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ABSTRACT
        A qualitative case study examined professor and
student perceptions regarding how professors use communication to
build their classroom credibility and the influence of the
professor's race in the establishment of credibility. The research
design reflects the vantage point of an African-American female
researcher acknowledging and incorporating her "outsider within"
status into the conceptual framework and the data analysis. Subjects
were 28 student volunteers and a purposeful sample of 6 professors at
a large predominantly white four-year research institution in the
northwest. Data consisted of non-participant observation,
semi-structured interviews, and open-ended questionnaires. The
validity and reliability issues associated with being an "outsider
within" who chooses to study the phenomenon of university classroom
dynamics while using professor race as an integral dimension of the
study are taken into account. At the completion of the study, one
question tends to prevail above all others for the African-American
female "outsider within" academia--"Do you think that being black
introduced bias into your study?" Implications of what that question
could mean when asked by the general public as well as when it is
asked within the academic research community are explored. Contains
70 references and 4 notes. (RS)

"Do You Think Being Black Introduced Bias Into Your Study?":
Validity, Reliability, and the Outsider Within

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Abstract

Qualitative case study is used to examine professor and student perceptions regarding: 1) how professors use communication to build their classroom credibility, and 2) the influence of the professor's race on the establishment of credibility.

The research design reflects the vantage point of an African-American female researcher acknowledging and incorporating her "outsider within" status into the research design from the conceptual framework through the analysis of data. This paper outlines the validity and reliability issues associated with being an "outsider within" who chooses to study the phenomenon of university classroom dynamics while using professor race as an integral dimension of the study. At the completion of the study, one question tends to prevail above all others for this African-American female "outsider within" academia — "Do you think that being Black introduced bias into your study?"

According to Bassett and Smythe (1979) two factors
influence a teacher's ability to affect the self-concepts of
students: 1) credibility, and 2) self-esteem. Whereas self-
esteem is personal and internal, "credibility does not reside in
the teacher but rather in the minds of students" (p. 179).
Although many classroom studies have occurred over the past 30
years assessing teachers' effectiveness in the classroom, few
have investigated how teachers establish and maintain their
credibility (Beatty & Behnke, 1980; Beatty & Zahn, 1990; Frymier
& Thompson, 1992; McCroskey, Holdridge, & Toomb, 1974; McGlone &
Anderson, 1973).

In addition, instructional communication and education
literature is incomplete as the classroom perspective and
pedagogical knowledge of Black professors and teachers has often
been overlooked (Foster, 1990; Shulman, 1987; Zeichner & Gore,
1990). In particular, the experience of being a member of a
subordinate minority group (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) functioning as
a professional within a predominantly white educational
environment has escaped the interest of social scientists
(Foster, 1990; Weinberg, 1977). Yet Black teachers and
professors do exist (see Endnote 1).

Black teachers have been educating children and
adolescents for over 200 years in the United States, yet their
classroom experiences have been chronicled only to a limited
degree (Collier-Thomas, 1982, Cooper, 1986; Moss, 1958).
According to Rose (1966), universities reflect the ills of
society rather than serving as agents for change. Given: 1) the

negative tenor of race relations with the United States (Frisby, 1994; Guess, 1989), and 2) the continued expression of alienation by Black faculty (Cook, 1990; Lopez, 1991), it is logical to speculate that a classroom of predominantly white students may present particular challenges to building credibility and acceptance for the Black teacher and professor. The classroom experiences of Black teachers and professors may not completely parallel those of their white counterparts yet they are expected to: 1) engage all of their students, including whites, in the learning process, and 2) meet the same promotional requirements as white professors (e.g., publication, positive teaching evaluations, service, etc.).

As with any empirical investigation, it was necessary for this researcher to anticipate issues associated with validity and reliability. This necessity was heightened due to this researcher's "outsider within" status and conceptual frame. According to Collins (1986, 1990, 1991), African-American female scholars experience contact with members of their racial community (non-insiders) prior to and **after** initiation into Anglicized post-secondary educational institutions. The attempts of Black female scholars to gain "full insider status" within academia are often mitigated by the fact that we maintain allegiances with other Blacks in our communities, and, as a result, remain aware that complete assimilation into white society is unrealistic within both the general population in the United States as well as within academia. Black female scholars bring a unique and valuable viewpoint to teaching and research -

knowledge borne from being educated in the traditional institutions of learning, forged by white society, and from our lived, daily experiences as Black females (see Endnote 2).

