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Rape Risk Reduction Materials: How Do University Students of Color Perceive the Cultural Relevancy of These Materials?

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Rape Risk Reduction Materials:

How Do University Students of Color Perceive

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This Doctoral Dissertation is Dedicated

To

My parents, Dr. Donald F. Vorryer and Mrs. Miriam C. Vorreyer,

Both loving parents and dedicated educators

And to

My sons, John, Michael, and Adam,

Who have taught me the most of all

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ABSTRACT

Few studies have investigated how race and ethnicity influence people's beliefs about rape, or what impact these beliefs have on what and how we teach college students in efforts to raise awareness about rape. The purpose of this study was to gain understanding of how students of color perceive the cultural relevance of materials commonly used on campuses for rape risk reduction education. Participants were African American and Hispanic students at a mid-sized state university. Focus group sessions and interviews were conducted with 23 student participants. Students reported that they found the rape risk reduction materials culturally relevant; however, other revisions of the materials were necessary if the materials were to connect with students. Data analysis, based on the construction of grounded theory and the use of educational criticism, revealed three recurring themes—the influence of popular culture on student perceptions of social situations, the role of racial and ethnic identity development within a global context, and developmental influences on students' ways of constructing knowledge. Therefore, rape risk reduction efforts must be culturally sensitive and developmentally appropriate, and take into consideration the influence of popular culture in order to connect with students.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Introduction and Background

The years spent in college are a time when many traditional college-age students are dating and exploring relationships. It is also a time when traditional college-age students are at a higher risk for sexual assault. As many as one woman in four is sexually assaulted during her college years (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987), and the overwhelming majority of rapes on campus are perpetrated by someone who is known by the victim—a friend, classmate, or date—that is, someone with whom the victim has some type of relationship (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Simon & Harris, 1993; Warshaw, 1988). Although sexual assault can happen to anyone at any age, those who are between the ages of 16 and 24 are at the highest risk (Fisher et al, 2000; Warshaw, 1988), and traditional college-age students fall within this high-risk age bracket.

Unfortunately, violence against women on college and university campuses is a serious problem; and sexual assault is prevalent on all college campuses, regardless of whether the school is urban or rural, large or small, private or public (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz & Wisniewski, 1987). Sexual assault is one of the most common violent crimes committed on college campuses (Fisher, Sloan, & Cullen, 1995). Since 84 percent of perpetrators are known to the victim (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987), the term

acquaintance rape is commonly used to indicate that the perpetrator of a sexual assault was a friend, classmate, acquaintance, or date of the victim.

Because of the prevalence of sexual assault on campuses, many colleges and universities provide educational materials and programs about sexual assault to their students. These materials and programs are usually designed not only to raise awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault, but also to address the needs to reduce the risks of being assaulted, to report sexual assaults, and to change stereotypical attitudes regarding sexual assault.

The materials used in rape risk reduction programs and presentations are central to this kind of educational effort, since they often become a kind of curriculum in themselves. The efforts to raise awareness of sexual assault and the issues that surround sexual assault most often do not take place inside a classroom with a specific curriculum, but rather are either one time educational events or a limited series of events. In addition, the materials are frequently put together in hand-outs to students, who then take them away to review again later.

Much of the research in the field of rape education has focused on documenting the prevalence of sexual assault and its effect on victims. Initial research and discussion in this field focused on prevalence due to the fact that rape had largely been a hidden and ignored phenomenon until recently. It has only been in the past 25 years that there has been public discourse about sexual assault as well as significant changes in the legal codes regarding sexual assault. As a result of the research focus in the field being on the prevalence and effect of sexual assault, much less has been done in terms of how we educate students regarding this phenomenon.

Of the very few studies which have examined educating students about sexual assault, several have examined the types of learning activities which have the most impact on students' attitudes toward rape (Earle, 1996; Frazier, Valtinson, & Candell, 1993; Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & DeBord, 1995). However, knowing which types of learning activities are effective does not reveal answers to questions involving students' perceptions of the curriculum or materials used, the questions they have, or the information they would find most useful. What we might need to know, for instance, is what meanings students make of the materials they read. Does the information contained in those materials elicit a change in attitude? Does it elicit a change in behavior? Another crucial question in terms of educating students is whether students identify with these materials. How do students give meaning to the materials in terms of their own background and everyday experience?

We know that race and ethnicity influence the meanings people make of their experiences (Banks, 2001; Gil, 1995; Pai & Adler, 1997). Cognitive processing is influenced by a student's cultural history (Watson & Terrell, 1999). Very few studies have investigated how race and ethnicity may influence peoples' beliefs about sexual assault, or what the impact of these beliefs might be on what and how we teach students in our efforts to raise awareness concerning sexual assault. This intersection of race, ethnicity, and sexual assault was the focus of the study.

<div style="text-align:center">Statement of Purpose</div>

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of how students of color perceive the cultural relevance of the materials commonly used on college campuses for rape risk reduction education. Particular questions were embedded within this purpose.

How do students feel culture influences perceptions and attitudes about sexual assault?
In what ways? How are the meanings they have developed about sexual assault
influenced by their particular culture? Do students feel that the materials used to inform
students about the risk of acquaintance rape are sensitive to cultural influences? How are
they culturally sensitive? Are they meaningful for students of color? In summation, the
research question for this study was: How do university students of color perceive the
cultural relevancy of these materials?

Interview is a technique for gaining access to people's perceptions. In particular,
the use of focus group interviews as a data-collection technique gives insight into the
perceptions and beliefs regarding a particular topic of those people being interviewed
(Bertrand, Brown, & Ward, 1992; Hendershott & Wright, 1993; Lederman, 1990).
Therefore, focus groups, as well as individual interviews, were used to gain insight into
how students perceive the relevance of rape risk reduction materials with regard to
cultural experience. By listening to students' share their perceptions and experiences
through a series of focus groups and interviews with women and men of color, insight
was gained into how these students perceived the materials in terms of the relevance to
their culture.

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

Definitions are important to the clarity of any discussion. Inherent in discussions
concerning sexual assault are perplexing definitional issues due to the different
terminology used in legal codes from state to state and due to the common terms
regarding sexual assault used interchangeably but with different meanings (Russell &
Bolen, 2000; Schwartz, 2000). In addition to the definitional issues inherent in discussion

about sexual assault, there are perplexing definitional issues in discussions concerning race and ethnicity due to the confusion about the nature and relationship between race and ethnicity (Spickard & Burroughs, 2002). The terms used in this study are defined below. The definitions are built upon both experience and the literature in the fields of victim advocacy and rape risk reduction education, and the literature concerning racial and ethnic identity development. For this study, the terms sexual assault, rape, acquaintance rape, date rape, rape myths, rape risk reduction, culture, cultural relevancy, race and ethnicity, and students of color were used frequently.

- Sexual assault encompasses a wide range of behaviors from the mildly intrusive, such as an unwanted kiss or touch, to a vicious attack involving penetration. The term was used in this study to mean a wide range of behaviors.

- Rape is a more focused term meaning forced penetration against the victim's will, most commonly penile-vaginal, penile-anal, or penile-oral penetration; however, penetration can involve objects as well. Force may mean physical force or the threat of force.

- Acquaintance rape refers to rape perpetrated by someone who is known to the victim.

- Date rape is a more specific term referring to a rape which is perpetrated by someone who is in a dating situation with the victim; however, in common usage, date rape is a term frequently used to mean acquaintance rape. For this study, the terms were used interchangeably to reflect common usage by students and by some researchers.

- Rape myths are prevalent attitudes and beliefs about rape, rape victims, or rapists that are false yet widely held. They serve to deny that many instances involving coercive sex are actually rape, and they can serve to justify male sexual aggression against women.

- Rape risk reduction is a term commonly used to describe educational efforts and materials which help raise awareness about sexual assault.

- Culture is defined as a particular group's chosen way of perceiving, judging, and organizing the experiences of everyday life, including the guidelines and patterns of behavior that the group sets for its people who share a common history. Cultures have values, symbols, and traditions.

- Cultural relevancy of educational materials refers to the utility, or applicability, of the rape awareness materials to the ethnic or racial background of students of color, including customs, traditions, experiences, and upbringing.

- Race and ethnicity refer to categories which are primarily a social and political means of classifying people. Racial and ethnic groups are important categories in human relationships; however, the devices that divide races from each other are the same devices that divide ethnic groups from one another (Spickard & Burroughs, 2002). Furthermore, the processes that connect a race together are the same processes that connect an ethnic group together. In recent literature on racial and ethnic identity development, the term ethnicity is used to include racial categories (Spickard & Burroughs, 2002; Phinney, 1996). Therefore, in this study, both terms are used in a generic way in order to be inclusive of the terms people use to describe themselves and others. Both race and ethnicity refer to a group of

people who see themselves, and are seen by others as well, as culturally and historically connected to each other (Spickard & Burroughs, 2002).

- Students of color refer to students who are of a ethnic or racial heritage which has traditionally been considered a minority (Banks, 2002; Phinney, 1996). Due to the negative connotations attached to the term minority, some members of minority groups prefer the use of the phrase people of color. Although there is some disagreement with the term, the term is commonly used in discussions regarding members of minority groups. In addition, in some geographical regions, groups previously considered minorities constitute the greatest number of residents in the area, and therefore are not a minority in terms of numbers. Therefore, the term students of color refer to students who are members of groups of non-European origin. In addition, these groups are considered nondominant groups.

Importance of the Study

Several studies on the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses have confirmed that rape occurs frequently on campuses (DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). The particular figures for the frequency vary among studies, from one in four women having experienced some kind of sexual assault to less than one in ten women having been assaulted. Regardless of the numbers cited, all studies concluded that sexual assault is prevalent on all college campuses.

It must be acknowledged that males can also be victims of sexual assault and rape. Until very recently the rape of males has been a taboo subject. The fact is that the vast majority of studies concerning sexual assault on college campuses only cite women

as victims, with no accounting for male rape victims. Male sexual assault is even more rarely reported than female sexual assault, and is infrequently written about (Isely, 1998). Male sexual assault can be perpetrated by females or males, but male rape is most often perpetrated by other males. Prevalence rates are very difficult to obtain (King, Coxell, & Mezey, 2000). Male rape victims are estimated to be between 5 to 10% of the rapes which are reported to rape crisis centers in the United States (Scarce, 1997). Because the great majority of rapes are perpetrated by males against females, this study will primarily focus on male violence against women. It must also be acknowledged that females can perpetrate sexual violence—both against men and against other women; however, the prevalence rates of female perpetration are almost nonexistent and therefore outside the scope of this study.

Sexual assault frequently is perpetrated by someone who is known to the victim. Many parents teach their children to beware of strangers, and many people think of rapists as crazed strangers (Bohmer & Parrot, 1993; Parrot, 1991); however, the stereotype is not a realistic picture. Often the perpetrator of a sexual assault is the victim's friend, classmate, or date. Acquaintance rapes account for 84% of rapes on campus (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). Unfortunately, the beliefs many people have about rape do not coincide with the reality of how it is perpetrated.

Needless to say, the effects of sexual assault are devastating to the victim. Indeed, regardless of the victim's sex, rape is a devastating crime. Rape's purpose is to overpower, to humiliate, and to degrade the victim. This purpose operates whether the victim is a female or male. Men's rape of women is a cruel act with the intent of

reinforcing male superiority. The same is also true for men's rape of men (Funk, 1997;
Isely, 1998; King, Coxell, & Mezey, 2000).

Many studies have shown the significant negative impact rape has on its victims
(Resnick, 1993; Sudderth, 1998). Victims not only suffer the immediate after-effects of
their rape—problems with eating, sleeping, concentrating, illness, fear—but often feel the
impact for many years. Whether the perpetrator was a stranger or someone known to the
victim makes little difference to the well-being of victims (Frazier & Seales, 1997). All
victims suffer.

When the victims are students, their learning is affected as well. Unable to
concentrate, afraid to engage in normal activities, fatigued due to lack of sleep, victims
are not in a state conducive to learning. They may be unable to attend classes, unable to
perform the typical tasks of college students such as writing papers, taking tests, and
reading, and unable to focus on anything other than their victimization. Obviously, this
impact has significant negative effects on learning, and, in some cases, makes it
impossible for victims to continue in college. The students are attending to survival and
safety needs only. As we know from Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, survival and
safety are the most basic of all needs, and if one is in a state of survival or is seeking
safety, growth needs such as intellectual achievement are not easily attended to.

Raising awareness about sexual assault and teaching rape risk reduction strategies
are therefore necessary endeavors on college campuses. In addition, state and federal
authorities have recognized the seriousness of the situation. In the State of Florida, the
Chancellor of Higher Education and the Board of Regents mandated that sexual assault
counselors be available 24 hours a day to students (Minutes, Florida Board of Regents

Meeting, June 27, 1991, Tallahassee, FL). A federal mandate exists within the Ramstad Amendment to the Higher Education Act (1992) to provide information on sexual assault to students. Further, the Crime Awareness and Campus Security Act (1990) was designed to promote the prevention of sexual assault, to improve services for victims, and to clarify sanctions for perpetrators (Gary, 1994a). This act requires campuses to provide educational risk reduction programs for its community members. The act was amended most recently (1998) to include additional reporting obligations. The 1998 amendments changed the name of this act to the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). In responding to the mandates and in recognition of the seriousness of the problem, a large number of colleges and universities now offer programs to their students that inform them of the prevalence and seriousness of sexual assault.

Sexual assault had not traditionally been a topic for public discussion, let alone for research, prior to the 1970s. Since the early 1970s there has been an increasing substantive public discourse concerning rape, primarily due to the women's movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition, there have been significant legislative changes in state laws concerning sexual assault during the 1970s and 1980s. Much of the research on sexual assault began in the 1980s and focused on the prevalence and impact of sexual assault. Since sexual assault has been a significant topic for research for only 20 years or so, and since the focus has been the documentation of the prevalence of rape, much less has been done in terms of how people make meaning of their experiences of sexual assault and how that meaning is influenced by their cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Studies have indicated that all racial and ethnic groups in the United States

experience the phenomenon of sexual assault and that all victims are severely impacted (Resnick, 1993); however, possible differences in beliefs about sexual assault and racial and ethnic differences in reactions to rape have not been investigated adequately. There appears to be a gap in the literature regarding the intersection of race and ethnicity and sexual assault.

The apparent gap in the literature regarding the intersection of race and ethnicity and rape is of particular importance within the context of the rape risk reduction education efforts carried out by colleges and universities. Colleges and universities have experienced a higher enrollment of students of color during the past few years (Pai, 1990; Powell, 1998; Watson & Terrell, 1999). Understanding how race and ethnicity influence peoples' beliefs about sexual assault may provide insight into what the impact of these beliefs might be on what and how we teach students. In turn, these efforts, sensitive to the influence of race and ethnicity, might enhance rape risk reduction education.

As mentioned before, many colleges and universities have programs to raise the awareness of their students concerning the prevalence and risks of sexual assault. Programs frequently use materials which attempt to dispel common misunderstandings and myths about sexual assault. Since we know that race and ethnicity influence the meanings people make of their experiences (Banks, 1988; Banks, 2001; Gil, 1995; Pai & Adler, 1997), it is reasonable to think interpretations surrounding sexual assault, including common misunderstandings and myths, vary among different racial or ethnic cultures.

To provide a framework for examining the intersection of race, ethnicity, and sexual assault with regard to risk reduction education efforts on campuses, we must also

consider what we know about the influence of race and ethnicity on learning in general and what we know about student development. The field of multicultural education provides valuable information concerning the differences in learning experienced by various cultural and ethnic groups of students (Burgess, 1978; Cortez, 1978; Hale, 1978; Shade, 1997a). The literature on life stages and adult student development also provides valuable information about our college students and how they learn developmentally (Chickering & Havighurst, 1981; Fleming, 1981; Kegan, 1994; King & Baxter Magolda, 1996; Love & Guthrie, 1999; Perry, 1981).

Conclusion

As educators, we must take a leadership role in improving education opportunities for our students. Creating conditions that motivate students to engage in educationally purposeful activities, in and out of the classroom, is key to enhancing learning and development (American College Personnel Association, 1994). These educational opportunities must be for all of our students. According to Powell (1998), the ultimate challenge for educational leaders is to help create a multicultural campus. This vision requires that we become leaders and change agents: "[We] must understand the changes that are taking place and help the campus community scale the steep 90 degree angles inherent in responding to the cultural, social, and psychological needs of students of color" (p. 112). In short, looking at the students and at the materials and activities used by colleges and universities in rape risk reduction education is important in examining the cultural relevancy of our efforts. The first place to begin is by reviewing the literature.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This review of the literature provides a framework in which to place the

experiences of students of color regarding sexual assault and the relevancy of the rape

risk reduction materials used in higher education. A first topic is the literature regarding

the prevalence of sexual assault, including its effect on victims. The review also includes

examination of the historical and sociocultural aspects of rape. Current practices and

materials used in rape prevention education are reviewed. To complete the framework for

this study, a final topic is the literature on multicultural education and student

development, particularly as it relates to cultural sensitivity in learning and curriculum

development.

