "all the differences that exist within people;" "opportunities that are availed to us to learn different things about each other and to understand those ideas;" "lots of points of views;" "a broad spectrum of perspectives, identities and living experiences;" "…variety…;" "…we can deal with similar concepts but we should also be able to expand those concepts based on general objectives we have decided upon;" "everything you could imagine…it shapes us…." These definitions, unlike the others, do not assert difference to a characteristic, nor do they embrace the idea that one group or sub section deserves more "acceptance" than another. This set of definitions refers more to "us" than "them." It is clear, upon comparison, that there is a difference between the two: one separates while the other join

Those who seemed more personally connected to diversity or who used personal anecdotes did not necessarily fall into the second conceptualization of diversity. They were, however, more willing to talk about it, and as a result they may be more welcome to identifying and challenging their previous beliefs and assumptions. It was also important to try to understand what shaped the definition they provided and what influenced their thoughts on the term. Ideas, terms, elements and ultimately the definition of diversity may come primarily from a person's physical characteristics, personal or professional experiences. While part of an individual's identity is the identification of things like race, sex, gender and age, this serves only as a part of identity construction. This makes identity an important factor mostly, according to research, because there are many different ways and many different standards that people use to classify themselves and others (Woodard, 1997). Physical characteristics have an indirect influence in that they can contribute to identity, but that's only the first step. What also contributes to identify is how an individual may see themselves in context with the rest of society. This is based on those physical characteristics and others and how a person assesses their place in society. It is for this reason that of those who fell within Banks' second conceptualization of diversity were not only white males but also ethnic or racial minorities and females.   As such, identity depends on difference. It is clear that there is a connection between how instructors felt about their identity and how that affected their feelings about difference and diversity.

Although identity in terms of where someone sees them self in society seemed more telling of their conceptualization of diversity rather than their ethnic, racial or sexual classifications, most instructors commented that one or more classifications had a direct influence on their thoughts about diversity. This was most clearly seen in the instructors self-

identified as ethnic minorities. Two black instructors talked in-depth about how that characteristic "stuck out" the most when thinking about diversity. Not only did it affect how they saw themselves, but also how they felt others saw them. Those who identified as female talked about how being in public relations has affected their thoughts and ideas about where and how they fit. The first step, then, in conceptualizing diversity is self examination to find what makes us different and how we are personally affected by that difference. It is important to realize that this provides a foundation or a first step but is not the only step.

Instructors' physical characteristics and personal and professional experiences that expose them to diversity also influence where they feel they fit and how comfortable they feel they are with the term. During the interviews, the question on where they "fit" in their definition of diversity was left purposely ambiguous for instructors to think back to the definition they gave and try to create a personal meaning.

Those who did not cite age, race, or sex talked about their personal and professional experiences and the extent to which that provided a situation or an environment from which they could gather an understanding of diversity. Those who were affected by an experience in their personal or professional lives used that as a basis to form an understanding of diversity. Instructors who talked about age focused on the times in which they grew up as contributing to what made them different. The Civil Rights Movement, growing up in segregated areas, the women's liberation movement, and a time when there were few women in the work place are just some examples. Although levels of personal involvement varied among instructors being in the midst of sociopolitical change left its mark. Something about where they were and what they saw resulted in a particular feeling toward diversity. Instructors who were able to find something

that separated them-something that made them different- used this as a basis of their

conceptualization of diversity.

Those instructors who were unable to see their difference or felt they lacked difference

still provided a definition but as the interview continued their responses lacked connection to the

term. One instructor who could not see what made him "particularly diverse" mentioned later in

the interview that people just "expect you to know" what diversity is, without ever providing a

comprehensive explanation. Undoubtedly others share this opinion but feel pressure to be able

to speak to a topic they are not completely comfortable or familiar with. According to previous

research, the solution is to first hold one's self accountable and do a critical self examination of

personal biases, and knowledge insufficiencies, as well as challenge dominant and cultural

assumptions through personal research (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). This provides a basis to

build an understanding of diversity.

Critical Race Theorists and other scholars claim this lack of value and knowledge needs

to be solved, first, on a personal level. As mentioned in the literature review, self examination,

listening, seeking and understanding and validating others' point of view is imperative to

"embracing diversity" (Harper, 2007; Quaye & Harper, 2007; Grillo, 2005). By actively seeking

other opinions and differences, "going outside your comfort zone," as one professor put it and

not simply dealing with it as it bumps into you, is one way to become more comfortable with

diversity. The next important step in conceptualizing diversity is being able to connect that

difference to the ways in which others are different. Finding commonality in having differences

is how people can move from Banks' first conceptualization to the second.

