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Kristin Mary Oelke

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A study of the required educational preparation and
role of entry-level public relations practitioners -
a national educator and practitioner perspective.

(TITLE)

BY

Kristin Mary Oelke

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts - Speech Communication

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1994

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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Abstract

The public relations profession is in a constant state of change, and it doesn't have a clear definition. Without having a clear understanding of public relations, it is difficult to know exactly how to prepare college students who aspire to become public relations practitioners for the profession.

Moreover, there is only limited public relations research and literature regarding the required educational preparation and role of entry-level practitioners. Therefore, due to the limited literature, this study was conducted, in general, to learn more about the required educational preparation and role of entry-level PR practitioners and, specifically, to test the following three hypotheses.

H1: Skills of expression, writing and interpersonal communication, will be ranked as the two most required skills for obtaining an entry level PR position and the top two functions most performed by entry-level PR practitioners by both practitioners and educators.

H2: Skills of expression, writing and interpersonal communication, will be ranked as the top two skills to be taught to aspiring entry-level PR practitioners by both practitioners and educators.

H3: Subjects directly teaching skills of personal expression, writing and public speaking, will be ranked as the two most valuable subjects to be taught to aspiring entry-level practitioners by both practitioners and educators.

On a national scale, 200 practitioners and 200 educators were surveyed in four general areas: 1) skill requirements to obtain entry-level PR employment; 2)

entry-level PR functions performed; 3) PR skills to be taught in college; and 4) PR-affiliated subjects to be taught in college. Sixty practitioners and 28 educators responded within the given time frame.

Overall, the results clearly indicate writing to be the most important skill requirement, function performed and skill to be taught, and newswriting followed with being the number one subject to be taught.

However, statistically significant differences were still found between educator and practitioner views with regard to 'skill requirements' and 'functions performed' for answers ranked lower than writing.

For skill requirements, practitioners indicated an importance of interpersonal communication with the majority (66%) of practitioners ranking it either first or second. The majority of educators ranked interpersonal communication third or lower creating a statistical difference at the .002 level.

For functions performed, educators and practitioners were found again to have significant differences (.01) in how they ranked the importance of interpersonal communication. Practitioners, more than educators, believe interpersonal communication is more often a function of entry-level practitioners. Only four percent of educators indicated interpersonal communication is the number one function while 29 percent of practitioners believe it is the function most often performed. More educators, seven percent, actually ranked it fifth (or last) rather than first.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to the continuous support of family, friends, mentors, Eastern, and its faculty and staff, I have been able to achieve more than I ever dreamed about three years ago. Your guidance, encouragement and patience did not go unnoticed or unappreciated. I hope I will make you proud you took the time to help.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	Introduction and Review of the Literature
Chapter 2	Methodology
Chapter 3	Results
Chapter 4	Conclusions and Discussion
References	
Appendices A and B	

Chapter 1 - Introduction and Review of the Literature

"It is not surprising that a discipline that cannot even agree on its definition is confused about career preparation," stated Douglas Ann Newsom, veteran public relations researcher and educator, in 1984 when she was examining the concepts and practices that have helped and hindered the public relations discipline. Newsom continued by explaining that, "part of the problem -- with both definition and preparation -- springs from the changing nature of public relations" (p.15). And, because of the continual changes, public relations education, or the lack thereof, is a topic of seemingly perpetual importance and interest for practitioners and educators alike (Gibson, 1992-93).

One of the first comprehensive studies of public relations education was conducted in 1975 by an select group of educators and practitioners specifically organized to research PR education. The organization, the Commission on Public Relations Education, was critical of both public relations education and the practice. Among other things, they observed. In the last quarter-century, more and more institutions of higher learning had turned their attention to public relations as a field of study. However, the majority of courses in public relations were offered only on an elective basis at the undergraduate level. And, moreover, many of the courses, were taught by instructors who themselves were not fully qualified in the theory and practice of public relations.