Prevalence and Effect of Sexual Assault

College and university campuses have traditionally been thought of as relatively

safe environments. Only recently has there been a realization that campuses contain the

same problems and dangers that characterize the larger society (Belknap & Erez, 1995;

Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). The dangers on campus have been particularly apparent

in crimes of violence against women. As more and more public discussion of sexual

assault occurred in the 1970s and early 1980s, it became clear that sexual assault occurs,

and occurs frequently, on college campuses. Since the 1970s, the women's movement has helped to make sexual assault visible to all citizens and has helped to educate them about male violence against women (Belknap & Erez, 1995; Russell & Bolen, 2000).

Sexual assault occurs on all college campuses. Sexual assault occurs on the campuses of urban, suburban, and rural colleges, whether they are large or small, public or private (Simon & Harris, 1993). Even more unfortunately, sexual assault on campuses occurs often (Belknap & Erez, 1995; DeKeseredy & Schwartz, 1998; Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987).

The groundbreaking work of Koss and her colleagues (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987) in the mid-1980s documented the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses in the United States. In cooperation with MS Magazine, a national survey of college students on 32 college campuses revealed that 27% of the women surveyed had experienced an assault or attempted assault (Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987). This revelation brought into sharp contrast the common view that campuses were safe environments.

Other studies confirmed the prevalence of sexual assault on campuses with similar findings. Muehlenhard and Linton (1987) reported that nearly 65% of women respondents experienced some form of sexual aggression and that nearly 15% reported being raped. The National Survey on violence against women on campuses in Canada showed the prevalence of campus sexual assault (DeKeseredy & Kelly, 1993). Further, Belknap & Erez (1995) found between 8% and 15% of the college women in their study reported forced intercourse while in college. The most recent study of the sexual victimization of college women found that 2.8% of college women were victims of

sexual assault just during a 6 month period. The researchers suggested the implications were that during the course of a college degree, the percentage of victimization for college women may rise to 25% (Fisher, Cullen, and Turner, 2000).

These studies clearly revealed the magnitude of sexual assault on campuses in the United States and Canada; however, there are some who question the accuracy of the data. Critics of the reports of the prevalence of sexual assault have questioned the motives of the researchers or their methodology. Gilbert (1991) and Roiphe (1993) in particular have been touted by the popular media for their criticisms of the research. Both have claimed that the numbers are exaggerated. Gilbert claimed that the figures for Uniform Crime Reports, the counts of crimes reported to the police, are better data to use, and blamed the feminist movement for promoting programs which seek to alter intimate relations between men and women. He was critical of the definitions used in some of the studies and claimed that using broader definitions of sexual assault led to ambiguous interpretations of the data. Roiphe claimed that the numbers were exaggerated and used by feminists to scare college women and to damage the reputation of college men. Roiphe cited her own college experiences and reactions as her expertise.

Paglia (1994) is another who has been critical of the research. She also attacked the broader definitions of sexual assault used by some of the researchers, saying that it has resulted in "a hallucinatory overextension of the definition of rape to cover every unpleasant or embarrassing sexual encounter" (p. 24). In her view, rape should be defined as stranger rape or the forcible intrusion of sex into a nonsexual context such as a professional situation.

Researchers have rebutted these criticisms. A very recent rebuttal came from

Russell & Bolen (2000):

> Those who most vociferously denounce studies that have documented the
> widespread prevalence of rape... appear to be unfamiliar with the sizable social
> scientific literature on this crime, much of which has contributed to
> revolutionizing our knowledge about rape from the early 1970s until today. Nor
> have they themselves ever conducted any research on rape. (p. 4)

Although researchers have rebutted the criticism put forward, they have also

acknowledged that methodological issues must always be carefully and thoughtfully

considered. The debate over the magnitude of the problem has been based on political

interests; however, methodological and definitional issues must be continually addressed

in such research, and the parameters of sexual victimization needed to be more

definitively established (Belknap, Fisher, & Cullen, 1999; Russell & Bolen, 2000;

Schwartz, 2000). Some of the definitional concerns center around the fact that different

terminology is used in various studies. Some of the researchers have used broader

definitions of sexual assault, including many aggressive sexual behaviors, while others

have defined sexual assault solely as penetration against a victims' will.

An additional point can serve as a rebuttal to critics of prevalence figures, that is,

rape most often is not reported to the police (Koss, 1985, 1998) and therefore would not

be reflected in official crime reports such as the Uniform Crime Report. It has only been

through the efforts of researchers that the magnitude of sexual assault has been

uncovered. Russell (1975) conducted the first study regarding the prevalence of rape and

its effects. Her study, conducted in the San Francisco area, found that 25% of the women

she interviewed reported experiencing rape at some point in their lives. The majority

were not reported to authorities. Koss (1985) found that only 4% of the college students

she surveyed who experienced sexual assault had reported the crime. Continued research into the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses had not occurred on the same national scale at colleges and universities since the work of Koss and her colleagues in 1987 until very recently. Fisher, Cullen, & Turner (2000) recently completed and published the findings of The National College Women Sexual Victimization (NCWSV) study. They also found that less than 5% of women who are sexually assaulted reported the assault.

In addition to uncovering the alarming frequency in which sexual assault is perpetrated against college-aged women, the research has also uncovered that an overwhelming majority of those assaults were perpetrated by someone known to the victim. Although many people think of rapists as mentally ill strangers (Burt, 1991; Estrich, 1987), this view is a stereotype. Most often the perpetrator is the victim's acquaintance, friend, classmate, or date. Koss (1985) found that 85% of perpetrators were known to their victims. Abbey and colleagues (Abbey, Ross, McDuffie, & McAuslan, 1996) found that 95% of the perpetrators were known to the victims they studied. A National Victim Center survey (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymour, 1992) found that a majority of perpetrators were known by the victim, and Wyatt (1992) reported that 77% of the perpetrators were known to the victims in her study. Fonow, Richardson, and Wemmerus (1992) bring home the point in their statement: "Statistically, in the United States, a woman is more likely to be raped by a man of her own race, someone she knows, and in her own home or another familiar environment" (pp. 108-109).

Researchers have thus determined that rape happens frequently and is most often perpetrated by someone known to the victim. However, perhaps a more important area to

focus on is the effect this experience has on the survivors of rape. Any victimization is traumatic, and rape is a crime which has devastating effects to its victims. Victims encounter both emotional and physical reactions to the trauma of rape. Symptoms such as confusion, depression, exhaustion, anxiety, fear, relationship and sexual difficulties, and post-traumatic stress disorder are commonly experienced by women who have been sexually assaulted (Arata & Burkhart, 1996; Gidycz & Koss, 1991; Resnick, 1993).

Acquaintance rape victims appear to be at a greater risk for experiencing behavioral, emotional and cognitive consequences than victims of stranger rape. Victimization shatters people's previous meaning of the world and how it functions, and of their own selfhood and control over their environment (Gidycz & Koss, 1991; Frazier & Seales, 1997). Acquaintance rape victims report higher levels of post-traumatic stress disorder than do stranger rape victims (Arata & Burkhart, 1996).

One of the reasons that victims of acquaintance rape suffer more may be because of self-blame. Self-blame is common among victims of acquaintance rape (Arata & Burkhart, 1996; Belknap & Erez, 1995; Bondurant, 2001; Frazier & Seales, 1997; Sudderth, 1998). These women have been assaulted by someone they knew and often by someone they trusted. They blame themselves for trusting their assailant. They feel particularly vulnerable, powerless, and lacking of control over their lives.

Not only do acquaintance rape victims blame themselves for their assault, others blame them as well. Many times friends, families, the authorities, and the general public blame the victims of sexual assault. There is a considerable stigma attached to being raped, and victims often worry about how others will react (Belknap & Erez, 1995; Sudderth, 1998; Williams & Holmes, 1981). Often they are not believed. Therefore,

victim blaming, whether it be by the general public, by the victim herself, by friends and family of the victim, or by the authorities is one of the reasons that women do not report their assaults.

Another reason that many women do not report rape is because they do not define their experience as rape. This perception that their experiences were not rape is especially true for acquaintance rape victims. At first thought it seems incredible that someone who is forced into sexual activities against one's will would not identify the experience as rape; however, upon reflection it becomes clear how strongly our society's stereotype of rape has influenced people's thinking. For some women, if their rape does not fit the stereotypical idea of sexual assault—that of a crazed stranger jumping out of the bushes in the dark—they do not label their experience as rape. Koss (1998) found that only 27% of the victims she surveyed actually labeled themselves as rape victims. Frazier and Seales (1997) discovered that only 47% of the women they interviewed who were classified as rape victims acknowledged they were raped. Less than half, only 46%, of the women surveyed in the most recent national survey of college women acknowledged their rape as rape (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000). According to Bondurant (2000):

> In deciding whether to acknowledge a rape, a woman may be influenced by many factors including her individual history and dispositions, the behaviors of the rapist, the attitudes and reactions of her closer friends and family, and sociocultural beliefs and expectations. (p. 294)

Our image of sexual assault is very clouded by the stereotypical ideas we have concerning what is, as Susan Estrich (1987) terms it, "real" rape.

Even when women do not label their experience as rape, they suffer from the same symptoms as any victim of sexual assault. They experience anxiety, depression, fear, and other emotional and physical reactions. Most rape victims, whether they have

acknowledged their rape or not, experience acute reactions which last for several months, with some victims continuing to experience chronic problems for longer periods of time (Frazier & Seales, 1997; Koss, Dinero, Seibel & Cox, 1988; Resnick, 1993). Women who did not label their experience as rape reported that the experience was at least as stressful as women who did label their assault as rape, and they exhibited no fewer symptoms than women who defined their experience as rape.

As one can see from the literature, sexual assault is not only prevalent in our society, but also prevalent on college and university campuses, and many college women therefore suffer both sexual assault and the devastating aftermath. The seriousness of the problem requires us to examine possible causes of sexual assault. The next section examines various historical and socio-cultural dimensions of sexual assault.

Historical and Socio-cultural Dimensions of Sexual Assault

Sexual assault is not a new phenomenon in American society, nor is it a new phenomenon in other societies around the world. Sexual assault and other forms of violence against women have existed throughout history. These violent behaviors against women have not always been identified as such but they have been prevalent and well documented. Susan Brownmiller (1975) made a significant contribution in her book, Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape. In this seminal work she explored the history and various sociocultural factors of rape. Brownmiller concluded that rape plays an intentional and critical function in society. It is a conscious process of intimidation by which men keep women in a state of fear, thus allowing for patriarchy to continue to flourish.

Two often used theoretical frameworks in studying rape are gender role socialization and political-economic theories. Gender role socialization focuses on the ways in which males are indoctrinated by society to be sexually aggressive. Political-economical theories focus on women's historical powerlessness, their legal definition as property, and the commodification of sexuality (O'Toole, 1997). Brownmiller combined the two frameworks in her work. Combining both gender role socialization and a critical view of political and economic factors is necessary in trying to understand the various dimensions of sexual assault, as both frameworks have threads which run through the literature. Therefore, both theoretical frameworks shaped this study.

The initial conceptualization of rape as a crime seems to have been economically motivated, as rape was originally defined as a property crime (Brownmiller, 1975). Women were considered property, and rape was seen as one man assaulting another man's property. This conceptualization of rape was especially important for young unmarried daughters, who subsequent to the rape were no longer valuable (Brownmiller, 1975; Donat & D'Emilio, 1992). The victims were considered spoiled and could not command an acceptable dowry.

Rape has also been used as a weapon of war. Throughout the histories of different countries, rape has been what Brownmiller (1975) described as a deliberate attempt to punish and humiliate the enemy. Victors have been seen as entitled to the spoils of war—the property of those vanquished. When women are conceptualized as property, they too are seen as spoils of war. The purpose of the rape is not only to inflict pain upon the victim but even more so to degrade and humiliate the men who are fighting against the conquering rapists. A recent and brutal example can be seen in reports from the

conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina about women being deliberately raped and impregnated (Allen, 1996; Stiglmayer, 1994).

In addition to being used as a weapon of war, rape is also used as a punishment to keep women from varying from culturally prescribed behavior or, in other words, to keep women in line. A number of cultures have used rape as punishment (Sanday, 1981). Even the fear of rape keeps women in their places (Williams & Holmes, 1981). Rape has also occurred as punishment in instances of acquaintance rape (Belknap, 1989). In these situations, the better the victim knows the assailant, such as in long term dating relationships, the more likely the victim will incur and suffer from significant physical injuries, suggesting that the rape is used to punish the victim.

Donat and D'Emilio (1992) offered a detailed account of the history of sexual assault in the United States. During the colonial period of the United States, women were valued for their ability to marry and to produce legitimate heirs. A woman's sexual purity was therefore a critical factor to her attracting an appropriate partner. Sexual intercourse was only acceptable within marriage, and if a woman was raped, she was considered unpure. The rape of a virgin was considered a serious property crime against the woman's father, not a crime against her. Beginning in the 1900s this view of rape began to change with the development of Freudian psychology. This shift in thinking promulgated an interest in understanding the causes of sexual aggression. Most of the theories which were developed defined rapes as a perversion and further labeled rapists as mentally ill rather than as criminals. This viewpoint served to shift the responsibility for the attack away from the rapist, and rape became seen as an act of sex rather than as an act of violence. During the 1970s, rape was again redefined. The feminist movement

sparked a shift in the definition of rape, defining it as a form of domination and control. Subsequent research revealed that rapists are usually known by the victims and are neither mentally ill nor strangers.

As previously stated, rape is not a phenomenon unique to the United States. Sanday (1981) looked at the incidence of rape across cultures, finding that some cultures had a high incidence of rape while others had a low incidence. She examined the phenomenon of rape in 156 tribal societies and classified them as either rape prone, intermediate, or rape free. In societies classified as rape prone, sexual assault was not only prevalent, but was also an accepted practice which was often ritualized. In some of these societies rape was a part of tribal ceremony. In what Sanday called intermediate societies, rape was present but there was no report of the frequency in which it occurred. Those societies which Sanday classified as rape free had little to no incidence of sexual assault. Sanday asserted that human sexual behavior was an expression of cultural forces, and that rape was part of a cultural configuration which included interpersonal violence, male dominance, and sexual separation. She pointed to the fact that there were considerable differences in the character of heterosexual interaction in societies which were rape free and those which were rape prone. In rape free societies women were treated with great respect, the sexes were seen as complementary, and interpersonal violence was uncommon. Rape prone societies accepted interpersonal violence as a way of life, and men were pitted as a social group against women.

Koss, Heise, and Russo (1994) also looked at rape in different cultures. They suggested that rape can be characterized as either normative or nonnormative. In addition, they claimed that sociocultural supports play a critical role in both defining rape and

promoting rape and in shaping its consequences. Nonnormative rape was viewed as a surprise attack on a virtuous woman. The cultural responses associated with nonnormative rape revealed the belief that only certain women—those of good character—deserve protection.

Examples of this belief can be seen in the attitudes in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and the United States (Koss, Heise, & Russo, 1994). For example, the United States reflects this attitude in the criminal justice system when officials fail to prosecute cases which do not conform to the stereotype of a stranger brutally raping a respectable woman. In some countries this attitude has been codified into law. In the Koss, Heise, and Russo study, rape was considered normative when there was no punishment of the male, when rape was condoned as a punishment of the female, when rape was embedded in cultural ritual, or when a woman's refusal was disapproved by the community. Rape is normative in many societies.

As one can see, rape is a global phenomenon, occurring in many of the societies of our world. There is a universality of sexual assault issues. However, it is necessary to point out that there are differences as well as universality. Specific attitudes toward rape are affected by many factors, including culture, and cultures differ significantly. "Rape does not exist in a cultural vacuum; the patterns, prevalence, and explanations for sexual violence are influenced by a wide variety of sociocultural factors and vary across ethnic groups" (Ward, 1995, p. 39). Both sociohistorical and cultural influences are present in every society. These influences include patterns of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, the success of a group's ability to solve problems, and other ways of making meaning (Love

& Guthrie, 1999). Sociohistorical and cultural influences affect meaning-making

concerning sexual assault.

One of the ways in which cultural influences are evident is in the popular myths

or stereotypes concerning sexual assault. Koss, Heise, and Russo (1994) reported that in

almost all societies, rape was perceived as a rare event which was perpetrated by

unknown strangers who were either psychologically unbalanced or who lost control of

themselves as a response to female enticement. Burt (1980) defined these stereotypes as

rape myths. Rape myths are prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape

victims, and rapists. Rape myths are attitudes and beliefs that are generally false, but

which are widely accepted and persistently held (Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994). Rape

myths are part of the general culture. People learn them the same way they learn other

attitudes and beliefs—from family, friends, stories, books, and other methods in which

cultures transmit beliefs.