Diversity in Practice

Conceptualization influences practice and while many instructors claim to be "comfortable with," "appreciative," "accepting and "aware" of diversity, their behavior may be nothing more than "race etiquette." The term is meant to imply that they are respectful and know how to handle themselves but may not necessarily understand or value difference. And although a person may be comfortable with diversity with regard to sex, they may not have the same level of comfort toward race or ethnicity. As a result, they may see difference and know how to appropriately react, but do not or cannot understand or assert value to that type of difference. One instructor referred to this as a skill saying the she had to become more sensitive and has had to "look for others views…." Another instructor said she had to put herself "out there" and make herself "vulnerable" to other people and their ideas.

Ability to find such commonalities and comfort with diversity may also be seen in how often instructors engage in conversation about diversity and the types of conversations they have. A number of instructors spoke, at length, about their conversations about diversity during departmental planning and recruiting new faculty and students. One instructor said that this was one of the only times his department discusses diversity to such a large extent; "…because that's when it often comes to the forefront, when philosophies about certain things come to the forefront." Another instructor said that diversity "becomes an issue certainly in hiring" that they want to make sure everyone is being evaluated fairly. The fact that this type of consideration and care is being taken highlights the fact that diversity is important to some extent. It shows that instructors realize the importance of diversity within their own departments. Other conversations with and among colleagues included the curriculum, like what texts are used, and dealing with

student needs. This shows that there are some instructors who know to take a comprehensive approach toward diversity.

Very few, however, mentioned talking about diversity among colleagues outside of this environment. Does this mean they do not understand or care about diversity? No. But to become more comfortable with diversity, instructors must talk about it with colleagues outside professional and meeting-type settings. Doing this is another way of personal accountability and a means of broadening personal understanding as a result of acknowledging and challenging personal beliefs.

Personal discomfort or lack of knowledge regarding diversity can be seen in the classroom as well. The most important tool or resource instructors can bring into the classroom is themselves. Instructors serve, in part, as gatekeepers to their students; they bring in—whether consciously or otherwise—certain ideas and leave out others. As mentioned earlier in the analysis, depending on the parts or types of diversity they are comfortable with has a large affect on what they bring into their courses.

A number of instructors said they think about and include diversity in their courses. There are a variety of levels at which instructors infused diversity into their courses. The ethnic and racial makeup of the class did seem to have some affect on how and if instructors included diversity. A few instructors talked about the fact that since there was a lack of diversity in their courses, they gave students exercises or made sure they were at least thinking about serving publics that did not look like them. There was one instructor who used an exercise that helped students learn about the difference among them. Although she described her classes as being pretty diverse, this allowed them to see past physical differences to see other types of difference and commonalities. Some bring in diversity by the examples they use or bring up in class, others

bring it up when they feel it is relevant to the lecture or topic; one instructor did not want to "force fit" diversity into a topic where it did not fit, but he tried to make sure he included it where he thought it fit. They did not want to "force their opinions" on students or "make them feel they had to agree". One of the instructors felt it was more important expose her students to all their different perspectives to show diversity in thought. According to Banks (1993), adding content or only using examples does diversity a disservice because it is done in a "sporadic" or "segmented way." Instead, CRT theorists say that instructors should be looking at how difference has advantaged some and disadvantaged others. This type of inclusion, especially at institutions serving a predominant demographic, tends to place the majority (students and faculty) at the center, striving to make them comfortable with difference. There were some instructors who did not think that approach was appropriate.

Others infused diversity into lectures and discussions throughout the course. One instructor talked about "meeting her students where they were comfortable" and guiding them into the conversation about ethnic diversity throughout the semester. Those who did feel it is appropriate felt they were warranted because of their responsibility to prepare students for their careers. One instructor felt like part of her role as an instructor was to serve as a mentor to her students, another felt she would not be doing her job properly if she did not bring part of "herself" into the classroom. Among those who said they talked about diversity in the classroom, some addressed diversity as a specialty area, like an area of expertise. Others treated like an overarching idea that all people should have an understanding of, like ethics. The latter is in line with Grillo's (2005) opinion that educators should approach diversity as an action not a concept. Using ethics as an example, students learn that ethical practices are at the forefront of public

relations work, they are not taught to simply consider it. Diversity should be considered in the same regard.

