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# The Interethnic Communication Apprehension of Students of Color at the University of Arkansas

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The Interethnic Communication Apprehension of Students of Color  
at the University of Arkansas

The Interethnic Communication Apprehension of Students of Color  
at the University of Arkansas

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Higher Education

by  
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May 2014  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Interethnic Communication Apprehension of students of color with white faculty members was studied at the University of Arkansas, a predominantly white university with predominantly white faculty. Interethnic Communication Apprehension is defined as a psychological response of fear or anxiety which causes avoidance of interaction with people from ethnic groups that are different from one's own (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997). This study was conducted using the PRECA (Personal Report of Interethnic Communication Apprehension) measure created and validated by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997). Students of color who frequent the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education were polled using the PRECA. Students of all categories including ethnicity, sex, and grade level reported low mean scores on Interethnic Communication Apprehension. However, significant issues of concern were articulated in open ended responses which indicate that though the construct labeled Interethnic Communication Apprehension (ICA) may be low, other areas of tension and communication dissatisfaction exist. Therefore, other variables such as Attractiveness of Majority faculty and Asymmetrical Power Dynamics between faculty and students of color should be examined.

Students expressed need for increased inclusion; culturally relevant event programming; the salience of culture with desire for improved understanding of members of different groups; communication quality, quantity and access between ethnic groups; dissatisfaction or negative experiences at the University; faculty and staff roles; and finally, sensitivity and training of faculty and students when relating to people of color.

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The African Proverb says, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Achieving this Doctorate has been similar, a village effort. There are many who have become part of my village, and to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude. Innumerable acts of kindness, support, and intellectual contribution from others have helped me complete this academic journey. I am deeply grateful.

### **Faithful God**

I never thought of myself as intelligent, or even capable of academic pursuits because of the invisible disabilities caused by a lifetime of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. When I sought God on how to escape the lifelong cycle of abuse, He kept saying, “Study to show yourself approved . . . a worker that does not need to be ashamed” (2 Timothy 2:15). As an avid reader and pursuer of knowledge, I had made a lifestyle of reading every self-help and non-fiction book I could get my hands on. I was as educated as self-education could make me. I realized that I needed to go to college, even though I didn’t think I was capable of it. I trusted that what God directed me to do, He would empower me to do. He did. God gave me favor and opened the doors for scholarships, friendships, and the academic and social support I needed to succeed.

When I didn’t know how to do my assignments (or in the beginning to even download an attachment), I received ideas out of “nowhere” with new and creative thoughts of how to accomplish my academic tasks. The ideas came from God, who made a way for me every time I turned around. “The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, an ever present help in times of trouble” (Psalms 9:9). I came to understand and embrace these words of hope, “I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord. They are plans to prosper you, plans never to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future, these are the plans I have for you” Jeremiah 29:11.

I am most grateful to the Lord Jesus Christ, who made the way for me to escape the cycle of abuse, to resurrect my life, and to heal; The Holy Spirit, who has been my constant comforter, teacher, and guide; and The Father, who is always good and always kind.

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## **DEDICATION**

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I identify with the pain of Sojourner Truth who said, “I cried out with a mother’s grief, none but Jesus heard” (Gates & McKay, 2004, p. 248). It is my hope that, those tears, prayers, and this dissertation will ignite courage for change, build value, and empower oppressed, abused and disenfranchised people; but that especially you, my children will be ignited with courage, built up, and empowered.

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

Demographic shifts, demands for knowledge workers, and the mass retirement of baby boomers have placed new pressures on higher education in the United States (Canton, 2007). Legislative demands for transparency and efficiency have created pressures to perform better (Knott & Payne, 2004), serve a broader demographic of students well, and to do so with less federal and state funding (McLendon, Hearn, & Mokher, 2009; Sabloff, 1997). If only for pragmatic reasons, higher Education must dedicate itself to understanding and meeting the needs of students from all population demographics, particularly students of color (Canton, 2007) who have historically been excluded (Thelin, 2004) and are still under-represented in higher education and especially underrepresented at public doctorate-granting, and public four year institutions (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2011, 2010). “Underrepresented minorities’ are black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native students, who attend college at disproportionately low rates compared with the percentage of those groups in the U.S. population” (U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Department of Statistics, Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System, 2010).

Yet, because the social, racial, professional and economic landscapes are changing with higher levels of integration than ever before (Stoute, 2011; Kim & McKay, 2009; Chung & Ting-Toomey, 1999) many European Americans commonly believe that with the election of an African American President of the United States and these observed patterns of change in social integration, racial discrimination has become a thing of the past, and ethnic tension is a figment of the imagination of a very few radical liberals (Brown, Carnoy, Curry, Duster, Oppenheimer, Shultz, & Wellman, 2005; Allen, 2011). White Americans often believe that The Civil Rights

Act and Affirmative Action have corrected the residual effects of the oppressive history of slavery, Jim Crow laws, and the general lack of equal access to citizenship benefits for people of color in the U.S. (Brown et al., 2005; Ford, 2010). However, significant research has indicated that the residue of national history toward people of color still has negative effects in society and in the attitudes of people of different races towards each other (Ford, 2010; Brown et al., 2005). Recent works by historians Robinson and Williams (2010), Allen (2011), Oliver and Horton (2005), Thelin (2004), and Brown, et al., (2005) have documented both historical and ongoing effects of disadvantage for people of color. Ford's (2010) report on a poll conducted by the Blair Center of Southern Politics and Society at the University of Arkansas found that the election of the first African American president has not alleviated racial stereotypes. In fact, racial groups still harbor "negative evaluations and stereotypes of other groups" (para. 2) and there is insignificant regional difference in these attitudes. The work of psychologists, business, and communication researchers; Tatum (1997), Canas and Sondak (2011), Ting-Toomey (2005), Hofstede (1983, 1984, 2001), Hecht, Collier, and Ribeau (1993), Gudykunst and Kim (1997), have helped provide an understanding of how historical and cultural factors culminate into current day issues that higher education must address in order to effectively fulfill the mission of educating students who have historically been excluded. The economic survival and competitiveness of the U.S. depends upon being able to fill the void in the new global economy that requires technology, education, leadership, innovation, and the knowledge industry that is being vacated by baby boomers (Canton, 2007; Allen, 2011).

Education must be made accessible and effective for the new workforce that will replace the past generations. This new workforce ". . . will be dominated by women and minorities, especially Hispanic Americans by 2020" (Canton, 2007, p. 95). Due to the low skills of the American workforce in the high-tech industry, Canton further asserted that there may be 14

million more jobs than workers needed to fulfill the demands of the U.S. economy by 2015. As a result, the global competitiveness and leadership of the U.S. will be severely compromised, and the demand for innovation and technology skilled workers will force major outsourcing of high wage jobs to other countries (Canton, 2007).

### **Purpose of Study**

The area of faculty-student interaction has been shown to be both problematic, and beneficial to the success of students in higher education (Terenzini, Pascarella, & Blimling, 1999; White & Lowenthal 2011). Unfortunately, the laws, history, institutions, and citizens of the United States have created sociological, economic, psychological and communication distance between White Americans and Americans of other races and ethnicities as a result of “an ideology of white supremacy” (Allen, p. 90) and racialized violent treatment of people of color (Horton & Horton, 2005; Kaplan & Lee, 2007; Hecht, et al, 1993; Young, 2009; Thelin 2004; Nwosu, 2009; Robinson & Williams, 2010, Moshin, 2009; Warren, 2009; Gates & McKay, 2004).

Student development research has indicated that students of color have special concerns because of the above mentioned historical and social context. Like white students, students of color are in the midst of important cognitive developmental tasks (Evans, Forney, Guido, Patton, & Renn, 2010). However, in contrast to white students, students of color are also highly attuned to and involved with the psychological and cognitive development processes of assigning meaning to their experiences of race and ethnicity (Evans et al., 2010).

Students today have to contend with negative racial attitudes and stereotypes that are still prevalent throughout all regions of the country (Ford, 2010). In a scientific poll conducted by the Blair Center for Southern Politics and Society, over 80% of African Americans and over 60% of Latinos surveyed reported experiencing race based discrimination in their daily lives (Ford,



2010). Over 58% of African Americans polled reported being treated as if they were feared as opposed to 26-30% of Latinos (depending on region). Only 15 to 18% of whites reported being treated in a discriminatory fashion because of being feared (Ford, 2010). The everyday experiences of discrimination and fear laced treatment during formative years may affect the sense of safety and trust of students once separated from the certainty and familiarity of ethnically homogeneous hometowns to negotiate life on a college campus, particularly a predominantly white institution (Cushman, 2007; White & Lowenthal, 2010; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Allen, 2011; Orbe, 2004; Terenzini et al., 1999; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Kim, 1986; Tatum, 1997; Kanter, 1977).

As a function of the above referenced dynamics in society, Interethnic Communication Apprehension (ICA) between students of color and white faculty at Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) may result in diminished student-faculty interaction because of fear (Ford, 2010), anxiety (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; White & Lowenthal, 2011), uncertainty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), and differences in cultural values affecting communication norms (White & Lowenthal, 2011; McCroskey, 2009; Triandis, 2009; Young, 2009; Swaiden, Rawwas, & Vitell, 2008; Nwosu, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 2005, 2010; Orbe, 2004; Hofstede, 2001; Terenzini, et al., 1999; Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Kim, 1986; Kanter, 1977). Interethnic Communication Apprehension is defined as a psychological response of fear or anxiety which causes avoidance of interaction with people from ethnic groups that are different from one's own (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997). Interethnic communication has been shown to create apprehension levels similar to that of intercultural communication contexts, where people of different nationalities and different cultural values attempt to exchange messages and achieve shared meaning through communication (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997). However, since student-faculty interaction has been shown to be beneficial to student success (Padgett,

Goodman, Johnson, Saichaie, Umbach & Pascarella, 2010; Padget & Johnson, 2008; Terenzini, et al., 1999) it is the moral and professional responsibility of faculty and administration to design solutions that allow students of color to experience the benefits of a successful college experience with similar representation and proportion to that of white students. In an effort to better understand the needs of students of color, and how higher education might effectively serve in a manner that honors the moral mandate and public trust to educate all who are admitted to the institution, the purpose for conducting the study is to investigate the Interethnic Communication Apprehension (ICA) of students of color when interacting with European American faculty.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the ICA (Interethnic Communication Apprehension) levels of college students of color specifically as they relate to communicating with faculty members at the University of Arkansas, a major predominantly white Research University?
2. Are there significant differences in ICA among students based on ethnic differences?
3. Are there significant differences in levels of ICA based on gender?
4. Are there significant differences in levels of ICA based on year in school?
5. What do students report could be done to improve the outcomes and experiences of students of color?

### **Assumptions**

1. The study accepts the assumption that participants will accurately report ethnicity/racial categories with which they most identify. While race is considered a social construct for the purposes of this research, and ethnicity is considered a factor of cultural identification, these concepts/constructs are often connected and assumed to be one in the same for purposes of demographic categorization. This researcher recognizes that the

terms race and ethnicity are distinct but connected because of historic and cultural factors mentioned above.

2. The study accepts the assumption that Interethnic Communication Apprehension can be measured using the PRECA. Further, it is assumed that participants will answer survey questions, including number 15 with the sincerest intention of assisting the researcher and the institution with identifying ways to serve students of color that will enhance their experiences and outcomes.
3. The study accepts the assumption that, based on the student development literature outlined above, communication between faculty and students is directly related to teaching and learning outcomes (Padget et al., 2010; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004).
4. The foundational assumption of this investigation is that higher education, particularly the University of Arkansas, a research university has a sincere commitment to serve students of color in an effective and sensitive manner.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

There are some limitations to this study. The first limitation is that it is to be conducted at only one institution, and that institution is a Southern predominantly white institution, the University of Arkansas. Although the institution is a research university, the demographics of the student population may not be representative of other types of institutions and dynamics at institutions with more ethnic diversity. Therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to all institutions, but will most likely offer insights as to the experiences and feelings of students of color at PWIs, as well as their apprehension levels when communicating with ethnically different faculty members at any institution. Data gathered in this study may also offer insight as to how higher education might seek to develop faculty for communicating more effectively with

ethnically different students, and develop students for communicating more effectively with ethnically different faculty and people with asymmetrical power over them once they leave the institution and enter the workforce.

A delimitation of this study is that the results may be less applicable or even not at all applicable to other types of institutions such as community colleges, private institutions, and more demographically diverse institutions, institutions that are not PWIs, and not in the South.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Cultural values:* International and co-cultural ideologies about the appropriate ways to behave, and communicate which are based on beliefs commonly held within a national, and/or ethnic context. Cultural values are expressed as “dimensions of culture” by Hofstede (2001, p. 24) which include five dimensions: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism/collectivism, masculinity/femininity, and long term/short term orientation. Others have included time orientation, tightness, instrumental/expressiveness, active/passive, emotional expression/suppression, which are often referred to as “cultural syndromes” (Triandis, 2009, p. 20). This work will be restricted in focus to aspects of power distance, and individualism/collectivism (Hofstede, 2001) when communicating with faculty.

*Ethnic Identity:* The strength of commitment to common patterns of communication, beliefs, cultural practices, and worldview which are shared within a particular cultural group which causes individuals to associate strongly, positively, loosely, negatively, or with a mix of feelings toward one’s own cultural group (Ting-Toomey, 1981).

*Individualism/Collectivism:* Individualism is a cultural value that emphasizes the importance of the “I” over the “we” (Ting-Toomey, 2010, p. 173). Cultures where individual rights are believed to be more important than group interests, individual responsibilities are considered to take precedence over group (family, work, society) goals, and individuated-

focused emotions over social-focused emotions are considered to be individualistic cultures. In comparison, collectivism is the cultural value that emphasizes the importance of the “we” identity over the “I” identity. In-group interests (family, work, tribe, etc.) prevail over individual priorities, and the public face of others and group status maintenance as more important than self-face concerns and personal status achievement (Ting-Toomey, 2010).

*Ingroup/Outgroup Theory:* Ingroup members are individuals or groups of people who we are concerned about, and associate as similar to ourselves based on physical, cultural, linguistic, similarity or geographic proximity. Ingroup members are those whose welfare we are concerned about and do not demand equitable returns in order to collaborate with or assist. Separation from ingroup members brings discomfort or even pain. Outgroup members are individuals of people groups about whose welfare we are not particularly concerned. We associate outgroup members as dissimilar to ourselves based on physical, cultural, linguistic difference, geographic distance, and even moral (religious) grounds. We require equitable returns for cooperation with outgroup members, and experience no pain or discomfort when separated from them (Gudykunst & Kim 1977; Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

*Intercultural Communication Apprehension:* Fear or anxiety which leads to apprehension and avoidance of real or anticipated interaction with people from different cultural groups (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997).

*Interethnic Communication:* Interaction with people from different . . . cultural or ethnic groups (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997).

*Interethnic Communication Apprehension:* A psychological response to the fear or anxiety, and avoidance of interaction with people from ethnic groups that are different from ones own (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997).

*Power:* An ability held by one person or group to control the outcomes of another person or group in a relationship, whether the relationship be interpersonal, professional, political, or organizational (Thompson, 2004).

*Power Distance:* The strength with which status based hierarchal differences are deemed to be appropriate within a culture. High power distance cultures hold the belief that inequality protects both people of high and low status, and that every individual has an assigned (by fate) position that they should accept. In accepting norms of hierarchy, each should fulfill their obligations in society and relationships as is appropriate for their status. Also implied with power distance of any given culture is the degree to which low status individuals accept that low social status, uneven distribution of power, and the lack of access to those in power is appropriate and acceptable. On the other extreme, low power distance cultures believe that everybody is relatively equal and should have equal input and influence in social and organizational structures (Hofstede, 1983, 2001).

*Race:* Scholars conceptualize race as “an artificial construct that varies according to social, cultural, political, legal, economic, and historical factors within a society” (Allen, 2011, p.67). For the purpose of this study, race will be defined as “an involuntary category assigned by society to a person based on physiological features such as ‘skin color, hair texture, body type and facial features’ (Allen, 2011, p.66) which may restrict that person’s access to social, professional, and educational opportunities because of predominant beliefs and stereotypes associated with the racially assigned category by others who have the power to name (Allen, 2011). Race designation is not assumed to be in congruence with the embraced identity of individuals or groups. The term is used in this study as a legal designation in reference to social constructs which help researchers understand the frame of reference which is likely to affect the perceptions of participants because of racialized categorization of people groups for the purpose

of maintaining systems of power and oppression throughout American history (Allen, 2011; Horton & Horton, 2005; Robinson, 2003).

### **Significance of the Study**

The study is significant because the results may inform principals in higher education about communication barriers that may exist in a primary relationship of import for the success of students of color in higher education at PWI's. The relationship, and the communication between students of color and faculty members, is a matter of significance upon which many outcomes rely. The mission, values and goals of key administrators at the University of Arkansas may be supported with vital information as an outcome of this research initiative.

The Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs website states that the mission of its office is to “continue to strengthen the university's excellence in instruction; research; outreach and public service; and student affairs; and is responsible for academic planning and budgeting, faculty development and promotion, and academic initiatives (University of Arkansas Provost website). The mission of the Dean of Students is to “strengthen students for success” (University of Arkansas Division of Student Affairs Website: Mission statement, 2013). One goal of the office of the Dean of Students is “to foster the ongoing development of an inclusive community” (University of Arkansas Division of Student Affairs Website: Goals). The Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education states that its vision is to provide “academic, cultural and social programs intended to promote inclusiveness, foster achievement and assist in the development and advancement of a diverse student body” (University of Arkansas Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education website). The Teaching Faculty Support Center at the University of Arkansas is “Committed to overcoming obstacles to effective teaching and learning” (University of Arkansas TFSC website). This research may be able to use the insights

gathered to support faculty in an understanding effective communication and support for students of color.