Thus, this research on professor credibility incorporates what Delgado-Gaitan (1993) refers to as investigating the duality of the researched and the researcher. This study on professor credibility, with race as one component, is conceptualized and executed from the vantage point of a Black female "outsider within" academia (Hendrix, 1993, 1994, 1995). While numerous questions are raised by various individuals regarding the methodology and findings, the most prevalent question tends to be, "Do you think that being Black introduced bias into your research?" The question appears to be an inquiry into "interviewer effect" and "objectivity" but is it really?

This paper: 1) provides a rationale for the research on professor credibility (and the influence of race) while also summarizing the research findings, 2) outlines how the research design addressed anticipated validity and reliability issues, 3) briefly notes several "outsider within" research observations and reflections, 4) acknowledges movement within the academic research community toward redefining objectivity, and 5) explores the possible meanings of the question posed regarding researcher race and biased findings.

Investigating Professor Credibility

Participants

The participants in this study represented a "purposeful rather than random" sample (Miles & Huberman, p. 36). Six professors (two in phase one, four in phase two) were selected using the following criteria: 1) race, 2) gender, 3) age, 4) teaching experience, and 5) departmental affiliation. The goal was to obtain the participation of male dyads reflecting professors who worked in the same division and possessed comparable years of teaching experi- ence at the collegiate level. However, three of the professors would be Black and three, white. The three dyads represented the social sciences **(Professors Bryan and Wyatt)**; performing arts **(Professors Mearns and Kindred)**; and, an undergraduate professional program **(Professors Samuel and Stone)**.

A total of twenty-eight students enrolled in one of six courses under observation participated in this study.   On the third week in the quarter, a "Professor Credibility Survey" was disseminated in the classes. Student volunteers (those providing identifying information allowing for follow-up contact) were separated by class standing (i.e., sophomore, junior, etc.), race, and major (in the same field as the professor or in another field). Student interviewees were then randomly selected from a volunteer pool within each category. In the second phase of data collection, the selection procedures were adapted due to the limited number of students who volunteered to make themselves available for in-person interviews (see Endnote 2). The twenty-eight students can be summarized as: 11 white males, 3 Black males, 1 Pacific Islander male, 9 white females, 2 Black females,

1 Native American female, and 1 Asian female. Data were gathered

from nine students in phase one and nineteen

students in phase two.

Research Questions

The specific research questions were:

RQ1:   What verbal and nonverbal communication cues do
       professors believe lead their students to per-
       ceive them as credible?

RQ2:   What verbal and nonverbal communication cues,
       exhibited by professors, lead students to
       perceive their professors as credible?

RQ3:   When the professor's race is not the same
       as the majority of the students' in the
       class, what verbal and nonverbal communica-
       tion does the professor view as leading to
       student perceptions of credibility?

RQ4:   What criteria are used by students to assess
       credibility when the professor's race is not
       the same as the majority of the students' in

       the class?

Research Methods

        Non-participant observation occurred in six undergraduate

courses at a large four year research institution in the

Northwest reflecting a predominantly white student enrollment.

The university was selected as the site of the investigation

because the percentage of Black faculty (1.5 %) and Black student

enrollment (3.2%) was consistently small - certainly, less than

the percentage found in the general metropolitan population

(10.1%). Three different methods were utilized to address the

research questions: 1) non-participant observation (Spradley,

1979, 1980), 2) semi-structured interviews (Ginsburg, Jacobs, &
Lopez, in press) of students and professors,and 3) open- ended
questionnaires. Findings were triangulated across these three
methods (Erickson, 1986; Mathison, 1988).

Findings

The participants in this study defined credibility in two
ways: 1) being knowledgeable, or 2) being knowledge- able and a
good teacher. Most of the student participants assessed
credibility based upon a professor's communicative behavior in
the class room (rhetorical ethos) or the reputation which
preceded him rather than automatically assuming credibility based
upon his "professor" status. The professor participants believed
that credibility and good teaching were not synonymous. Although
they believed that being credible was one aspect of being a good
teacher, they believed a professor could be credible
(knowledgeable) without being an effective teacher.

In regard to specific verbal and nonverbal cues which
assisted students in determining the credibility of their
professors, the students indicated these professors revealed
their: academic and professional preparation, confidence in their
knowledge, and ability to provide real life examples rather than
relying solely on hypothetical ones (refer to Hendrix, 1994 for
more specific examples). However, all three of the Black
professors were held to a more stringent standard than their
white counterparts - establishing their credibility through the
provision of greater amounts of information about their academic

and professional background and/or more extensive demonstration
of their knowledge and skills to their students.