While some instructors talked about including racial and ethnic diversity, many instructors excluded (or did not mention including) racial and ethnic diversity, but discussed diversity of thought or political diversity, making sure their students understand that people think differently than they do. Failing to include all types of differences can be detrimental to students but particularly, the exclusion of race and ethnicity does not account for the role of race and racism in U.S. education, but maintains it. In addition, students are not fully prepared for the workforce due to avoidance of issues of race and the lack of educators showing them how racial issues are infused throughout the curriculum (Parker & Shapiro 1992; Yosso 2002).

Diversity and Instructional Tools

Personal teaching style, the course topic, and the key ideas and understandings instructors wanted students to leave with seemed to dictate how instructors found the tools they used. Both identity and comfort with diversity also play a role in these ideas as well. And although most of the instructors for this analysis use similar instructional tools in their courses, their methods for finding such tools and how they used them differed. Although many instructors had not given much thought to the strategy of choosing instructional tools, this is not to say there is no strategy; rather, many may have never had to articulate the process.

Many of the instructors talked about constantly surveying the industry as well as academic journals for a balance in what they cover. The instructors with more technical courses did this to a lesser extent, focusing more on the latest software and its uses. Some instructors first looked for what they wanted to teach then sought the appropriate tools to teach it, while others let the tools they found dictate what and how they teach their courses. A couple of the newer

instructors reported using the tools used by their mentors or the same tools used by the person who taught the course before them. The instructors that thought about diversity when choosing their instructional tools, thought that since diversity "permeates" the discipline of public relations, all the tools they use have an element and create an opportunity to include the diversity conversation throughout their courses. Whether they actually use them as diversity tools is unclear.

While the inclusion of diversity may be easier depending on the type of course—seminar vs. technical—and the level—freshman vs. seniors vs. graduate students—research provides strategies and ways for instructors to include diversity in their courses. According to CRT theorists, instructors must strategically find tools that combat oppressive forces and to do so they must examine classroom practices and assigned course materials, and they may consider soliciting input from colleagues and students. Other scholars assert the insertion of multicultural perspectives may be used as a tool (Harper 2007; Quaye & Harper, 2007; Grillo, 2005; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005).

Department & Institutional Responsibilities

Most instructors stated their schools, departments, and institutions made diversity a priority. Instructors mentioned receiving training, courses and literature on diversity at some point during their teaching career. This information cannot stand alone, however, and few instructors discussed ways their institutions handle diversity on a regular basis.

Due to the requirements for accreditation, many institutions have to include diversity in their curricula and instructors have to write it into their syllabi and in reports. This does not mean those institutions and those instructors understand diversity, but there is a mechanism in place to garner understanding.

There are some institutions, however, that may not support diversity efforts to the fullest extent or at all. Holding instructors responsible is only part of the effort. Instructors need resources, constant dialogue and to be led by example. Research puts the onus on academic officers, deans and department chairs as well as instructors. Faculty need to be engaged in exercises and dialogue that encourage them to ask questions and that show the urgent need to diversify the curricula and not just make sure the faculty and students are diverse (Anderson 2007).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Diversity, as mentioned by one instructor, is something everyone claims to embrace, "it's politically correct." This analysis sought to find out how public relations conceptualized and practiced diversity both personally and in throughout their courses. During the interviews many instructors admitted to not understanding or using diversity to its fullest extent, others did not admit to it but did not sound too sure or confident in their responses. Still others were comfortable, willing and seemed eager to share their opinions. Although the research questions were included in the protocol, responses to other questions that just as telling of instructors' feelings about diversity.

The first research question asked: how do public relations instructors define diversity? The simplest answer is, in varied and diverse ways. With the different definitions given, it could be said that diversity is in the eye of the beholder. But according to Banks (2005) there are two basic conceptualizations where definitions fall. Based on that idea, close to half the definitions provided focused on the idea of "other" or a standard from which everything else is "different." This does not mean that these instructors do not attempt to embrace diversity; it simply means that their conceptualization of diversity may be skewed or that they may be misusing language. This is consistent with Muir's (1993) idea that racism can be thought of like a gun. Mean racists use it to "coerce or kill" and kind racists "help keep it going by supporting underlying racial concepts." One of the most important elements of understanding diversity is understanding our own differences. Another important element is having a genuine interest and willingness to admit and question our own beliefs, ideas and biases to be able to value another person's difference.