Hence, the 1975 Commission originally recommended four courses as the basis for most public relations sequences, and, through support from the Public Relations Society of America, the courses are now required for chartering a Public Relations Student Society of America chapter. The courses include: 1) An introduction to public relations, covering the principles, history and practice of public relations, the processes in influencing public opinion, and analyses of public relations programs. The course should give students a sound appreciation

of the public relations function and its role in society; 2) A course dealing with publicity media and campaigns; 3) A course devoted to public relations case problems in industry, labor, education, government, social welfare and trade organizations, and the application of public relations techniques; and 4) An internship or practicum with a public relations department or organization, either for an individual student or for a team of students (Greenberg, 1984).

The need to understand the PR profession and its educational requirements continued, and in 1985 another practitioner-educator group was assembled, the Commission on Undergraduate Public Relations Education. Their goal was to determine what public relations courses practitioners and educators thought should be taught at the undergraduate level. Research for the survey covered all course work required of public relations students during their four years in college including liberal arts and general education areas, public relations-related communication disciplines, and subject matter within public relations itself (Anderson, 1986, p.16-17).

According to Anderson (1986) the most surprising and heartening result of the 1985 survey was that practitioners and educators were found to be in close agreement on what public relations education should be for undergraduate students. The 544 out of 1,500 educators and practitioners that answered the questionnaire represented a 36.29 percent response, and the results indicate that both practitioners and educators believe that facility with language is the most important and basic skill that a public relations graduate can bring to the profession. This includes writing skills in journalism, advertising, telecommunication, and public relations. While the traditional publicity and media relations courses still rank high, courses covering the use of a wide range of new tools, techniques, and specialties, have gained ground (Anderson, 1986, p.18).

Moreover, in addition to requiring a high level of writing and production skills, the 1985 Commission made it clear that these skills and their use had to be understood within the framework of public relations management.

Another study researching required PR skills to be learned in college was conducted exclusively with corporate practitioners. Baxter (1985) found that out of 200 PRSA corporate practitioners, public relations students planning on jobs in the corporate sector must make development of writing and other journalistic skills (reporting, editing, and photography, etc.) their first priority. Public relations courses such as PR theory, techniques, case studies, etc. were listed next in importance.

Further proof that practitioners want entry-level practitioners to be skilled writers is found in an article by Edward J. Menninger, vice president and group manager, Burson Marsteller, New York, and a national professional advisor to PRSSA (1984). He wrote, "When public relations practitioners and public relations educators get together, the discussion invariably involves the students in the public relations sequences. The question often arises, "But can they write?" Then the conversation turns to enumeration of the failures and successes each participant has known" (p. 25).

However, even though Menninger and his colleagues believe in the importance of effective communication, he does not support the idea of exclusively teaching communication courses. He suggests that students do know the tactics of PR, but they are unaware of the "How" -- how to execute strategy. He said, "To survive in today's survival focused environment, students will benefit from exposure to a more demanding, thinking curriculum, and, in the long run, the public relations practice will be the beneficiary of better thinkers" (Menninger, 1984, p. 25).

Turk (1989) supports Menninger's notion by explaining that the focus of most professional journalism and mass communication education programs had, until quite recently, been part of the preparation of individuals for entry-level positions in various mass media industries: newspapers, magazines, broadcasting, advertising and public relations. Curricula traditionally had been skill-centered, providing instruction in hands-on mass communication techniques and skills such as writing, editing, graphic design, and audio or video production. But, in recent years, perhaps most obviously since the beginning of the 1980s, journalism and mass communication educators had begun to interpret their mission more broadly. Turk claims preparing students for entry-level positions became no longer sufficient. Professional programs began to see it as their mission to prepare students for lifetime careers that almost certainly would offer the likelihood or opportunity of managerial involvement in addition to the practice of technical skills (p. 38).