The Black professors were cognizant of their "minority"
presence in a predominantly white institution. The Black
professors indicated that it was critical to their credibility
that they communicate their qualifications to the students.
These professors mentioned their academic degrees, the
institutions where they were earned, and their work experience at
various points during the quarter.

The student participants did not personally believe that
any professor had an automatic advantage in establish- ing
credibility based on race. One of the students did, however,
articulate her belief that there was a "cultural" or "societal"
norm which would favor the white, male professor even before he
spoke. Several of the students acknowledged that it might be
more difficult for a Black professor to establish his/her
credibility in subject areas which were not linked to his/her
race and indicated their counterpars would use more rigorous
standards for assessing the credibility of Black professors in
disciplinary areas (e.g., engineering) which could not be linked
with the professor's race. Several of the students also said
they believed (especially the students of color) the Black
professors had to work harder to achieve their position within
academia.

The findings indicate the classroom does indeed present
particular challenges for Black professors teaching within
predominantly white institutions. In view of the pivotal role

played by teachers and professors, the researcher suggests variations on the research questions and continued research in order to gain insight into the classroom experience of professors/teachers of color. Such knowledge can assist in ensuring successful classroom and career experiences for the person of color and can, perhaps, provide valuable information regarding what communicative behavior exhibited by professors/teachers of color is effective in promoting student learning.

Justification of the Research Methods
Validity, Reliability, and the "Outsider Within"

<u>Validity</u>

According to Stewart (1994), there are three versions of validity: 1) classical, 2) pluralistic, and 3) interpre-tive/rhetorical. Of the three versions of validity outlined by Stewart (1994), this study was guided most by the classi- cal definition. The classical version of validity seeks to fit the observation and measurement of some phenomenon to an objective reality (Brinberg & McGrath, 1985).

However, given the unique "outsider within" vantage point of this researcher, as a Black female, the study was also heavily influenced by Taylor's (1985) interpetive/ rhetorical version of validity. According to Taylor, research should be conducted which contributes to the actual practice of the subject under study in a way which "enables [the] practice to become less stumbling and more clairvoyant" (p. 111). Two researcher goals were to: 1) contribute to a better understanding of classroom

dynamics including the influence of race upon the practice of
teach- ing and learning, and 2) enhance the likelihood of under-
standing classroom dynamics by virtue of a "good fit," in a
classical sense, between the data observed and the "reality" they
supposedly represent.

In order to establish this study's reliability and validity
(Hendrix, 1993, 1994) and to avoid the category of what Philipsen
(1977, p. 42) refers to as the "theoretically aimless and
methodologically shifty," suggestions offered by LeCompte and
Goetz (1982) for enhancing internal and external validity were
followed such as:

1. clearly designating the phenomena under
    study as professor credibility and race
    and clearly delineating the research
    methods and analytic categories,

2. creating research instruments (e.g., survey
    questions and semi-structure interview
    questions) which were mutually intelli-
    gible to myself and my participants to
    reduce construct effects.

3. "consistently attend to member's categories
    and meanings..." (Emerson, 1987) by asking
    how the participants interpreted particular
    events and terms and paraphrasing the
    responses offered by both professor and
    student participants while also audio-
    recording their verbatim comments.

4. recording observations in a standardized mode
    using a "working version" of a descriptive
    framework to guide observation (Philipsen, 1982)
    Specifically, the constructs of self, task, and
    impact (Staton-Spicer & Darling, 1987); analytic
    units for social situations (Lofland & Lofland,
    1984); the historic conceptualization of
    credibility; and, the "outsider within"
    perspective providee lens from which to view
    classroom encounters, written responses, and
    inteviews.

5. avoidance of spurious conclusions by trian-
    gulating data collection methods - e.g.,
    interviews with professors, interviews with
    with students, and participant observation
    (Erickson, 1986; Mathison, 1988).

6. noting my status, demographics, and active
    relationship with the participants and the
    setting in order to delineate clearly
    possible setting effects.

7. observing and interviewing professor parti-
    cipants over an 11 week period to: a) reduce
    observer effects which may generate "best
    behavior," and b) capture historical and
    maturation effects which may occure in the
    social setting and the participants over
    an academic quarter.