In summary, this research may help support the achievement of goals of key administrators at the University of including: excellence in instruction, faculty development, strengthening students for success, fostering ongoing development of an inclusive community, and overcoming obstacles to effective teaching and learning.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

Intercultural Communication Theory (Kim, 1986; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997), Ingroup/Outgroup Behavior Theory (Ting-Toomey, 2005, 2006, 2010) Interethnic and Intercultural Communication Apprehension research (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; McCroskey, 2009) provide the grounding for this investigation into Interethnic Communication Apprehension of Students of Color with faculty at a The University of Arkansas, a Predominantly White Institution (PWI).

Intercultural Communication Theory (Kim, 1986; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997) is the study of effects of communication across the culture line. Intercultural Communication Theory includes not only the study of the phenomena of communication between members of differing international cultures, but also between interethnic cultures of the same nationality.

Ingroup/Outgroup Behavior Theory is the study of human interactions with others perceived as different, and not of the same group as compared with interactions with those who are perceived as similar and considered to be part of the ingroup of an individual. Interethnic and intercultural communication apprehension research combines years of knowledge gleaned from intercultural communication theory, ingroup/outgroup theory, psychology and sociology to specifically look at the effects of interethnic communication and interaction upon anxiety levels of participants.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review**

The primary topic of this literature review is focused on Interethnic Communication Apprehension (ICA), which, according to Neuliep and McCroskey (1997), is a “special context” of Communication Apprehension (CA). Secondly, and of equal importance, to understand the effects of ICA, this literature review will also focus on the body of research available regarding interethnic and intercultural communication. It is in understanding how ethnicity and culture function as critical to the communication process (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997) that researchers may begin to understand the phenomena of ICA. Third, the context of ethnic identity development and student development are topics of import in this review, as they are crucial to understanding the needs and development process that takes place in students during their college years. As this literature review articulates the constructs of ICA, interethnic/intercultural communication, ethnic identity/development and student development literature, it will lay the foundation for the proposed research for this dissertation.

This review will first elaborate on Communication Apprehension (CA); the history of CA research, interethnic implications of CA, the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension and the Personal Report of Interethnic Communication Apprehension (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997). The second section, focuses on empirical literature related to salient issues for students of color; historical context and first generation status, unique challenges, ethnic and cultural identity, ingroup/outgroup treatment, and, communication dynamics with faculty. The third section covers power and relationships as they relate to students of color, namely; power distance, effects of asymmetrical power, and the power held by faculty.

## **Communication Apprehension**

Communication is the tool by which all relationships are built. The nature of the communication dictates the nature of the relationship of communicators. When attempting to communicate, anxiety and uncertainty discourage communicators from trying again in an attempt to avoid additional feelings anxiety and uncertainty, whereas positive feelings produced by achieving one's communication goals and being understood while communicating result in communicators making further attempts to communicate (Berger & Calabrese, 1975; Altman & Taylor, 1987). Communication apprehension is therefore an important construct to understand where effective positive communication is dependent upon the success of students.

Communication Apprehension (CA) was defined by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) as "the fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with others" (p. 145). Further, they wrote that "anxiety is a state of heightened self-awareness, perceived helplessness and expectation of negative outcomes . . . . Affectively, anxiety manifests itself as subjective feelings of discomfort, distress and fear" (p. 147). Behaviorally, heightened anxiety is demonstrated by communication that is "hesitant, inhibited and sometimes disrupted when interacting with others" (p.147).

An even more specific focus of CA is Interethnic Communication Apprehension (ICA). ICA is defined as "fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people from different groups, especially different ethnic groups" (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997, p. 147).

### **History of Communication Apprehension Theory.**

McCroskey (2009) first published the term "Communication Apprehension" (CA) in 1970 after several years of informal collaboration and observation of students in Public Speaking classrooms. Research by McCroskey and others on what he conceptualized as CA has been the

most studied construct of human communication since the late 1960s (McCroskey, 2009). In the early 1900s, until 1971, speaking ability and intelligence were believed to be positively related. However, research by McCroskey (2009) and others in the 1970s showed that there was no correlation between intelligence and CA; however, there has been some link established between genetics and CA because of the way genetics influence personality and temperament traits (McCroskey, 2009). Many institutions of higher education have traditionally required successful completion of a Public Speaking course as a condition of degree conferral, yet, McCroskey's research by the late 1970's indicated that although speech classes were helpful To students with low or no CA, they did not remedy CA for students with high apprehension, and may in fact make it worse (2009). A student's attempted suicide in 1970, because of anxiety over an assigned speech for class, drove further investigation and the development of scales to validate and measure the construct of CA (McCroskey, 2009).

Several measurement scales were developed by McCroskey and colleagues; the PRCA-College (Personal Report of Communication Apprehension), the PRCA-Ten (a ten question instrument), PRCA-Seven (a seven question instrument), and the PRPSA (Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety) to measure the phenomena (McCroskey, 2009). However, most of these instruments dealt with a context of public speaking anxiety. Of these instruments, the PRPSA remains instrumental in measuring public speaking anxiety by researchers. The PRCA-24 was the first instrument to look at CA in light of the different contexts of "Trait CA" (TCA) and "State CA" (SCA). Trait CA was defined as "a general pattern of low, medium or high orientation of anxiety/fear across communication contexts" (McCroskey, 2009, p. 163). State CA was defined by McCroskey (2009) as "experiencing anxiety/fear in one situation but not in others" (p. 163). The State CA research served as theoretical foundation for this dissertation research, in that it inferred that there may be a connection between the "state" of being a student

of racial and ethnic minority on a predominantly white campus and an apprehension to communicate with White faculty members for students of color.

McCroskey's research has shown multiple negative effects of CA. Several findings of the negative effects of CA have appeared to be relevant to the study: in 2009 McCroskey reported in a literature of his previous research with Andersen that showed college students with high CA prefer attending large lecture classes as opposed to smaller classes that require more interaction and communication with others. Further, high CA students were less likely to enlist the services of a tutor and may do less well than other students in their class as a result (McCroskey, 2009). In 1978 McCroskey and Vetta wrote that high CA students often preferred to sit in the back and sides of the classroom, and that requiring them to sit in the front or middle actually decreased their learning outcomes (McCroskey, 2009). In 1972, Quiggins found that credibility and interpersonal attractiveness were attributed by others to be lower in those with high CA (McCroskey, 2009). McCroskey (2009) indicated that "negative attractiveness and low credibility lead to dislike and rejection in social and work environments" (p. 168). McCroskey (2009) deduced that high CA was a particularly undesirable and unattractive trait in the U.S. in that people socialized in the U.S. tend to look to the more verbally outspoken when leadership is desired, and as a culture continue to associate intelligence and leadership with verbal assertiveness. The above findings were summarized in McCroskey 2009.

### **Interethnic communication apprehension.**

When students arrive on a campus where vast population demographic differences (from home) exist, and they possess any or all of the traits discussed above, they may develop a State (context induced) Communication Apprehension (SCA). However, in familiar circumstances these same individuals would experience very little anxiety. Among other things, CA can be triggered by anxiety caused by differences such as first generation status, perceived academic

preparation difference, verbal and non-verbal code difference, power differential between Students of Color and White students, power differential between students and faculty of other race/ethnicity (Allen, 2011, White & Lowenthal, 2011), and the racial identity developmental process that young adults are growing in when they encounter new environments that are ethnically/racially different from home environments (Evans et al. 2010). McCroskey and Neuliep (1997) articulate this dynamic when they write, “actual or anticipated interaction with members of different groups (e.g., cultures or ethnic groups different from our own) leads to anxiety” (p. 147).

Intercultural and Interethnic Communication apprehension are defined as “fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated interaction with people from different groups, especially different cultural or ethnic groups” (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997, p. 147).

Buss (1980) wrote “some of the salient situational features leading to increased anxiety include novelty, unfamiliarity, and dissimilarity. Hence those situations containing new, atypical, and/or conspicuously different stimuli are likely to increase one’s sense of anxiety . . . someone’s initial interaction with someone or interacting with strangers may produce heightened anxiety in persons (p.44).

Freshmen in college are most certainly in an unfamiliar situation. Freshmen, in particular, experience many “situations containing new, atypical, and/or conspicuously different stimuli” (Buss, 1980, p. 44). Students of color at a PWI have additional stimuli to manage. They are ethnically, racially and culturally dissimilar to most of the peers and faculty they encounter, and they are attuned to those dissimilarities (Evans et al, 2010; White & Lowenthal 2011). Therefore, freshmen, and particularly freshmen students of color are likely to experience heightened anxiety from what they experience as their usual “state.”

Uncertainty Management Theory (Berger & Calabrese, 1975) included that when people come together and interact for the first time, uncertainty is high, and leads to anxiety since they have a very limited amount of information about each other. High levels of uncertainty lead to increased anxiety. Gudykunst and Kim (1997) expanded on the idea of uncertainty in their intercultural communication research and explained that intercultural and interethnic communication are particularly novel, unfamiliar, and dissimilar communication contexts that are marked with high uncertainty. When discussing the concept of communicating with those one perceives as outsiders, Gudykunst and Kim (1997) coined the term “stranger” (p. 25) to delineate those who are familiar from “people who are members of different groups and unknown to us” (p.25). Further, they explained that “An African American student in a mainly European American school, a Mexican student studying at a university in the United States . . . a manager from the United States working in Thailand are all examples of strangers” (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 49). Interacting with individuals from cultures other than our own tends to “. . . involve the highest degree of strangeness and lowest degree of familiarity. Greater uncertainty exists in initial interactions with strangers than with those who are familiar” (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 26).

Given what the above referenced research has indicated about novelty, unfamiliarity, dissimilarity, uncertainty, and anxiety, it is fairly obvious that for freshmen, and particularly for freshmen students of color at a PWI, all of the contextual elements for high communication apprehension exist. Further, students of color may be at even higher risk to additionally experience Interethnic Communication Apprehension (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; Evans et al. 2010).

Anxiety begets anxiety, and negatively affects attractiveness which is the desire to communicate with another person (Berger & Calabrese 1979). Negative attractiveness reduces

the desire to communicate with an individual, thus reduces interaction. As a result, high levels of uncertainty about anxious communicators tend to self-perpetuate. Anxiety also increases the likelihood of miscommunication and misunderstanding between communicators. (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Interethnic attractiveness has been shown to be lower initially than attractiveness between communicators of same ethnicity even in diverse environments (Neuliep, Hintz, & McCroskey, 2005). In addition, preference to hire members of European American descent has even been attributed with slightly higher attractiveness ratings for European-Americans among African Americans (Neuliep et al., 2005) in the United States. Further, reluctance to interact with whites among African Americans has been shown based on perceptions of incompatibility and distinctiveness (Bahk & Jandt, 2008). Therefore, the desire to communicate with a white faculty member or a student of different ethnicity at the very least causes uncertainty, anxiety, and may even be undesirable for students of color. If first interactions are not rewarding, communicators are less likely to try again than if first encounters are rewarding and reduce the anxiety (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). In 2007, Jordan and Powers found that both the frequency of communication with instructors and the satisfaction with educational experiences was significantly negatively correlated with the apprehension to communicate with instructors.

**Personal Report Interethnic Communication Apprehension & Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension.**

The publication of the Personal Report of Interethnic Communication Apprehension (PRECA) and the Personal Report of Intercultural Communication Apprehension (PRICA) in 1997 by McCroskey and Neuliep built upon the previous decade of CA research. These instruments provided a measurement instrument for the specific contexts of intercultural and interethnic communication, and the apprehension they create. The PRICA and PRECA were

modeled directly after the most reliable of the previously developed CA scales by McCroskey and others discussed above (including Levine, 1990; Beatty, Kearney & Plax, 1995; Booth-Butterfield, 1988; Richmond, 1996) as reported in Neuliep and McCroskey (1997). McCroskey and Neuliep used the theoretical foundation of previous CA research, but also that of Uncertainty Anxiety Management Theory published by Berger and Calabrese in 1975, and Intercultural Communication Theory published by Gudykunst and Kim in 1997.

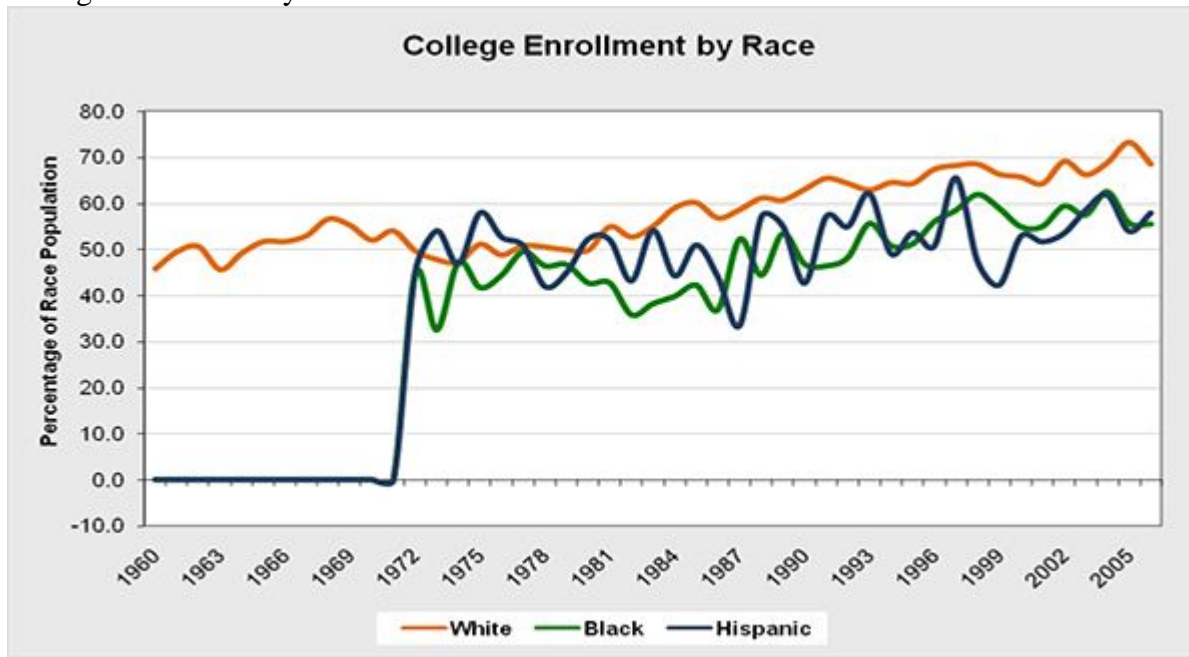
The PRECA and PRICA were developed simultaneously and tested together. The Chronbach's alpha for the PRECA was .971, thus demonstrating high reliability. The PRECA was also shown to be highly correlated with the PRCA24 which it was modeled after,  $r(196) = .51, p < .01$ . As determined by Chronbach's alpha the PRICA was .942, and also significantly correlated with the PRCA24,  $r(196) = .58, p < .01$ . PRICA scores were negatively and significantly correlated with the frequency of contact with people from other countries  $r(369) = -.11, p > .05$  and negatively correlated with the frequency of contact with people of another race,  $r(369) = -.09, p > .05$  and shown not to correlate with the size of one's hometown, frequency of travel outside of home state, or the number of people of same race in one's hometown. PRECA scores were also negatively correlated with the frequency of contact with people of another race,  $r(369) = -.11, p < .05$ . PRECA scores were also not correlated with the size of the participant's hometown, how often the participant traveled outside of their home state, or the number of people in the participant's home town of their same race. Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) reported that both scales "appear to possess content, construct, and predictive validity" (p. 153). Since these scales were directly modeled after the PRCA24, which is widely recognized as a valid operationalization and measure of CA (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997) it is apparent that the content validity of the PRICA and PRECA are acceptable for use in the current investigation.



## Students of Color

Students of color have only had real access to higher education since the 1970s as evidenced by Department of Education statistics (2009) in Figure 1. An onslaught of legal battles in the 1960's to remove the vestiges of Jim Crow Laws and to enforce the provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Kaplan & Lee, 2007; Thelin, 2004) essentially took a decade to lead to any significant representation of students of color in higher education in institutions other than HBCUs and tribal colleges. Figure 1 shows Department of Education data tracking the growth from 1960 to 2005 of both Hispanics and Blacks in higher education as compared with white students.

Figure 1  
College Enrollment by Race



(Department of Education as reported in August, 2009, Project America website <http://www.project.org/info.php?recordID=219>)

### Historical context.

Power has long been held in the United States predominantly by the culturally dominant and numerical majority members of European American descent (Allen, 2011). According to

Allen, this power has been used historically to perpetuate hierarchies of race “that reflect an ideology of white supremacy” (p. 71). In the year 1851, Sojourner Truth, a self-emancipated slave referred to herself as “double cursed by race and sex” (Gates & McKay, 2004, p. 246). According to CBS News (Faber, 2007), as recently as 2007, female African American college women of the Rutgers University basketball team were verbally assaulted while playing University sports, being referred to as “nappy-headed hos” on national television by the broadcaster. Much national outrage ensued, apologies were made, the offending commentator, Don Imus, was fired (CBS News, 2009). People of color still daily deal with demeaning treatment such as this, both privately and publicly (Ford, 2010). Though aggressive acts may often be less public, and often less overt than in the past, history and a persistent culture of hostility toward people of color continue to have a powerful impact on the identity, sense of power, safety, and locus of control (Rotter, 1966) people of color may have, particularly young people who are still developing their racial identities (Evans et al., 2010) and frontal lobe reasoning center during their first years of college (Dahl, 2004; Lenroot & Giedd, 2008; Inhelder, & Piaget, 1958; Johnson, Blum, & Giedd, 2009).