Specifically, Turk found that practitioners placed the highest value on teaching the skills and managerial perspectives that they had ranked most highly as necessary to effective public relations management. General leadership skills were generally valued more highly than people-management skills or understanding of functions and issues. And, overall, the categories of planning/organizing, and problem-solving/decision making were ranked first and second, respectively, in response to a question inquiring what general business skills executive practitioners deem most important for entry-level practitioners (p.49).

Professor Todd Hunt, who conducts the public relations program at Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick, is another supporter of teaching more than just communication basics. Under his direction, Rutgers's PR program goal is to produce well-rounded individuals who enjoy a

variety of interests, know what questions to ask, and have sound judgment. The students are taught to understand theory, and Hunt believes this prepares students to quickly learn specific job skills (Greenberg, 1984).

As the literature suggests, there are many foundations and beliefs upon which curricula are based. However, a study conducted by Files (1984), that acknowledges the differentiation between PR programs, indicates one similarity throughout all programs. Results indicate the common thread of all programs generally consisted of two filaments --- introductory public relations and news writing. After that, course offerings varied widely (p.17).

Overall, Greenberg (1984) doesn't suggest a new core of courses, she simply poses a whole new PR education perspective. Greenberg claims what public relations really needs are not credentials but qualities -- intelligence, literacy, creativity, dependability and commitment -- and that can be developed by an academic program if raw material is there and educational standards are high (p.21).

Public relations education outside of the classroom in the form of internships has also been explored. Teahan (1984) found internships were instrumental for PR hopefuls in obtaining their first PR job. Forty percent of the women and 30 percent of the men studied, reported sponsors of their in-school internships snapped them up at graduation. However, Teahan explained that the ultimate value of internships was first noted in 1980, when 22 percent of the respondents attributed their first full-time public relations employment to previous part-time sponsors. Twelve years previous, such a response was rare (Teahan, 1984, p. 28).

Ann Plank, Fellow, PRSA, agrees in the importance of internships citing, "What is important is that a program be substantive, comprehensive and have the support of the administration in terms of adequate budget, strong faculty

instruction and input from professionals in the form of internships and lectures so the program and the students receive a partnership of academics and working professionals” (Briefings, 1993, p.19).

Teahan (1984) also researched what public relations techniques/skills practitioners were least prepared for as they entered the workplace. Seventy-two percent of the men and 60 percent of the women, including graduate-degree holders, confessed ignorance about budgeting, and 45 percent of the women were “floored” by computers. Photography, business practices and writing were virtually unmentioned.

According to Files (1984) there needs to be more than just a few periodic studies to diminish the gap between PR education and practitioner expectations. Files states, “Until the academic community reaches a consensus regarding entry-level public relations skills (and competence for later promotions), the struggle to elevate the craft to professional status will continue to be a slipping, sloshing, mud-caked journey through a quagmire of eclecticism. In short, what is needed is synergy of education and expectations” (p. 19).

Noted PR educator and researcher James Grunig concurs on the educator/practitioner partnership concept. However, he also believes that to better the profession as well as society the practitioners must support the partnership for better education both politically and financially (Grunig 1989, p. 23).

Although there continues to be discussion and research on how academia can best meet PR marketplace needs, ironically, studies have shown that to enter the public relations field specialized educational preparation is not even required. Grunig (1989) pointed out that at least half of the active public relations practitioners do not have a formal education in public relations.

Studies researching the practice of public relations, without regard for PR education, have also been conducted.

Wakefield and Cottone (1988) investigated tasks of practitioners and knowledge and skill areas important to agency/firm and organizational public relations employers. Numerous organizational types were tested, and knowledge and skills deemed "very important" on 188 practitioner surveys were decision-making/problem solving and customer/client relations. Therefore, emphasis was placed on knowledge and skill in interpersonal communication. Additionally, as noted by the authors, "Also revealed were higher public relations employer emphasis on knowledge and skill in management, persuasive and interpersonal communication, promotional design, and promotional writing than on knowledge and skill in media relations" (p.31).