8. observing in-situ rather than in an artificial
    setting (Philipsen, 1982).

Reliability

The goal of this proposed study is not generalizability but,

rather, translatability and comparability. Reliability addresses

the ability of a researcher or her/his peers to replicate an

investigation and to obtain similar findings. However, this

researcher conceptualizes replicability in terms of varying

degrees. It is at this point, that this researcher departs from

"classical" positivist conceptuali- zations of research validity

and reliability. Given my particular racial and gender

characteristics, I do not claim that the study results will be

replicable in their entirety however, the eight steps taken

below enhance the degree to which another researcher can achieve

similar findings. In order to establish this study's

reliability, per LeCompte and Goetz (1982), I:
    1. clearly delineate the research methods and
        analytic categories.

2. use mechanically recorded data, in conjunction
   with field notes, to assist in the preservation
   of raw data for continuous review and analysis
   by me or fellow researchers.

3. provide verbatim accounts of narrative (low
   inference descriptors) combined with my
   interpretation (high inference) which allows
   for peer examination.

4. use participants as "participant researchers"
   to routinely cross-check my observations and
   interpretations.

5. carefully describe the participants, how they
   were selected, and their roles in order to
   guide the investigations of other researchers.

6. carefully describe the pertinent physical,

   social, and interpersonal contexts in order to
        guide the investigations of other researchers.

7. note my status, demographics, and active
   relationship with the participants and the
   setting ("outsider within") rather than
   projecting a role of "passive reflector"
   of the setting (Collins, 1991; Emerson, 1987;
   Saville-Troike, 1989).

8. thoroughly explain my "researcher developed"
   schemes to enhance the likelihood of inter-
   observer reliability.

The "Outsider Within" as a Research Standpoint

When discussing reliability, LeCompte and Goetz (1982)
note delineation of researcher status (membership and position)
within the group under study as crucial informa- tion assisting
in the replication or supplementation of research results. As a
backdrop, the race, gender, and educational level (Black, female,
doctoral student) of this researcher allowed the study to be

conducted from a special vantage point often absent within
traditional research - the "outsider within."

The unique communicative event (i.e., a Black female
interviewer of Black and white interviewees) needs to be
recognized and acknowledged as one research standpoint to be
pursued and explored rather than "accounted for" and "balanced."
White confederates were not used to assist in the interview
process. The use of confederates would have
denied: 1) the commonplace position of underlying racial tension
in everyday interaction within the United States, 2) creates a
second order, contrived reality, 3) eliminatef an opportunity for
this Black female researcher to refine her "disciplined
subjectivity" in such a communicative event, and 4) diminished
the importance of the reality associated with Black/white
encounters.

According to Hartsock (1983), a research standpoint is not
simply an interested (biased) position but, rather,is a sense of
being engaged which structures epistemology by positing "duality
of levels of reality, of which the deeper level or essence both
includes and explains the 'surface' or appearance..." (p. 285).
For instance, another potential "standpoint" for this same
proposed study could be represented by the disciplinary knowledge
and gendered (female) experience of this researcher (Code, 1988).

Despite other available standpoints, this researcher viewed
and analyzed the classroom and dyadic interactions as an
"outsider within" employing an "experienceable" qualita- tive
approach. The "experienceable" approach incorporated meanings

generated by the individual researcher, individual participants, and shared meanings as well (Philipsen, Personal communication, April 3, 1991). It was the lived, daily experience of being a Black female born and raised in the United States, and educated within its institutions of learning (rather the formal training in research methods), which influenced me to recognize several important dimensions associated with: 1) developing a particular research design and, 2) attending to multiple interpretations of seemingly "uneventful" classroom behavior.

Outsider Within Reflections About Credibility Research

Three (of many) reflections are noted here to provide a glimpse into the psyche of this researcher functioning as an "outsider within."

Establishing MY credibility. It was important for me to establish MY credibility with both the student and professor participants. Rather than having the professor participants or their research assistants explain my research and solicit participation, I requested permission to speak to each of the six classes involved in the study. Once at the front of the room, I introduced myself as a Speech Communication doctoral student with instructional communication as my area of expertise. Instructional communication was explained to the students as well as my objective of investigating how professors use communication to build, maintain, and even lose credibility. I then explained my triangulated research design which called for input from the professors, students, and researcher. Finally, I provided two reasons for completing the survey in part or in its entirety - 1)

the data would move me toward graduation which was an idea I found quite appealing, and 2) the research reflected the beginning stages of a long-range commitment to the subject area.