> All societies pass on complex patterns: conventions of human relations; languages roughly comparable in their basic complexity, whether or not they have ever been written down; details of the environment; skills for survival; abstract notions of causality and fate, right and wrong. (Bateson, 1994, p. 42)

The common perception concerning sexual assault does not match the legal

definition of rape nor does it match the reality in which sexual assault most often occurs.

Indeed, acquaintance rape certainly does not fit the common stereotype of rape. "Real"

rape is considered to be perpetrated by the stranger in a dark alley at night with much

violence and resulting wounds. Being sexually assaulted by someone you know and

without violent injuries is not thought to constitute real rape. This stereotypic view of

rape or, in other words, these rape myths, are the mechanism people use to justify the

dismissal of an incident of sexual assault from the category of real rape (Burt, 1991;

Estrich, 1987; Fonow, Richardson, & Wemmerus, 1992; Lonsway & Fitzgerald, 1994;

Williams & Holmes, 1981).

Rape myths basically serve to blame victims of sexual assault for their own

victimization and justify male sexual aggression against women (Belknap & Erez, 1995;

Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1991; Donat & D'Emilio, 1992). Because of these myths, rape

becomes a misunderstood crime in which the victim regularly gets blamed (White &

Sorenson, 1992). Rape myths result in making a victim's recovery more difficult and also

serve to thwart prosecution of the perpetrators. Some commonly articulated rape myths

are that women "ask for it," a woman can resist if she really wants to, and rapists are sex-

starved individuals. Other pejorative statements about a woman's dress, her choice to be

in a certain location, and the people with whom she associates reflect the subtle

underpinnings of rape myths and the effort to blame a woman for her rape. Burt (1980)

categorized rape myths into four categories: nothing really happened, no harm was done,

she wanted it, or she deserved it. By blaming the victim for her assault, male control in a

patriarchal society is maintained. According to Brownmiller (1975), rape has been an act

that men do in the name of their masculinity; claiming that women want to be raped

served the interest of those men. Further, because rape has been a social act, it has served

social purposes both personally and collectively (White & Sorenson, 1992). Rape has

been a logical extension of the male role and a response to threatened masculinity at the

personal level; at the collective level, rape has maintained the subservience of women to

men.

Many people in our culture are socialized to believe in rape myths (Sanday,

1996). Many males and females are raised to believe that males are superior to females.

Males are commonly socialized with attitudes which negatively stereotype women. Often females are socialized to act passive, submissive, or weak. In addition, both males and females receive cultural reinforcement for these attitudes (Belknap & Erez, 1995; Bohmer & Parrot, 1993; Parrot, 1991; Sanday, 1996; White & Niles, 1990). Culturally transmitted beliefs concerning men and women, sexuality and relationships, and myths about sexual assault coalesce to form a rape-supportive belief system (Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985).

Many of the myths concerning sexual assault are rooted in society's beliefs about what is appropriate behavior for females. Girls are expected to be nice and friendly, to yield to other people's needs, and to defer to men; whereas boys are expected to be aggressive, self-reliant, and in control and to use physical responses to conflict (Warshaw & Parrot, 1991). Unfortunately, often these kinds of attitudes are precursors to beliefs in a male's sexual entitlement and social superiority over females. As a result, women have been placed in a conflict situation when socializing with men (Norris, Nurius, & Dimeff, 1996). Traditional beliefs concerning sex roles of women to attract and to be submissive to men come into conflict with a woman's need to be alert to risks and to be self-protective.

The socialization of boys and girls to believe in rape myths is evident in the beliefs of college students. Unfortunately, a significant number of college students accept rape myths (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986). One survey (Ward, 1995) revealed that less than one half of the students in the United States believed that men, and not women, were responsible for rape. The same results occurred with students in Canada, Mexico, Israel, Barbados, Turkey, Singapore, Malaysia, and Zimbabwe. A comparative study (Muir,

Lonsway, & Payne, 1996) examined the acceptance of rape myths by Scottish and American college students. The study used a cultural theory of rape as a frame and postulated that since rape was an expression of power and aggression and was supported and encouraged by rape myths, a greater rape myth acceptance would be seen in societies with a higher incidence of sexual assault. The study supported this; males accepted rape myths more than females, and Americans accepted rape myths more than Scots. Further, the United States had a higher rate of sexual assault than did Scotland.

Four key indicators for the acceptance of rape myths have been identified—sex role stereotyping, sexual conservatism, adversarial sexual beliefs, and acceptance of interpersonal violence (Burt, 1991). Acceptance of these four indicators has led to the acceptance of rape myths. In turn, the acceptance of rape myths has significant consequences. Men who have accepted rape myths have had a proclivity toward rape (Malamuth, 1981). Further, there is a relationship between beliefs about rape and sexually aggressive behavior (Cue, George, & Norris, 1996). Five attitudes or beliefs are correlated with self-reported sexually aggressive behavior in men—a belief in male sexual entitlement, a need for power and dominance, an attitude of hostility and anger, an acceptance of interpersonal violence, and a belief in adversarial sexual relationships.

Often, because of the beliefs in rape myths, males do not view sexual aggression as problematic. Many date rapists do not think they have done anything wrong (Parrot, 1991). Sexually aggressive men often believe that sexual aggression is normal, that relationships between the sexes is adversarial, that men should dominate women, and that women are responsible for rape (Sanday, 1996). Many college males are involved in a wide spectrum of coercive sexual behaviors ranging from mildly intrusive, such as

kissing against the female's will, to clearly aggressive behavior such as forcing intercourse (Cue, George, & Norris, 1996; Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski, 1987; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1983; Rapaport & Burkhart, 1984). A large percentage of college men have reported they would rape if they could be assured they would not get caught (Malamuth, 1981). Unfortunately, most perpetrators of acquaintance rape are not caught and, if they are, the consequences are few. Typically there are no sanctions against a rapist either within the criminal justice system or within the campus judicial system (Sanday, 1990; Warshaw, 1988). Muehlenhard and Linton's (1983) study found that if a man asked a woman out, chose where they went and what they did on the date, drove, and paid for the activities, the woman was at greater risk for sexual assault. Many of the variables they found to be risk factors are considered to be part of a typical date. Additionally, often male peer groups, such as athletic teams and fraternities, provide support for beliefs in sexual aggression and subsequent aggressive behavior (Boeringer, 1999; Koss & Cleveland, 1997; Sanday, 1996).

Rape happens to women around the world, and in many of the cultures around the world there is an acceptance of rape myths, although some of the myths may be particular to the specific culture. In other words, there is a universality of many of the issues surrounding rape; however, specific cultural contexts enter into the picture as well. "Rape happens to women of all races and all classes, regardless of sexual orientation, yet the social, historical, and political context of rape may vary for different groups of women" (Fonow, Richardson, & Wemmerus, 1992, p. 111). Within tribal societies, sociocultural factors explain much of the variation in the incidence of rape cross-culturally (Sanday,

1981). Evident also upon a closer look are the influences of the particular social, historical, and political contexts in the United States.

Society is not only sex stratified. It is color stratified as well. Society, in the United States, is not just male dominated; it is also white dominated (Williams & Holmes, 1981). Sexism and racism are both powerful societal influences which often intersect. The intersection of sexism and racism can be clearly seen in the phenomenon of sexual assault. There are racial aspects to sexual assault. In addition to oppressing women, rape serves as a method of racial control. Rape, or the threat of rape, is an important tool of social control in a complex system of racial and sexual stratification (Brownmiller, 1975; Donat & D'Emilio, 1992; Williams & Holmes, 1981). As Williams and Holmes (1981) asserted, "The issue of rape is complex and intricately interrelated with racism and minority-majority group relations" (p. 21). Indeed, "rape and its legal treatment can be seen as the ultimate demonstration of power in a racist and patriarchal society" (Donat & D'Emilio, 1992, p. 13).

In addition to sexism, racism is reflected in many of the rape myths. Rape myths contain many false assertions. They not only have blamed the survivor and promoted a conflict model of heterosexual relationships, they also have reflected a cultural ideology of racism (Fonow, Richardson, & Wemmerus, 1992). Examples of racism are evident in the myths of Black male sexuality and the victimization of Black women. The stereotype of Black men raping White women has prevailed for many years, yet the actual raping of Black women by White males has largely been ignored (Brownmiller, 1975; Donat & D'Emilio, 1992; Williams and Holmes, 1981). Furthermore, one need only to look at the discriminatory sentencing of those rapists who have been caught to see the stereotype

played out in the consequences. If caught, White men went to mental institutions for rape while Black men went to jail (Donat & D'Emilio, 1992). Both African American males and females have been stereotyped as having uncontrollable sexual desires, with this stereotype being used both to instill fear and to create a political frenzy with regard to Black men lusting after White women. The stereotype has also been used to justify the sexual liaisons, even if they were coerced, between White men and Black women (Abney & Priest, 1995; Adisa, 1992; Brownmiller, 1995; Donat & D'Emilio, 1992; Pierce-Baker, 1998; Wyatt, 1992).

The particular sociohistorical and political contexts for other minority groups in the United States reflect the interrelatedness of sex and race as well. The particular contexts are an important dimension in understanding sexual assault. Cultural attitudes guide the definition and assessment of sexual assault (White & Sorenson, 1992). Each minority group has its own culture and constructs its own sex role scripts, including those regarding rape. From this viewpoint, one can reasonably assume that there are variations in particular sex role scripts based on each group's experiences, both past and present. Further, one would also be reasonable in assuming

> That how one deals with the experience of rape, that the kinds of attitudes about rape manifested by racial-ethnic communities, are largely determined by the differential statuses (power), roles, and related attitudes that are now a part of being Black, Mexican American, or Anglo, and male or female. (Williams & Holmes, 1981, p. 49).

Relatively few studies have examined the possible differences among racial and ethnic groups in experiences of and attitudes toward sexual assault. Of the cross-racial studies that have been carried out, only a few have examined rape myth beliefs. Fewer still have examined the experiences of rape of women of color. Differences have been

uncovered in both types of studies. These studies have shown that measures of attitudes about rape reveal a lack of consensus between ethnic groups and even within ethnic groups (Fischer, 1987; Giacopassi & Dull, 1986; Mori, Bernat, Glenn, Selle & Zarate, 1995; Proto-Campise, Belnap, & Wooldredge, 1998; Williams & Holmes, 1981). In addition, the experience of rape for women of color is influenced by culture, and each culture has its own methods of making meaning. The studies which have sought to understand the experience of sexual assault on women of color have found that the sociocultural context particular to each group studied is important (Mills & Granoff, 1992; Pierce-Baker, 1998; Williams & Holmes, 1981; Wyatt, 1992).

Studies which included the variables of race or ethnicity in their examination of attitudes toward sexual assault help in understanding racial or ethnic differences in the experiences of rape. For example, a cross-cultural community study surveying 1000 residents of San Antonio, Texas, revealed racial and ethnic differences (Williams & Holmes, 1981). Findings indicated that ethnic differences in attitudes toward sexual assault did indeed exist among Whites, African Americans, and Hispanics. Whites were more likely to define a given situation as rape and less likely to attribute blame to a victim than were African Americans or Hispanics. Hispanics were the most conservative in their attitudes and were the most likely to attribute blame to a victim. African Americans fell in between Whites and Hispanics.

Three studies examined possible ethnic and racial differences between African Americans and Whites regarding attitudes supportive of rape. The first study revealed the influence of both race and gender (Giacopassi & Dull, 1986). Males, more than females, were accepting of rape myths, regardless of their race. However, African Americans

more than Whites were likely to believe the rape myths. African Americans agreed more often that rape was sex, that women could not be forced to have sex, and that women falsely accused men of rape. African American males were somewhat defensive in their attitudes, perhaps due to the stereotypes of African American men. The second study looked at race, stereotypes, and rape culpability attributions (Willis, 1992). Rape culpability attribution refers to the assignment of blame for rape. The stereotypes identified in the second study clearly involved racial ideas. These were particularly evident in the stereotypes about African American males and their supposed proclivity to rape White women. Racial ideas also were evident in how African American female victims of sexual assault were perceived. Stereotypes about African American females' sexuality interfered with perceiving them as victims. African American females did not fit the stereotype many people had concerning victims, and were therefore not seen as credible. These biases often have a powerful influence in terms of criminal justice proceedings. Unfortunately, juries may be biased against both African American victims and African American perpetrators, being less likely to believe either. In the third study conducted with high school students, males were found to be more likely than females to adhere to, or to accept as valid, rape myths (Proto-Campise, Belknap, & Wooldredge, 1998). Further, African Americans more than Whites were more likely to adhere to rape myths. White females were the least likely to accept rape myths, followed by African American females, White males, and African American males.

Two other studies have revealed differences between racial and ethnic groups. One study involved Hispanic and White students who were surveyed to ascertain differences in rape myth acceptance (Fischer, 1987). The hypothesis was that since

previous research found people with more traditional attitudes toward women were less

rejecting of rape supportive attitudes, Hispanic students, expected to have more

traditional attitudes toward women due to cultural influences, would be more likely to

accept rape myths concerning forcible date rape. Overall, Hispanics did have more

traditional attitudes toward women and were more accepting of attitudes toward forcible

date rape. There were some interesting differences among the bilingual and bicultural

Hispanics in her study with regard to sex. Bicultural and bilingual males were least likely

to blame men for rape, but bicultural and bilingual women were most likely to blame men

for rape. Interestingly, bicultural and bilingual women had the most traditional attitudes

toward women. These findings suggest that bicultural Hispanic women were affected by

exposure to less restrictive sex roles of the majority culture which has somewhat of a

liberating influence on them; however, there was not a liberating influence on the

bicultural Hispanic males (Fischer, 1987).

Asian Americans also have shown differences in attitudes toward rape and

acceptance of rape myths. Asian students were more likely to be negative toward rape

victims and to believe rape myths in one study comparing Asian and White college

students (Mori, Bernat, Glenn, Selle, & Zarate, 1995). Asian males in particular believed

rape myths. The responses of Asian students differed in terms of the degree of

acculturation—the less acculturated the student, the more the student had accepted rape

myths. Asian students may have been more likely to view rape victims in a negative light

than did White due to Asian cultural traditions. Asian cultural traditions endorse a

patriarchal structure in which the status of women is low, in which there is an emphasis

on harmony with others, in which there is a strong family and group orientation, and in which the importance of avoiding shame is high.

As stated before, the experience of rape for women is influenced by cultural meanings and interpretations. We can learn something of women's experiences from the studies which have investigated the differences in the experience of sexual assault among women, particularly women of color. The study of San Antonio residents' attitudes toward rape also addressed, at least partially, the meaning sexual assault had for the groups they studied (Williams & Holmes, 1981). Variations exist in sex role scripts among Whites, African Americans, and Hispanics, with historical and sociocultural factors influencing the sex roles of African Americans and Hispanics. In addition to particular cultural traditions, racism and poverty helped to shape the experience of African Americans and Hispanics to the extent that sex roles did not have the centrality of importance that they did for most Whites. Women of color had to cope with survival first and foremost.

The meaning of rape for African American women as compared to White women has been more closely explored (Wyatt, 1992). Stereotypes of African American women have had a tremendous impact. Little attention has been given to the sexual oppression of African American women, who because of their supposed sexual nature, could not be raped. In addition, African American women were considered property, and no legal sanctions were available to them for many years. Even subsequent to African American women receiving legal rights, they were still overlooked and taken less seriously when they brought charges of rape against a perpetrator. Within such a societal context, then, it is not often that a African American woman will disclose her rape. "Long established

patterns of nondisclosure of rape have often been reinforced by historical, societal, and legal attitudes about racial and ethnic groups" (Wyatt, 1992, p. 80). Further, at a personal level,

> It is possible that African American women's awareness of rape stems not only from their personal experience, but also from membership in an ethnic group that lived through a period of American history where their incidents of sexual assault were not considered crimes. (Wyatt, 1992, p. 88)

Pierce-Baker (1998) supported this claim. Pierce-Baker has written in the first person, since her work was sparked by her own survival of rape. Her book provides a riveting look at her own process of interpretation and meaning-making of her rape, as well as a look inside the processes of other African American women interpreting their experiences of rape. In interviewing African American rape survivors, Pierce-Baker found that for African American women race preceded issues of gender, at least with regard to sexual assault.