Communication -- both oral and written-- was also singled out as the most important managerial or leadership skill needed by public relations managers within their organization in a study conducted by Turk (1989). Of the respondents, 95% said oral communication was somewhat or extremely important, and 93.5% said the same of written communication.

Communication skills in both public relations and marketing professions were studied by Spicer (1991). Results indicate public relations professionals more frequently engaged in writing-oriented activities than did the marketing professionals or the control group. Moreover, crosstabulations of the communication skills and knowledge data revealed that 67% of the PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) sample and 72% of the IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) sample scored above the mean on the PR writing factor. Less than 30% of the AMA (American Marketing Association) respondents scored above the mean, indicating marketing professionals do not often engage in the kind of writing demanded of those in public relations.

No matter what department an individual is working in, as Bivens (1991) explains, employers want people who can write and communicate ideas -- who can pull complex or fragmented ideas together into coherent messages. This requires not only technical skill, but also intelligence. From the president or vice president of public relations to the lowliest office worker, writing will be a daily part of life. From enormously complex projects involving dozens of people and whole teams of writers to the one-person office cranking out daily press releases and weekly newsletters, writing will continue to be the number one concern of public relations (p. 1).

But, unfortunately, as Lesly (1991) points out, the ability to express oneself both in writing and speech has been declining steadily. While complexities of society increase and make the need for clear expression greater than ever, prevalence of sloppy and even semi-literate communication material has been growing. Probably the most vital single attribute of the communicator is exceptional skill in expression (p. 51).

Hence, the following three hypotheses were formed:

H1: Skills of expression, writing and interpersonal communication, will be ranked as the two most required skills for obtaining an entry-level PR position and the top two functions most performed by entry-level PR practitioners by both practitioners and educators.

H2: Skills of expression, writing and interpersonal communication, will be ranked as the top two skills to be taught to aspiring entry-level PR practitioners by both practitioners and educators.

H3: Subjects directly teaching skills of personal expression, writing and public speaking, will be ranked as the two most valuable subjects to be taught to aspiring entry-level practitioners by both practitioners and educators.

Chapter 2 - Methodology

Two hundred public relations practitioners and 200 educators were mailed surveys through the U.S. postal service. Names of practitioners were randomly selected from the 1994 PRSA Directory. Educators, also randomly selected, received the questionnaire from their chairperson who was initially sent the survey. Names of chairmen were obtained from the Directory of Communications Studies, and the chairperson was asked to forward the survey to an educator that teaches public relations classes.

The survey had two sections -- demographic questions and PR questions. The practitioners and the educators each received a different set of demographic questions, but the PR questions were identical for all. (See appendices A and B.)

For educators, demographic questions included whether the school was public or private; how many years the educator had been teaching; whether they had ever taught PR courses; and whether they had ever been a practicing PR practitioner. For practitioners, demographic questions included what type of organization they work for; how many years they had been practicing public relations; whether they had ever hired entry-level PR practitioners; and whether or not they had ever supervised an entry-level PR practitioner.

The bulk of the questions were PR questions, and respondents were asked to rank all responses to four questions which included: 1) Rank order the following skills as to how important you believe they are as requirements for obtaining an entry-level public relations position. (graphic design, interpersonal communication, research, strategic/critical thinking, writing and other); 2) Rank

order the following skills as to how often you believe they are functions performed by an entry-level PR practitioner. (graphic design, interpersonal communication, research, strategic/critical thinking, writing and other); 3) Rank order the following skills as to how important you believe it is that they are taught in college to aspiring PR practitioners. (graphic design, interpersonal communication, research, strategic/critical thinking, writing and other); and 4) Rank order the following subjects as to how valuable you believe they are for training aspiring PR practitioners. (desktop publishing, newswriting, photography, PR internship, public speaking, PR history/case studies, PR methods, PR theory/strategy and other). A final section was given for comments.