I indicated that I hoped to use the data in a practical manner in order to initiate programs for training professors how to teach in the classroom rather than learning to teach via trial and error and experimentation for several years while learning their duties. The survey was then distributed to the class members and the researcher indicated she was willing to answer any questions.

In regard to the professors, just the as Black professors believed they had to earn the perception of being credible in the eyes of both their Black and white students, I experienced similar feelings with all of my professor participants. Initially, my concerns about establishing credibility were grounded in the perceived need to establish that, as a doctoral student, I could be trusted to keep their confidentiality, and accurately (and fairly) record my observations and their interview comments. Later in the quarter, I perceived my credibility as linked to my ability to demonstrate, as a Black person, that I was capable of accurately and fairly recording comments about race.

Cultivating an atmosphere of trust. In addition to establishing my credibility, it was important to secure the participants' trust so they would relax during the interview and provide forthright, honest answers. This was particularly true in the case of students who, unlike the professors who were

interviewed at several points during the quarter, were only
interviewed once.

Student interviews were generally conducted in the
researcher's office without the presence of my officemates. When
a student arrived, the person was greeted and left alone for
several minutes to review the Student Consent Form and to address
an envelope so a xerox of the form could be forwarded to her/him
for their personal records. The time alone was also designed to
give each student participant an opportunity to "settle in" and
obtain a personal glimpse of me by seeing my space within the
office, family photos, books, etc. as well as those of my
officemates - fellow graduate students. Students were notified
at the onset of the interview that more sensitive questions
pertaining to race would be asked during the latter part of the
interview and that they were under no obligation to respond
(Brannen, 1988) as an additional trust-building strategy..

A review of the interview notes indicate a kinship between
my student interviewees of color and me - with the exception of
one. My transcripts reflect movement towards a more casual tone
and colloquialisms which signal inclusive- ness. I used some of
the same code-switching moves (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b; Hymes,
1974) which were noticed in the conversation of Professor Bryan
and his students as well as his interviews with me.

The interpersonal dimensions of the interview process did
not present me with dilemmas. Part of my responsibi-
lity as an interviewer is to put the students at ease. One means
of accomplishing this task was to convey "fictive kinship." I

had to choose between being the prim, proper, and detached
interviewer (the typical Anglicized male model as noted by
Oakley, 1981) or a professional cognizant of my femininity, age,
and race (and that of my interviewees). When interviewing
students, I chose to act in ways which I believed was expected of
me (while being genuine) given their similarities and/or
differences as advocated by Oakley (1981).

Seeing beyond the obvious - etic vs. emic. The
classroom represents a social system where students and
professors come together and encounter each other on a regular
basis. Classroom encounters entailed social practices and
episodes revolving around sharing meanings in order to promote
the learning process.   Using the defini- tion of "social
practice," most classroom dynamics can be conceived of as
undramatic, normal ritualistic events (roll call, announcements,
preview of the lesson, transition into the first part of the
lesson, etc.) - even challenges from unruly and/or fun-loving
students can be construed as somewhat expected behaviors only, at
best, briefly function- ing as "episodes" within the classroom.

However, **Professors Bryan, Mearns, and Samuel** recognized
their presence in the predominately white post-secondary
institution as far from normal as did their students. Thus, the
daily classroom interaction which outwardly appears as an "often
ignored" social practice within the classroom can be perceived as
"episodic" in and of itself, by the Black professors, or riddled
with the potential for "episodes." Within the Lofland and
Lofland (1984) schema, an event is categorized as an "episode"

if at least two parties visibly recognize and interpret the "episode" as one which is "remarkable" and "dramatic." However, in the case of the Black professors and their white students, the interpretation of what is "normal" versus what is "remarkable" may significantly differ due to societal definitions associated with capabilities and race.

Given his unusual position within the academic organization and the negative societal stereotypes associated with being Black in the American "settlement," what may be considered by whites to be normal behavior may not be viewed as such by and for the Black professor. In addition, when negative classroom events occur which are mutually defined as "episodic," the Black professor may expand his repertoire to include the consideration of his race as a motivation for a student's behavior. Thus, his interpretation of the catalyst for the "episode" may differ from the interpre- tations of fellow participants in the event.