The second research question was concerned with whether or not instructors thought about diversity when choosing their instructional materials. It seemed as though the instructors interviewed for this analysis thought about diversity, generally speaking, it is considered at great length when talking about faculty hires and student recruitment. Other than in a meeting setting, not many talk about diversity personally. Many, however, did but not to actively think about diversity when choosing their instructional tools. Some did not see how it fit and others did so, but not to the extent that CRT theorists think necessary. It is not enough to mention minorities in examples or to expect students to learn it in other courses, according to CRT instructors must first understand how inequality has been constructed into education as well as the profession and then make sure students understand how they all are affected.

While the analysis focused on racial and ethnic diversity in public relations courses, many instructors avoided the topic of race and ethnicity and focused on other types of diversity. Instructors talked about international diversity, political diversity and sex diversity, putting very little focus on the cultural and sub-cultural differences that exist in American society. Maybe this avoidance was on purpose, which could be a good thing because many, instead, talked about diverse perspectives, opinions and ideas. But this may also be a detrimental because it may show a discomfort and lack of challenging one's self personally. CRT scholars believe that avoiding diversity, whether aware or not, ignores the role race has played in creating inequity, lack of opportunity and oppression in American society. With regard to public relations specifically, the exclusion of diversity, whether consciously or otherwise, adversely affects students, because while they may respect and acknowledge difference, they do not understand the value differences bring.

In her 2005 study, Pommper believed that the public relations curriculum was still out of step with multicultural world realities. In 2009, strides are being made to be "in-step" but instructors, departments and institutions alike must go past the surface of diversity. They must reach for a deeper understanding and expose students not only to the effects of race and ethnicity in America but also to the value of difference.

Faculty, to properly prepare students, must get past their own beliefs and deepen their knowledge of diversity. This may involve understanding their personal privilege and seeking a deeper meaning of diversity and difference. Regarding their courses, instructors must first think about how diversity fits within their particular course. Next, they must strategically select and use course materials that help teach diversity. Initiating informal conversations with colleagues or students of different cultures, religions and different opinions may also be beneficial.

Faculty cannot work alone, but need supportive administrative staff. Public relations departments should continue diversity training discussions and considering diversity when recruiting faculty and students. Departments may consider establishing a definition of diversity and making sure students and faculty understand the definition. During diversity training courses, departments could include diversity exercises, or have faculty share how they feel about diversity, their challenges and their strategies. This allows for semi structured conversations among colleagues.

Public relations departments and faculty alike have a tremendous responsibility. They have to prepare students for their future careers. And while there are many techniques and skills to be taught, diversity is too great a lesson to be excluded. This goes beyond public relations' departments and can be extended to any discipline.

Strengths & Limitations

Qualitative research served as an asset to this analysis in several ways. First, observation often serves as a better method for collecting information for describing actual behavior. Secondly the data gathered from observation-type methods is often richer and more complex than other forms of data collection. Qualitative research can also be more flexible, allowing the researcher to "switch perspectives quickly" and "explore new areas of inquiry." Lastly qualitative research can be done with as much disturbance to a community and may draw less attention because the sample does not have to be as large. (Burchinal, 2006).

Alternatively, because qualitative research is observational, it is often limited to the person or persons analyzing the sample. And the group being observed is often smaller than with quantitative research. Also the researcher or researchers have a great deal of responsibility in ensuring they get the most complete and accurate records possible since much of the final product depend on their thoroughness as investigators (Burchinal, 2006).

This analysis is not without its own shortcomings. The instructors in this analysis may have been more comfortable sharing their ideas, whereas as other people may not feel comfortable sharing their honest opinions about the subject. The sample was self selected so only those willing to talk about diversity were interviewed. Also, because of perceived correct or incorrect answers, some instructors were guarded and may not have shared their true opinions in fear of being politically incorrect. Some instructors may have said what they thought was appropriate when discussing diversity rather than sharing their true feelings. If this is the case, then where the idea came from is important as well.

<u>Future Research</u>

To further understand and develop the area of Critical Race Theory an analysis, examining elements of programs, departments or instructors that are "doing it right," can be done. The purpose being to understand what goes into creating a curriculum or course that meets the needs of all students. This type of analysis could also be used to provide a sample to institutions that may need to work on being more genuine in their inclusion of diversity.

Regarding diversity and Banks' conceptualizations colleges, departments or division definitions of diversity could be analyzed to understand how the concept of diversity affects the individual and department as a whole. A department's commitment to diversity could also be tested by gathering student's opinions and knowledge on diversity over the course of their time in a particular program either from one semester to another or at the beginning of the academic school year and again at the end of the year. The purpose would be to see if they experienced a change of opinion or if they gained additional knowledge on diversity and if it was due to the courses they took.