Because of these historical power differentials, students of color have to negotiate not only racial and ethnic cultural differences, but asymmetrical power dynamics that historically have been oppressive and intentional in order to communicate well with white instructors. Orbe (2004) developed Co-Cultural Theory that gives insight to the communication process of people who have typically been marginalized in dominant societal structures which posits that people from marginalized groups assess their experience to evaluate the costs and rewards as well as their own ability to engage in various communication practices. In so doing, they adopt communication orientations based on the individual’s own preferred outcomes and their preferred communication approaches that fit specific communication contexts and specific

situations. Orbe (2004) also wrote that non-dominant communicators use a variety of verbal and non-verbal practices when interacting with dominant groups such as remaining silent when offended, mirroring, extensive preparation, cognitive rehearsal, extensive self-censoring, and avoiding interaction by deflecting controversial topics in addition to emphasizing commonalities. Muted group theory asserts that “women (and members of other subordinate groups) are not as free or as able as men are to say what they wish, when and where they wish” (Kramarae, 2006, p. 494). Further, Kramarae (2006) researched the silencing effect on people from historically marginalized, oppressed, or low power positions in American society,

Mutedness is due to the lack of power which besets any group that occupies the low end of the totem pole . . . As a result, they are overlooked, muffled, and rendered invisible ‘mere black holes in someone else’s universe’ (Kramarae 2006, p. 495).

Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) wrote that interethnic communication contexts have been shown to create anxiety at the same levels as international cultural communication situations.

### ***The racialized history of higher education.***

Until recently, higher education has not been equitably accessible to people of color, and even less accessible in the South (Thelin, 2004). Even at institutions in the Northeast between 1890 and 1910 where law did not mandate racial segregation, limited and “token accommodation of diverse groups was the rule of thumb. . . as presidents and boards became increasingly preoccupied with the xenophobia associated with retaining or regaining ‘racial purity’” (Thelin, 2004, p. 173). Racial segregation was the norm in the North and the South, even though in the North there were no formal policies mandating segregation (Thelin, 2004). The second Morrill Act of 1890, established the first federally funded separate colleges for blacks, and allowed limited access to higher education to people of color. Shortly thereafter, the Supreme Court formally legalized segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, which legitimized the right of colleges to

exclude anyone designated as black from attending institutions that were serving whites (Kaplan & Lee, 2007). Even after the creation of black land grant institutions by the Morrill Act of 1890, the best endowed black colleges (Hampton Institute and Tuskegee) favored agricultural and industrial education, neglecting the classical arts (Thelin, 2004). Howard University and Fisk were the exceptions to this norm, in the early days focusing on development of leaders. These schools were primarily funded by missionary groups and church associations (Thelin, 2004). The Servicemen's Readjustment act of 1944 (also known as the GI Bill) incentivized soldiers returning from World War II to delay reentering the job market in favor of getting a college education. It provided financial means for many who would not have been able to afford a college education without the funding provided by the government. However, soldiers who were not classified as white were discouraged and blocked from entering white institutions (Thelin, 2004). Institutions that previously excluded racial minorities continued to do so without penalty since the initial GI Bill did not require nondiscriminatory policies. In fact, the United States Military still practiced discriminatory policies in 1944 (Thelin, 2004). Schools, now known as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were created by the second Morrill act, creating land grant institutions for former slaves which were primarily trade schools and teaching colleges, not liberal arts colleges that offered classical education (Thelin, 2004; Kaplan & Lee, 2007). Initially, Brown vs. Board of Education in 1954 and a decade later the Civil Rights Act of 1964 removed major legal barriers and allowed people of color to legally enroll in education establishments previously reserved for whites only (Kaplan & Lee, 2007). However, people of color were still not admitted to many institutions without threat of financial penalty or legal recourse (Robinson & Williams, 2010).

In 1961 President Kennedy signed Executive Order 10925 forbidding government employers from making negative employment decisions based on race, creed, color or national

origin. This order applied both to hiring decisions and to procedural justice matters once someone was employed. President Johnson expanded the provisions in 1964 to encourage “full realization in equal employment opportunities” (Executive Order 11246, Equal employment opportunity. *The Federal Register*) and again in 1967 to add the category of sex to protected class status (Executive Order 11375, Equal employment opportunity. *The Federal Register*). However, it was not functionally until 1972, with the passage of the Pell Grant program which awarded need based grants that were portable with the student and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, when many women and people of color had the financial means and legal access to scale the walls of institutionalized racism that have historically thwarted both access and success (Allen, 2011; Robinson & Williams, 2010; Thelin, 2004; Brown et. al., 2005; Kaplan & Lee, 2007).

By 1972, federal regulations required nondiscriminatory practices in admissions as a condition of institutions receiving the Pell proceeds. In an era where student enrollment was lagging, Pell funding caused competition for students (and the funds that came with them), but the condition for those funds was attached to nondiscriminatory admission policies (Thelin, 2004). This was the first meaningful incentive to institutions to adhere to the statutes and constitutional mandates of equal access rights. By law, the Fourteenth Amendment, and Titles VI and IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 made access possible for women and people of color. The Pell grants, combined with the GI Bill were largely responsible for the new affordability of a college education for women and students of color (Thelin, 2004).

In summary, the young people of our nation have borne a particularly heavy load of creating a new normal as pioneers into our places of education. The images and narratives of the Little Rock Nine being escorted into Central High School by the National Guard after the Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education* are significant. Yet, these images and narratives are a but a tiny snapshot at a single moment in time of the thousands of episodic

events contributing to the centuries old struggle for equal access to education and the American Dream by people of color.

### **First generation challenges.**

In addition to the historical context that students of color must overcome, additional challenges (as opposed to European American first generation students) are faced by first generation students of color. First generation students do not have family success stories about college to rely upon for guidance and encouragement in their first year of college (Cushman, 2007; White & Lowenthal, 2011). Parents and extended family who have succeeded in higher education, offer personal anecdotes and knowledge to consult and psychologically prepare students throughout their experience in higher education. First generation students are missing this asset. When challenges arise (as they do for all freshmen) first generation students do not have the resource of the empowering stories of parents and success in the face of similar hurdles. Because of the historical and systematic deprivation of equal access to higher education, first generation students of color are less likely to have extended family and community members from whom to gain advice and resources to reinforce their success and identity as scholars in higher education. A revealing finding of, Padgett, et al., (2010) expressed that for first generation students, personal contact with faculty inside and outside of the classroom actually had an “unnerving” (p. 109) effect on students, thus reducing their need for cognition (desire to engage in cognitive activities). This finding may be an effect of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and power in general, particularly the asymmetrical power that may be perceived by first generation students and students of color in particular because of historical racial and ethnic oppression in the United States. Finally, many students of color who are also first generation students, may experience an “inhibitive effect” (p. 109), therefore a negative impact on need for cognition when communicating with faculty members (Padgett & Johnson, 2008).

## **Unique challenges.**

Predominantly White Institutions historically have employed predominantly white faculty (see Table 3). White faculty and minority students embrace different cultural identities, and cultural values, which may contribute to a lack of desire to communicate with one another (also referred to as lack of attractiveness). Martin, Nakayama, and Flores (1998) wrote:

Context and power affect which identity(ies) is (are) enacted. European Americans, one of the groups having the greatest socioeconomic and sociocultural power in the United States, are highly individualistic and may have the most flexibility in featuring national identity or gender identity or ethnic identity. Members of ethnic groups with lower socioeconomic and sociocultural power such as African Americans, US Indians, and Latinos, do not have the same freedom of choice because of the frequency and absoluteness with which European Americans or other out-group members ascribe negative stereotypes and set up expectations for conduct (p. 374).

Kanter (1977) in her work on tokenism wrote that people of numerically significant minority in organizations are often more highly scrutinized and have higher performance pressures as a result of more attention being paid to their performance than is paid to the performance of members of the dominant culture. If they succeed, they are viewed as the exceptions (unlike others of their group), and if they experience failure, these failures serve to confirm negative group biases that existed before their arrival in the organization (Kanter, 1977). In addition, dominant members of a culture tend to make observations by contrast, polarization and exaggeration of differences (Kanter 1977).

Historical lack of access to equal and higher education for people of color (Kaplan & Lee, 2007; Thelin, 2004) have contributed to what White and Lowenthal (2011) described as

“collegiate literacy” (p. 285). They wrote in 2011 that among the “codes of power” (p. 285) needed for academic success there is a “college literacy” (p. 293) that minority students have often not had the opportunity to practice in their K-12 schools because of segregation (p. 287) or in their homes since many of their parents have not had the benefit of a college education, and do not practice the codes of “college literacy” (p. 293) in every day speech. Rather, ethnic codes of speech that are practiced and considered appropriate within ethnic families and communities may be considered non-academic. Further, White & Lowenthal (2011) stated that adapting new codes once students arrive on campus (i.e., question asking, verbally disagreeing with one in authority such as the professor) can be a face threatening (Ting-Toomey, 2005, 2006) negation of one’s own identity and is often thought of as “acting white” (p. 287).

#### **Ethnic culture and identity.**

Ashforth and Mael (1989) in their work on Social Identity Theory posited that “people tend to classify themselves and others into various social categories” (p. 20). Further, “organizational newcomers” are “apprehensive about their status . . . they must learn its policies and logistics, the general role expectation and behavioral norms, the power and status structures, and so forth” (p.26).

Students of color may perceive many of the discursive patterns and cultural practices on a Predominantly White Campus as assimilationist pressures. “Many college students raised outside the dominant culture are highly attuned to their culture and ethnicity in both positive and negative ways” (Evans, et al., 2010, p. 275). By contrast, many European Americans do not hold their own ethnic identity as a salient issue. White and Lowenthal (2011) contend that “minority alienation from and eventual withdrawal from higher education” (p. 285) may be, in part, the responsibility of differences in cultural “ways with words” (p. 285).



### **Ingroup/outgroup treatment.**

Gudykunst and Kim (1997) in their landmark Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory discuss the issue of anxiety created by communication situations with people who are culturally different. “Individuals have less anxiety and uncertainty about interacting with in-group members than out-group members” (p. 87). Gudykunst and Kim (1997) found that humans in every culture communicate, think, feel and behave differently towards ingroup members and outgroup members.

In-groups are groups of people about whose welfare we are concerned and whom we are willing to cooperate without demanding equitable returns and from whom separation brings discomfort or even pain. Out-groups are people about whose welfare we are not concerned, with whom we require an equitable return for cooperation, and experience no pain or discomfort when separated from (Gudykunst & Kim 1997, p. 87).

In addition to holding biases that inform us who we should care about, communicators have goals according to Gudykunst and Kim (1997). These communication goals tend to be, either assimilationist or pluralist in their desire to reduce uncertainty and anxiety when communicating with those of different cultures and co-cultures. Assimilationists assume that “they should become like us” (p. 87), while pluralists tend to value and embrace the differences of other traditions and cultures as positive. If applying Kanter’s (1977) findings on tokenism the concepts of Gudykunst & Kim’s (1997) intercultural communication theory to students of color who are in a great numerical minority in the larger population on a campus, students of color may experience assimilationist pressures to abandon self and “become like us” (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997, p. 87).

Failures of self and others require explanations. The failure of self and those seen as ingroup members generally warrant more empathetic explanations than do the explanations of

failures of outgroup members (Kanter 1997). Fundamental Attribution Error (Miller, 1984) Theory states that people are more likely to attribute failure of another individual who is an outgroup member to internal factors of that person (lack of character, work ethic, effort, preparation) than they are to external issues such as unexpected illness, misunderstanding, environment, not to mention attributions of failure because of unfavorable circumstances such as disadvantaged by social structures, institutional barriers, or economic barriers set before the person experiencing failure. This is known as fundamental attribution error, and is a common perceptual error between people of different ethnicities, races and cultures as well as towards others who are part of the outgroup. By contrast, humans tend to attribute the failures of people from the ingroup to circumstances beyond their control such as illness, stress, poor treatment, or unfavorable environment.

In summary, people generally have harsher judgments towards outgroup members. These harsh judgments might cause attribution errors in assessing blame upon the outgroup members for one's own communication apprehension, anxiety, misunderstandings and failures with outgroup members. In addition, when people witness the failure of outgroup members, they are likely to use these attributions and judgments as "evidence," to support oppressive treatment. Humans have demonstrated willingness and have shown historic propensity to treat outgroup members in ways that would not be deemed humane within the ingroup (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Ting-Toomey, 2007; Triandis, 2009).

### **Cultural and ethnic communication values and differences.**

"All communication is problematic and ethnicity, at the least, adds problematic elements and perhaps alters the basic nature and interpretations of problematic processes" (Hecht, Larkey & Johnson, 1992, p. 228). We must question whether there is a significant communication and culture gap between faculty and students of color at a PWI. Communication difficulties can be

the result of a number of factors; historical, verbal and non-verbal communication normative communication differences between co-cultural groups. There are differences in immediacy perceptions, need for cognition, and motivation to communicate for students of color and white students (White & Lowenthal, 2011). In addition White and Lowenthal (2011) found that many students “who do not know the hidden rules” (of discourse) are excluded (p. 290). In 1983, Heath found “minority students’ culturally imbued uses of language, and thus the means through which they make sense of contexts, differ significantly from the primarily White discursive patterns” (White & Lowenthal, 2011, p. 290) that are typical of faculty members at institutions that are predominantly white.

“A more restrained style of communication seems to characterize Euro-American students” (Dandy, 1991, p. 29) at PWIs than students of color at HBCUs where predominantly black students “engage in assertive and expressive communication” (Dandy, 1991, p. 29) in the classroom (Gendrin & Rucker, 2007, p. 44). The “more restrained style of communication” of European Americans, which is often perceived by students of color as “detached and unemotional (p. 45)” according to Gendrin & Rucker (2007, p. 45) is considered appropriate in the European American culture, and thus the accepted discursive style of most professors at a PWI.

Teacher immediacy is created by communication behaviors, both verbal and nonverbal, that contribute to a sense of closeness, both physical and psychological, between teacher and students (Andersen, 1979). Immediacy can affect student perceptions of and motivation to communicate with Faculty (Gendrin & Rucker, 2007). Students of color tend to prefer “expressive” communication from their instructors and see expressiveness as “genuine,” and emotional restraint as disingenuous whereas European American students tend to prefer more

verbal and non-verbal restraint and minimization of cues that convey emotion (Gendrin & Rucker, 2007).

A general feature of African American and Latino communication is “expressiveness.” In multiple studies, African Americans have expressed preference for communication that is animated, authentic, direct, expressive, and respectful (Hecht, et al., 1992, 1993; Gendrin & Rucker, 2007). People of Latino, Asian, and Native Americans ancestry place emphasis in communication on deference, modesty, harmony, and politeness strategies in regard to hierarchy, and respect of elders and authority. (Hecht et al. 1993; Collier, 1998; Allen, 2011; Young, 2007; Nwosu, 2007; Orbe, 2004; White & Lowenthal, 2011). Face is a significant concern for all the above mentioned co-cultures. Individual face preservation strategies serve individual as well as group dignity and harmony goals (Ting-Toomey, 2006).

#### **Communicating with faculty.**

In light of the previously discussed dynamics of historical context and issues particularly salient to students of color, there are problematic features of communicating specifically with faculty. Communication with faculty has been shown to be both problematic and essential for the success of first generation students and students of color (White & Lowenthal, 2011; Schwitzer, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999; Terenzini et al., 1996; Padget et al., 2010). When directly communicating with faculty, Schwitzer et al., (1999) wrote, that because of fear of negative perceptions about their ethnic group by faculty members, African American students often find it difficult to approach faculty of a different ethnicity and that communicating with faculty may consequently be avoided. Lundberg (2010) added that “This can be an obstacle to students who’s race/ethnicity is severely underrepresented among faculty” (p. 52).

Distinctly different cultural values about appropriate verbal, non-verbal behavior and patterns of speech between students of color and European American faculty members as well as

ingroup/outgroup perceptions and stereotypes can result in the withdrawal (emotional, psychological, and academic) of the student. “The college experience of interacting with faculty may actually be an unnerving activity to these students, perhaps causing them to ultimately forgo (abandon) the opportunities to communicate with faculty one on one” (Padget, et al., 2010, p. 109). Paradoxically, student success literature also suggests that “there are positive associations between the nature and frequency of students’ out-of-class contacts with faculty members and gains on one or another measure of academic or cognitive development” (Terenzini, et al., 1999, p. 616).

Out of class experiences with faculty are opportunities for the formation of close relationships. According to Altman and Taylor’s Social Penetration Theory (1987), self-disclosure dictates closeness and formation of relationships. Altman and Taylor (1987) argued that social penetration (depth of knowledge about the other’s life and world) is increased as intimacy is increased. This means that self-disclosure on a larger variety of topics and with more intimacy causes relationships to persist and flourish to the same degree that self-disclosure persists and has satisfying degrees of reciprocity to the participants. However, there are differences in the way European American faculty and students of color practice self-disclosure. The disclosure of “having difficulty with an assignment” may be considered a fairly “intimate” disclosure for an African American student. Gudykunst and Kim (1997) stated that “European Americans engage in more self-disclosure with people they do not know than do African Americans” (p. 313). Therefore, a European American faculty member may view “typical” communication with an individual student as less threatening than it may seem to a student of color when dealing with a European-American faculty member. Noel and Smith (1996) found that all ethnic groups of students were more comfortable disclosing information to faculty of their own ethnicity. Further, they found the strongest effects of this dynamic when race,

academics, or personal conversations were the topic. The “having trouble” or the “I have a question” conversation is likely to be deemed inappropriate self-disclosure and also highly personal and face threatening information by students of color (who are culturally influenced heavily by collectivistic traditions and communication values). Ting-Toomey (2006) discussed the importance of facework strategies, particularly among collectivistic cultures. Face Negotiation Theory explains the importance in cultures of collectivistic ancestry of managing both the dignity of the individual and preserving the unity of the group particularly when communicating with outsiders (Ting-Toomey, 2006).