The relative roles of the classroom participants are affected not only by self-definition but by societal definitions (including stereotypes) as well. Thus, the Lofland and Lofland schema did not function well in plotting the relative positions of participants in heterogeneous social settings - in particular settings involving "majority" versus "minority" status. The schema appears to be built upon a presumption of participant shared meanings which lead to mutual assessment of what is "normal" versus what is "remarkable."

Redefining Objectivity

Kuhn (1962) has indicated that researchers do not investigate phenomena as individuals but, rather, as members of particular research communities who subscribe to an often implicit paradigm which directs their studies. The paradigm determines what is viewed as a valid problem for study, what methods are appropriate for investigation of the problem, and what solutions should be offered. Logical positivism and qualitative research reflects two such paradigms of differing approaches to theory and research.

Logical positivism has traditionally been grounded in the notion of researcher objectivity. According to Lindlof (1995), objectivist science claimed to create a boundary between its research operations and the world of personal, ethical, and political choices. Positivists believe that theory development and method application should (and can) be free of human values and other potentially contaminating influences. Thus, positivists refuse to allow value positions to affect the way their studies are designed, data are collected, and are analyzed.

Other researchers argue that subjectivism is present in all research to some degree. For instance, the quantitative researcher makes rhetorical choices when wording measurement instruments, giving study participants instructions, and writing up the study results for journal publications. In addition, scholars argue that there is value in subjectivity (Clark, 1973; Oakley, 1981.) Kenneth Clark indicates that a social science built upon objectivity is useless in redressing the ills of a society desperately in need of moral and empirical guidance.

Clark further argues that all people come to whatever they do with subjectivity and it is subjectivity which makes us human while Hawes (1977) laments the absence of researcher reflexivity in the description of communication research. Hawes believes researchers should offer a detailed rationale for both what topics we study and how we decided to investigate the topic.

Qualitative researchers would argue that subjectivism which is acknowledged and properly documented (e.g., verbatim transcription, researcher's interpretive notes, etc.) adds to the reliability of one's research. In addition, from the perspective of liberation ethics, the moral underpinnings of the selected topics may, ultimately, contribute to improving the human condition (Cannon, 1988; Clark, 1973; Friere, 1993; Thompson, 1993). According to liberation ethicists, it is the right of those facing oppression to develop the strategies for change. As a result, concrete experience is one criterion for researcher credibility. Thus, per Thompson (1993) the insights Blacks have in understanding Black reality and responses to injustice should be acknowledged and appreciated (see Endnote 3).

"Do You Think Being Black Introduced Bias?"
What is Really Being Asked and/or Stated?

If then, the criterion of objectivity has been gradually redefined to include varying degrees of subjectivity, why would I be asked "Do you think being Black introduced bias into your study?" by several study participants (professors and students), committee members, and colleagues? Interviewer effect

is but one factor which can reduce the internal validity of a researcher's data yet this one methodological criterion dominates other questions regarding this particular study of the influence of race on professor credibility. There are several possible reasons for asking the question.

First, when posed by the general public (and student participants), it can be taken as: 1) a request for details regarding my methodology and documentation processes, 2) an expression of concern (an implicit warning) that I must be able to appropriately respond to the question in order avoid allowing others to invalidate the importance of the research topic and the findings, and 3) a "straw man" issue which, without an appropriate response, allows the person asking the question to bypass all other methodological issues and automatically negate the research.

Second, when posed by a member of the academic community, the question can be taken as: 1) a request for details regarding my methodology and documentation processes, 2) an expression of concern that I be prepared to address the question when posed by opponents (especially posivists), 3) a "straw man" issues, and 4) an implicit request for information regarding what constitutes methodological rigor when a person of color chooses to study race. The fourth interpretation will be explored in the remainder of this section in terms of: 1) a lack of knowledge regarding validity and reliability issues for scholars of color, 2) the power to judge the merit of research by scholars of vs. the ability to do so, 3) alternate standards for determining the

value of particular research projects, and 4) frustratations experienced by scholars of color despite the movement toward redefining "objectivity."

Lack of knowledge

While traditional systems are applicable (and necessary) for the Black researcher they are not sufficient. According to Allen, Heckel, & Garcia (1980), "...the journey outside the fishbowl for neophyte black researchers will be fraught with obstacles and pitfalls, for it is they who must chart an insightful course for those who will follow" (p. 770). I maintain one reason for the "obstacles and pitfalls" is lack of familiarity with the issues faced by the Black researcher (and others of color). According to Moss (1958), "only two Negroes other than Dr. Du Bois held teaching assignments in predominantly white colleges prior to 1900" (p. 453). And, according to the 1985 United States Equal Opportunity Commission Report (Guess, 1989), 90% of the full-time faculty are white whereas only 4.1% are Black. It has also been documented that Blacks typically cluster at the bottom of the tenure ladder or are in positions (Berry, 1982) with no possibility for tenure. At the collegiate level, the number of Black professors has not increased over the past two decades.