Chapter 3 - Results

A total of 60 practitioners and 28 educators responded within the given time frame. Of the practitioners, the breakdown by employer by is 16 agency, 6 association, 16 corporate, 3 education, 5 health care, 8 non-profit and 6 other. The predominant answer in the other category was government. Of the educators, 21 were from 4-year public schools and 6 were from 4-year private schools.

Overall, in both professions the respondents were highly experienced. Most educators and practitioners had more than 10 years experience (41 practitioners and 18 educators), and the fewest number had less than three years experience (2 educators and 4 practitioners).

To aid in understanding the respondents perspective, additional demographic questions were asked. Results indicate that 52 practitioners did have experience hiring entry-level practitioners, and 58 had experience supervising entry-level practitioners. The educators also had PR experience, as all had taught PR classes and 23 had actual PR work experience.

Skill requirements

The skill found to be required most highly by both educators and practitioners for obtaining an entry-level public relations position was writing. Sixty-four percent of educators and 69 percent of practitioners ranked writing as the most important skill required.

Although, a significant difference (.002) was found between educator and practitioner views regarding the importance of interpersonal communication for obtaining an entry-level PR position. Practitioners indicated an importance of interpersonal communication with the majority (66%) of practitioners ranking it either first or second. However, the majority (70%) of educators ranked interpersonal communication third or lower.

Strategic/Critical thinking was also considered by both groups to be of some importance as a required skill, and the lowest ranking skills were research and graphic design, respectively. No common answers were found in the other category.

Functions performed

Writing was again the highest ranking. Both professions indicated that the most common PR function performed by entry-level practitioners is writing. All educators ranked it either first or second, and 87 percent of practitioners ranked it in the top two positions. Only one respondent ranked writing less than a third place.

Also similar to skill requirements (question #5), educators and practitioners were found to have significant differences (.01) in how they ranked interpersonal communication. Practitioners, more than educators, believe that interpersonal communication is more often a function of entry-level practitioners. Only four percent of educators indicated that interpersonal communication is the number one function while 29 percent of practitioners believe it is the function most often

performed. More educators, seven percent, actually ranked it fifth (or last) rather than first.

Ranked most commonly third by educators and practitioners was strategic/critical thinking. Since it was consistently ranked third, it was considered to be an important function, but not one practitioner ranked strategic/critical thinking first and only two educators gave it a first ranking.

Research ranked quite evenly in all places (1st - 5th place) by both groups. However, the majority of responses were ranked between second and fifth place, making research not the most often nor the least often performed function.

Graphic design ranked last most often as a function of entry-level practitioners with 41 percent of educators and 58 percent of practitioners ranking it fifth. No common answers resulted in the other category.

Skills taught

Writing was clearly the skill respondents believe should be taught to aspiring PR practitioners. Of the practitioners, 84 percent, and of the educators, 96 percent, ranked it first or second. Only three responses were lower than third place.

While there weren't significant differences (.08) in how interpersonal communication ranked between practitioners and educators, there were differences. Practitioners generally ranked teaching interpersonal communication after writing with most responses (65%), being ranked second or third. However, most (77%) of the educators ranked interpersonal communication third or lower.

Strategic/critical thinking was also found to be an important skill to be taught in college to both groups. All educators ranked teaching thinking skills between first and fourth place. Also, a majority of practitioners (93%) ranked teaching thinking skills between first and fourth place.

Research and graphic design ranked lowest. No common answers were found in the other category.

Subjects taught

Responses to the question ranking how valuable subjects are to aspiring PR practitioners varied greatly. However, newswriting did rank first (51% of practitioners and 42 % of educators) most often by both groups.

PR Internships were found to be the second most important subject to taught. With most rankings between first and fourth place, results indicate that 80 percent of practitioners and 82 percent of educators ranked Internships in the top half (eight subject choices) of all responses.