> We are taught that we are first black, then women. Our families have taught us this, and society in its harsh racial lessons reinforces it. Black women have survived by keeping quiet, not solely out of shame, but out of a need to preserve the race and its image. In our attempts to preserve racial pride, we black women have often sacrificed our own souls. (p. 84)

African American women are not the only women of color who have struggled with meaning making concerning rape. Asian women obviously bring their own interpretation of their experiences of sexual assault as well. A study at the University of Hawaii assessed the needs of the student population for sexual assault services (Mills & Granoff, 1992). The sexual assault center was seeing very few Japanese students, although Japanese students made up a considerable percentage of the population. The study found that there were "culturally derived definitions of sexual assault" (p. 509). In traditional East Asian culture, women hold a place of low status and must first obey their

fathers, then their husbands, and finally, their eldest sons. These cultural values may have increased women's vulnerability and decreased their likelihood of disclosing or even labeling an experience of sexual assault. In addition, Japanese culture places an emphasis on harmony in relationships and considers discussion of sexual matters taboo. Japanese women were therefore not likely to challenge male behaviors openly.

The importance of culture on interpretations and meanings is apparent. Different racial, cultural, and ethnic groups view sexual assault through the lens of their own sociohistorical and political contexts. Although sexual assault is a phenomenon which occurs in many cultures, the particular cultural history, traditions, and sex role expectations influence the meaning that is attached to sexual assault and how an assault is dealt with, including the effect it has on victims. The importance of cultural meanings and interpretations on the effect of sexual assault on victims has been underscored by Koss, Heise, and Russo (1994): "Although physical and emotional symptoms seen in the aftermath of rape may be similar across cultures, groups differ in the meanings attached to these symptoms and in the preferred methods for healing" (p. 530). Attitudes about rape and the effect of these experiences upon women may be strongly influenced by the sociocultural context in which the experiences were initially defined (Wyatt, 1992).

These studies on the differences between racial or cultural groups in terms of their interpretations of, beliefs about, and experiences of rape provide us with a glimpse of the impact of sexual assault upon particular communities and their people. Unfortunately, there has not been sufficient attention given to ethnic and cultural differences in much of the previous research on sexual assault; thus, there needs to be additional research concerning the similarities and differences among ethnic or cultural backgrounds and the

interpretations and experiences of rape. From the glimpses offered in the literature, however, it is clear that awareness of the impact of cultural traditions and sociohistorical contexts when dealing with victims of sexual assault is crucial. Further, this awareness of cultural traditions and sociohistorical contexts is crucial in raising awareness about sexual assault and in attempts to educate young people about its prevalence, the risks, and its effects. Cultural sensitivity is crucial—both in responses to victims of sexual assault and in efforts to raise awareness and educate young adults. Having established the need for cultural sensitivity, it now becomes necessary to examine the materials that are commonly used in rape risk reduction education efforts in colleges and universities.

Current Practice And Materials Used In Rape Risk Reduction Education

The need for education, and specifically feminist education, concerning sexual assault is clearly evident. Education is not only needed to help change society's attitudes about rape and to dispel rape myths; but it is also needed because the most common misconception, that rape is infrequent and perpetrated by strangers, leaves women more vulnerable to being raped (Fonow, Richardson, & Wemmerus, 1992). One way to counteract rape myths and common misperceptions is through feminist rape education.

Educating a campus community about sexual assault is crucial to the well-being of students. Not only is it crucial for the well-being of students, but sexual assault education is also required by the Ramstad Amendment to the Higher Education Act (1992). In addition, education about sexual assault is needed to help change society's attitudes about rape since rape myths and misconceptions abound. Many campuses today have some type or form of rape awareness activities, events, or programs. These programs use a wide range of strategies (Lonsway, 1996). The programs and strategies

are an attempt to help students understand that rape, particularly acquaintance rape, is prevalent on campuses. These efforts are also an attempt to help students understand that many of the beliefs people have concerning sexual assault are based on rape myths (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). Certain activities and programs are aimed at female students, others are aimed at male students, while other activities and programs are aimed at both male and female students. In addition, some programs target particular groups of students such as incoming freshmen, sororities and fraternities, or athletes.

Sexual assault information programs aimed at women often focus on helping women understand the nature of sexual assault and methods of avoidance. Women who are made aware of the risks and dangers which exist on campus can then learn strategies to avoid an assault (Aizenman, Andrews, Witt, & Burns, 1994). A recent example is The Date Rape Prevention Book: The Essential Guide for Girls and Women (Lindquist, 2000). Often females are placed in dating situations that require them to have a solid understanding of sexual behavior since they often must make sophisticated decisions concerning their relationships and their safety (Parrot, 1991).

The programs advocating women's avoidance or resistance of rape may better be thought of as deterrence efforts rather than rape prevention efforts, as they are labeled at some institutions of higher education (Lonsway, 1996). A term which is increasingly being used to replace the term prevention is rape risk reduction. The term more accurately describes many of the educational efforts which are commonly used. An important point to consider, not only in describing programs advocating women's avoidance but also in terms of the message conveyed within the program, is the tendency for the prevention efforts to sound as if they are victim blaming (Aizenman et al., 1994;

Lonsway, 1996; McCall, 1993; Pritchard, 1988). It is critically important that efforts to

educate do not in essence say that if a woman avoids certain situations and behaves in

prescribe ways, then she can prevent rape; and, conversely, if a woman is raped, then she

must not have employed the correct strategies to prevent the attack. Sexual assault cannot

always be avoided, and it is always the perpetrator's behavior that must be blamed for it

is always his responsibility. It follows that women need to be educated about specific

dating patterns that are potentially dangerous so that they can recognize these patterns

and make more informed choices in avoiding risks to their safety (Cue, George, & Norris,

1996; Norris, Nurius, & Dimeff, 1996). Therefore, using the term risk reduction for

sexual assault education activities and programs typically aimed at women better conveys

that the information is empowering, not victim blaming. The blame is on the perpetrator,

and, as Lonsway (1996) has aptly reminded us: "Although such programs for women

might have value as a deterrence strategy, true rape prevention must target the real and

potential perpetrators, thereby addressing the primary cause of rape itself—men's

motivation to rape" (p. 232).

Men also need awareness and prevention programs, especially those which reduce

the likelihood of sexual aggression. Further, programs are needed which not only reduce

offensive and illegal behavior but also assist men in being supportive of and sensitive to

the women in their lives (Aizenman, Andrews, Witt, & Burns, 1994). Unfortunately, the

problem of sexual assault has been viewed as a woman's problem, with little attention

previously given to men's roles in perpetrating sexual assault; however, programs aimed

at men have recently begun to receive attention. Many of these sexual assault information

programs are based on the supposition that men who do not share various rape myths are

less likely to be sexually aggressive (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997); there is some evidence to support the idea that there is a link between rape-supportive beliefs and sexually aggressive behavior (Koss, Leonard, Beezley, & Oros, 1985; Muehlenhard & Linton, 1987). Programs aimed at men emphasize male responsibility and the ability to empathize. One such program which has been increasing in popularity is The Men's Program developed by Foubert (1998). The Men's Program is designed as an all-male workshop which focuses on increasing men's empathy toward women who have survived rape and, according to Foubert, teaches men how to change their behavior to avoid being sexually coercive. However, from her assessment of rape awareness education, Lonsway (1996) cautioned that there has not been sufficient evidence to determine whether attitude change can actually decrease sexual aggression.

Other educational programs include both male and female participants. Programs aimed at both genders often focus on dating expectations and clarity of cross-sex communication (Lonsway, 1996). Some of these programs have been based on the idea that sex role scripts incorporate stereotypes about behavior of men and women; the resulting expectations for particular behavior in dating situations may thus be problematic. Prescriptions for gender roles help to shape courtship scripts (White & Sorenson, 1992). Expected behavior for males and females in college dating relationships can be confusing to both genders (Parrot, 1991). In addition to problematic dating expectations, there is some thought that miscommunication between males and females contributes to sexually aggressive behavior. This miscommunication hypothesis is the assumption that acquaintance rape often follows from miscommunication between men and women. For example, men sexualize behaviors more than women, so that behavior a

woman views as friendly may be seen by a man as sexual interest (Belknap & Erez, 1995). One resulting proposal is that women should communicate their feelings accurately and assertively in a coercive situation and be consistent in their verbal and nonverbal messages. The validity of the miscommunication hypothesis has been questioned, however. McCaw and Senn (1998) tested the miscommunication hypothesis in their study. The results of the study suggested that men knew what they were doing and did not engage in sexual coercion without realizing it. Programs which are based on the premise that miscommunication leads to sexual assault must also be careful not to place the responsibility for sexual assault on women and their communication.

Particular programs also target specific student populations. Three student populations—athletes, fraternities and sororities, and incoming freshmen students—receive the most attention from rape awareness programs. New students are especially vulnerable as they are new to the campus environment, and groups such as athletes and fraternities tend to support and promote sex role stereotyping and rape myths (Aizenman, Andrews, Witt, & Burns, 1994). For example, fraternity males and male athletes have reported significantly greater agreement with rape supportive statements in measures of rape supportive attitudes among college males (Boeringer, 1999). Fraternities help program men to use sexual aggression to display masculinity (Sanday, 1990). An example of the programs aimed at specific student groups is a program developed by Parrot, Cummings, and Marchell (1994). The program they developed is a sexual assault prevention program specifically for college athletes. The authors suggested that male dominance is learned and developed their program, which has feminist underpinnings, to address sexual assault issues found in the subculture around sports.

The variety of available programs addressing sexual assault on college campuses differ among themselves in terms of content areas, formats, components, and teaching strategies. Such variety is desirable (Adams & Abarbanel, 1988) in order to inform the campus community about sexual assault because people respond to programs in different ways, along with needing repeated exposure to key concepts. Although a wide range of programs are being used on campuses, the vast majority of rape prevention programs have taken the format of educational workshops or presentations (Lonsway, 1996). Educational presentations are one of the most effective strategies in promoting both awareness about and prevention of sexual assault (Briskin & Gary, 1994).

Rape risk reduction education programs involve a number of content areas—rape facts and myths, the dynamics of date rape, prevention strategies, and what a victim should do following an assault (Aizenman, Andrews, Witt & Burns, 1994; Briskin & Gary, 1994; Lindquist, 2000). In addition, other topics are relevant since sexual assault, and particularly date rape, cannot be addressed separately from sex roles, sexuality, communication, assertiveness, self-esteem, and the role alcohol can play in sexual assault (Aizenman et al., 1994). Effective education about sexual assault requires a focus on the definition and prevalence of sexual assault as well as strategies to reduce risks. Current program materials usually incorporate this focus on definition and prevalence, and include strategies for risk reduction. Examples would be Pritchard's (1988) Avoiding Rape On and Off Campus, Parrot's (1991) Acquaintance Rape and Sexual Assault: A Prevention Manual, Gary's (1994b) The Campus Community Confronts Sexual Assault: Institutional Issues and Campus Awareness, and Lindquist's (2000) The Date Rape Prevention Book: The Essential Guide for Girls and Women.

Common content areas in rape risk reduction education include exposing rape myths, encouraging participant interaction and providing sexuality education; workshop facilitators should also avoid approaches which are confrontational (Lonsway, 1996). Presentation formats and techniques used within these components are varied. Many of the program materials provide suggestions as to which formats or techniques to use. They also identify other factors of effective programs. For example, Briskin and Gary (1994) noted that educational presentations on sexual assault require considerable preparation due to the emotional content of the material; they also have provided a number of suggestions for educators, such as a list of presentation techniques. Program manuals by Parrot (1991), Parrot, Cummings and Marchell (1994), and Gary (1994b) all have provided suggestions for presentation format, techniques to use in presentations, and other components of effective programs. These are often in the form of sample exercises, lists, quizzes, and scenarios for discussion which have been included in appendices to their work.

Although the authors of many of the program materials have claimed such program and components are effective, actual effectiveness has been questioned (Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & DeBord, 1995; Lonsway, 1996; Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). Whereas there has been a clearly identified need for rape risk reduction education, the effectiveness of particular programs or program components has not been clearly supported. Determining how to educate students effectively about sexual assault and the issues surrounding it is crucial because of the prevalence and severity of the impact of sexual assault. Unfortunately, few studies have examined effectiveness.

Of the studies that have looked at effectiveness, many have relied on various rape myths scales or participant satisfaction surveys (Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & DeBord, 1995; Lonsway, 1996). Most of the programs have not reported statistically different attitudes following educational presentations; thus, their effectiveness has been questioned (Schwartz & DeKeseredy, 1997). However, there is some evidence that attitudes may change as a result of rape awareness programs. Two studies (Frazier, Valtinson, & Candell, 1993; Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & DeBord, 1995) found a difference between pretest and immediate post-test scores. These differences, however, were short-lived. As little as one month after the program, the differences were no longer evident. These findings, of course, raise questions about lasting change brought about by educational presentations. An additional question arises—although educational presentations may truly change attitudes, how they change future thoughts and behavior is unclear (Lonsway, 1996).

The effectiveness of the format of presentation has also been questioned with regard to attitude change. Although much research is still needed in this area, there have been two significant studies which have indicated that interactive presentations made by peers in a safe environment produce the greatest amount of attitudinal change (Earle, 1996; Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & DeBord, 1995). In one study, interactive drama was found to be the most effective in promoting change in attitudes, and possibly behavior differences (Heppner et al., 1996). The other study examined the effect of four different types of rape prevention programs on the attitudes of first year college men—single sex versus coeducational workshops, peer facilitated versus professionally led workshops, small groups versus large groups, and lecture versus

interactive formats (Earle, 1996). Small, single sex groups which were peer facilitated and used interactive techniques had largest positive change in attitude (Earle, 1996). It is important to note that the studies which found differences in attitudes following a program presentation examined programs which used an interactive peer format (Frazier, Valtinson, & Candell, 1993; Heppner et al., 1995).

Although it is important to determine the effectiveness of rape risk reduction programs, programs by themselves are not enough. In the majority of the various educational program materials, authors have underscored the point that although the educational programs are crucial, they are not enough by themselves. Programs need to be reinforced by appropriate policies, by other communication such as brochures and articles in the student newspaper, and by incorporation into required courses and meetings (Adams & Abarbanel, 1988; Aizenman, Andrews, Witt, & Burns, 1994; Briskin & Gary, 1994). Furthermore, policies and brochures are not enough if they are not distributed in a way that emphasizes their importance (Adams & Abarbanel, 1988). Educational programs alone are often one time events for many students, such as a presentation made during new student orientation; the information given about sexual assault needs to be reinforced in a variety of ways, not only because learning needs reinforcement but also because the sociocultural environment of many colleges is one that promotes rape-supportive attitudes (Heppner, Humphrey, Hillenbrand-Gunn, & DeBord, 1995). In sum, all efforts to reduce the risk of rape need to focus on attitudinal, cognitive, and behavior outcomes (Heppner, et al., 1995; Lonsway, 1996).

While keeping in sight that rape risk reduction programs and materials must pay attention to attitudes, cognition, and behavior, the agenda for rape risk reduction

programs and materials must also keep in sight the racial and ethnic differences among students (Wyatt, 1992). Unfortunately, we know very little about how cultural variables influence the responses to students to actual rape risk reduction programs. For example, the ethnicity of participants in the studies that have been done has rarely been reported (Burkhart, Burg, & Berkowitz, 1994). In her review of rape risk reduction education, Lonsway (1996) recommended evaluations to determine program relevance for various ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic groups. Such work could guide changes in rape risk reduction education toward increased effectiveness. "Program participants never begin as 'blank slates' but carry with them considerable attitudinal baggage that is both deeply ingrained and powerful in moderating the impact of any persuasion attempt" (Lonsway, 1996, p. 254). The studies (Mills & Granoff, 1992; Mori, Bernat, Glenn, Selle, & Zarate, 1995; Wyatt, 1992) with Asian American women and African American women demonstrate the importance of cultural sensitivity in educational programs. Not only is cultural sensitivity essential in developing educational programs, but the information should also be presented in a culturally unbiased manner and in a safe atmosphere. Specialized rape risk reduction efforts promoted in a culturally sensitive manner are needed (Mills & Granoff, 1992; Mori et al., 1995).

The need for cultural sensitivity is evident; however, little concerning cultural differences is addressed in the materials that are commonly used in rape risk reduction education. Cultural differences are not dealt with in the content areas, in the recommended program components, nor in the suggested formats and techniques to be used. The few studies concerning program effectiveness do not address ethnic or cultural differences. Most of the rape risk reduction education materials have been developed by

the majority culture, with a possible consequence that some components included in prevention programs may go against the values of minority cultures. A clear example can be seen from Mills and Granoff's (1992) study—assertiveness training, a common component in rape risk reduction programs, goes against Asian cultural values. The cultural values of others must be respected. The literature on multicultural education may thus assist our efforts to keep in sight the ethnic differences among college students and to learn about respecting differing cultural values.