Wilmot and Hocker (2007) studied communication classrooms of public higher education institutions across the U.S. where directness, ease in public, clarity of expression, assertiveness and ability to argue are encouraged as skills in conflict management, leadership, and public speaking. These aspects of communication are also accepted as part of “collegiate literacy” according to White and Lowenthal (2010). However, in light of the previous information on verbal, non-verbal, and face negotiation communication preferences, it is essential to understand that persons of collectivistic co-cultures and those who hold low-power positions in society may experience cognitive dissonance or identity threats and find above listed individualistic communication norms (Hofstede, 1983, 2001) and so called “skills” to be difficult and perhaps even undesirable (Wilmot & Hocker, 2007; Ting-Toomey, 2006; Kanter, 1977; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Hecht et al., 1992; White & Lowenthal, 2011; Dandy, 1991; Gendrin & Rucker, 2007; Padget et al., 2010).

## **Power and Relationships**

### **Power distance.**

Power distance, as defined in the landmark research of Geert Hofstede (1983), is the degree to which hierarchal differences based on status are accepted within a culture. High power

distance cultures hold the belief that “there should be an order of inequality in this world in which everybody has his rightful place; high and low are protected by this order” (Hofstede, 1983, p. 60). Power distance is the degree to which low status individuals accept the social and structural distance as acceptable (Hofstede, 2001). In contrast, low power distance cultures believe that inequality in society should be deemphasized (Hofstede, 1983).

Collectivistic cultures are generally higher in power distance than individualistic cultures. In a 2008 study on cultural and moral ideologies of African Americans conducted by Swaidan et al. (2008), there were found to be positive relationships between collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance. This indicated that though African Americans are immersed in an individualistic society, they retain collectivistic values originating in Africa, and carried forward partially in resistance to assimilationist efforts through times of slavery, Jim Crow, and Civil Rights struggles in America as a highly oppressed group. There is limited other direct empirical evidence as to the cultural values held by African Americans in regard to collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance. Indirect evidence suggests that African Americans may embrace collectivistic values similar to those of Asian and Hispanic/Latino Americans, but more research is needed on the communication values of American co-cultures and the degree to which they retain the cultural values of origin. The evidence that exists about communication values suggests that African Americans are both individualistic and collectivistic (also known as horizontal collectivism, Hofstede, 2001), valuing self-expression within the ingroup as well as group unity and goal achievement as a cohesive group (Hecht, et al., 1993; Swaidan, et al., 2008; Orbe, 2004; Young, 2007; Gendrin & Rucker, 2007). Asian-Americans, Latino-Americans, and Native Americans remain highly collectivistic in that they collaboratively support individual achievement as it supports group goals and needs, and tend to value highly collectivistic communication behaviors such as harmony, modesty, indirect conflict strategies, and group unity

(Triandis, 2001, 2009; Ting-Toomey, 2007; Kim, 1986; Kim & Omizo, 2005; Hwang & Francesco, 2006, 2010; Young 2007; Nwosu, 2007; Cox, Lobel & McLeod, 1991).

### **The effects of asymmetrical power on students of color.**

According to Thompson (2004), those who lack power are highly distrustful of those who have power. They also have the incentive of rewards and punishment to carefully attend to those who are in power and pay attention to negative or threatening information.

Power is defined by Thompson (2004) as “the ability of a person to control the outcomes of another person in a relationship” (p. 242). Because people in power are less dependent upon favorable judgments from people with less power, they are less aware of negative appraisal, therefore less motivated to pay attention to the messages and actions of those they view as subordinate. According to Thompson (2004) People in power simply attend less to negative information regarding their performance, to others’ true feelings about them, and to the evaluations of subordinates than they do to positive feedback or feedback from those with power to reward or punish them (stockholders, bosses).

Instructors have power over students in that instructors often decide, based on their own culturally embedded and subconscious biases, who is trying, who is working hard, who deserves extra time and attention, and who is capable of succeeding in college. Thus, the instructor may have enough power to decide who succeeds and who fails by what assistance and communication accommodation they offer students. Instructors may appear to first generation students or students of color to be the people with the most power in the classroom. Instructors may believe themselves to be more fair, generous, and trustworthy than students evaluate them to be according to the effects of power discussed by (Thompson, 2004). With this self-serving bias, instructors may unwittingly or even intentionally pay more attention to positive feedback, than to feedback indicating they aren’t reaching all students well.



Hwang & Francesco (2006) asserted that collectivistic students are more likely to seek feedback from peers than professors, preferring to interact with others perceived as similar to themselves. According to results of the Swaidan, et al. (2008) study, this could be an effect of high power distance and uncertainty avoidance. Conversely, individualistic students are more likely to seek feedback directly from professors, who students may think of as similar and on equal status with themselves (because of low power distance values). In 2010, Hwang and Francesco found that students' power distance and individualism/collectivism values impact their learning outcomes as a result of preference for communication channels with their professors. Students high in power distance and collectivism preferred mediums of communication that were not face to face.

A revealing study by Padget, et al., (2010) found that for first generation students, personal contact with faculty inside and outside of the classroom actually had an “unnerving” (p. 109) effect on students, thus reducing their need for cognition (desire to engage in cognitive activities). This phenomena may be an effect of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and power in general, particularly the asymmetrical power that may be perceived by first generation students and students of color in particular and is informed by their personal experience and knowledge of historical racial and ethnic oppression in the United States.

In order to decide if and how to communicate with instructors, students of color first negotiate with their own experiences (Orbe, 2004). This means students must manage their perceptions of racism, power or lack thereof, their personal degree of internalized racism (Evans et al., 2010), personal locus of control (one's sense of having personal power as opposed to external forces [fate, powerful others] having control over one's outcomes; Rotter, 1966), self-construal on the collectivism/individualism continuum, and conflict management preferences. In response to the above factors, students must respond to their own values regarding power

distance and appropriate behavior towards those in authority on campus, particularly toward those of white ethnicity who are in authority.

Wilmot and Hocker (2007) asserted that where there is an imbalance in power, people of low-power positions find indirect communication is more effective with people in high-power positions. One reason for this may be that high concern for loss of face may be experienced by students of historically low-power positions on the campus when attempting to communicate with people (faculty) who they perceive to be in high power positions.

On a predominantly white campus, members of any ethnic minority status may feel the need to attend more closely to their own face maintenance. “People try to avoid loss of face by defending their self-images against humiliation, embarrassment, exclusion, demeaning communication, or general treatment as unimportant or low-power individuals” (Wilmot & Hocker, 2007, p. 71).

#### **Effects of interaction with faculty of dominant culture.**

In contrast to findings of an unnerving effect on first generation students, faculty interaction across racial and ethnic groups has been shown to contribute to student learning and personal development especially in students of color (Lundberg & Schrener, 2004). However, there are some obstacles to developing interaction patterns with students of color.

Students of collectivistic traditions, who are high in power distance, may hold polarized cultural values from their white instructors when it comes to the issues of perceived respect (or power distance), and conflict (or dissonance) with persons in authority. According to Stella Ting-Toomey (2006), members of individualistic cultures tend toward the following conflict behavior categories: independent self-construal, self-face maintenance, and therefore dominating/competing, and passive aggressive conflict styles. This indicates that the verbal aggressiveness and verbal dissonance that may be valued as “pro-active” by white faculty, may

be regarded as threatening, undesirable, or disrespectful by students of color who hold collectivistic values. Collectivistically influenced students with interdependent self-construal, mutual-face and other-face maintenance concerns, will tend toward different (than individualist's) conflict strategy categories: compromising/integrating, third-party help, and avoiding/obliging conflict styles. If a student of collectivistic values finds him/herself in "conflict," disagreement or even questioning an instructor, it is likely that an indirect approach to resolving the problem may be taken by that student. The indirect approach may not even involve the instructor in question, but may instead enlist peers and mentors that the student sees as more similar to him/herself. This lack of directness on the part of students may be attributed by a majority member instructor as avoidance, lack of respect, inadequate academic preparation, inadequate assertiveness, lack of intelligence, or even childish dependence behavior in keeping with some predominant stereotypes (Riggs, 1987).

**Case Study Institution: University of Arkansas**

The University of Arkansas is a Research Institution in the South, which has historically been, and still remains, predominantly white. According to Robinson and Williams (2010), demographics by race have only been collected since 1983. However, data in Table 1 was created to give a partial snapshot of enrollment demographics from 1969 to 2003 which is based on information compiled by Robinson & Williams (2010) and the *BAD Times Collection*.

Table 1  
African American Student Representation 1969-2003

Year	African Amer. Stu	Total Students	% of African Amer.
1969	150	9000	1.66
1983	738	14508	5.08
1993	708	14407	4.91
2003	1005	16449	6.11

(Compiled using data from: Robinson & Williams 2010, *Remembrances in Black: African American Student Enrollment, BAD Times Collection*.)

Student enrollment at the University of Arkansas between 2009-2012 as shown in Table 2 below, demonstrates that the percentage of African American students enrolled at the University of Arkansas has actually fallen since 2003, and is not significantly higher per capita than enrollment levels of 1983, 20 years ago. It is possible the decrease noted may be in part a reflection of changes in new racial categories now available on the census and in the federal definitions of racial categories, however that is difficult to ascertain for certain.

Table 2  
University of Arkansas Student Enrollment 2009-2012

U of A Enrollment 2009-2012	% pop 2009	2009	2010	2011	2012	% pop 2012	% change
Total Enrollment		19,849	21,405	23,199	24,537		
Asian	2.45%	486	508	562	596	2.43%	-0.02%
African American	5.24%	1040	1128	1246	1278	5.21%	-0.03%
Hispanic and any other race	3.52%	699	861	1068	1301	5.30%	1.78%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1.67%	331	337	315	327	1.33%	-0.33%
Caucasian	78.96%	15672	16813	18098	18985	77.37%	-1.58%
Non-Resident Alien	5.82%	1156	1163	1191	1237	5.04%	-0.78%
Unknown	0.91%	180	115	90	99	0.40%	-0.50%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.07%	13	19	21	20	0.08%	0.02%
Two or More Races	1.37%	272	461	608	694	2.83%	1.46%

(University of Arkansas Office of Institutional Research, 2013; percentages added by researcher)

During the same period between 2009 and 2012, teaching faculty demographics reflect a slight increase in ethnic representation, although still not representative of the general population or the student population (Table 3).

Table 3  
Teaching Faculty at the University of Arkansas 2009-2012

Teaching Faculty 2009-2012	% fac. 2009	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 %	% Change
Total Teaching Faculty		983	1026	1087	1130		
Asian	5.70%	56	58	69	80	7.08%	1.38%
African American	3.05%	30	31	35	35	3.10%	0.05%
Hispanic and any other race	1.32%	13	17	20	23	2.04%	0.71%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.92%	9	9	8	8	0.71%	-0.21%
Caucasian	82.10%	807	830	860	908	80.35%	-1.74%
Non-Resident Alien	4.68%	46	46	44	42	3.72%	-0.96%
Unknown	1.32%	13	25	40	22	1.95%	0.62%
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander						0.00%	0.00%
Two or More Races	0.92%	9	10	11	12	1.06%	0.15%

(University of Arkansas Office of Institutional Research – raw data, % of faculty and change added by researcher.)

If synthesized with information found in the *Bad Times Collection* (2009), Tables 1, 2, and 3 indicate that there were significant gains in attendance of students of color for several decades. However, stagnation and even atrophy of African American student enrollment has occurred in the last decade (shown in Table 4).

Table 4  
Decades of Diversity at a Glance: University of Arkansas

Decades at a Glance	1969	1983	1992	2002	2012
Total Student Enrollment	9000	14508	14734	16035	24537
African American Enrollment	150	738	707	1022	1278
African Amer. % of student body	1.67%	5.09%	4.80%	6.37%	5.21%

(*Bad Times Collection*, Office of Institutional Research, 2013).

### **History of diversity at University of Arkansas.**

There have been many “challenges to integration in our past” and “residual barriers still remain” (Robinson, & White, 2010, p. xiii). Although the University of Arkansas prides itself for being the first southern institution to integrate without a court order, this move was more of a

maneuver to avoid the cost of lawsuits and out of state tuition for graduate students of color than it was a genuine commitment to offer students of color equal opportunities to education. In spite of the fact that there was never a written official policy to exclude blacks from the University of Arkansas, the first graduate admissions occurred in 1948 with Clifford Davis and Silas Hunt. Clifford Davis did not attend. Silas Hunt, on the other hand, suffered such extreme hostility and conditions, that it is suspected his death in the spring of 1949 was a result of physical consequences of the poor treatment he suffered. He was forced to take classes alone in the basement of the law school, and segregated from white students, except for a few who chose to sit with him in the basement. In addition to the alienation he must have felt, the harsh winter when he was forced to live off campus and commute by foot from the home of a black family in Fayetteville he lived with resulted in his death after contracting tuberculosis. Silas Hunt was the first black student admitted to the University of Arkansas (Robinson & Williams, 2010).

It was not until 1955 that the first black undergraduate students were admitted, Helen Maxine Sutton, Billie Rose Whitfield, and Marjorie Wilkins were admitted, but not permitted to live in the dormitories or eat with the other students. They were assigned housing at the edge of campus, and as young 18 year old ladies felt unloved, uncared for on campus, and were often afraid for their safety. This stood out as different from the homes and towns they came from. Their stories include one horrifying night when an angry mob attempted to break down the door of the little house they were assigned to reside (Robinson & Williams, 2010).

The stories of black alumni as recalled in *Remembrances in Black* (Robinson & Williams, 2010), resonate with the consistent themes of fear and courage, even though as the decades progress, they appear to become less overtly racist accounts, and more subtle racialized events commonly called micro aggressions. The accounts of the integration of African Americans at the University of Arkansas are filled with “violent struggles and inhuman conditions” (p. 280).

The oral tradition in the African American community, contributes to the documentation of these events in family stories of abuses being well known as “horrific at worst and inhumane at best” (p. 281). As a result, both “fascination and fear” (p. 282) continue to be the residual reputation of the University of Arkansas as it is perceived by African Americans. We do not have nearly as thorough an account as the one offered by Robinson & Williams (2010) for other ethnic groups in their struggle to obtain an education at the University of Arkansas. However, we can surmise that any student of color paid a heavy price in pain and persistence to succeed. The size, the resources, and the American Dream itself are all benefits that draw students to the University of Arkansas. However, according to Robinson & Williams (2010) it is yet a concern of many that the University “has not yet completely eradicated the vestiges of its nonwelcoming past” (p. 282). They further claimed that still “many people of color stand waiting for the University of Arkansas to cogently demonstrate that diversity and inclusion are seminal strands of its institutional DNA” (p.282).

In the past five years, the university appears to have made a serious commitment to understanding the needs of students of color, and serving them better. With programs such as the College Access Initiative, the Bridge Scholarship Program, and the reorganization of diversity offices accompanied by the appointment of a Vice-Provost of Diversity Affairs who was recently promoted to Vice-Chancellor of Diversity and Communication, Dr. Robinson and his team have created a meaningful, effective voice and inclusive services for underserved populations of students. The climate appears to be friendlier, more accepting of matters of difference from this researcher’s observation. Students of color appear to be more relaxed, less apprehensive, and more confident that they will be treated well. Students of mixed ethnic groups meet, linger, and laugh with obvious affinity for each other in the common areas of campus. However, the observation of this instructor is that students of color still demonstrate an apprehensiveness with

this white instructor that is greater than that of students from the dominant population on campus. Perhaps with the election of an African American president, and the more open discussion of race and ethnicity in society, and on campus, these factors are beginning to open lines of communication that have never been open before. However, we must not assume. The University of Arkansas is still in the South. The rebel flag is still frequently seen proudly displayed in dorm rooms, truck windows, and on Facebook covers in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The campus is still predominantly white in its racial/ethnic makeup. The goal of this study is to measure communication apprehension of students of color with their instructors, asymmetrical power relationships which are interethnic. It is the hope of this researcher that data obtained from this study will have much heuristic value for both interethnic communication research as well as higher education research. But above all, it is the desire of this researcher that higher education become the cashier of a “bad check” (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 1963, p.2) that was long ago written to the people of color in the United States of America.



## CHAPTER 3

### Research Methods

This chapter describes the details of the research methods and design of the study. The study was primarily quantitative; however, the opportunity to gather content rich data was utilized as well with the design. Communication phenomena are complex, and the design provided a rich understanding of the needs and communication perspectives of students of color when communicating with faculty members. The chapter includes the following sections: Design, Sample, Data Collection, and Data Analysis.

#### Design

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this research. Cross-sectional surveys collect data at one point in time (Creswell, 2008). Cross sectional survey designs can be used to examine attitudes, beliefs, opinions and practices. They can also be used to compare two or more groups. “Attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are ways in which individuals think about issues, whereas practices are their actual behaviors” (Creswell, 2008 p. 390-391). Surveys can be used to gather data quickly and inexpensively. Survey methods are widely used in the social science fields, by the United States Military, and by well-respected research centers such as the ones at Berkley, the University of Chicago, and the University of Michigan (Creswell, 2008).

The PRECA, a survey instrument developed by Neuliep & McCroskey (1997) measures the Interethnic Communication Apprehension levels of participants. Communication Apprehension levels have been shown to affect communication behaviors of individuals (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; McCroskey, 2009; Gudykunst & Kim 1997; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Orbe, 2004; White & Lowenthal, 2011). Research question 1 addresses the self-reported apprehension levels of students of color in relation to communicating with white faculty members at the University of Arkansas, a predominantly white institution. Research questions

two and three addressed whether there are significant differences between groups according to gender, race/ethnicity, and year in college. Research question four asked for open ended response about suggestions for improving the experience of students of color. Creswell asserted that “an open-ended question allows participants to create responses within their cultural and social experiences instead of the researcher’s experiences” (p. 399).