PR Methods classes also were considered important. Although, more practitioners ranked this first (22%, and only 42% of educators). Overall, both groups ranked PR methods also in the top half of all responses given.

PR Theory/Strategy and PR Case Studies ranked closely behind PR Methods and PR Internships.

For both practitioners and educators, the subject of public speaking ranked in the last four places most often, and photography resulted as the least valuable subject for aspiring PR practitioners. Desktop publishing was ranked by both groups across the board, thereby deeming it important but not giving it a clear ranking.

Therefore, some of the hypotheses were proven.

Hypothesis 1

Writing was found to be the most required skill for obtaining an entry-level PR position and is the function most performed by entry-level PR practitioners by educators and practitioners. Interpersonal communication was also found, by only practitioners, to be one of the most important skills required for obtaining an entry-level PR position and as a function most performed by entry-level

practitioners -- which all support the hypothesis. However, educators believe interpersonal communication is less important as a requirement for obtaining an entry-level PR position as well as for being a function performed by entry-level PR practitioners, thereby conflicting with Hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2

Supporting the hypothesis, writing was found by both groups to be the most important skill to be taught in college to aspiring PR practitioners. Practitioners also ranked the other skill of expression, interpersonal communication, as being a subject that is most important to be taught - also supporting the hypothesis. Although, educators did not see interpersonal communication as being one of the most important skills to be taught, thus going against Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3

Newsriting resulted in being ranked first by both educators and practitioners as the subject most valuable to aspiring PR practitioners, therefore, proving the hypothesis. But, neither profession indicated public speaking as a valuable subject to be taught clearly negating part of Hypothesis 3.

Chapter 4 - Discussion and Conclusions

As previous research has proven, educators and public relations practitioners are in close agreement on what public relations education should be and the role of the entry-level practitioner. Throughout the results of this study similarities abound, and dissimilarities are few between the two groups.

The similarities could be the result of educators reading previous research regarding practitioner views and reiterating their readings into this study's survey. However, if this was the absolute, interpersonal communication would have been cited by educators as more important to the PR profession.

Additionally, as with previous research and again proven in this study, writing is clearly seen as the number one required skill, function, and subject to be taught in preparation for the public relations profession. As this wasn't always the case with writing, interpersonal communication -- if continued to be found as important to practitioners (as was found in previous research and with this study), interpersonal communication may be given higher or equal importance with writing by educators in the future.

Strategic/critical thinking, the "hot" contemporary topic in PR research, was given the same importance in this study as previous research suggests and supports the notion that emphasis in PR education needs to also be focused on preparing aspiring PR practitioners to think. However, ironically, even though the data revealed an emphasis is needed on teaching and requiring PR hopefuls to think strategically and critically, not one practitioner indicated this type of thinking is the most often performed function of an entry-level practitioner. Therefore, supervising practitioners may want entry-level practitioners to possess strategic/critical thinking skills, but they don't let them use the skills.

Most often research was positioned in importance behind thinking and skills of expression which poses a unique situation. Thinking, writing and speaking all have a base -- research, may it be research conducted through reading materials, having discussions or formal interviewing. Research is the foundation upon which people obtain information about that they write or speak and upon which they base their decisions during their thought processes. Therefore, it is interesting that, generally, by both practitioners and educators, research is commonly ranked after thinking and expression skills.

Graphic design was an obvious last place throughout the surveys' skill and function questions. This may be because of the ability to hire sources from outside the organization to perform these duties or that the executive

practitioners, which might be due to the relative newness of the computer-aided design equipment, are unfamiliar with designing and simply prefer not to be directly responsible for design production.

The ranking of college subjects by both groups of respondents supported previous research indicating writing is an extremely important skill to be taught to aspiring PR practitioners. Not only was newswriting cited, but many times comments indicated that all types of writing should be taught, and as much writing as possible should be included in the public relations curriculum.