Ward (1992) provides us with a personal description of her lack of knowledge regarding other races. Ward describes many years of possessing little consciousness of her whiteness and white privelege (contrasted with the position of women of color) while developing a feminist curriculum at her university. She admits years of focusing on gender to the exclusion of race and

class and then, finally, acknowledging her discomfort at being

expected (she was influenced by the presence of Black women in

her courses) to teach about gender and race. Ward then describes

her

lengthy transcendence toward the development of an inclusive

approach to gender including the incorporation of scholarly

works by women of color. She acknowledged her ignorance, the

importance of an inclusive multi-dimensional perspective, the

need to learn the research by scholars of color, and to integrate

that research into the Women's Studies curriculum.

The Power to Judge Research Merit

In view of this absence of familiarity with the research of

scholars of color and the methodological issues which we face,

scholars of color are now expressing concern that the traditional

Eurocentric perspective used to evaluate research puts non-

traditional research at a disadvantage (de la Luz Reyes & Halcon,

1990) as it is devalued. De la Luz Reyes and Halcon express

their concern that whites lack the appropriate cultural

perspective to judge the merit of the research (and covertly

disapprovalof Brown-on-Brown research) yet maintain the power to

determine whether scholars of color receive tenure and promotion.

In his book addressing conducting research on sensitive

topics, Lee (1993) indicates the cancellation of two major

research projects on sexual behavior in the United States and

Great Britain raise issues such as: 1) what kind of research is

permissable, 2) what kind of research encroaches upon people's

lives, 3) how data quality can be ensured, and 4) how much can

the powerful control research.I would argue that the research
conducted by scholars of color which addresses issues linked to
the race and ethnicity of the researcher, poses similar
questions. For instance, who has the power to authorize the
research project; approve the grant funds; determine the tenure
merit of the research; and, determine whether the research
findings will be published.

Alternative Standards of Merit

(Marsha, there WILL be something here in time for SCA. I'm too
tired to think anymore and will not subject myself to writing
jibberish nor wasting your time having you read it.)

Who defines "sensitive" and who defines "valid" and "valuable."

--the value may be found not in what occurs in academia

  but, rather, what is done for society

  "The Ethic of Community Responsibility" Thompson '93

  "The Ethnography of Empowerment" Delgado-Gaitan 1993

  "The Ethic of Caring and Personal Accountability" Collins

  1991

--Taylor's interpretive/rhetorical

Frustrations Faced by Researchers of Color & Women

         Numerous scholars speak of the choices which must be
made by researchers who are people of color and/or female.
Collins (1986) speaks of three options available to the African-
American female researcher: 1) leaving the discipline (sociology)
and remaining a outsider, 2) adopt the bona fide "thinking as
usual" promoted by the research communi / within one's

discipline, and 3) institutionalizing the "outsider within" as a legitimate way of seeing. De la Luz Reyes and Halcon (1990) speak of four Hispanic responses to racism within academia: 1) give in (sell out), 2) give up (burn-out and perhaps leaving academia), 3) move on (moving on to another campus before assimilating or readily ascribing to the mainstream perspectives), and 4) fight back by either succeeding within the system until tenure is earned or exposing injustice and risking exclusion from academia. Ward and Grant (1991) speak of the decision feminist scholars must make between merging with mainstream sociology or proceeding on a "wavelength of their own" and, thereby, legitimizing (Aptheker, 1989) a feminist's different form of knowledge which resists the objectifica- tion of subjects and ignoring women's experience as differentiated by race, color, and the suppression of emotion.

Conclusion

We know all scholars, regardless of race, gender, and social class need communities where they are insiders: that is, are cherished for who they are and how they see the world, and encouraged to share that vision and perspective with colleagues, students, and other communities (Weber, Higginbo- tham, & Dill, 1994, p. 42)

Education and communication researchers have not explored sufficiently teacher credibility or the classroom communication and experiences of teachers and professors of

color - in particular, teachers and professors belonging to
subordinate minority groups. As a result, there are gaps in the
literature due to its incomplete status.