A survey design is used to measure attitudes, opinions and beliefs from a sample of the target population, and then may be generalizable to the larger population if the sample is large enough, and if the sample is representative of the target population. If sufficient sample size and representation are present in the sample, observations can be inferred as generalizable to the target population (Creswell, 2008).

### **Sample**

The sample from which the data for this study was gathered was a convenience sample of students of color in attendance at events sponsored by the University of Arkansas Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education. A large percentage of students who attend the events at the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education are students of color of various ethnicities, thus meeting the goal was easily achieved and with the least probability of introducing suspicion or mistrust of the survey or researcher existed at events coordinated by the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education, which fosters a value for diversity and cultural education. Therefore, the goal of obtaining 100 surveys from students of color over the course of a few events was achieved.

At each event, an announcement was be made by individuals recognized and trusted by students who encouraged them to participate in the survey. Personnel of diverse ethnicity from the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education, and other volunteers were enlisted through the staff of the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education to facilitate the recruitment of

students to participate and administer the survey document as students arrived and departed from Center events.

Convenience sampling has been shown to have a higher participation rate than digital distribution of surveys. Because of the number of students who attended the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education events during the data collection period, volunteers will be able to collect 104 surveys during the last week October, 2013. Alreck and Settle (1985) wrote that 100 surveys provides an optimal number of responses for a sample, while still being cost effective and generating information of value at many more times the cost of the gathering expense.

Upon entering or leaving the Center, students were offered the opportunity to participate by completing the survey at that time. Students were permitted to take the survey with them, and return it scanned, via e-mail. A box was located in the data collection area outside of the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education where students deposited their completed surveys. Two optional methods of return of the survey allowed students the added sense of anonymity of their answers, however, no students elected to use the alternative return methods.

### **Data Collection**

A table was set up with the researcher posted just outside or just inside of the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education doors during the dates of collection. The researcher and the Center staff offered students the opportunity to participate in a survey using the statement that this survey's goal "is to help us understand how to better meet the needs of students of color."

Staff who assisted in data collection were all recognized as trusted members of the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education and campus community. Since this researcher does not appear not to be a person of color, nor is regularly present in the Center, it was important to

prevent concern about motivation (of the researcher) to reduce as much apprehension or mistrust as possible in relation to this survey (Allen, 2011; Orbe, 2004, Collier, 1998, Gendrin & Rucker, 2007; Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Hecht, et al., 1992; Hecht, et al., 1993; Kim, 1986; Kramarae, 2006; Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997; Nwosu, 2007; Padgett, et al., 2010; Tatum, 1997; Ting-Toomey, 2010; White & Lowenthal, 2011). The staff of the Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education assisted the researcher with enlistment of recognizable and trusted (to students of color) people to administer the survey instrument.

### **Data Analysis**

Prior to conducting any statistical tests, all cell sizes were checked to be certain that statistical analysis could be run given the number of responses for that cell. Descriptive statistics were used including mean scores and the standard deviation scores. In addition, one t-test and one ANOVA Test was conducted so inferential conclusions could be drawn. Finally, a content analysis and member check was used to search for recurring themes and frequently occurring words in the open ended answers. The tests were conducted as follows for each research question.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What were the ICA (Interethnic Communication Apprehension) levels of college students of color specifically as they related to communicating with faculty members at the University of Arkansas, a Predominantly White research university?

Using the PRECA (Personal Report of Interethnic Communication Apprehension) developed by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997), students answered a series of 14 questions that related to comfort with communicating with people from other racial/ethnic groups. The response possibilities were strongly disagree = 1, disagree = 2, undecided= 3, agree = 4, and strongly agree = 5, an ordinal scale, which represents differing values, but not an absolute

absence of communication apprehension (Glass & Hopkins, 1996). This measure was developed to address communication apprehension in the interethnic context. It is presumed to be better than the PRCA24 (Personal Report of Communication Apprehension) for the interethnic context, however it is substantially related with the PRCA24. The correlation between the PRECA and the PRCA24 suggest that interethnic communication apprehension is a sub-category of general communication apprehension (Neuliep & McCroskey, 1997).

To compute the PRECA score, the following steps were completed:

Step 1. Scores were added for the following items: 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, and 12

Step 2. Scores were added for the following items: 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, and 14

Step 3. The following formula was completed: PRECA score = 42 - Total from Step 1 + total from step 2.

PRECA scores range can from 14 to 70. Scores below 32 indicate low interethnic CA. Scores above 52 indicate high interethnic CA. Scores ranging between 32 and 52 indicate a moderate level of intercultural CA.

Descriptive statistics were used to calculate results, including the mean ICA scores and standard deviations associated with each score for each ethnicity/race.

Table 5  
Descriptive Statistics

ETHNICITY/RACE	MEAN PRECA	STD. DEVIATION
African American/black	23.75	8.18
Latino/Hispanic	24.09	7.42
European American/white	21.83	13.99
More than one	24.40	9.39
Other	25.27	6.9

RQ2: Were there significant differences in ICA among students based on ethnic/racial differences?

An ANOVA test was planned for use to determine if there were significant differences of ICA levels among students based on ethnicity/race. An ANOVA test is often used in communication research to capture the “complexity of communication phenomena” (Keyton, 2006, p. 205). Keyton (2006) went on to explain that where a t-test can only test one independent variable at a time, an ANOVA can “test more than two categorical levels. . . and allows the researcher to compare individuals’ scores on the dependent variables according to the groups or categories they belong to for the independent variable.” (p. 205). If statistically significant differences were found in the data sets for RQ2, RQ3, or RQ4, post hoc analysis was conducted using a Turkey Pair Wise Comparison.

RQ3: Were there significant differences in levels of ICA based on sex?

A T-test was used to determine if there were significant differences of ICA of among students based on sex. The t-test was used to indicate whether students reported significant differences in ICA levels based on their sex. Keyton (2006) noted the t-test is used to compare differences between two independent groups (male and female) on a dependent variable (ICA score). The ICA scores of males and females was then compared for significant differences between the means of males and females.

RQ4: Were there significant differences in levels of ICA based on year in school (and ethnicity/race)?

An ANOVA test was conducted to measure if there were significant differences of ICA based on year in school. The reasons cited in RQ2 also apply to the need for ANOVA test on this variable. Significant statistical differences found then warranted the Tukey’s Pairwise Comparison analysis.

RQ5: What did students report could be done to improve the outcomes and experiences of students of color?

The PRECA is a 14 question survey developed by Neuliep & McCroskey (1997), to measure interethnic communication apprehension. Qualitative information was gathered to answer RQ5, an open ended question which was added as number 15 to the survey instrument. All written responses to question number 15 were cataloged and recorded in Appendix C of the dissertation. Responses to the open ended question were processed using content analysis which integrated data collection and analytical techniques (Keyton, 2006). This research used content analysis to uncover recurring themes, phrases and words that emerged in student responses to the final question. Content analysis helped the researcher make inferences by identifying characteristics of messages. Analysis was conducted for explicit content characteristics (such as the denotative meaning of words frequently used) as well as latent (interpretive) characteristics that imply something about the nature of the respondents or the effects of the communication phenomena in question on communicators involved (students and faculty members in this instance). The assistance of technology such as the Microsoft search and find features were used to identify recurring words and themes, which were coded into seven categories by the researcher.

Member checks were conducted by members of groups represented in the sample to assure that no recurring themes or latent messages were missed when coding the data set. Member check provided an additional system of analysis for themes, words, and categories as perceived by others working with the researcher. In this specific case, since the researcher is a white, middle aged female, it was expected that a male African American individual with a Master's Degree or higher would be needed as well as an African American female, and a Latina female of similar level of academic achievement and research methods knowledge.

Individuals for the member check were identified based on the descriptive statistics which indicated the most frequent ethnic and sex group memberships indicated by survey respondents.

### **Chapter Summary**

The PRECA instrument, developed by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997), was used to gather descriptive and inferential data on participant students of color at the University of Arkansas during events sponsored by the University of Arkansas Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education. In addition, T-Test's and Anova tests, were conducted in as much as was possible for cell sizes. When significant differences were found, the post hoc analysis Tukey Pairwise Comparison was conducted. SAS, a data analysis program commonly used in social sciences research was used to assist in analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis processes, and member check cross analysis to insure that no significant themes or inferences were missed by the researcher.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Analysis of Data**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the study along with the results of the data collection and analysis. The data were collected in late October, 2014 using a convenience sample of students who came to the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education at the University of Arkansas.

#### **Summary of the Study**

The study was conducted to measure the Interethnic Communication Apprehension of students of color in the specific context of communicating with faculty and instructors who are members of the racial majority. In addition, the study provided students the opportunity to report in an open ended response what could be done to improve the experience of students of color at the University of Arkansas.

The study was conducted in an effort to aid the institution in achieving institutional objectives such as excellence in instruction, research, outreach, public service, student retention, and student affairs. The University's strategy to accomplish these objectives includes the continued development of an inclusive community by designing programs that foster inclusiveness, achievement, the removal of obstacles to effective teaching and learning.

In spite of the proven benefits of interracial and interethnic communication that leads to relationship development, classroom communication expectations are generally set by the verbal and non-verbal communication preferences of whichever ethnicity is the majority student population at a given institution (Gendrin & Rucker, 2007). Neimann and Dovidio (1998) found that feelings of racial and ethnic stigmatization in organizations were directly related to numeric representation. Thus, it is important to understand the tacit communication expectations and

experiences of non-dominant student populations to assure that classroom, and out of classroom experiences are designed to best meet the needs of all students, including the non-dominant student populations. Gendrin and Rucker (2007), further asserted that “culture, as reflected in ethnic membership, strongly influences how teachers and students communicate to accomplish teaching and learning goals” (p.42), and that different ethnic groups responded differently to teacher communication behaviors. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to understand the experiences that non-dominant culture students report during their classroom and out of class encounters in order to understand how to most effectively serve not only students of color, but all students as it has been well established that intercultural and interracial interaction serves students of all ethnicities in the acquisition of critical thinking skills and learning objectives (Terenzini et al. 1999).

### **Collection of Data**

Data were collected with the assistance and permission of the staff of the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education (MC) at the University of Arkansas. During the development of the methods strategy for this research, Director of the MC, and other staff consulted with the researcher regarding best practices and times to collect data in order to enlist the most participants possible. The Director of the College Access Initiative was also crucial to encouraging students to come to the Center to assist with the research effort.

During the last week of October 2013, the plan to collect data was executed at the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education of the University of Arkansas. During the day prior to the first event of collection, requests were sent via e-mail and text messages urging students to stop by to participate in the research and eat some snacks. These messages were sent by the Director of College Access, and other staff of the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education.

The initial data collection occurred on October 25, 2013, during the “Popcorn Friday” event from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education staff assisted the researcher in asking students for their help filling out the surveys, popcorn and candy was offered to the students in gratitude for their time and participation. As students entered the MC area and lobby, they were asked by the researcher and Center staff members to “fill out the survey to help us better understand the needs of students of color at the University of Arkansas.” In addition to the distribution of popcorn during that time, a bowl of candy was placed in the lobby near the collection box, where there was also a 8.5 x 11 inch sign posted that read, “Please help us better serve students of color. Approved by the Vice Chancellor for Diversity, supported by the Director of the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education, U of A.”

The second event where surveys were distributed and gathered was on Sunday, October 27, 2013 at an iConnect event sponsored by the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education. A staff member in charge of the event ended the meeting by requesting students to take one of the surveys being passed out by the researcher, and complete it. During this time, cupcakes were also being distributed in celebration of October birthdays.

Ninety seven of the surveys were collected at the first two events, the remaining seven were collected the following week by a Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education Administrative Specialist. Candy was offered to all students but was not a condition of participation. Students in the Center appeared to be comfortable, and seemed to be relaxed in the hospitable atmosphere. The staff assisted in data collection by making initial introductions of the researcher, who is not a staff member at the Center. Therefore, the ethnicity, age, or lack of familiarity with the researcher did not appear to be a hindrance to the data collection process. The collection of data was discontinued when the researcher and staffers of the Center concluded that most students involved with the Center had completed the survey.

The only problem with gathering data at the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education was that an insufficient number of European American, Latino/Hispanic students, and those who self-identify as “other” or “more than one” ethnicities were available in a convenience sample from that location. This led to insufficient cell sizes for comparison in one of the proposed ANOVA tests. The comparison of apprehension levels between different ethnic groups of students could not be conducted because of insufficient cell sizes for ethnicities other than African American students.

### **Analysis of the Data**

Data were gathered using the Personal Report of Interethnic Communication Apprehension (PRECA), developed by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997). The PRECA is a 14 question, five point Likert-type scale survey that asks participants to self-report on apprehension levels they experience during four communication contexts: group, interpersonal, public speaking, and classroom. For the purpose of the research, the survey was altered to include one open ended question. The directions were also altered as suggested by Neuliep and McCroskey (1997), to focus participants on a specific context while answering survey questions. Students were directed (in the written instructions and verbal direction) to think about their interactions with European American professors and instructors at the University of Arkansas while answering the survey.

RQ1. What were the ICA (Interethnic Communication Apprehension) levels of college students of color specifically as they related to communicating with faculty members at the University of Arkansas, a PWI (Predominantly White University)?

The overall mean for the sample was 23.90. According to Neuliep and McCroskey (1997), this score indicated a low Interethnic Communication Apprehension level. The Neuliep and McCroskey’s (1997) PRECA instrument, established score ranges as follows: low

apprehension scores range from 14-31, moderate scores range from 32-52, and high ICA scores range from 53-70. As shown in Table 6, the mean for African American/Black students was 23.75, the mean for Latino/Hispanic students was 24.09, the mean for students self-identifying as “other” was 25.27, the mean for European American/White students was 21.83, and the mean for students reporting their ethnicity/race as “more than 1” was 24.40.

RQ2. Were there significant differences in ICA among students based on ethnic differences?

As shown in Table 6, of the 104 responses to the survey, African American/Black students comprised 58% of the sample, Latino/Hispanic students comprised 20.1% of the sample, students who identified as “Other” comprised 10.5% of the sample, European American/White students comprised 5.7% of the sample, and students who identified as “more than one” ethnicity/race comprised 4.8% of the sample. Due to a discrepancy in cell sizes, it was not possible to conduct the originally planned Analysis of Variance. Therefore, no statistical analysis could be completed to analyze significant differences of ICA between ethnic groups. However, there were observable minor differences in the ICA mean scores with European American students having the lowest ICA levels, followed by African American students, Latino/Hispanic students, “more than 1 ethnicity/race” students, and students who identified as “other” reported the highest ICA scores respectively. These scores appeared to reflect the enrollment predominance of each group at the University of Arkansas, with “other” having unknown meaning for the purpose of this research.

Table 6  
Mean Scores Interethnic Communication Apprehension

		n	Mean ICA SCORE	Standard Deviation
Race/Ethnicity	African American/Black	61	23.75	8.18
	Latino/Hispanic	21	24.09	7.42
	Other	11	25.27	6.90
	European American	6	21.83	13.99
	More than 1	5	24.40	9.39
Sex	Female	62	24.01	9.00
	Male	41	23.87	7.05
Year in School	Freshmen	24	21.66	7.38
	Sophomore	32	24.06	6.58
	Junior	24	28.50	10.86
	Senior	21	21.57	6.55
	Graduate Student	3	19.66	2.3

RQ3. Were there significant differences in levels of ICA based on gender?

Men comprised 39.4% of the sample and women comprised 58.6% with one participant who failed to identify their sex. As shown in Table 6, the mean score for men who participated in the survey was 23.87, while the mean score for women was 24.01. Both mean scores reflected low ICA levels. A T-test was conducted to measure significant difference, and no significant difference was found in that  $f$  value was 1.63 and  $p$  value was 0.1018.

RQ4. Were there significant differences in levels of ICA based on year in school?

As shown in Table 6, freshmen comprised 23.07% ( $n=24$ ) of the sample, sophomores were 30.76% ( $n=32$ ), juniors were 23.07% ( $n=24$ ), seniors were 20.19% ( $n=21$ ) and graduate students were the participants on 2.88% ( $n=3$ ) of the surveys. Group mean ICA scores by year showed freshmen with a mean ICA of 21.66, sophomores with a mean ICA score of 24.06, juniors were with a mean ICA score of 28.5, seniors with a mean ICA score of 20.19 mean and

graduate students had a mean ICA score of 19.66. All groups by year in school demonstrate low ICA scores.

Table 7  
Results of ANOVA

Source	DF	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	<i>f</i> Value	Pr > F
Model	4	796.020604	199.005151	3.19	0.0165
Error	99	6181.017857	62.434524		

Although all ICA scores fell within the “low” apprehension ranking, the Tukey’s Pairwise Comparison indicated that there were significant differences between the ICA scores of the freshmen and junior year, and between the junior and senior years in school. The data indicated that ICA scores were significantly heightened after the sophomore year with the junior year score showing a spike, and then decreasing significantly during the senior year of school.

RQ5. What did students report could be done to improve the outcomes and experiences of students of color?

One open ended question was asked at the end of the survey. The responses to question 15 were included verbatim in Appendix C. Of 104 surveys, 92 included an answer to the open response question, and 12 were left blank on this answer. Eighty nine percent of participants elected to answer the final question in which seven prevalent themes were indicated. The themes were: inclusion; event programming; salience of culture with desire for improved understanding of members of different groups; communication quality, quantity and access between groups; dissatisfaction or negative experiences; faculty and staff roles; and finally; the need for sensitivity and training of faculty and students when relating to people of color.