Additionally, throughout the comments section and in the rankings for the college subjects question, there were many citations that PR Methods and PR Theory/Strategy were the same, and that these were also important skills as well as the hands-on experience of the PR Internship. The results were similar between educators and practitioners and common between all rankings. However, responses ranked behind these did not give a consistent ranking, thereby indicating that the PR profession is understood to entail writing and PR Methods and Strategy/Theory (which most professions do), but, other than that, there is a general inconsistency about what else the PR practitioner does. Thus, indicating that there still is much needed research to better understand the role of the entry-level PR practitioner.

Limitations

Lastly, the limitations of this study were many and primarily due to a limited amount of existing research upon which to base the study.

More demographic questions could have been posed specifically looking closer at what the respondents' background included -- where they were coming from with their answers. Questions could include their education, their work responsibilities - past and present, previous occupations, number of

employees/students, etc. In addition, definitions of the responses could have been given to further explain the answer choices to the respondent.

There were also a few operational limitations -- limited time for responses and not including a response envelope.

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Appendix A

Name (optional) : _____

Organization : _____

1) Circle which category best describes your organization.

Agency Association Corporation Education Health Care Non-Profit Other _____

2) Circle how many years you have been practicing public relations.

0-3 4-6 7-9 more than 10

3) Are you or have you ever been in the position of hiring entry-level PR practitioners? Yes _____ No _____

4) Are you or have you ever been in the position of supervising entry-level PR practitioners? Yes _____ No _____

When answering questions 5-8, please rank order all given answers.

5) Rank order the following skills as to how important you believe they are as requirements for obtaining an entry-level public relations position. (1 being most important)

graphic design interpersonal communication research strategic/critical thinking writing other _____
rank- _____

6) Rank order the following skills as to how often you believe they are functions performed by an entry-level PR practitioner. (1 being most often)

graphic design interpersonal communication research strategic/critical thinking writing other _____
rank- _____

7) Rank order the following skills as to how important you believe it is that they are taught in college to aspiring PR practitioners. (1 being most important)

graphic design interpersonal communication research strategic/critical thinking writing other _____
rank- _____

8) Rank order the following subjects as to how valuable you believe they are for training aspiring PR practitioners. (1 being most valuable)

desktop publishing newswriting photography PR internship public speaking
rank- _____

PR history/case studies PR methods PR theory/strategy other _____
rank- _____

Comments:

Please respond by July 15, 1994

Send survey to: Kristin Oelke
3116 Western Avenue
Mattoon, IL 61938

Questions: (217) 234-4616

Appendix B

Name (optional) : _____

School : _____

1) Circle which category description best describes your school.

4-year public university 4-year private university Other _____

2) Circle how many years you have been teaching.

0-3 4-6 7-9 more than 10

3) Have you ever taught any course you believe would prepare students to enter the PR field? Yes _____ No _____

4) Are you or have you ever been a practicing PR practitioner? Yes _____ No _____

When answering questions 5-8, please rank order all given answers.

5) Rank order the following skills as to how important you believe they are as requirements for obtaining an entry-level public relations position. (1 being most important)

graphic design interpersonal communication research strategic/critical thinking writing other _____
rank- _____

6) Rank order the following skills as to how often you believe they are functions performed by an entry-level PR practitioner. (1 being most often)

graphic design interpersonal communication research strategic/critical thinking writing other _____
rank- _____

7) Rank order the following skills as to how important you believe it is that they are taught in college to aspiring PR practitioners. (1 being most important)

graphic design interpersonal communication research strategic/critical thinking writing other _____
rank- _____

8) Rank order the following subjects as to how valuable you believe they are for training aspiring entry-level PR practitioners. (1 being most valuable)

desktop publishing newswriting photography PR internship public speaking
rank- _____

PR history/case studies PR methods PR theory/strategy other _____
rank- _____

Comments:

Please respond by July 15, 1994

Send survey to: Kristin Oelke
3116 Western Avenue
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Questions: (217) 234-4616