Qualitative case studies of six professors (three Black,
three white) are used to examine the relationship of race and
student perceptions of credibility. Ultimately, the researcher
desires to contribute to an enhanced understand- ing of classroom
dynamics by: 1) ensuring a "good fit," in a classical sense,
between the phenomena observed and the "reality" they supposedly
represent, and 2) studying race, teaching, and credibility as a
social practice consistent with Taylor's (1985)
interpretive/rhetorical version of validity.

The findings from interviews with twenty-eight undergraduate
students, enrolled in one of six courses, indicate the classroom
presents particular challenges for Black professors teaching at a
predominantly white post-secondary institution. Overall, these
student interviewees wanted their professors, Black or white, to
be knowledgeable, experienced in their subject area, effective
users of teaching techni- ques, and skilled demonstrators/
deliverers of their subject matter content. Yet students,
in general, desired more evidence of the exact nature of the
academic and experiential credentials of their Black professors.

The three Black professors were cognizant of their
"minority" status and believed that white students applied: 1) a
different set of criteria for judging their classroom
credibility, and/ore 2) a more stringent set of standards than
their Black students. However, they also acknowledged that it

was necessary to earn credibility in the eyes of Black students as well. The white professors were accustomed to classrooms where the majority of their students were of the same race as the professor. As a result, although interested in establishing their credibility, they worried less about their race influencing student perceptions.

This researcher also details the methodological steps executed within the study to address issues of validity and reliability. The discussion of the move within the social science research community to negate logical positivism as the only credible means of conducting research (Lindlof, 1993) provides a foundation for exploring the contradictions faced by scholars of color. Specifically, this researcher explores the contradiction between the call for reflexivity and certains degrees of subjectivism in research and the charges (overt and covert) that scholars of color who research participants of their own race and ethnicity introduce bias into their findings - thus, the question, "Do you think that being Black introduced bias into your study?"

Endnotes

1. "Black" is being used as a formal name designating
    nationality parallel to the term "African-American."
    The term "Black" is capitalized in recognition that,
    due to slavery; most Blacks cannot identify a speci-
    fic tribe or nationality associated with an "old
    country."

2. In phase one, 84 surveys were completed in Professor
    Bryan's class and of these 20 contained identifying
    information to allow contact for interviews. 219
    completed surveys were returned in Professor Wyatt's
    class. Of the 219, 53 contained identifying informa-
    tion allowing contact for interviews.

    An adaptation of the selection procedure noted on
    page seven became necessary due to the limited number
    of students who volunteered to make themselves avail-
    able for in-person interviews. In the large group
    instruction courses taught by Professors Mearns and
    Kindred, the response to the credibility survey was
    79% and 45% respectively. However, only 16% (25)
    of the total respondents identified themselves in
    manner allowing selection for interviews in Mearns'
    course and 22% (17) in Kindred's.   In the case of
    Professors Samuel and Stone, who taught courses
    with enrollments approximating 48 and 40, there was
    a 88% (42) and 60% (23) total return respectively.
    However, only 7% (3) of the total respondents iden-
    tified themselves in a manner allowing for interviews
    in Samuel's course and 13% (3) in Stone's.

    Given the low percentages of students willing to
    participate in a one hour interview, the original
    selection procedures were adapted. All six students
    enrolled in the courses taught by Professors Samuel
    and Stone were automatically selected for interviews.
    It is also important to note that, given the
    structured program, most students enrolled in the
    courses taught by these two professors were juniors,
    seniors and, to a lesser degree, fifth-year students.

Endnotes, continued

In **Professor Kindred's** course, three white males
were selected from the freshman, sophomore, and
junior respondents volunteering for interviews as
well as the only two Black males willing to volunteer
for an interview. Of the two Black males, only one
actually scheduled an interview. Three white females
were also selected, representing three of the
four class levels - freshman, junior, and senior.

In the case of **Professor Mearns**, three white
males and one Asian (the only person of color to
provide identifying information allowing follow-up
for an interview) were selected along with three
white females and the only Black female to provide
identifying information. Ultimately, the student
of Asian descent did not show for his interview.

3.   Thompson and other scholars (Delgado-Gaitan, 1993;
hooks, 1981; Collins,1986, 1990) are not subscribing
to the belief which would say only Blacks are capable
of researching and studying Blacks or Hispanics able
to study Hispanics. These scholars are not advocates
of "essentialist determinism" but, rather, informed
consciousness.

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