The weight of the themes (Table 8) referred to by participants was: 65% percent of the responses indicated themes of inclusion; 46% referred to programming of events and activities to enable access to the dominant ethnic student group at the university, cultural support of co-

cultural groups, and cultural education; 45% of the responses emphasized the salience of culture, ethnicity and race of the respondents and indicated a desire for an improved cultural and communicative understanding by out-group (often referred to in responses as “minority”) members; improved communication quality, quantity and access was referenced in 43% of the responses; direct dissatisfaction or negative experiences were reported in 26% of the responses; faculty and staff roles in “improving the experience of students of color” were mentioned 19% of the time, most often indicating the need for student support from faculty; the need for cultural education, sensitivity, and training was referenced 7% of the time.

A word count was conducted, and indicated that the following words were used with high frequency (shown in Appendix D). The most frequently used words or forms of words were: event (25), culture (17), synonyms including professor, faculty, and teacher (15), ethnic (13), involve (11), interact (11), class (10), and activities (10).



Table 8  
Theme Analysis

% of Occurrence	Themes
68%	Inclusion: 63 references to desire for hospitable environment and inclusion in activities with majority group
46%	Event Programming: 43 references to the desire for a range events which provide assistance connecting and access to (dominant) out-group members, in-group social support, and cultural education Access to out-group members In-group support (social and academic)
45%	Culture/ethnicity: 42 references to cultural, ethnic, and racial inclusion which indicate desire for improvement
43%	Communication: 40 references to desire for communication improvement or access
26%	Dissatisfaction: 24 references to direct dissatisfaction or negative experiences
19%	Faculty/staff: 18 references to faculty or staff support of students
7%	Education/training needed: 7 references to the need for more cultural education or sensitivity training of faculty

In addition to the word and theme analysis of open ended question by the researcher, member checks were also conducted by members of the ethnic groups most represented in the sample. This was done to assure that no themes were overlooked because of the group membership of the researcher or the diversity of the sample. Fifty-nine percent of respondents self-identified as African American/Black, therefore, two members of the same ethnic group agreed to read and analyzed the themes of student responses. Member checks were conducted by one African American male with a, one African American female and male married couple, all of whom hold doctorates in Higher Education. Additional member checks were conducted by two Latina/Hispanic females since 20.19% of the respondents self-identified as Latino/Hispanic. Table 9 contains the observations of those who conducted a member checks.

Table 9

Member Check General Themes

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Member Check General Themes

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Member Check 1: African American Male (with terminal degree)

Themes:

1. Comfortable/Welcoming:
2. Inclusivity
3. Programming
4. Training and Development:

Member Check 2: African American Male & Female Couple (with terminal degrees)

Themes:

1. Programming/Cultural Events
2. Intercultural Programming
3. Recruitment of Students
4. Retention
5. First Generation Students
6. Recruitment of Faculty of Color
7. Alienation
8. Scholarships
9. Faculty Development/ Training
10. Showcase/Highlight
11. Minority Student Involvement
12. Minority Organizations
13. Nothing is Wrong
14. Race
15. Resources
16. Other

Member Check 3: Latina (with Master of Arts degree)

African American students want to feel welcomed at the U of A. Right now they don't feel they are viewed as equal or as important as other ethnicities/majorities. They would feel welcome if the U of A did more of:

1. Implementation of programs/events/fairs/activities that would cater specifically to this population
2. Hire more African American faculty/staff
3. Caucasian faculty/staff to undergo cultural sensitivity training, especially understanding of the African American population

Member Check 4: Latina (with terminal degree)

Themes:

1. Opportunities
  2. Faculty of Color/Engagement
  3. Diversity/Multicultural Events
  4. Continuing current programming
  5. Collaboration
-

The member checks were consistent with the major theme and word count analysis of the researcher. The member checks did show variance in the grouping of themes, and their apparent priorities as read by participating colleagues, however, they were not necessarily categorized in order of the weight given by student responses, but as seemed most salient to the data readers. Member check collaborators were asked to “read the open ended responses, think about them, and list the themes” (Personal Communication, March, 2014) they observed in student responses. As intended, themes observed and reported in member checks were the most apparent to each of the readers of the data based on their own experience and expertise. No quota or number of themes were requested of the members, and no direction was given as to any particular themes to be mindful of. All four member checks consistently named the major themes of event programming, faculty recruitment and development, inclusivity and opportunity for students of color, as well as inter- and intra- cultural opportunities for students.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter included a discussion of the significance and importance of this study, as well as a description of the data collection and analysis. Next, the findings for each of the five research questions and observations of interest were included along with tables. Finally, a word count and theme analysis of the qualitative, open response data was included. These data were analyzed by the researcher and by four members of the co-cultures who held advanced degrees and were represented the most in the sample.

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusions and Discussion

#### Introduction

This chapter will include the research questions and conclusions, recommendations for practice and future research, as well as a discussion of the findings in light of theoretical knowledge. In addition, the cultural and communication implications of a change the magnitude of which is predicted by current demographic trends will be covered. Suggestions for higher education policy and programing are made with theoretical support serving as guidance.

#### Summary of the Study

The study examined the Interethnic Communication Apprehension of students of color with faculty members at the University of Arkansas, a Predominantly White Institution with predominantly White faculty. This area of inquiry is important given that ethnic populations are predicted to become the numerical majority in the United States by 2025. Thus, the workforce in the United States will be primarily people of color by the time the Baby Boomers exit the workforce. In order to advance society, to maintain economic stability, and to meet the demands for knowledge and technology based jobs in the United States, it is essential that higher education become more accessible, hospitable, and effective in recruiting, including, educating, and graduating people of color than it has been historically.

Whether or not it is out of instrumental motivation to survive economically, or moral conviction to keep the American promise, leaders in higher education and throughout society must examine and solve the ineffective and inefficient policies and practices that still prevail which may contribute to underrepresentation of people of color in higher education, and in positions of power throughout the social, economic, educational, and political landscape of America.

The findings of the present study are significant because they revealed some interesting contrasts. First, the overall mean interethnic communication apprehension scores indicate a low level of interethnic communication apprehension for all groups, and all categories measured at the University of Arkansas. There were, however, significant differences in the levels of self-reported communication apprehension between the freshman and junior year, and between the junior and senior years of college reported by the participants.

Second, the qualitative data indicates that although students reported low levels of interethnic communication apprehension, there is dissatisfaction with their experiences as students of color at the University of Arkansas. Students reported numerous aspects of communication that they find dissatisfactory, including the perceived need for more integrated social access to members of the cultural majority (inclusion), and the need for “training” or “cultural education” (understanding the cultures of under-represented students) for faculty and student majority members. In addition, cultural integration of programming events and classrooms to address the perceived exclusion and isolation of non-dominant students. The expressed desire for academic leadership and support from in-group members as well as cultural activities that support and celebrate cultural identity of underrepresented students is also indicated in the data.

Student responses indicated a desire for both intra-cultural opportunities to gain support from in-group members while more frequently expressing dissatisfaction with the lack of inter-cultural activities and communication opportunities which afford opportunities to get to know majority members, and build relationships. The data indicates that students wish for the assistance of structured activities and programming which appeals to majority students and ethnically diverse students. Ethnically and racially integrated events which facilitate access to majority and other ethnic groups in non-threatening environments could help reduce anxieties

which are associated with interracial communication during initial stages (Orbe & Harris, 2008) of relationship development.

Research question one asked “What were the ICA levels of college students of color as they related to communicating with faculty members at a major predominantly white research University?” Results indicated that the overall mean of the sample was 23.90, a score considered low on the 14-70 point scale. Research question two asked if there were significant differences in ICA among students based on ethnic differences. No significant differences in mean scores were identified based on ethnicity/race of students.

Research question three asked if statistically significant differences in ICA were found based on gender. Again, differences in mean scores were slight without statistical significance. The sample consisted of 62 male respondents and 41 female respondents, with one student failing to indicate sex.

Research question four inquired as to the existence of significant differences in levels of ICA based on year in school. There were significant differences present between the reported ICA mean levels from freshman to junior year. Junior year ICA scores (28.5), though still considered low, were significantly higher than freshman (21.66) year mean scores. There was also a significant difference in scores between the junior year and the senior year in school, with senior year scores dropping to the lowest of all year means (21.57).

## **Conclusions**

1. The overall mean score for the sample was 23.90, a low Interethnic Communication Apprehension mean for the sample. According to Neuliep and McCroskey (1997) low ICA scores range from 14-31, moderate ICA scores range from 32-52, and high apprehension from 53-70.

2. The mean Interethnic Communication Apprehension score for males was 23.87 while the mean score for females was 24.01. These scores both represent low ICA levels of the participants in the sample and do not represent a statistically significant difference.
3. The mean scores for students based on year in school were all low, however an observable statistical difference was identified when conducting a Tukey Pairwise Comparison test. Freshmen (n=24) had a mean of 21.6, sophomores (n=32) with a mean of 24.06, juniors (n=24) had a mean of 28.5, seniors (n=21) with a mean of 21.57, and Graduate Students (n=3) with a mean of 19.66. The Tukey Comparison indicated a statistically significant difference between year one and three in school, and between year three and four with 4 degrees of freedom,  $f$  value of 3.9, and  $p$  value of .0165.
4. In spite of the low ICA scores calculated for every category and group tested, respondents had specific concerns they articulated in the open ended question that articulated dissatisfaction with and increased attention to:
  - a. Inclusion
  - b. Additional cultural events and programming that appeal to students color
  - c. The salience of culture/ethnicity and the need for support and affirmation of underrepresented student cultures
  - d. Increased communication quantity and quality with majority members
  - e. The need/desire for more Faculty/Instructor support
  - f. Training which improves the sensitivity and co-cultural knowledge of faculty

Member checks were conducted by members of the ethnic groups represented in the sample to support the theme analysis of the researcher. Member checks confirm these themes, and emphasize four major areas of dissatisfaction. The students overwhelmingly request integrated inclusivity, event/programming that affords culturally relevant activities and

opportunities with out-group members, cultural support from in-group and out-group members (including faculty), and a strong desire for the University to recruit and hire more faculty of color while requiring cultural training of majority faculty members.

## **Recommendations**

### **For practice.**

1. Create programming and events that focus on interactive cultural education, communication, and integrated social and dialogue opportunities for white students and students of color (Miller & Sujitparapitaya, 2010). Altman and Taylor (1987) found that relationship closeness is negotiated through dialogue.
2. Design structured communication opportunities for students of diverse ethnicities and co-cultures to participate and engage together in interethnic groups, academic and community projects, socialization, and non-threatening cultural experiences. Designing and executing events that are attractive to majority students and co-cultural students will reduce the ethnic segregation and create a less threatening atmosphere for all students. Many students come from homogeneous communities and schools which increases the possibility they may lack the skills or uncertainty tolerance to initiate communication with ethnically distinct others.
3. Create integrated Greek activities. Students report Greek activities were highly segregated.
4. Create more opportunities outside of Greek organizations for students of color to receive social, identity, and cultural support from other students of color. Some students expressed a desire to affiliate with other co-cultural group members without being associated with Greek organizations.



5. Restructure section assignment protocols in order to eliminate the isolation students of color within classrooms. Students reported a sense of individual alienation on campus particularly in the classroom environment where they are the only student of color in the entire class.
6. Expand and enhance the support and development of students in primary school systems (as with College Access Initiative and the Bridge Program) for underrepresented populations. Enhancing not only college entry preparation, but academic rigor, communication skills, Advanced Placement class availability, and family/community financial education and preparation. Create a larger pool of students of color who are academically, financially, and psychologically prepared for the academic culture of higher education.
7. Create project based interracial and intercultural communication courses that are focused on effective communication with and knowledge of American co-cultures and international cultures in order to enhance the preparation of all students for a global workforce and economy.
8. Demand more courses in satisfaction of graduation requirements that teach the history, culture and communication norms of a co-cultural groups in America for all majors.
9. Require Faculty to engage in co-cultural training, events, and sponsorships of student groups in partial satisfaction of Service criteria. This would serve multiple institutional goals; faculty engagement with students and community, faculty experiential training provided through immersive cultural contexts to increase awareness and sensitivity, increased empathy and understanding the needs of students and people of color.
10. Design interactive project-related programs in faculty areas of expertise (intercultural communication, history, AP math courses, academic writing, etc.) that serve

underrepresented communities and primary education systems. These programs should be structured to serve multiple learning objectives such as cultural education and exposure for majority faculty, intellectual exchange and college preparation in underrepresented communities, interpersonal relationship development across culture line(s), and reciprocal development of cultural competence and communication effectiveness across the color/culture line. Service and design of these events should serve as heavily weighted fulfillment of service and scholarly criteria in employment review and tenure process(es).

11. Attend to majority perception of threat by offering educational activities that immerse majority members in information which focuses on cultural richness and historical contributions of people of color as “real” Americans who have invested heavily in the economic, political, and social processes and success of the United States. Increased co-cultural presence is shown to increase minority perception of discriminatory treatment as well as majority apprehension and threat, particularly that of white males (Orbe & Harris, 2008; Robinson, 2003). Selective exposure to negative information about co-cultural groups and homogeneous communities create stereotypical perceptions of members of minority groups.

**For further research.**

1. Develop an instrument and design studies that analyze the effects of asymmetrical power distribution on culturally/ethnically distinct communicators. This research could be highly educational for not only the academic context, but also the professional workforce management and diversity/inclusion initiatives.
2. Future studies should expand upon this one with a larger sample size at several universities that have predominantly White student populations. The data collection

strategy should be refined using stratified random sampling, whereby significant numbers responses by all ethnic groups may be gathered in order to conduct a comparison of Interethnic Communication Apprehension scores.

3. Future studies should measure the communication apprehension, cultural sensitivity, ethnocentricity and communicative attractiveness of European American Faculty in relation to students of color could help inform educators as to the developmental needs of faculty in the area of communicating and developing trusting relationship(s) with students of color.
4. Further research comparing faculty, and students at Historically Black and Hispanic Serving Institutions with those in Predominantly White Institutions Interethnic on constructs of communication apprehension, faculty attractiveness, and cultural sensitivity/awareness of could be extremely insightful. The suggested comparative research could invoke the strengths and utilize the power of diversity (the diversity of diverse institutional cultures, diverse faculty, and diverse student body cultures). The use of empirical data to provide guidance for higher education administrators and faculty is essential for increasing the effectiveness of the institution to better educate students of all ethnicities, and the next generation of faculty and administrators.
5. Conduct a comparison study of students of color at the University of Arkansas who utilize the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education with students of color who do not utilize the services of the center, and are not required to meet with a mentor each month as a condition of scholarship award(s) such as is required with the Bridge Scholarships.

## **Discussion**

The most unexpected outcome of the data was the statistically significant spike in Interethnic Communication Apprehension scores demonstrated in the junior year of school. Although the “spike” measured still qualified as “low” on the ICA range, it was originally suspected that the ICA scores would be highest during the freshmen year, and incrementally decrease as students persisted through their senior year. Speculation begs the question whether the smaller class sizes as one enters into their major courses during the junior year create more attention and greater sense of isolation for students of color within the classroom. The suspicion is supported by the qualitative data gathered in the present research. During freshmen and sophomore years, class sizes are significantly larger, where more than one ethnic student may be enrolled, thus reducing the “token” (Kanter, 1997) pressure that often exists for underrepresented individuals in organizations. In larger classes, it may be more possible to go unnoticed for one’s distinctiveness.

In smaller class sizes students may experience being the only heterogeneous member of the class, and Interethnic Communication Apprehension may increase in the context of feeling isolated, distinctive, or focused upon. Distinctiveness theory (Appiah, 2003) proposed that when a person is distinct in a group, psychological, emotional, and cognitive energy of the distinctive individual is expended on preoccupation and heightened awareness of one’s distinctiveness. In addition to heightened self-consciousness, others are more aware of a distinctive individual, thus drawing extra unwanted attention. In other words, students may experience a discomfort in an environment when they are the only distinctive one even though they may be otherwise comfortable with their racial, ethnic, and social identities.

Another explanation for the low Interethnic Communication Apprehension of freshmen with faculty in this sample must also be considered. It is evident that the environment provided

by the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education provides significant social, identity, and cultural support for the freshmen surveyed which may be atypical of the support received by the general population of freshmen. According to much of the student development literature, freshmen face high adjustment demands and high levels of uncertainty when relocating from home to a university campus. Students of color on a predominantly white campus undoubtedly face even more uncertainty and adaptation than white students (White & Lowenthal, 2011; Evans et al., 2010; Hecht et al, 1992; Hwang & Francesco, 2010; Brown et al., 2008; Kanter, 1977; Kim, 1986;). Because of the context of high uncertainty, high novelty (Berger & Calabrese, 1975), and the adaptation to a new environment (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997; Swisher, Griffin, Ancis, & Thomas, 1999), it would be expected that freshmen would demonstrate the highest ICA scores of all students. It is a distinct possibility that freshmen in this research are atypical of freshmen in general because of the support they receive in the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education.

Not surprising, was also that European American students reported the lowest levels of Interethnic Communication Apprehension on the University of Arkansas campus. Two reasons for that should be considered. First, the European American students participating in the survey were part of a “convenience sample” of students who frequent the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education. This center is still predominantly utilized by students of color. Therefore, European American students who also frequent the center are probably more practiced and comfortable with inter-ethnic communication than are European American students who do not regularly attend inter-ethnic places and events. Secondly, European American students have the “option,” unlike students of color at a PWI, to avoid inter-ethnic engagement. The number of White students and faculty make it possible for White students to avoid inter-ethnic relationships almost completely if they chose to do so. The European American students who participated in

the survey have chosen intentionally to engage with other ethnicities, thus, their Interethnic Communication Apprehension levels are likely lower because of more exposure and practice communicating across cultural lines (than would the ICA scores of self-segregating European-Americans).