Multicultural Education and Student Development

Multicultural education can be defined as a concept, as a reform movement, and as a process (Banks, 2001; Banks & Banks, 1993). As a concept it is defined as education that values cultural pluralism. As a reform movement, its purpose is to make changes in education. As a process, multicultural education is ongoing. One of the goals of multicultural education is to provide all students with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes needed to function within their cultures and within the mainstream culture (Banks, 2002). Another goal of multicultural education is to develop among all members of the learning community an awareness of, appreciation of, and respect for all cultural groups (Banks & Banks, 1993).

All students, from elementary students to students in higher education, come to school with ethnic and cultural identifications. These identifications may be conscious or unconscious to the student. Identity is a concept that relates to all that we are (Banks, 2001). The culture to which one belongs becomes the root of his or her identity (Pai & Adler, 1997). "To separate an individual from his or her cultural background is like prying roots from the dirt that surrounds them" (Gil, 1995, p. xi). Culture is a complex

web of behaviors, values and attitudes, and history. Culture determines the guidelines by which individuals within groups select the specific information to which they attend. Culture also determines the interpretation that is given to information (Shade, 1997b).

Given that culture guides the selection of and interpretation of information that people attend to, it is important to understand and appreciate the different cultures of our students if we are truly concerned with their learning. Student learning and development must be addressed throughout a student's years in schools. "The awareness of societal, cultural, and historical influences on cognitive development should provide insight for professionals seeking to enhance the development of their students" (Love & Guthrie, 1999, p. 59).

The actual information that is being taught must be examined in order to determine its relevance to a particular group of people, to a particular culture. Appreciation of the different cultures of our students leads to the examination of the materials we teach. Without looking at the materials, teachers would in effect demean their students. And, to demean a person's cultural heritage is to do "psychological and moral violence" to the dignity and worth of that person (Pai & Adler, 1997, p. 26).

There are many different approaches to multicultural education; however, much of the literature on multicultural education focuses on children and classrooms. Multicultural issues and approaches in kindergarten through high school are well articulated, along with a growing body of literature regarding teacher preparation education in colleges and universities. Less information exists concerning multicultural education approaches in higher education. Having said that, however, the most significant multicultural education approach from the perspective of this study in higher education is

curriculum reform. In this particular case curriculum reform means the examination and possible alteration of the materials commonly used in rape risk reduction education.

Curriculum reform requires additions to, and changes in, the curriculum which incorporate the voices and experiences of cultural and ethnic groups (Banks, 1999). The reformed curriculum enables students to look at the curriculum content from a new and different perspective. This new and different perspective has the potential to facilitate learning. Learning involves interpreting sensory events, categorizing information into familiar categories, and searching memory for similar experiences and ideas to which the information relates (Shade, 1997a). What we know about college students' learning and development is that what they learn is grounded in how they construct their knowledge (King & Baxter-Magolda, 1996). Students actively attempt to interpret, or make sense of, their experiences. We also know that how they construct knowledge is tied to their sense of self. Therefore, relevant curriculum and materials are crucial.

In addition to the cultural relevance of curriculum and materials, teaching also needs to be culturally relevant (Ladson-Billings, 1993). Culturally relevant teaching encompasses a continuum of teaching beliefs and behaviors. It serves to empower students so that they will be able to critically examine education content themselves. By using the student's culture, culturally relevant teaching helps the student create meaning and enhance his or her understanding. Culturally relevant teaching is just as important in higher education as it is in grades K through 12. College education has the potential for facilitating and stimulating a student's learning and development, but we must remain cognizant of the fact that there is a critical interaction between what the student brings to college and the opportunities for learning and development the college offers within it

(Fleming, 1981). Students do not need to struggle with the relevance of the opportunities for their lives.

Just as culturally relevant teaching operates along a continuum of teaching beliefs and behaviors, learning also occurs in a variety of ways, influenced by beliefs and behaviors (Burgess, 1978; Cortez, 1978; Gay, 1988; Hale, 1978; Shade, 1997c; Tong, 1978). Culture can significantly influence the beliefs and behaviors of learners. Differences in how we learn are generally referred to as learning styles. Students do not approach information in the same manner. Individual and groups differences among students reflect how they prefer to have material presented and how they reconstruct ideas so that it is meaningful to them (Shade, 1997c). "[Research] in sociopsychology, learning theory, ethnicity and educational anthropology inform us that students differ both individually and by social, ethnic, and cultural group membership regarding their learning styles and preferences" (Gay, 1988, p. 331).

Culturally relevant teaching and sensitivity to the differences in learning styles require that we use a variety of teaching methods, activities, and examples. Students of color can therefore find content about their own group's history, culture, and experience more meaningful and more useful in learning tasks. In other words, explanations or contexts with which the students are familiar, and with which they have a relationship, are more likely to enhance the learning process. When students encounter new information, it is important that they perceive some similarities and differences with other ideas, events, and concepts which they already know (Gay, 1988; Lynch, 1997; Shade, 1997c). Things that are meaningful to people are learned more quickly and retained longer. A basic feature of appropriate curriculum for diverse learners is the use of

culturally relevant illustrations and examples when teaching a particular subject matter

content, for these examples and illustrations serve as

> bridges between the abstract and the concrete, the ideal and the real, theory and practice. When these bridges do not intersect with the life experiences and referent points of culturally diverse students, the quality of their learning and skill mastery suffers. (Gay, 1988, p. 335)

Curriculum materials used must provide this type of bridge if students are to add to their

knowledge base (Shade, 1997c).

Embracing culturally relevant teaching is crucial, but at the same time it is equally

crucial not to define any group of students in a rigid manner. There are as many

differences within groups as there are across groups (Lynch, 1997; Ogawa, 1999). For

example, there are over 500 nations and tribes of American Indians, and Asian

Americans may have Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Korean, or other

backgrounds (Anderson, 1988; Ooka Pang, 1997; Smith, 1997). No group can be defined

or described unidimensionally. This diversity must be acknowledged and accounted for in

curriculum materials.

The essence of multicultural education is, as Geneva Gay (1988) suggested, the

"diversification of the content, contexts, and techniques used to facilitate learning to

better reflect the ethnic, cultural, and social diversity of the United States" (p. 332).

As a result, assessing the relevance of curriculum materials to ascertain whether diverse

students will find the materials personally meaningful is not only necessary, it is critical.

This assertion brings us directly back to this study which was an examination of the

cultural relevancy of rape risk reduction curriculum materials. Assessing the relevance of

the rape risk reduction materials required recognition of the differences among students

and the need for cultural sensitivity.

Conclusion

This review of the literature has established the need for rape education. Rape is

prevalent and has devastating effects on victims of all racial and ethnic groups. Many

myths exist surrounding rape, and most college students accept or believe those myths.

Furthermore, the need for cultural sensitivity in both dealing with victims and with the

educational materials presented is evident in the literature. Sociohistorical and cultural

contexts need to be considered in terms of the effects they have on the victims of rape

and on the phenomenon of rape. There are both cultural differences in history and in the

meaning that is assigned to particular phenomena. Ethnic differences have been detected

in attitudes toward rape. Current materials which are being used in rape risk reduction

education do not address cultural variables; they do not address cultural sensitivity in

either the materials or in their presentation. The question of relevance arises. Culture

guides the selection and interpretation of information that people attend to. It is important

to understand and appreciate the different cultures of our students. Learning involves

interpreting information and events and organizing the information into familiar

categories. It involves searching memory for similar experiences and ideas to which the

information relates. For that reason, the educational materials presented to students must

address cultural relevance. The materials must reflect the experiences of the students to

whom it is presented. Therefore, the research question for this study was: How do

university students of color perceive the cultural relevancy of these materials? After the

question was stated, the next step was to decide and discuss who we ask this question of

and how we do that in an informed way.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Qualitative research is concerned with matters of meaning, and seeing clearly is central to making meaning (Eisner, 1998; Patton, 2002). In order to make the methodology of this study clear, this chapter explains the selection of methods used for data collection, the selection of the participants for the study, the procedures used for data collection, and the processes used in the data analysis and interpretation. Inquiry into issues involving sexual assault, gender, and culture is difficult; therefore, this chapter contains a section devoted to issues of sensitivity and a section on the challenges encountered during the research. Finally, the chapter discusses methodological issues embedded in the research. Because the study involved a qualitative research framework with the researcher as instrument, this chapter also includes a discussion of researcher background and beliefs. Due to the fact that one's perspectives are the frames through which he or she views the world, I begin with my point of view.

Point of View

Every person has a unique history and background which influence how he or she views the world. All observations and analyses are filtered through a person's world-view, values, and perspectives (Merriam, 1998). It is not different for researchers. There

is a relationship between the researcher, the observations he or she makes, and conclusions about such observations (Peshkin, 1986). A researcher's unique background is his or her own "signature" (Eisner, 1998, p. 36). This reality is not a liability. Rather, it is a way of providing a unique insight. The traditional notion of objectivity, or seeing things the way they are, is elusive. This research effort worked from the assumption that there is no objective reality existing independently of the observer (Kvale, 2002). Subjectivity is always present, and it is better for a researcher to acknowledge it rather than to pretend it does not exist (Eisner, 1998; Manning, 1999a; Peshkin, 1988). The researcher uses personal perspective as a means through which to view the data and therefore needs to be aware of how these perspectives may distort as well as illuminate that which is seen or heard (Manning, 1999a).

The acknowledgement of a researcher's background is important for several reasons. First of all, it enables the reader to make his or her own judgments about the study and about the conclusions which have been drawn (Peshkin, 1986). There are multiple interpretations of reality, and it is important to understand how the researcher's subjectivity may have shaped the study (Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998). In addition, acknowledgment of the researcher's point of view is important for the researcher himself or herself in order to be fully attentive to the participants (Heshusius, 1994). The researcher must first become aware of and acknowledge his or her own values and reactions, for it is only then that the researcher can temporarily let go of self and move into a state of full attentiveness to the participants of the study. Furthermore, although it is important to acknowledge the perspectives from which one operates in all research settings, such acknowledgement by the researcher is critical in studies which deal with

cultural differences (Weis, 1993). There are difficulties encountered in cross-racial and cross-cultural research, but those difficulties are not insurmountable and are in fact beneficial, provided that the researcher addresses issues of researcher point of view and methodology (Huisman, 1997).

Before discussing the specific methodology chosen for this study, I must state my background. I must first claim that I am a feminist, a postmodernist, and a sociologist with a critical lens. By claiming the label feminist, I am stating that I believe in the social, political, and economic equality of men and women. As a postmodernist and a sociologist, my interests lie in the multidimensional and ever-changing experiences of people and communities and the meanings they assign to those experiences. The frame of reference with which I approach information and experiences looks deep, beyond the surface layers and power structures of the phenomenon; and, like the peeling of an onion, it exposes layers upon layers of hidden meanings. The critical lens through which I process information significantly influences my understanding of the world. Critical theory, from which my lens was formed, plays a part in examining the role of power and position and in examining cultures which have formed around those ideas.

I must also acknowledge that I am an administrator within the division of Student Affairs of a medium-sized state university. As an assistant vice president of Student Affairs, I oversee a broad range of programs, services, and activities geared toward students. In addition, I direct the programs, activities, and services of the university's Women's Center. One of the responsibilities of the Women's Center is to provide rape risk reduction education on campus. The Women's Center also houses the victim advocacy program. By overseeing rape education efforts on campus and the victim

advocacy program, I am critically aware of the magnitude and impact of the problem of sexual assault.

Although my current role is as an administrator within Student Affairs, I have previously served in roles as a chaplain and as a victim advocate. My training for these roles included developing skills in crisis intervention and counseling. These are skills that I use from time to time, even in my administrative role. It is likely that I relied on these skills—consciously or unconsciously—during data collection.

Finally, I am committed to assisting all students in their learning. This commitment is reflective of my values. Students within a university are diverse, not only in terms of their interests and personalities but also in terms of background, gender, race, and ethnicity. Further, I assume that education is a sociopolitical process. Helping students learn requires not only cognizance of their differences but also sensitivity to how gender, race, and ethnicity influence learning (Fleming, 1981; Pai & Adler, 1997; Powell, 1998).

I have included this information about my background because the study involved interviewing students about a sensitive and often difficult topic to discuss. Also, I am a member of the dominant culture in this country, with a White middle class background. Engaging in cross-cultural research requires claiming your background (Huisman, 1997; Weis, 1993)—not only to acknowledge that there may have been a reluctance on the part of the researcher to see past his or her own culture, but also to recognize that how participants of other cultures view a researcher likely plays a role in any cross-cultural study. Issues of trust may have been present in this effort and may therefore have limited the amount and richness of the information participants were willing to share.

Not only did this study engage in cross-cultural research, but it also involved significant gender issues. Perceptions that participants may have had regarding females and feminists may have influenced their responses. Another facet of my background which may have influenced the students is that I am an administrator and the participants know me in that role. Although this role provided me with invited entrée into many student groups, there is a clear if unstated understanding that I cannot discard my role as an assistant vice president when interacting with students. Beyond the uneven power distribution between researcher and participant, the power differential between student and administrator may have influenced the study. In order for me to be fully attentive to the participants, it was important, as Hesushius (1994) noted, for me to be critically aware of my own background and acknowledge it. Although my background may have influenced the study in some way, it also afforded me unique insight.

I therefore came with my own ideas concerning rape risk reduction education and the responsibility of those who teach students within higher education to assist all students. However, I attempted to set aside my own ideas and to listen intently to the voices of the students themselves. My strong desire to understand the cultural relevancy of the materials currently used in rape risk reduction guided my inquiry.

The Qualitative Research Frame

My interest was in the meaning, in terms of cultural relevance, of the rape risk reduction materials to students of color. Because I was concerned with understanding the views of minority students from their own frames of reference, a qualitative research methodology was indicated. Qualitative research is concerned with matters of meaning (Eisner, 1998). In fact, one of the hallmarks of qualitative research is its attention to the

importance of meaning to those who are part of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998; Eisner, 1998; Merriam, 1998). Qualitative inquiry also focuses on meaning in context, penetrating the surface and aiming beneath behaviors which are manifest toward the meaning that events have for those who experience them (Eisner, 1998).

In addition, there is not just one way to view an object, an event, a phenomenon, or an experience. There are multiple ways of viewing what we experience or observe. Expressed another way, there are multiple ways of knowing, multiple ways of interpreting experience. All experiences are filtered through human eyes which hold particular world-views, values, and perspectives. Reality is socially constructed (Bogdan & Biklin, 1992; Eisner, 1998; Kvale, 2000; Merriam, 1998). Indeed, Eisner (1998) argued that knowledge is a constructed form of experience when he claimed that "knowledge is made, not simply discovered" (p. 7).

Another important characteristic of qualitative research is that the researcher is the primary instrument in the study. It is the researcher who observes what is to be observed, perceives the presence of some behavior, and interprets its importance. The concept of self as instrument means that the researcher "engages the situation and makes sense of it" (Eisner, 1998, p. 34). The researcher was the primary data collection instrument in this study to investigate the cultural relevancy of rape risk reduction materials to students of color, thereby underscoring the need for a qualitative research framework.

A qualitative framework for research was also amenable to the principles of feminist research. For example, feminist research greatly values the voices of the participants and is often focused on uncovering new meanings (Modleski, 1991). This

study of the cultural relevancy of the rape risk reduction materials embraced the principles of feminist research. Feminist research is characterized not so much by a particular methodology but rather by the researcher striving to adhere to certain principles of research. Feminist principles of research include attending to the significance of gender, challenging the norm of objectivity and rigid separation between the researcher and the researched, honoring the ethical implications of the study, and emphasizing the empowerment of women (Cook & Fonow, 1990; Kirsch, 1999; Montell, 1999). Further, feminist research draws on different disciplines, while at the same time offering a critique of the knowledge and the methods derived from patriarchal interpretations (Joyappa & Martin, 1996).

A postmodern paradigm undergirds both a qualitative research framework and feminist research. Postmodernism acknowledges that reality is socially constructed, personal, and subjective (Patton, 2002). In a postmodern paradigm, the world is not a stable constant but rather is evolving, fluid, and multidimensional. It acknowledges a world of infinite possibilities, multiple perspectives, and many truths and advocates a contextual construction of meaning (Fawcett, Featherstone, Fook, & Rossiter, 2000; Kvale, 1996; Patton, 2002; Sarchett, 1995).

> The postmodern turn then requires that we pay as much attention to who is speaking and who is not authorized to speak as we do to what is being spoken. It requires a sense therefore that all knowledge and values depend on power differentials: Some voices have cultural power to define good and bad, high and low, true and false, while others must live inside those definitions because they are relatively voiceless. (Sarchett, 1995, p. 24)

These words echo my own understanding of what must be taken into account in postmodern qualitative research.

Qualitative research, commonly found in education, uses a variety of research methods in data collection. One of the most common types of qualitative research found in education is the case study (Merriam, 1998). According to Yin (1994), a case study is a study that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and when multiple sources of data are used. A simpler definition (Eisner, 1998) describes a case study as a thorough look at one setting with careful attention to particulars. This study focused on how students at one university viewed the materials, the particulars, of rape risk reduction education which they had experienced.