To advance this area of study, a quantitative study asking public relations professors their thoughts and opinions on diversity may allow for more generalizable results and conclusions. This study could be replicated using either students or professionals instead of instructors, to get thoughts and opinions on diversity. Or students could be asked if they feel their instructors are doing a good job of teaching them about diversity. This study could also be replicated examining other types of difference, not just race and ethnicity.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION

Hello. My name is Donna Wilcox I am a graduate student in the Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Georgia.

I am working on a research study, under the direction of Dr. Karen Russell, titled Understanding Difference: A Qualitative Study of Public Relations Professors, Conceptualization of Diversity and its Role In the Classroom. The purpose of the study is to allow educators to say, in their own words, what diversity means to them, what role they play and how they convey that message to students and throughout the academy. While the idea of diversity encompasses all differences among people, this analysis will focus primarily on racial and ethnic differences. The growing number of minorities not only means increased diversity in the work force but also among college students making it important for higher education to be culturally inclusive. Regarding public relations specifically, students make up the second largest cohort of communication students, for these reasons it is important that instructors prepare students for diverse audiences as well as making them aware of difference. I will not personally benefit from the research.

I'd like to ask you about your experiences as a faculty member at your institution, your feelings and ideas about diversity and how they affect your choices in instructional materials and the direction and content for your course. Many of the questions I'll ask are open-ended, that is, designed to allow you to answer in your own words. I'd like to make a digital recording of the conversation if you don't mind so I have the full details of your responses. I will destroy the digital file no later than April, 6 2010, a year from the Graduate School thesis submission date. There will be no follow-up interviews.

Your responses will be confidential. Your participation, of course, is voluntary, and you may skip some of the questions if necessary or even discontinue the interview at any time. There are no known risks associated with your participation. Your contact information was obtained from your institutions web site. All files will be labeled with psuedonyms, stored, and password secured, in the researcher's computer. The master list that matches participants and pseudonyms will be kept in a separate location (the researcher's home). All identifiers and contact information will be removed from the data once I begin transcription. The identifiers and master list linking participants to the pseudonyms will be destroyed no later than April 6, 2010; one year after the analysis is completed.

As you probably know, research at universities that involves human participants is overseen by what is called the Institutional Review Board. The IRB at the University of Georgia has reviewed this project and the procedures for protection of human subjects in research. Questions or

problems regarding your rights as a participant can be addressed to the IRB Chairperson, Human Subjects Office, at 706-542-3199. Dr. Karen Russell is the principal investigator. You can contact her at 706 542-5035 if you have any questions now or after you complete the interview.

Do you agree to participate? May I begin with my questions now? It is possible for us to complete the interview in about 30 minutes, but I don't want you to feel rushed in your responses.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

<u>Introduction</u>

Choose a course you teach most often and think about that when answering the following questions.

1. How many courses do you teach?

2. What course do you teach most often?

3. How long have you been teaching this course?

4. What instructional tools do you use for this course?

5. How do you select the instructional tools used in this course?

6. When thinking about this course, what key ideas/understandings do you want students to leave with?

<u>How do Public Relations professors define diversity?</u>

7. Please define diversity in your own words.

8. What key elements, terms, or ideas are involved in your definition?

9. What has shaped this definition?

10. Where do you feel you fit within your definition?

11. As far as you know, do your colleagues share these ideas?

12. Do you engage in conversation with colleagues about diversity?
    a. If so, who initiates the conversation?
    b. And what types of conversations are they? For example, are they professional, are they academic in nature, are they personal?
    c. Do you find that you are educating others, or are being educated yourself?

13. Do you think about diversity when planning for and teaching your classes?
    a. What do you think about?
    b. If not, are there any particular reasons you don't?

14. Do you feel it's appropriate to express your thoughts about diversity in your classes?
    a. Why or Why not?

15. How old are you?

16. What is your sex?

17. How do you classify yourself in terms of race/ethnicity?

18. Do you think any of these factors influence your thoughts on diversity?
    a. If so, how?

19. What is your title?
    a. How long have you had this position/held this title?

20. Do you have any professional experience/ outside the academy?
    a. How much?

21. In your opinion, does your school/department/college make diversity a priority? How do you know this?

22. Are you apart of any diversity initiatives, panels, organizations, taskforces etc. at your institution?