The low mean Interethnic Communication Apprehension of students of color in the sample may be a factor of the social and academic support students receive as a result of their participation with the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education. Students came to the center on the days of data gathering for two reasons. First, some students are “regulars” at the center, using the facilities to study, to meet friends, to consume lunches and snacks, and to rest between classes. Secondly, students who may not have planned to come to the Center on the data gathering days came in response to requests made by administrative staff members with whom they have established relationships. The literature is clear that students who have relationships with supportive others such as faculty, staff, and other students have higher retention and persistence rates. Higher retention and persistence rates may be an outcome of lower Communication Apprehension and Interethnic Communication Apprehension. If this is the case (the students who frequent the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education have lower CA and/or ICA because of the support they receive at the Center), then the sample may not be representative of the population of students of color.

The low mean Interethnic Communication Apprehension of in the results of this investigation were also not surprising in spite of the fact that junior year scores showed statistically significant increase over the freshmen year, and preceding the significant drop in ICA scores of the senior year. Members of non-dominant co-cultures have been shown to be proficient in the communication codes and normative behavior expectations of the dominant culture as well as their ethnic culture (Cox, et al., 1991; Orbe & Harris, 2008; Collier, 1988),

from which much significance, identity, and self-esteem is derived (Cox, et al. 1991; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Cox, et al. (1991) reported on the biculturalism of students of color in an examination of minority and European American students when asked to collaborate on tasks. Students of color demonstrated awareness and the ability to code switch when needed to adapt to the normative behaviors expected in whichever group they were assigned to function within. Code switching “is a communication strategy used by individuals who have mastered the speech codes from two different cultural communities . . . these individuals discern which system of communication is more appropriate to the specific situation and adapt accordingly” (Orbe & Harris, 2008, p. 127). Collier (1988) found that European Americans were less willing (and possibly less skilled) than African Americans to adopt outgroup speech codes. Lack of skill in code switching by European Americans is an effect of homogeneous communities and schools as well as selective exposure to people of color. Exercising the exclusively majority option not to engage in co-cultural relationships and events would prevent one from understanding and enacting the codes of others.

Majority members are often unaware of the absence of some privileges for students and people of color and may believe that minority members have access, opportunity and privilege equal to their own (Ford, 2010; Warren, 2009; Folb, 1997). Littlejohn and Foss (2005) found that homogeneity of groups makes communication easier, and the more heterogeneous the group, the greater the challenges to “communicate effectively in terms of (1) equal participation; (2) consensus-based decision making; (3) non-dominating conflict management; and (4) respectful communication” (p. 224).

In short, there is a learning curve that must be intentionally attended to for members of all cultural groups when diversity increases. Initially, conflict and misunderstanding have been known to increase with the increase of diversity (Littlejohn & Foss, 2005). However, more

diverse teams outperform more homogeneous groups, encompassing a broader range of solutions in organizations (Prasad et al., 1997). Creating a culturally diverse, immersive, and integrated environment in higher education is essential to achieving institutional goals of preparing students to function appropriately and effectively in a diverse and global workforce.

The difficulty of transitioning to higher levels of integration and inclusion can be mediated by an institutional environment and emphasis that reinforces the value of diversity, supportive administration, faculty, and institutional policies which censure inappropriate behavior (Lundberg, 2010). When policy is clear and enforced, change and compliance occurs (. Less racial tension is reported in student centered environments where faculty and administrative support are strong. (Hurtado, 1992).

In light of the evidence found in this inquiry, demonstrating low median scores of Interethnic Communication Apprehension with faculty for students of all ethnic groups, in every year of higher education, it must be considered that rather than Interethnic Communication Apprehension may not be at the heart of lack of engagement by students with majority faculty members. Communication scholars contend that the desire to initiate and maintain communication with someone is a matter of perceived attractiveness (McCroskey & McCain, 1974). Homophily, or perceived similarity, is known to be a source of attraction in communication research, which is confirmed the higher education research. The desire to engage in communication with faculty members who are majority members, may not be perceived as rewarding enough (Meyers & Huebner, 2011; Kim & Sax, 2009).

Gendrin and Rucker (2007) explored the motivation of students to communicate with instructors (attraction) based on verbal and non-verbal “immediacy” behaviors of the instructor. Immediacy is a term used for responsiveness which enhances the perceived psychological and physical closeness of communicators. Verbal immediacy is verbal responsiveness (using words).



Non-verbal immediacy is responsiveness using facial expression, eye behavior, hand and body gestures, vocal intonation, use of space, touch, and silence. African Americans experienced increased motivations to communicate with instructors when immediacy was perceived, particularly verbal immediacy. Verbal immediacy (communicating directly, expressively, assertively) is considered a sign of authenticity to African Americans. High verbal and non-verbal immediacy perceived by African American students increased motivation to communicate with instructors. Verbal immediacy was shown to influence African American student motivation to communicate in the classroom and for relationship building purposes.

Using the contextual theory of interethnic communication, Kim and McKay (2009) found that when there are large numbers of cultural in-group members, students were less inclined to associate with ethnically different others (out-group members). Conversely, for those whose ethnic in-groups were numerically smaller in the context of the campus, daily contacts and networks were more ethnically integrated because of lack of numerical strength of their in-group; students were more likely to associate in inter-ethnic interpersonal relationships with ethnically different others when their own ingroup numerical strength was low. For ethnic groups who are the majority (i.e., white students at a PWI), it is an exercisable option to associate with out-group members whereas for minority group members, interethnic association is not an option. For groups who hold less numerical and social power, interethnic integration is a requirement for success in the environment dominated by ethnically distinct others. The ability to choose whether or not one interacts with members of other ethnicities has also been reported as an aspect of white privilege (McIntosh, 1990; Orbe & Harris, 2008). Carlson, Wilson, & Hargrave (2003) found the more diverse and numerically balanced an academic environment the higher the likelihood of interracial contact which will result in interracial friendship(s).

Self-segregation is a strategy described by (Tatum, 1997; Camara & Orbe, 2010; Miller & Sujitparapitaya, 2010) in which, for the purpose of ethnic identity support, social support, and self-esteem maintenance, underrepresented students may segregate themselves from the majority population in an effort to retreat from the stress of isolation and marginalization (Orbe & Harris, 2008).

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has summarized the importance of the study, the study itself, the research questions and conclusions as well as recommendations for practice and for future research. A theoretically grounded discussion of the findings, which are all supported by previous research efforts of many scholars followed the recommendations for practice and future research. The chapter concluded with an analysis of the implications and strategies for change given what is known about inter-racial and inter-cultural communication as well as what is known about the dynamics of dominance and non-dominance when demographic shifts occur.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Modified PRECA Instrument**

## APPENDIX A

### Modified PRECA Instrument

#### Interethnic Communication Apprehension Among Students of Color with White Faculty at the University of Arkansas

*The purpose for conducting this study is to explore the Interethnic Communication Apprehension levels of students of color when thinking about or interacting with white faculty members. To measure interethnic communication apprehension, the Personal Report of Interethnic Communication Apprehension is being used. This instrument is composed of 14 statements concerning feelings about communicating with others that are ethnically different and is Part II of the survey. This survey should require about 15 minutes to complete.*

*Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you retain the right to withdraw at any time. All individual responses will be recorded anonymously, and only group data will be reported.*

*If you have questions or concerns about the study, or if you would like an executive summary of the study findings, please contact Angela Courage-Mellott [acourage@uark.edu](mailto:acourage@uark.edu); or Michael Miller (479)575-3582; [mtmille@uark.edu](mailto:mtmille@uark.edu). For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the University's IRB Coordinator, at (479) 575-2208 or by e-mail at [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).*

This survey is being distributed in the UA Multicultural Center. Have you ever filled this survey out before? \_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_ No. If yes, stop here, and turn in this survey without completing it.

#### Part 1: Background Information

For each of the questions below, please indicate the category with which you *most closely* identify.

**1. What is your ethnicity/race?**

\_\_\_ African American/Black

\_\_\_ Latino/Hispanic

\_\_\_ European American/White

\_\_\_ More than one race

\_\_\_ Other

**2. What is your sex?**

\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_ Female

**3. What year in school are you?**

\_\_\_ Freshman

\_\_\_ Sophomore

\_\_\_ Junior

\_\_\_ Senior

**4. Please check ALL the below characteristics that apply to you.**

Pell Grant eligible

Transfer student

Parent or guardian completed college

Out of State Student

## Part II. Interethnic Communication

**Directions:** As you complete this section, please focus on your interactions and feelings about communicating with ethnically/racially different (from yourself) individuals who teach your classes at the University of Arkansas.

The 14 statements below are comments frequently made by people with regard to communication with people from other ethnic groups. Please indicate how much you agree with these statements by circling the number that best represents your response to each statement using the following choices:

**Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; are undecided = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5**

- 1 2 3 4 5 1. Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different ethnic/racial groups.
- 1 2 3 4 5 2. I am tense and nervous while interacting with people from different ethnic/racial groups.
- 1 2 3 4 5 3. I like to get involved in group discussion with others who are from different ethnic/racial groups.
- 1 2 3 4 5 4. Engaging in a group discussion with people from different ethnic/racial groups makes me tense and nervous.
- 1 2 3 4 5 5. I am calm and relaxed with interacting with a group of people who are from different ethnic/racial groups.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6. While participating in a conversation with a person from a different ethnic/racial group, I get nervous.
- 1 2 3 4 5 7. I have no fear of speaking up in a conversation with a person from a different ethnic/racial group.
- 1 2 3 4 5 8. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in a conversation with a person from a different ethnic/racial group.
- 1 2 3 4 5 9. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations with a person from a different ethnic/racial group.
- 1 2 3 4 5 10. While conversing with a person from a different ethnic/racial group, I feel very relaxed.
- 1 2 3 4 5 11. I am afraid to speak up in conversations with a person from a different ethnic/racial group.

1 2 3 4 5 12. I face the prospect of interacting with people from different ethnic/racial groups with confidence.

1 2 3 4 5 13. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when interacting with people from other ethnic/racial groups.

1 2 3 4 5 14. Communicating with people from different ethnic/racial groups makes me feel uncomfortable.

**In your opinion, what can be done to improve the experience and success of students of color at the University of Arkansas?**

*Thank you for your participation in this study!*

**You can return this survey in one of the three following ways:**

1. You may return it to the locked box that is in the area the survey is being administered.
2. You may scan the completed survey and e-mail it to [acourage@uark.edu](mailto:acourage@uark.edu)
3. You may fax this survey and return it to the Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education of the University of Arkansas.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **PRECA Instrument and Description of Modifications**



## APPENDIX B

### PRECA Instrument and Description of Modifications

Neuliep, J. W., & McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The development of intercultural and interethnic communication apprehension. *Communication Research Reports, 14*, 385-398.

#### Personal Report of Interethnic Communication Apprehension (PRECA)

This measure was developed to address communication apprehension in the interethnic context. This instrument is presumed to be better than the PRCA24 for this particular communication context. However, it is substantially correlated with the PRCA24. This suggests that interethnic communication apprehension is a sub-category of general communication apprehension. Alpha reliability estimates should be expected to be above .90 when completed by native English speakers, although they may be lower when this instrument is translated into another language because translations usually are less than perfect.

Directions are to be modified to direct students to think of their feelings about and interactions with faculty members at the University of Arkansas as they answer the questions in the survey as recommended by Neuliep & McCroskey (1997) to give a specific communication context in the “directions” section of the instrument to be administered.

Demographic questions were added to the beginning of the survey (race/ethnicity, class standing, and sex).

One open ended question (#15) was added asking students to write how the University of Arkansas might improve our service to promote the success and experience of students of color.

**Directions:** The 14 statements below are comments frequently made by people with regard to communication with people from other ethnic groups. Please indicate how much you agree with these statements by marking a number representing your response to each statement using the following choices: **Strongly Disagree = 1; Disagree = 2; are undecided = 3; Agree = 4; Strongly Agree = 5**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Generally, I am comfortable interacting with a group of people from different ethnic/racial groups.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I am tense and nervous while interacting with people from different ethnic/racial groups.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. I like to get involved in group discussion with others who are from different ethnic/racial groups.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Engaging in a group discussion with people from different ethnic/racial groups makes me tense and nervous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I am calm and relaxed with interacting with a group of people who are from different ethnic/racial groups.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. While participating in a conversation with a person from a different ethnic/racial group, I get nervous.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I have no fear of speaking up in a conversation with a person from a different ethnic/racial group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Ordinarily I am very tense and nervous in a conversation with a person from a different ethnic/racial group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Ordinarily I am very calm and relaxed in conversations with a person from a different ethnic/racial group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. While conversing with a person from a different ethnic/racial group, I feel very relaxed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. I am afraid to speak up in conversations with a person from a different ethnic/racial group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. I face the prospect of interacting with people from different ethnic/racial groups with confidence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when interacting with people from other ethnic/racial groups.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Communicating with people from different ethnic/racial groups makes me feel uncomfortable.

Neuliep, J. W., & McCroskey, J. C. (1997). The development of intercultural and interethnic communication apprehension. *Communication Research Reports, 14*, 385-398.

## **APPENDIX C**

### **Catalog of RQ5 Responses**

## APPENDIX C

### Catalog of RQ5 Responses

- 
- 1 “The University should really improve their retainment rate. Too many minority students choose not to come back the following year. I’m not sure what’s missing but I don’t always feel ‘at home’”.
  - 2 “I feel like the University is doing a pretty good job at making everyone feel comfortable & equal. If anything, there could be more historical-learning events and programs.”
  - 3 “I believe that more teachers can reach out to let students know that they are here to help and assist with our success here at the U of A. So far most teachers have, once everyone jumps on board, it’ll be a breeze.”
  - 4 “More programs involving things that people of color enjoy. Most activities on campus are geared towards the majority ethnicity. I know this can be difficult to implement but I don’t feel that an attempt has been made to make campus more relatable to people of color.”
  - 5 “Have more cultural events. Something like international day or internationally food fair.”
  - 6 “Provide activities for students to interact with one another.  
Socials.”
  - 7 “More activities for people of color that are less centered around Greek life; study sessions/enrichment focused to help students of color.”
  - 8 “Continue to make all students feel welcome (:”
  - 9 “I think professors should take some kind of class or have a workshop to improve their relationships with minority students.”
  - 10 “I’m not really sure maybe we should have our own housing, or participate in African-American group activities, or maybe we should have specialized sessions dedicated to helping us perform well in class. Also having more African-American faculty members would help.”
  - 11 “Perhaps include more professors and programs that reach out to students. I know some are available. Yet, I have heard it would be great especially in professors to be of color. Someone a student could relate to.”
  - 12 “To improve the experience, students of color can benefit from being exposed to resources that are directly applicable to them and being shown a network of people who are advocating for their success. Being able to establish a meaningful connection with people/resources/groups has a tremendous impact on development.”
  - 13 “I believe that the University of Arkansas makes the social environment a great place for diversity.”
-

- 
- 14 “Maybe the U of A can do more events involving everyone at the U of A including the different ethnic groups.”
- 15 “Seeing more professors of color.”
- 16 “Try to get them more involved so that they feel comfortable on campus.”
- 17 “Student spotlight on social media that showcases students and their backgrounds”
- 18
- 19 “Academic Enc—lment Programs  
Community Engagement Programs  
Youth Mentorship”
- 20 “Just have students engage in various organizations.”
- 21 “”Large classes makes everyone, not just people of color, nervous to speak up in class. If we could somehow reduce the number of students in the larger classes, I am sure more students will be comfortable with asking questions and speaking up in class.’
- 22
- 23
- 24 “Involvement! Most student and student organizations tend to work only amongst themselves or other groups that are similar to them. In order to help the student reach their maximum potential, there must be a way in which these students can interact w/each other and benefit from the different organizations or background. The best way to do it is to create events in which students are made to interact and work w/each other”
- 25 “Could have more open activities for everyone instead of everything being centered around Greek life. Also could promote more study organizations for minorities.”
- 26 “I think we could do more events and have people learn about other’s cultures.”
- 27 “In my opinion, I feel that a lot of the white Greek life like to only associate with other white Greeks. That weirds me out, but overall I don’t feel like there are any racial interaction problems at the University of Arkansas.”
- 28 “More activities aimed at educating people about different races/cultures would help bridge the gap by reducing unfamiliarity in environments such as the U of A where there is a lot of ethnic homogeny.”
- 29 “Faculty and staff take the time to learn the communication styles of “their” students—not just refer to stereotypical information about communication styles of colored students. Listening skills is an important key to understanding communication styles.”
- 30 “More programs, and discussions with teachers about their experiences about being black.”
-

- 
- 31 “People should try to understand their background to better relate.”
- 32 “Just being open to listening to us and not looking at us as if we are dumb helps also.”
- 33 “It would have to start & better understanding and knowledge about students of color. from experience it takes more time and work to gain trust from them, therefore genuine passion and interest is necessary. Open-mindedness & perceptiveness.”
- 34
- 35 “There is a lot of discussion about it amongst minorities, but involving teachers to discuss it more might -----.”
- 36 “Having a main student organization aside from NHPC, NSBE, NABA, and any other specific student RSO related to majors or Greek life, would be an effective way to get the general color population involved. If BSA was up and running to its full potential, it would bring the population closer together.”
- 37 “I think a strategy that would help benefit the success of students of color would be to have more interactive social events including minorities. This would make students more comfortable and acclimated to feeling like they are a part of the U of A student body.”
- 38 “Incorporate more multiracial events.  
Help rid racism because that is still an issue today, especially towards African American/Black.”
- 39 “More support organizations or clubs for ‘students of color’ in STEM”
- 40 “Continue with all events that promote clubs and people of color but make it so others feel more likely to go. Maybe fun activities that focus around colored students but welcoming to everybody.”
- 41 “Have more events and catered to the minorities.”
- 42 “More activities w/everybody involved.”
- 43 “Creating more spaces for our cultures to thrive. Having more cultural events, not just academic.”
- 44 “Educate people that have questions about the ethnicity. This will make people more comfortable w/each other.”
- 45 “From my point of view I think we are handling the situation with Students of Color well. I feel like there are good programs that represent the students of color.”
- 46 “I think what the MC is currently doing right now by encouraging people to attend other cultural events is great. I will the U of A in general was more encouraging with this & not just the MC.”
-