<div align="center">Case Study</div>

Case study research is used to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular situation and the meaning those involved in that situation ascribe to it (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Merriam, 1998). This research study was a case study. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), "studies focusing on society and culture, whether a group, a program, or an organization, typically espouse some forms of case study" (p. 61). A case study is a descriptive and interpretive written account of the perspectives of the participants of a study (Manning, 1999b; Merriam, 1998). Not only does case study research present a detailed account of the case, it also helps to expand a field's knowledge base through its focus on the questions, issues, and concerns of the study's participants. Case studies take readers to places where they may never have an opportunity to go. They allow the reader to experience unique situations vicariously (Donmoyer, 1990). They illuminate meaning.

This study was a case study because it sought a descriptive and interpretive account of a particular phenomenon—the meanings students of color assign to rape risk reduction materials in terms of the cultural relevancy of the materials. Indeed, questions about meaning and perspective were central to the study.

Although case studies may use various data collection techniques, this study involved in-depth group interviews as the primary method of data collection. Since the purpose of the study was to uncover and describe the participants' perspective on the curricular materials, the use of in-depth interviews as the sole way of gathering data was appropriate (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). The subjective view is what mattered. These in-depth group interviews, or focus group interviews as they are called, relied more on the interaction within the groups for the generation of data than on the interchange between a researcher's questions and the participants' responses (Morgan, 1997). The hallmark of focus groups is the use of group interaction to elicit data and insights which would not surface without the interaction occurring within the group. Therefore, I chose to use focus groups in an attempt to uncover and illuminate the meanings students of color assign to the rape risk reduction materials with regard to cultural relevancy. Because focus groups have only recently begun to be used with any frequency within the social sciences (Morgan, 1997), using focus groups as a technique for data collection requires a fuller discussion.

Focus Groups

As stated above, the focus group interview involves conducting group discussions or interviews with the goal of better understanding the perceptions, beliefs, or attitudes of the participants on a specific topic (Bertrand, Brown, & Ward, 1992; Greenbaum, 2000;

Hendershott & Wright, 1993; Lederman, 1990; Morgan, 1997). Focus groups offer

insights and data that other types of interviews cannot. The two defining features of focus

groups are their reliance on the researcher's focus and the group's interaction (Morgan,

1997). Group interaction is particularly key. Group discussions not only can provide

direct evidence about the similarities and differences among the participants' experiences

and perceptions (Morgan, 1997), but also can give the researcher greater accessibility to

the participants' points of view since they are responding and relating to each other,

rather than only with the interviewer (Hendershott & Wright, 1993). Observing

participants and hearing how they respond to each other provide valuable insight. Group

dynamics serve to encourage participant discussion which will result in more in-depth

information from the participants' points of view, particularly with sensitive topics. The

group can provide synergy, and the information participants share can differ in quantity

and quality because of the group's bond (Lederman, 1990).

For certain topics, group interaction can lead to richer and more complex

information than individual interviews might reveal. The focus group technique embraces

several assumptions: that people sharing a common concern will be more willing to talk

within the security of the others than they would talk as one individual with an

interviewer; that members of the group understand the dynamics of the topic being

discussed; and that individuals can draw social strength from one another (Lederman,

1990; Montell, 1999). Group understanding and the empowerment of participants as they

draw strength from one another are particularly important when dealing with topics

which are either socially unpopular or especially sensitive.

Since the topic of sexual assault is a sensitive one, the use of focus groups offered an appropriate context for data collection. It can sometimes be difficult for people to talk about attitudes regarding sexuality, gender, and intimate violence in one-on-one interviews; but within a group setting participants can respond to and interact with each other to provide richer and more complex data (Montell, 1999). The group provides a safe space within which to discuss a sensitive issue (Greenbaum, 2000).

Focus groups are consistent with a feminist research paradigm as well. As contexts for in-depth interviews, they promote a more egalitarian and less objectifying relationship between participants and the researcher than do many other methods. Furthermore, focus groups can be both consciousness-raising and empowering for the participants as well as the researcher (Montell, 1999). Consciousness-raising and empowerment are also consistent with feminist research principles (Cook & Fonow, 1990; Montell, 1999). What the students learned from each other and what I learned from them may have raised both their and my levels of awareness regarding views of sexual assault and their assessment of the cultural relevancy of the materials currently used to inform students about sexual assault. Research projects can be empowering to the extent that they provide access to new information and new ways of thinking, in turn enabling participants and researcher to question current practices and explore new alternatives (Montell, 1999). This study contained the potential to empower both the students and me.

Lastly, although the use of focus groups was appropriate and even desired for this study due to the nature of the topic, there are some limitations with regard to the use of focus groups in research. In reference to this study, some students may have been reluctant to share sensitive information within a group setting. While focus groups most

often provide a safe environment which encourages participant participation, some students may be discouraged and withhold information (Morgan, 1997). Such may have been the case during data collection in this study.

<center>Issues of Sensitivity</center>

The design of the study attended to the need to be cognizant of participants' sensitivity regarding the topic of sexual assault. Attitudes and beliefs about gender and sexuality can be difficult to study, just as violence against women can itself be difficult to study (Montell, 1999; Stanko, 1997). Of central concern was the emotional well-being of participants and of the researcher as they examined issues involving sexual assault and violence against women. Further complexity arose due to the cross-racial research process; as a White woman studying the beliefs and attitudes of women and men of color, it was imperative that I remain vigilant not to place my own experiences, or frame of reference, at the center of the study (Huisman, 1997).

The methodological literature offers commentary and guidance for research in complex circumstances such as those encountered during this study. In particular, it provides a framework for considering the role of attitudes about sensitive topics, difficulty in discussing sensitive issues, and emotional consequences from such examination. Attitudes are often unconscious and consequently taken for granted; therefore, they are frequently difficult to talk about. As alluded to before, the use of focus groups helps to elicit conversation around difficult topics. Difficult questions may yield greater overall response within a group since individuals themselves have the ability to opt out of discussion from time to time should they desire not to answer any particular question; that is, being able not to respond at a given moment may create the climate

necessary for participants to respond at other times. Further, group members can bring up different ideas without having to give a definitive answer (Montell, 1999). Group participants build on each other's answers and can come to their own understandings about the topic under discussion.

Many painful and difficult issues arise in discussions concerning violence against women. Often women are reluctant to talk about the victimization they have experienced. This reluctance may be a particular hurdle for a researcher (Currie & MacLean, 1997). Most often victims of sexual assault do not tell the police or other authorities and are reluctant to tell others as well. Thus the question also becomes why tell the researcher? Care must be given to building trust in the relationship between the participant and researcher so that disclosure is possible. Although the study did not ask the participants about their own experiences of victimization, the prevalence of sexual assault in our society introduced the possibility that either they or someone they knew had been victimized. Discussion of materials used in rape risk reduction education could have aroused memories of sexual assault previously experienced.

Another issue in conducting inquiry into sexual assault is that there are some women who do not name their experience as rape. There seems to be a tendency for some women not to identify their assaults as rape if they did not occur stereotypically. The belief that rapists are crazed strangers who grab people from behind in the dark of night is strong in our culture. For many college women, if their attackers are dates who forced them to have sex in the living room, they do not label the experiences as rape, although they experience the same reactions and feelings as women who name their experiences as rape (Frazier & Seales, 1997; Koss & Cleveland, 1997; Koss, Dinero, Seibel, & Cox,

1988). Of course, these beliefs about rape operate with men, as well. In research, therefore, attention must be given to definitional issues for the participants.

Research into violence against women and sexual assault in particular cannot help but bring about emotional responses. The emotional upset occurs for victims, friends of victims, and the researcher as well (Currie & MacLean, 1997; Stanko, 1997). A woman researcher particularly may experience such feelings, as she often experiences the interconnectedness between herself as a woman and the participants who have felt the pain associated with violence against women. However, such emotion can be tapped as a resource toward expanded insight. To be sensitive to such emotions is imperative; therefore, the researcher must be ethically conscious and provide for assistance to the participants in dealing with their emotions.

Given all the issues of sensitivity in conducting inquiry into sexual assault, I took great care to be cognizant of the emotions of my participants and provided them with a contact list for assistance should they have needed help in processing issues following the interviews. Referral names and telephone numbers to the counseling center on campus and to the victim advocate on campus were given to each participant ahead of time. I also took care to be cognizant of my own emotions during the study. To be cognizant of my own emotions, I remained attentive to my feelings and engaged in constant reflection. For example, during several of the interviews the participants made statements which could be construed as victim blaming. As I have been a victim advocate as well as an educator for many years, these kinds of statements are distressing to me. By remaining aware of my feelings during the interviews and later reflecting on those feelings, I was able to process my own reactions so they did not interfere with the study. In addition, I

was able to maintain what Patton (2002) called empathic neutrality with the participants, a middle ground between becoming too involved and too removed.

One final issue of sensitivity that must be recognized is that I am a White woman engaging in cross-racial research. It is an issue which cannot be ignored. Cross-racial research, although difficult, can be very valuable (Huisman, 1997; Leung & Van De Vijver, 1996). Careful attention must be given to the views of the researcher, with the researcher being careful not to place his or her experiences and views at the center of the study. The views and experiences of the participants must remain central and must not become peripheral. As with other areas requiring sensitivity, I remained aware of my thoughts and feelings and reflected on them throughout the study. The process of heightened awareness coupled with reflection allowed me to acknowledge and to let go of my experiences. An example of the process can be seen in my anticipation of references to machissimo by Hispanic males, an anticipation based on my prior experiences. By being aware of my feelings, I was able to let go of those feelings and to allow the Hispanic male participants to speak of their experiences. An important point to make is that, although race and ethnicity were important dimensions of this study, I assumed that the divisions of race and ethnicity could be overcome, particularly in the study of violence against women (Huisman, 1997). Violence against women, including sexual assault, transcends the boundaries of race and ethnicity. That is, there is common ground on which to base research.

<div align="center">Participants</div>

Based on my interest in and commitment to students in higher education, and based on my entrée within the university as an administrator within Student Affairs, I

chose to conduct focus group interviews with African American and Hispanic university students. In addition to focus group interviews, individual interviews were also used to collect data in order to enlarge and enhance the data base. University students are the target audience for the rape risk reduction curriculum, and students of color are the only students who can adequately answer the question of cultural relevancy of the curricular materials. The study used a purposive sampling of students using typical cases (Patton, 2002).

The participants were students at the University of North Florida located in Jacksonville, Florida. At the time of the study, African America students were the largest group of minority students at the university. The second largest group of minority students were Hispanic students. Although there was a small yet significant Asian American student population, time constraints and entrée were factors which influenced the decision not to include them in this study. Other minority student populations on campus were very small, so their inclusion as participants was not sought.

Students who attended the University of North Florida came largely from northeast Florida. The students in the study were all Florida residents. Most of the participants were from Jacksonville, although several were from central or south Florida. However, their background was not central to the study.

The original design of the study called for conducting four focus groups containing 6 to 10 members each—a group for African American women, a group for African American men, a group for Hispanic men, and a group for Hispanic women. Men and women were scheduled in their own groups for several reasons, the most significant of which was recognition of the emotional sensitivity of the topic. In order for

men and for women to feel safe in discussing their views and feelings, gender-separate groups were indicated. As is common in qualitative research, the design of the study was flexible and changed somewhat to maximize opportunities as they arose. Throughout the process of conducting a qualitative study, the researcher must "continually make decisions, choose among alternatives, and exercise judgment" (Merriam, 1998, p. 71). Due to several factors which are discussed below, only the women's groups participated. Interviews with the men were carried out individually. An individual female was also interviewed to expand the database. Furthermore, an additional focus group interview was conducted with students who were involved in rape education through the peer theater program on campus; significantly, this focus group session involved both men and women.

It was during the study when I identified this additional group of students who were quite informed about issues of sexual assault and were involved in educating other students about those issues. The university had a peer theater component within the rape education program which was sponsored by the Women's Center. The 2001-2002 Peer Theater cohort were predominately students of color. During the early part of the fall semester I had watched them, by virtue of my role as the Director of the Women's Center, in their process of script development. As they prepared for their presentations, they kept changing their scripts to make the message more relevant to their intended audiences. The changes were particularly related to using current student vernacular. The Peer Theater's fall full-length play was an overwhelming success, filling the university's theater. Because it seemed the Peer Theater was intuitively involved in making the

materials more relevant to students, I invited them to participate in a focus group interview. The group accepted the invitation.

Each of the three focus groups was audio recorded, with sessions lasting between one hour and one and one-half hours. I served as the facilitator in the three groups and conducted the five individual interviews, each of which lasted approximately one hour. I also personally transcribed the interview tapes to protect the privacy of the participants. Initially, the research design included the use of co-facilitators for each group in order to increase the level of trust for this cross-racial and cross-gender work. As the study progressed, however, the use of group co-facilitators became no longer feasible. A fuller explanation of the factors influencing the changes in research design follows in this chapter.

The structure of the interviews involved several steps. A prompt, consisting of a scenario describing an acquaintance rape, was used to elicit discussion. An interview guide for focus group questions was also used (Appendix F). The focus group questions became the interview questions for the individual interviews.

Upon arrival for the focus group session, participants were asked to fill out a brief and confidential questionnaire requesting demographic information (Appendix D). In addition, they also were asked to read and sign the consent form (Appendix B). Their rights as research participants were stated to them as they read and discussed the consent form. They were reminded that emotions may surface, and the names and telephone numbers of sources of help were given to them. Each interview ended with me thanking the participants and reiterating that, should they feel a need to discuss their feelings about sexual assault or the study itself, they could call me or one of the numbers on the referral

sheet. Following the interviews—group or individual—participants were sent an email

thanking them for their participation. A fuller discussion of the focus group interview

processes follows.

<div align="center">Focus Group Processes</div>

A letter of invitation (Appendix A) to participate in the study was given to

members of the African American Student Union, a Student Government agency, and to

members of the Hispanic American College Experience (HACE)—a student club. The

Coordinator for the Peer Theater initially spoke to the Peer Theater students about the

study since she was working with them almost day and night as they prepared for their

play. I later personally invited them to participate. Students who indicated an interest in

participating were given additional information about the study, about the focus group

process, and about possible focus group meeting places and times. Additional

information about the study and the interview process, as well as the time and place of

the interview, was also given to the students who were interviewed individually. Students

were assured that their participation would be confidential, that they had a right to

withdraw from the process at any time, and that there was a need for them to maintain

confidentiality about group discussion. Confidentiality regarding other participants in the

focus group and about what was discussed in the group was emphasized. Students were

also asked to sign consent forms (Appendix B).

Each interview session—three focus group interviews and five individual

interviews—began with introductions of the participants and researcher. The

introductions were followed by a description of the purpose of the study, the rights of the

participants, and information about the availability of resources following the interview.

Each participant signed an informed consent form, completed a brief demographic questionnaire, and received a list of resources should they desire follow-up discussion (Appendices B, C, D).

The actual interviews began with the participants reading a brief scenario (Appendix E) which described an acquaintance rape. The purpose of using a scenario was to prompt discussion among the participants. I developed the scenario by reviewing similar scenarios used in the current rape education materials and by reviewing actual cases of sexual assault on campus. The form and content of the scenario were typical of the materials used in rape awareness education presentations; further, it contained content typical of many of the Peer Theater skits about sexual assault. The names chosen for the students in the scenario were taken from actual encounters with students of color. A semi-structured focus group guide (Appendix F), which also then served as a guide for the individual interviews, offered stimuli which shaped discussion regarding the issues to be addressed. Points for discussion included whether or not the scenario depicted a rape, whether or not the participants had been to a presentation about sexual assault on campus and what that experience was like, and whether or not the participants could picture themselves or their friends in the story the scenario depicted. Most importantly, the focal points for discussion included cultural influences on views about sexual assault, and students views of the relevancy of the materials to the way participants interact on campus.

The main difference in format between the group interviews and the individual interviews was audio tape-recording. All three focus groups were tape-recorded. None of the individual interviews was tape-recorded; rather, extensive notes were taken. The

groups were each receptive to the request for tape-recording; three of the individuals who were interviewed individually did not wish to be recorded. Only one of the men, the first interviewed, was comfortable with being recorded, but it was at that particular interview that the tape itself failed. The other three men were hesitant about being recorded; I did not force the issue due to the sensitive nature of the study. By the final interview with a Hispanic female, it seemed inconsistent to tape record just the one interview. Therefore, a extensive notes were taken at all of the individual interviews. The individual and focus group interviews ended with a reminder that anyone could contact me at any time with any concerns or questions, along with a reminder to consult the provided resource list for any further discussion.

Focus group sessions and individual interviews were conducted in the Student Union. The Student Union was a building in which students frequently met, relaxed, and conducted business for the groups in which they participated. The building was considered by students to offer a safe space. The atmosphere was more relaxed than was typical in classroom buildings or administrative buildings. Because the Student Union was familiar to students, because students considered the building a safe space, and because the groups of students from which participants were recruited conduct their club business within the building, I chose to conduct interviews in the Student Union. In addition, conducting interviews on campus alleviated any logistical problems for students who lived on campus and had no transportation. Furthermore, some students who lived off campus either rode to campus with other students or on the bus.

The original research design for the study called for the use of co-facilitators. Because this study crossed racial and gender boundaries, co-facilitators were seen as a

bridge of sorts in terms of entrée and trust issues. However, additional challenges arose in using co-facilitators as the study took shape. In the spirit of the flexibility inherent in qualitative research design, I made the decision not to use co-facilitators during the focus groups as originally proposed.

My decision not to use co-facilitators was based on several factors. One factor was that of locating appropriate co-facilitators. Co-facilitators would have had to be the same race or ethnicity and the same gender as the focus group. In addition, they would have had to be people the students would accept into the group setting. I had initially identified several professional people whom I thought would be excellent co-facilitators—an African American woman, an African American male, and a Hispanic woman. Unfortunately, there was no suitable Hispanic male available in the university community to serve as a co-facilitator. The use of informed students was not considered since it would have prohibited those students from engaging in the study as participants.

A problem surfaced when, very early in the study and prior to data collection, I became aware of information regarding the students' reactions to these potential co-facilitators. The three individuals identified as co-facilitators provided services to students in their predominant roles at the university. The issue centered on the way in which the students of each particular group interacted with these individuals whom I had identified as possible co-facilitators. For the very reasons students would accept them into the group—their credibility and acceptance in their primary roles—their participation as co-facilitators became problematic. One student, Barbara, with whom I talked about my project told me that "they won't accept her [in the focus group] because they don't want her to hear what they have to say about rape. They may not talk openly." Thus, a

paradox existed. Because students perceived the on-going need to relate openly about certain matters with those who held positions in the university in everyday activity, they were potentially reluctant to be open with them as co-facilitators about other matters in a different setting—the research setting. During focus group sessions, information might have been shared which they might have wished to keep private had they been in everyday settings.

Additionally, a colleague shared that male students had reservations about one of the possible male co-facilitators with regard to his other role on campus. The colleague explained that male students had commented on their reluctance to discuss certain issues with him. Sexual assault was one of those topics of concern to the students. It appeared that using the people whom I had identified as co-facilitators would have had a negative impact on the other relationships students had with each in their predominate roles at the university. In essence, role confusion could have had a negative effect on the possible co-facilitators ability to work well in their other roles.

Another factor contributing to my decision not to use co-facilitators was that of scheduling—a very pragmatic concern. The added difficulty of arranging a time which was also convenient to the co-facilitator was overwhelming. The possible co-facilitators all work on campus and their schedules were not as flexible as I had hoped. After laborious negotiations to find a common time for a group of students to meet which coincided with available building space, meeting with the students themselves was my primary concern.

Entrée and Rapport

The complexity and sensitivity of the topic and the subsequent demands of inviting students to participate in the study require that special care be taken to be specific about how students were approached and how the data were collected. Also, because of the complexity and sensitivity of the topic, special care needed to be taken in terms of reporting the personal experience of the researcher (Eisner, 1996; Walford, 1991). Although educational research has traditionally been silent about the social dimension of conducting research, the research process is personal. Research includes "unforeseen difficulties, conflicts, and ambiguities" (Walford, 1991, p. 2). As Esiner (1996) has reminded us, personal experience is "an inevitable but seldom examined part of the process of doing educational and social research. We seldom reveal how we, as researchers, feel about what we are up to, or how those feelings shape our perceptions, alter our values, and enable us to construct meaning out of experience" (p. ix). The complexity and sensitivity of the topic of this study require inclusion of some commentary regarding the personal experiences of doing educational research (Walford, 1991). In addition, because of the nature of the study, it is important to describe the details of entrée and rapport which may have contributed to nuances in the data collected.

Early in the fall semester of 2001, after gaining approval from the university's Institutional Review Board, I approached the two student groups at the university with information about the study. As soon as the semester began, I had spoken with the student director for the African American Student Union (AASU) and to the club president, also a student, for the Hispanic American College Experience (HACE). I described the study and asked to be on the agendas for their next meetings. Prior to

speaking with the AASU director and HACE club president, I had spoken to the staff advisors for these groups to explain the study and my intent to extend an invitation to the students to participate in the study. The two student leaders were both very supportive, as were the staff advisors.

I spoke first to the African American Student Union (AASU), an agency of Student Government. It was a Monday evening meeting during the third week of September. They were convening in a meeting room within the Student Union. I arrived a few minutes early. Only a few students were there. The room had been set up "classroom style," with rows of tables parallel to the front of the room, chairs on one side only, facing the front. There was a good deal of activity outside the building, as Monday night is a busy class night. In addition, Student Government was sponsoring a forum in the near-by theater building to discuss the September 11th tragedy. More students began to arrive. There were many more women present than men.

I had been placed first on AASU's agenda for the meeting. It was scheduled for 6:00 p.m. but started about 10 minutes late. The student director of AASU introduced me by using my administrative title as well as explaining that I, too, was a student at the university. I began my presentation. Even with starting late, there were a number of students arriving after the meeting had begun. As I was first on the agenda, these late arrivals were somewhat disruptive, with me having to repeat information. I explained that I was a doctoral student doing research. I then outlined the study and invited them to participate. I handed each student an invitation letter (Appendix A) while I emphasized the adherence to confidentiality, in an effort to allay any fears of public disclosure regarding their feelings about a sensitive topic. I also emphasized the importance of

having students of color have their views heard on campus and the connection of this study to that conviction. Based on their lack of attention and nonverbal behavior indicating boredom, it seemed that there was little overall interest in the project. When I asked if there were any questions only one question was asked. The question regarded the time commitment required for participation in the focus groups. I left after my presentation so that the group could continue with their business meeting. The invitation letter distributed during the presentation contained contact information so that the students who were interested in participating could contact me later.

I then spoke to the Hispanic American College Experience (HACE) club at their first fall meeting. They met the first week of October. Like AASU, they hold their club meetings in the Student Union. The fall meeting was on a Wednesday afternoon, at 4:00 p.m., in Club Commons. Club Commons is an area in the Student Union which is available for student organizations to meet and to work on projects. The room is much more informal than one of the meeting rooms. There are sofas, chairs, and tables arranged throughout the room, almost in a random fashion, with lockers against the walls in which the clubs keep their supplies.

I arrived at 4:00 p.m. exactly. Several students were already there, seated on sofas, but a number arrived after I did. I took a seat after a brief exchange of pleasantries with the club president. The atmosphere was relaxed, and there were no other groups in the Commons during this time. The meeting began about 15 minutes late. Again, I had been placed first on the agenda for the meeting. After calling the meeting to order, the club president introduced me to the group. As I had done with the previous presentation to AASU, I explained that I was a doctoral student doing research. I outlined the study as

I handed each student an invitation to participate. Again I emphasized the adherence to confidentiality in an effort to allay any fears of public disclosure regarding their feelings about a sensitive topic. I also emphasized the importance of having the views of minority students heard on campus.

HACE had almost an equal number of men and women present at their meeting. More of the Hispanic students displayed an interest in participating in the study as compared to the students at the AASU meeting. The students were attentive, demonstrated by nods of heads, eye contact, and other nonverbal behavior. There were more questions asked—about what focus groups were, how long they would meet, and how people should contact me. Several comments were made by students regarding their beliefs that Hispanics needed to voice their perspectives. I left after my presentation so that the group could continue with club business.

Having made a presentation to each of the student groups chosen for this study, I reflected on the level of interest expressed within the meetings at which I spoke. While the interest level within the student groups differed, a number of students in both groups indicated an interest in participating. I also reflected on the fact that very few African American males were present at the AASU meeting. African American women had expressed some interest in participating, but no African American males had done so. It was clear that I would need to make contact with additional African American men. Both males and females expressed interest during the HACE meeting. After each meeting, I purposefully left behind Informed Consent Forms for students to review and extra invitation letters from me which contained contact information. Because the number of affirmative responses was less than desired, I decided that, in addition to the follow-up

contacts with those students expressing an interest in participating, I would also need to make contact with group members not present at the meetings.

Within a day following the HACE meeting, the club president and advisor gave me a list of students who had agreed to participate. Individual students, male and female, had signed up on a sheet of paper and had listed their names and email addresses. The club president also indicated that she could give me a roster of the members and their contact information if I wanted to contact members again or wished to invite members not present to participate. I expressed appreciation for her assistance. Unfortunately, the club president never gave me the roster of members.

The assistance HACE initially offered with regard to a roster of members and their contact information led me to approach the student director of the African American Student Union about obtaining a similar roster of members. It was nearly two weeks since the initial meeting with the group, and I had heard nothing at this point from any of the individual members at the meeting. Moreover, the student director had not contacted me with information about prospective participants even though I had spoken with her on two separate occasions following the initial meeting; I had also asked her to distribute the invitation to group members via the group's email updates to members. We had not talked, however, about me sending the invitation myself. When we did discuss the roster, she agreed to give me a list of members after she finished updating it with current information from the new fall semester. I made several more visits to see her before the updated list was completed, and she emailed me a list of members and their email addresses.

Upon receiving the list of interested students from HACE, I emailed the students on the list and expressed my gratitude for their interest. There were seven males and seven females who had expressed their interest in participating. In the email I reiterated basic information about the study and gave them prospective dates for focus groups. I had two tentative dates and times for the women's group and two for the men's group. In the email I asked potential members of each group which of the two dates was the better time for them. The email included my contact information again. I did not send an electronic letter of invitation to participate to members who were not present as I had not received the roster.

Once receiving the roster of AASU members, I emailed each student on the list. The email to AASU members was somewhat different than the one to HACE members. Obviously, the tentative focus group dates and times were different, but so was the audience. The email to HACE only went to members who had already signed their names to a list to indicate their willingness to participate, and it therefore was very specific. The email to AASU members went to the general membership and again invited participation. Unfortunately, even though the AASU list had recently been updated, many of the addresses were returned to my email as undeliverable.

Even though some of my email to AASU members was not able to reach its intended recipients, most of the addressees did receive the message. Emails to HACE members who signed up to participate were all received. My email to the students brought about quite a few responses, and a conversation via email began with a number of Hispanic and African American students regarding the study and the focus groups. Of interest was that both male and female Hispanic students entered into this conversation;

however, only African American females did so. Initially, there were no African American males who responded to my email.

Challenges Encountered

Although a number of students indicated their interest in the study and initially volunteered to participate, only two groups could be formed. An African American female group was formed and a Hispanic female group was formed. Neither the male Hispanic focus group nor African American male focus group could be formed. Several factors contributed to the difficulty in conducting the focus groups—scheduling difficulties, unexpected conflicts, changes in willingness to participate, and timing within the semester.

First, scheduling a meeting on a college campus can be difficult. Students' class schedules and work schedules differ greatly. For example, one participant was only available Friday mornings. Another participant was only available Tuesdays or Thursdays from 4:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. In addition, meeting room availability is an issue on campus. I had chosen to meet in the Student Union since it is considered a safe space by most students and since both student groups I approached conducted their meetings and business within that building. Meeting rooms were often booked in the Student Union and gaining a two hour block of time for the focus groups was difficult. Getting the schedules of a group of students to come together when a room was available became a feat of daring.

A second phenomenon contributed to the difficulty in holding the originally proposed focus groups—a sudden change in students' personal lives. Several Hispanic students, male and female, had something come up so that they did not appear at the

scheduled interview time. Although there was no call or email to indicate such difficulties, these students either emailed me directly following the scheduled meeting time or responded to the email I sent following the time we were supposed to meet; they apologized and explained their situations. "Sorry I didn't make it yesterday—my mom got sick and I had to take her to the doctor" was an email message from one of the participants. Another participant explained that "my boss changed my work schedule after I talked with you yesterday, so I had to work this morning and couldn't come."

A third factor contributing to the difficulty in getting groups to meet was a change in the willingness of students to participate. There were some students who had committed to participate in the focus groups but never showed up nor communicated why they did not come to the groups. After several failed attempts to contact these students to discuss their participation or change of mind, their names were struck from the list of potential participants. These included men and women, Hispanic students and African American students. Although any number of explanations exist as to why they changed their minds about participating, I could not help but wonder if it were due to a reluctance to engage in a conversation about sexual assault.

Having dealt with students and student groups for some time, I knew there were several things I had to do in order to make the groups' attendance as successful as possible. One was to make sure the emails or verbal conversations were very specific about date, time, and place. The place of the meeting needed to be in space other than that used for classrooms in order for students to feel comfortable, or safe, in discussing their feelings and beliefs. I had to make sure students knew ahead of time so they had no other plans, but not so far ahead of time that they would forget—I gave them a week's notice. I

also sent an email reminder to them a day or two before the focus group was scheduled. I have found through experience that students use email as their means of communication more than they use other forms of communication, including cellular telephones. Furthermore, I knew that having refreshments at the focus group sessions would most likely be an incentive to come, particularly for those students who had little time between their various engagements and the focus group. I told the students in the email reminders that refreshments would be available at the meeting.

Although none of the strategies I used to increase the likelihood of student participation were guaranteed to work, they usually do work with student groups at this particular university. However, they were not as successful with the focus groups in terms of increasing the likelihood of attendance. Again, I became fully aware of how difficult it is to discuss the topic of rape. Perhaps the difficulty in getting students to participate was also because the conversations may have included race and gender issues. For those who withdrew from participation by their actions, such as agreeing to come and then not responding to follow-up contacts, I will never know the reasons.

The greatest amount of difficulty I encountered was in having the male focus groups be successful. In fact, neither male group met at all. A Hispanic male group was scheduled twice—the first time five men had said they would be there and no one came. I emailed the men following the first group attempt and expressed my disappointment that they had not been able to make it to that day's session. I also explained that another time was being scheduled for the focus group to meet. I included the date and time for the second scheduled meeting. Only one male explained that another commitment had interfered with his attending the first group session. Three men indicated that they could

attend the second scheduled session. Unfortunately, no men came to the second group meeting either.

This course of events prompted further reflection on the earlier contacts I had had with these men. My correspondence with four of the seven Hispanic men who had expressed interest in participating had been interesting, especially prior to scheduling the focus group sessions. Although all of the men had indicated interest in participating in the study by offering their names and email addresses, and although they had all heard me present information about the study, four of the men had a number of questions which they posed in response to my initial email contact with them about scheduling a focus group meeting time. One young man responded, "I may be willing to help out with whatever this is, but I'd first like to know what this is all about." Several of them wanted to know more details, such as my purpose for the research or the amount of time required of them, before they were willing to commit to attending the focus group. In qualitative research, reflections begin with the first interview, and analysis is often concurrent with subsequent data collection. As I thought about what appeared to be a kind of suspicion in these early emails, I again was reminded of the difficulty people face during conversations about rape and especially during ones that also include race and gender. These men seemed to be reluctant in our conversations. They seemed also to be reluctant when they did not come to the group sessions they had agreed to attend.

This situation still left me with a dilemma regarding interviewing Hispanic American males. The fall semester was rapidly coming to a close and the demands of a student's academic life increase during this time of year. Time certainly became a factor in the study in terms of having focus groups successfully meet. For example, I had one

participant tell me in an email, "I have been going crazy, you know, with the semester coming to a close and all." I knew it would be virtually impossible to form another focus group with those who had originally volunteered, let alone recruit additional Hispanic males during the time left in the semester. I decided to wait until the spring semester to try again. In the meantime, however, I contacted the staff advisor to HACE to seek her advice regarding recruitment. She agreed to approach several of the Hispanic male students she knew once the spring semester had begun.

Once the spring semester began, I again contacted the club's advisor. She gave me the names of two male students who may have been interested in speaking with me. She had contacted both of these young men and had encouraged them to help recruit other Hispanic males to participate. Both of the names she gave me were students on the original list HACE gave to me. I contacted each of the men again—both responded that they were willing to meet. Unfortunately, neither had any suggested contacts for other Hispanic males. As luck would have it, both had heavy school and work schedules, with their schedules incompatible for a group meeting. I decided to interview each one of them in individual interviews. Each man was willing to do so, and I subsequently interviewed them separately during the early spring semester of 2002.

A similar situation occurred with the scheduled African American male focus group. It had been even more difficult to identify African American males who might have been interested in participating. As was noted earlier in this chapter, very few men attended the AASU business meeting at which I described the study. Only three men had replied to the email invitation I had sent to the members of AASU several weeks following their business meeting.