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- 47 “Students of color at the University of Arkansas truly do not have too many problems. Most of the problems come from people who have never been around people of color are raised not to like people of color. One way to fix the problem is to immerse people in the culture and see that not all people of color fit the stereotype. People need to open up to people of color and realize that they are human beings to.”
- 48 “Make them feel at home!”
- 49 “N/A”
- 50 “Students of color at the University of Arkansas should do a better job of branching outside the colored race and get involved with other races. We do things with our own organizations, but imagine how much better it would be if we got involved with the whites, Hispanics, Native American, Indian, etc.”
- 51 “Promote cultural differences among people of color at the university.”
- 52 “Bring J. Cole, Wale, or Drake to perform instead of Mac Miller.”
- 53 “More activities where people have an opportunity to interact with people from other cultures and ethnic backgrounds.”
- 54 “For sororities and fraternities of all colors to get together. Everyone is so separate and obviously these social groups contribute a lot to the community. Seeing them hang and doing events together will create a more comfortable atmosphere.”
- 55 “Hire professors of other races (preferable that speak English well). Maybe more ethnic events on campus.”
- 56
- 57 “Provide more social events that consists of ethnical diversity.”
- 58 “Open forums where people can share their experience, even negative ones. I’ve lived a life with very diverse friends, but others haven’t so having mixed groups (maybe with the perspective classes would be great)”
- 59 “Currently at the U of A I have seen a large improvement in the interaction amongst the minority students. Also there could be a larger number of initiatives that focus on the betterment of minorities. Also more FLUENT English speaking minority professors.”
- 60 “I would recommend increasing recruitment of students of different cultures. Increased diversity would make the University a lot more attractive to prospective students and enjoyable.”
- 61 “Put more black people in the classrooms with each other,”
- 62 “Honestly, nothing can be done. You can’t change the perception of another person. They have to want to change and make the university a better place.”
-

- 
- 63 “I feel like it would be helpful to know that professors are generally invested in us as students.”
- 64
- 65 “Try to have ways to have white Americans be more expose with color people. Let the color people have the same opportunities as the white Americans.
- 66 “I think its good right now in my experience.”
- 67 “I believe there needs to be more meet and greet events within the University. People of color need to know that there are other people of the same race on campus. This especially applies to Freshman whom are new to the college experience. It would also help people meet other people of other races.”
- 68 “I think that by continuing to provide gender/ethnic classes the University can improve the overall experience for all students, but especially those of color or from an ethnic minority.”
- 69 “To improve the experience and success of students of color at the University I feel that the university must take into consideration the minorities when discussing and making plans for the U of A, in all areas applicable (i.e. class rooms, campus events, facilities. etc.). I currently feel like the University does a horrible job at making the U of A a place open and welcome to this campus and institution.
- 70 “Bring more into the university.”
- 71 “Being more included with people of different ethnicity will help ease the tension at being nervous since we are the minority.”
- 72 “Students of color can work together to hold each other up and support each other’s weaknesses.”
- 73 “Incorporate more cultural programs on a broad scale. Invite more cultural diversity.”
- 74 “First, I believe the students have to want to succeed. With that, I believe an academic mentor who is constantly knowledgeable and resourcefully easy to reach would be perfect. Through this may be debatable, I also feel like these advisors should be mandatory and meet weekly/biweekly.”
- 75 “Although society, as a whole, has a long way to go in terms of inclusion, I believe that instead of pandering to differentiating, exclusive groups, more steps should be taken to celebrate the commonalities amongst people of varying cultural backgrounds instead of what makes us different.”
- 76 Providing more interactive programs and social settings. Create discussions for everyone to join in and allow us to talk about how we feel every month. Provide us with the necessary tools to become a family and have our voices be heard. Have inspiring speakers of color talk to us and share experience. Remind us what our ancestors fought for and what
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we have to lose if we stray away from the path of success

- 77 Prob more activities
- 78 Provide more opportunities for students of color to mentor/tutor/lead study groups and for presentations
- 79 The university of Arkansas can have more events for the students of color at the university of Arkansas
- 80 I think that exposure is everything. Having more events with motivated students interests like prize give aways, & free food will continue the progress.
- 81 As a part of a minority, I feel like we need to encourage other minority groups join the university environment. Being a minority at times makes you feel less than the majority which is why Education can help even the gap in between.
- 82 To improve the experience for students of color the university should have more opportunities for minorities to get involved with things on campus.
- 83 I do not have a clue honestly. The programs I've been a part of have been wonderful.
- 84
- 85 To improve the experience and success of students of color, I think, there should be active conversation, in building better ties and breaking down of environmental barriers, taboos, thoughts pass down throughout most colored and noncolored students' lives.
- 86 Hanging out with more ethnicities outside of the MC  
The MC hosting events to emerge student of diff ethnicity together  
Having a Country Wee. Where every week there's events held in the MC about a diff. country every week, throughout the semester.
- 87 I think that a meeting/seminar/training should be held on interacting with different ethnic backgrounds/groups. From my three years of being a student at the U of A, I seen a number of differences made.
- 88
- 89 I think having events that are appealing to all cultures would bring everyone together
- 90 More professors of color, more students of color speaking out to the community to encourage students to become college bound.
- 91 I'm not sure put what I have noticed is that for me the academic environment is influenced by the social aspect. The interaction between myself & whites outside of the classroom bleeds into my interaction within the classroom

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92 My college is Dale Bumpers and I truly think it is one of the few colleges that genuinely lack diversity. In my senior year I am the only minority in the Nutrition field. I feel like I am held to a different standard. My white counterparts who have lower gpa's have been encouraged to continue with the major, where I have constantly been discouraged.

There needs to be more scholarships offered directly to minorities in Dale Bumpers, and also some cultural sensitivity training, example a teacher singled me out in class to talk about malnutrition in my home country.

93 I feel like maybe there could be other places like the multicultural center where students of color could get together and converse. A place to be relaxed. But in all in all, I like my experience as a student of color.

94 Events that openly discuss issues present with all people, Black history week

95

96 More multi-cultural events and programs

97

98

99 Offer more opportunities to make a standing difference at the University and the community

100 Being more active with other groups as well

101 Tell the colored students to know themselves, demand respect, accept nothing less. But do not be afraid to engage! You are a threat to them!

102 I think the U of A has made great strides in improving the experience and success of student and sometimes they don't use the resources the University provides. I can only think of more incentive programs (outside of scholarships) that would keep them involved and active. For example, if their progress reports are good and they meet with their program advisor, maybe they will receive movie tickets or a Walmart gift card. But again, a lot has to do with the students and how successful they want to be in school.

103 More events for students of color should be held.

104

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **Theme and Word Count Analysis**

**APPENDIX D**

Table 8  
Theme and Word Count Analysis

% of occurrence	Themes by word count	Precise Words used	Word count
68%	Inclusion: 63 references to desire for hospitable environment and inclusion in activities with majority group	Interact Involve(ing) Together Open(ness) (minded) (discussion) Comfortable (more needed) Included(ing) Opportunity Place Welcome Space Connect Relax	11 11 7 7 6 5 5 5 3 1 1 1
46%	Event Programming: 43 references to the desire for a range events which provide assistance connecting and access to (dominant) out-group members, in-group social support, and cultural education	Event(s) Social Activities Access to out-group members In-group support (social and academic)	25 8 10 Interact(ion) (ive) Support(ing) (ive)
45%	Culture/ethnicity: 42 references to cultural, ethnic, and racial inclusion which indicate desire for improvement	Culture Ethnic(ity) Diverse(ity) Race	17 13 6 6

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Member Checks 1 – 4**

## APPENDIX E

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### Member Checks 1 – 4

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#### Member Check 1: African American Male

##### Big Themes:

1. Comfortable/Welcoming:
2. Inclusivity
3. Programming
4. Training and Development:

##### Other Themes:

5. Students feel that more diversity programs and events are need at U of A.
6. More programs are needed that are enjoyable/appealing to minority students.
7. There should be a space/events for more interactions between diverse individuals.
8. The institution should focus on creating a welcoming atmosphere for ALL students especially students of color.
9. There should be more intentional programming that provides interactions of all cultures.
10. There is a lack of professors of color.
11. Hiring and recruitment of Faculty of Color.
12. Professors should undergo cultural competency training.
13. There is a need to “understand African American/Black” culture on campus.
14. The need for identities and acceptance in groups outside of Greek Life for students of color.
15. Campus Climate:
  - a. Provide a safe place for minorities.
  - b. Awareness of different cultures and ethnicities.
16. There is no concise definition of culture, race, diversity etc. (Participants equate students of color as African American/Black students only)
17. Advocate for integration (race) of one’s own groups
  - a. More students participating in/with groups outside of their culture.
  - b. African American students should go outside their own groups (i.e. joining different “stereotypical “white” groups)...hmmm interesting
18. Breaking boundaries set forth by race.
19. Increasing the number of minorities on campus. Helps with more minorities being in each classroom at a time.
20. Fair treatment of all students!
21. Discuss and address the commonalities of all cultures and not put so much focus on the differences of cultures
22. More avenues to express and discuss concerns, beliefs etc. openly.
23. Empowering the minority student.
24. Exposure of the minority professionals on campus.
25. The usage of the Multicultural Center to forward such work in diversity and cultural competence.
26. Training and development on handling cultural differences, holding cultural conversations and interactions between professionals and students of color.
27. Incentives to retain students of color...

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## Member Check 2: African American Male & Female Couple (with terminal degrees)

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### Programming/Cultural Events

1. Improved programs for minority students in areas that will interest students.
2. Provide more space for activities.
3. More and improved programming for minority students.
4. Bring all sororities and fraternities together for activities.
5. More events for minority students.
6. More activities with other groups

### Intercultural Programming

1. More and improved programming where minority and majority join forces.
2. Provide more cultural events
3. More activities for white students to meet/interact with minority students (Build intercultural relations.)

### Recruitment of Students

1. Do more in the area of recruitment and retention.
2. Recruit more minority students.

### Retention

1. Do more in the area of recruitment and retention.

### First Generation Students

1. Be more aware of those students who are first generation and minority students and the needs they have to attend college.

### Recruitment of Faculty of Color

1. More minority faculty to teach classes.
2. More minority faculty to advocate and care for minority students

### Alienation

1. Limit alienation of minority students in certain college. Help Colleges to understand what it is like to be the only one and have advocates students can seek out in the less minority colleges.

### Scholarships

1. Provide more scholarships that address a variety of needs for minority students.

### Faculty Development/ Training

1. Train majority faculty to work with minority students.
2. Faculty and staff should learn to better communicate with minority students.
3. Teach cultural sensitivity by college to include the faculty, deans and staff.

### Showcase/Highlight

1. Showcase or highlight the accomplishments and successes of minority students on

campus, in NWA, hometown and throughout the state.

#### Minority Student Involvement

1. Several comments talked about minorities getting involved with other groups to feel more comfortable.

#### Minority Organizations

1. Having minority based RSO

#### Nothing is Wrong

1. Everything is okay.
2. Minority students don't have any problems. The problems comes from those not accustomed to being around minorities.

#### Race

1. Subtle racism is still a problem, help is needed to understand.
2. Provide more education about race to make people feel more comfortable.
3. More open forums to talk about minorities' challenges, successes, and problems.

#### Resources

1. Provide students with a guide of all of the available resources and available faculty.

#### Other

1. More unity among minority students.
2. Provide support that will contribute to the improved experiences and success of minority students.
3. More mentors
4. Consider the minority experience when making changes at the university.

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#### Member Check 3: Latina (with Master of Arts degree)

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African American students want to feel welcomed at the U of A. Right now they don't feel they are viewed as equal or as important as other ethnicities/majorities. They would feel welcome if the U of A did more of:

1. Implementation of programs/events/fairs/activities that would cater specifically to this population
2. Hire more African American faculty/staff
3. Caucasian faculty/staff to undergo cultural sensitivity training, especially understanding of the African American population

By their responses, seems like they are quietly shouting –I am here, look at me and cater to me because I am making superfluous effort (economically and socially speaking) to come to and stay in school.

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Member Check 4: Latina (with terminal degree)

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1. Opportunities
  2. Faculty of Color/Engagement
  3. Diversity/Multicultural Events
  4. Continuing current programming
  5. Collaboration
-

**APPENDIX F**

**Letter of Collaboration, University of Arkansas Director of Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education, John P. Jones, M.A.**

## APPENDIX F

### Letter of Collaboration, University of Arkansas Director of Center of Multicultural and Diversity Education, John P. Jones, M.A.



Diversity Affairs  
*Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education*

September 27, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

The Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education has granted permission to Angela Courage to collect data from students at events that our department has scheduled during the months of October and November of 2013. We have an interest in Angela's research and feel that her findings may be useful to our department as we seek to understand the needs and challenges of underrepresented students at the University of Arkansas. We support Angela, and look forward to collaborating with her in this worthwhile endeavor. Please feel free to contact me at (479) 575-8405 with any questions that may arise.

Sincerely,

John P. Jones  
Director  
Center for Multicultural and Diversity Education

## **APPENDIX G**

### **IRB Approval**

## APPENDIX G

### IRB Approval



UNIVERSITY OF  
ARKANSAS

Office of Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board

October 22, 2013

#### MEMORANDUM

TO: Angela Courage-Mellott  
Michael T. Miller

FROM: Ro Windwalker  
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 13-10-175

Protocol Title: *The Interethnic Communication Apprehension of Students of Color at a Predominantly White University*

Review Type:  EXEMPT  EXPEDITED  FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 10/22/2013 Expiration Date: 10/21/2014

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance website (<http://vpred.uark.edu/210.php>). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval. Federal regulations prohibit retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can give you guidance on submission times. **This protocol has been approved for 100 participants.** If you wish to make *any* modifications in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval *prior to* implementing those changes. All modifications should be requested in writing (email is acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change. If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 210 Administration Building, 5-2208, or [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu).

210 Administration Building • 1 University of Arkansas • Fayetteville, AR 72701  
Voice (479) 575-2208 • Fax (479) 575-3846 • Email [irb@uark.edu](mailto:irb@uark.edu)

*The University of Arkansas is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.*

## **APPENDIX H**

### **McCroskey Permission to use PRECA Survey**

# APPENDIX H

## McCroskey Permission to use PRECA Survey

Dr. James C. McCroskey  
Dept. of Communication Studies, University of Alabama-Birmingham, Birmingham, AL 35294  
Phone: 205-934-3877; FAX: 205-934-8916; LMCCROSK@aub.edu

*We regret to announce the passing of Dr. James C. McCroskey on December 27, 2012.*

If you wish to make a donation to the James C. McCroskey and Virginia P. Richmond Undergraduate Scholars Conference Fund, please contact Kathie Cesa at: [ecs@kocumberservices.com](mailto:ecs@kocumberservices.com).

Welcome to my website! This site had been designed to provide information about me and my research programs. All material on this site is provided free-of-charge and may be used at no cost so long as it is appropriately cited. There are five categories of information: biographical data (the usual via information), publications (listings of published books, book chapters, monographs, periodicals, and book reviews), communication research measures (various scales which have been developed for use in communication research), electronic publications (papers which were presented at professional conventions and published here for the first time), and current information for students in my undergraduate classes.

All of my published journal articles are available (Periodicals) and can be downloaded. There is a listing of papers presented at conventions (Convention Presentations), but the text of those papers is not available. (I do not even have a copy of many of them). However, many have been published as journal articles and are available for downloading (Publications). I am in the process of identifying unpublished convention papers which may be of particular interest to some researchers but have not been published. These will be published here for the first time (Electronic Publications). There is a listing of my published books (Academic Books and Textbooks). Some of these, which are not currently in print or do not have a later edition in print, will be made available on this site (free) as time permits. Only one is now available. Many research measures that I (and/or my colleagues) have developed are available (Communication Research Measures). Each instrument is provided along with its scoring and the appropriate citation for where it has been published.

A brief list of Monographs is provided. Two of these have been requested frequently—my Carol Arnold Lecture presented at the 1971 NCA convention, and a monograph reporting 13 research studies relating to the use of evidence in persuasive communication. The former was distributed to all the members of NCA as a monograph by Alan & Bacon. The latter was originally distributed as a monograph by the Speech Communication Research Center at Michigan State University, which no longer exists. These 13 studies were summarized in an article in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, (1969), but have not been available as a full report and now.

I have also added my doctoral dissertation to the list of Publications. A recent increase of interest in research on evidence as well as attitude and belief measurement has resulted in several scholars contacting me to find out how they might access this dissertation. Now, a full downloadable copy of the dissertation is available by clicking on it under "Publications." This is the original source of my earlier measures of source credibility, and the Generalized Attitude Scale.

I would appreciate any comments (good or bad) that you might have concerning this website. The easiest way to reach me is at my email address noted above. I would particularly appreciate it if you find something that is "messed up" and let me know about it. Several people have done this in the past and this has helped me make several improvements on the site.

1.) Biographical Information

- a) Brief Biography
- b) Education
- c) Areas of Specialization
- d) Professional Employment
- e) Honors
- f) Professional Association Activities
- g) Personal Life

(<http://www.jamesmccroskey.com/> Retrieved 4/11/2014)