Two of these three men were in Peer Theater, a rape education program sponsored by the Women's Center. I had decided to interview the Peer Theater members in a separate focus group, thereby adding a focus group to the original design for the study. This decision was made at about the same time as the male members of AASU were responding to my emails. Since two of the three men who had responded to my invitation had been trained extensively in rape awareness issues by virtue of their participation in Peer Theater, I determined that their perspectives would more appropriately be reflected during the focus group session planned for that group.

In an attempt to solve the dilemma of African American male participation, I approached the third male who responded to my email. He was a prominent student leader on campus, who was very involved and very popular. He had agreed to participate in the study himself. I asked him if he knew of any African American men who might be interested in participating and explained to him that very few AASU male members had replied. He gladly agreed to talk to some of the men he knew and to direct them to me. This young man's leadership on campus afforded him a good bit of influence; therefore, I considered him to be a gatekeeper. It turned out that there were five men who were recruited this way.

As had occurred with the Hispanic males, a significant amount of time passed during the fall semester due to recruiting difficulties. Even though the young man who assisted in recruitment did direct five men to me, it was late in the semester. We decided to wait until spring semester to hold the focus group session.

The African American male focus group was scheduled during the spring semester and the five volunteers were notified. Only three responded that they could

attend. A fourth man could not arrange his schedule to accommodate the others, and the fifth man did not respond to my attempts to contact him to confirm his attendance.

Complications with the meeting room arose, with an unscheduled study group claiming the room without reservations. When I arrived at the designated meeting room approximately five to ten minutes before the focus group, I found the room occupied by the study group, talking and working chemical equations on the blackboard in the room. When I entered they immediately asked if I had reservations since they did not. They willingly agreed to relocate. My attention was diverted for a few minutes thereafter while I assisted them in finding an appropriate space. Upon my return to the room I had scheduled, no participants had arrived or at least stayed to see if others would soon be there. I had no way of telling if one of the men had arrived early only to find the room occupied, or if one arrived during my temporary absence, or if they never showed. The one male who did arrive did so late. Due to the difficulties in scheduling the group, and due to his eagerness to participate, I decided to conduct an individual interview during that time with him. He was very willing to do so.

The remaining four men who had earlier indicated a willingness to participate were notified that a second time for the focus group was scheduled. In my email to them I apologized that there had been complications with the meeting room in case they had attempted to meet with me. Only one male responded to my attempts at contact. This was the man who had not been able to attend the first scheduled session. Since no other males had indicated a willingness to participate in a second attempt at meeting, I decided to conduct another individual interview with this man. He agreed to do so. We met in March 2002.

Interviews

Regardless of the difficulties in forming the focus groups, there were three focus groups that did meet—a Hispanic American female group, an African American female group, and a focus group with the Peer Theater students. Both women's groups were proposed originally in the study. The scheduling of the women's focus groups with women was not nearly as problematic as attempts to schedule the men's focus groups; however, the task did not proceed without some level of difficulty. The first focus group conducted was with Hispanic American women. Seven women initially indicated an interest in participating. My email conversations with them were much less suspicious in tone as compared to the men. Students' schedules were quite diverse, but we finally agreed upon a Wednesday afternoon time in late October. Five of the seven women could come. Two did not confirm one way or the other their ability to make this scheduled session. Reminders were sent two days before. I received three responses to the reminders.

The Wednesday afternoon of the focus group was fairly quiet in the Student Union. A small conference room had been reserved. I arrived early to prepare the setting. The room was warm, with only a little light entering from outside. I set up the snacks and set chairs around the conference table. A friend had given me some chocolates, a small flower vase with green sprigs, and a small heart shaped rose-decorated tin. I placed the tin and flower vase in the middle of the table and placed a chocolate at each chair. I wanted the room to be comfortable.

One of the young women arrived several minutes early. We waited, but no one else came for a long while. One of the other women who had agreed to come had

indicated she was in class until the time of the focus group and would be a bit late. After waiting 10 minutes, the young woman and I decided to begin the session while I hoped others would arrive. Five minutes later a second participant arrived. She had been lost trying to find the room. We continued. No one else came. Although there were only two women who came, the focus group went well. The process was relaxed and informative. Both young women expressed delight with the decorations and thanked me for the snacks. "This is SO pretty," one participant said while pointing to the vase and heart-shaped tin. "This was really nice" remarked the other woman. We said our good-byes, they left, and I went back to my office.

Once back in my office I sent an email to the two women thanking them for their participation. I also sent an email to the remaining five women of the original seven who had indicated interest in participating; I informed them that there would be another focus group the following week for those who could not attend the first session and again invited their participation. Unfortunately, none of the women responded to this last invitation and therefore a second group never formed.

A women's focus group was held for African American women. Five women had expressed an interest in coming to the group. It was scheduled for a Wednesday afternoon in early November. As I had done with the first focus group, I arrived early to make the room attractive and to set out snacks. Initially, seven women had agreed to participate, but only five confirmed that they would attend this particular session. Five women came to the session, but the five were not all the same women who had indicated earlier that they would come. Only three women in the session had confirmed their attendance. The other two women who had confirmed their attendance did not come. Two additional

women who had not confirmed their attendance did attend the session. The group began

about five minutes late. Four women arrived right on time, with a fifth arriving a few

minutes late. We sat at the conference table and had a very productive, lively, and

information-rich session. They left afterwards, still talking with each other about a variety

of issues.

The third focus group that did meet was that which was formed around the Peer

Theater students. The Peer Theater was an initiative of the Women's Center's rape

awareness program. The purpose of the Peer Theater program was to have students

educate other students about violence against women, especially sexual assault, through

drama. Students who wanted to join participated in a number of hours of training. They

learned about sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, and victimization in general.

Working with the Rape Awareness Education Coordinator, they then wrote skits and

plays about these issues. They performed their pieces to campus audiences—clubs,

classes, the residence halls, sororities, and fraternities. After the performances, they

frequently remained in character in order to engage the audience in a dialogue about the

very issues in the performance. The program had been very successful and the

performances had been well received.

The decision to add a focus group with the Peer Theater students occurred during

the process of recruiting students for the other focus groups. The timing of the

recruitment of students of color coincided with the Peer Theater's preparation for their

major fall semester performance. I had already observed them as they prepared their skits

and plays, wrote and rewrote the texts, and altered them to fit their audiences. From

observing them, I suspected that their process of fitting the text to the audience was not a

conscious process, but rather an unconscious process of the Peer Theater students making sense out of the materials. Watching them make the material more relevant to them and, presumably to their audiences, made me want to interview the group. It thus seemed as though they were addressing the very thing I was investigating—they changed the materials used in rape risk reduction education to make them more relevant to themselves and their audiences.

In addition, the 2001-2002 Peer Theater cohort predominately included students of color. I consulted with the Rape Awareness Education Coordinator first. With her support, I approached the students to let them know I was conducting a study about the cultural relevancy of the rape education materials and would like their input. They enthusiastically agreed to meet with me.

I considered conducting a focus group of women and a focus group of men, but because the Peer Theater students are trained together, work together, and perform together, I decided not to divide the group by sex for single sex focus groups. I therefore interviewed them all together as one group. This was somewhat difficult since it was a large group for a focus group, 11 people. Three men and eight women participated in the group. All three men were African American. Six of the women were African American, and two women were White. The focus group was conducted in the middle of November, two weeks following their fall play performance. The students provided me with much information. Because they were already an established group and they knew me, there was no hesitancy during discussion within the group. The only difficulty arose in managing the session so that participants would talk one at a time.

By the end of the fall semester of 2001, I had conducted three focus groups and had decided to continue recruiting African American men and Hispanic American men to participate in the study once the spring semester had begun. As the spring 2002 semester started, I indeed continued my recruitment efforts. As explained above, these efforts did not produce focus groups, but rather individual interviews with two African American males and two Hispanic males. Those four interviews were conducted in early March. Also by that time, I had decided to interview one additional Hispanic woman who was interested in participating in the study but had had a difficult work schedule the previous semester and could not attend the focus group session. Since the focus group with Hispanic women only had two participants, I thought an additional interview would prove helpful and would give me an additional perspective from a Hispanic woman. I knew this student fairly well through her club and student government activities. I met with her in March as well. Therefore, by March 2002, all the sessions—focus group and individual interview—had taken place. In all, 23 students had participated.

<div align="center">Data Interpretation and Analysis</div>

Data analysis is a nonlinear and concurrent process of bringing order, form, and meaning to the data (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Data analysis occurs throughout the entire research process (Huberman & Miles, 1998; Manning, 1999a). As Coffey and Atkinson (1996) explained:

> The process of analysis should not be seen as a distinct stage of research; rather, it is a reflective activity that should inform data collection, writing, further data collection, and so forth. Analysis is not, then, the last phase of the research process. It should be seen as part of the research design and of the data collection. The research process, of which analysis is one aspect, is a cyclical one. (p. 6)

Typically, the data are reviewed to discover possible themes or concepts which can be classified into categories (Eisner, 1998; Manning, 1999a; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Possible relationships, or patterns, among the categories of data are explored (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Dey, 1999). Alternative explanations and emerging theories are also examined through the data (Highlen & Finley, 1996; Marshall & Rossman, 1995). There is no single right way of approaching and analyzing the data. The central focus of all the approaches one can take in "a rigorous and scholarly way" is with transforming and interpreting the data "in order to capture the complexities of the social worlds we seek to understand" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 3).

Several approaches contributed to the analysis of data in this study. To capture the students' voices on rape risk reduction efforts and cultural relevance, I constructed an interpretive screen through which to view the data. As I reflected on the data as they were being collected, I encountered concepts which were not examined by the literature initially considered in the review of related literature. The student participants repeatedly presented ideas or concepts important to them which were not discussed in the literature on the prevalence of sexual assault, sociohistorical factors related to sexual assault, or multicultural education. In order to make sense of, or interpret, the data, I therefore needed to review additional literature. The broadening of the literature for use in data analysis included topics regarding popular culture and their effects on student perceptions, the development of racial identity, and adolescent and adult development. This additional literature then served as a screen, or lens, through which to review the data and through which I analyzed and interpreted the focus group and interview data.

An inductive analysis of the interview and focus group data was also conducted using aspects of grounded theory development. Inductive analysis starts with the data as the source of interpretation (Manning, 1999a). Although there are a number of ways in which to analyze the data, grounded theory uses coding as the process of analyzing the data. "Open coding is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 61). Individual ideas or concepts in the data are given codes and the codes are then linked into categories that are defined as having a common element or theme (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Manning, 1999a). The role of coding allows one to undertake three kinds of operations: noticing relevant phenomena, collecting examples of those phenomena, and analyzing those phenomena in order to find commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures (Seidel & Kelle, 1995).

Data analysis as the development of grounded theory was originally described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Differing interpretations of grounded theory now exist, though the basic tenets are clear (Dey, 1999). Included in the basic tenets are that data analysis is systematic and continues throughout the study, categories are identified from earlier sets of data, and further data collection is based on concepts which result from the process of constant comparison. More specifically, data are coded and, through subsequent processes of linking the codes, categories are generated. Each category has particular properties or characteristics. These categories are not representational, but rather are analytic and sensitizing. Relationships among the categories and their properties are then developed. In this manner theory is generated (Dey, 1999; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Patton, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Although the aim of grounded theory is to

generate theory, its processes for data analysis have in essence also become a technique (Dey, 1999).

Reading, reflection, and re-reading each focus group and interview transcript and my notes became a ritual of sorts, repeated time and time again. Through careful consideration, the data were sequentially and systematically coded. As recommended, these codes were heuristic; they were "tools to think with" (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 32). Each concept within the interview transcripts was given a code. Codes that shared similar characteristics, or properties, became categories. Subsequently, the labels for the categories were suggested by material in the literature and through the influence of my own connoisseurship within the field.

As was noted above, the role of coding as an analytic strategy is three-fold—noticing relevant phenomena, collecting examples of those, and analyzing the phenomena in an attempt to find patterns, structures, similarities, and differences (Seidel & Kelle, 1995). The coding of the data did not occur merely for the purpose of retrieval or simplification. It also was part of the analytic process. As Coffey and Atkinson (1996) pointed out, "as parts of an analytical process, however, attaching codes to data and generating concepts have important functions in enabling us rigorously to review what our data are saying" (p. 27). As the data were coded, the codes were then labeled with names and further developed into categories. The categories appeared to cluster into themes within the students' stories. These themes are discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Finally, I used educational criticism as a set of tools with which to talk about the study and its findings. Eisner (1998) described educational criticism as "the art of

disclosure" (p. 86). Educational criticism is basically a way of talking about a phenomenon which enables others to experience the qualities and meanings of that phenomenon. Criticism aims to illuminate a phenomenon or situation so that it can be seen and appreciated by others. The tools or dimensions of educational criticism—description, interpretation, evaluation, and thematics—assisted me in transforming the qualities of the data into a public account that illuminates and interprets them.

In order to illuminate, the critic must also be a connoisseur of the phenomenon or situation. "Connoisseurship is the art of appreciation" (Eisner, 1998, p. 63). To be a connoisseur, one must have the ability to make fine-grained discriminations among the various, and often complex and subtle, qualities of a phenomenon or situation. Connoisseurship depends upon the ability to differentiate and experience the relationships among the qualities inherent in the phenomenon. The review of the literature, combined with my experience, enabled me to make discriminations among the complex qualities inherent in rape risk reduction education and its many facets. My connoisseurship assisted me in the data analysis. Thus, my connoisseurship allowed me to use educational criticism as part of the data analysis.

The process of analysis in this study was also constructivist in nature, for knowledge is socially constructed (Eisner, 1998; Kvale, 1996). As was stated earlier in this chapter, there is not just one way to view an object, an event, a phenomenon, or an experience—there are multiple ways of interpreting experience. Thus, each participant in the study had his or her own unique way of interpreting, or constructing, life experiences. According to Kvale (1996), "postmodern conceptions of knowledge emphasize the

contextuality of meaning" (p. 68). This study took into consideration, both during data

collection and during data analysis, the multiple perspectives of the participants.

Furthermore, constructivism "emphasizes the multiple perspectives of respondents,

ethical obligations of the researcher to her or his respondents, and techniques required to

meet standards of quality" (Manning, 1999a, p. 11).

In addition to an emphasis on the multiple perspectives and well-being of the

students participating, standards of quality were emphasized throughout the study. In a

qualitative research frame, analysis of the data is inductive, beginning with the data,

rather than deductive, beginning with a theory or hypothesis to prove or disprove

(Manning, 1999a). Standards of quality are met through demonstrating trustworthiness,

authenticity, and a deepened understanding (Denzin, 1998; Patton, 2002). Whereas the

traditional positivistic research paradigm may discuss standards of quality in terms of

validity, reliability, and generalizability, a postmodern qualitative research paradigm

addresses issues of quality and credibility with an alternative set of criteria.

> Validation comes to depend on the quality of craftsmanship in an investigation,
> which includes continually checking, questioning, and theoretically interpreting
> the findings. In a craftsmanship approach to validation, the emphasis is moved
> from inspection at the end of the production line to quality control throughout the
> stages of knowledge production. (Kvale, 2000, p. 309)

In addition, the researcher acknowledges his or her subjectivity, or point of view as I

have called it, and discusses it by taking into account his or her background (Eisner,

1998; Heshusius, 1994; Manning, 1999a; Patton, 2002). This acknowledgment is

important in the validation of the study (Kvale, 1996). By doing so, the reader is able to

make his or her own judgement about the study and about the conclusions drawn

(Peshkin, 1986). Since there are multiple interpretations of reality, it is necessary to know

about the researcher, how he or she has formed his or her views, and what his or her

subjectivity may be. Furthermore, in cross-cultural research it is crucial for the researcher

to acknowledge his or her point of view for reasons of trust and trustworthiness (Weis,

1993).

Standards of quality were addressed throughout the course of the study. By

adopting a critical outlook on data collection and analysis, I continually reviewed what

Kvale (1996) termed the credibility, plausibility, and trustworthiness of the findings (p.

242). Trustworthiness can be obtained by the processes of subjecting the data to the

constant comparative method of analysis from a grounded theory approach (Denzin,

1998). In a grounded theory approach, validation is built into the process with continual

checking on the credibility of the data (Kvale, 1996). For example, the data are reviewed,

categories examined, and possible relationships among the categories identified (Strauss

& Corbin, 1990). A statement is then made regarding those relationships which are

supported by the data. In this way credibility and trustworthiness of the findings are

validated. A grounded theory approach was used in this study. The data were reviewed

numerous times, categories formed and examined, and relationships among the categories

identified and explored. Those relationships are discussed in the next chapter.

In addition to using a constant comparative analysis of the data to address and

determine trustworthiness, authenticity was also addressed in the study. Authenticity,

according to Lincoln and Guba (1986), is determined by the researcher's reflexive

consciousness about his or her own perspective combined with an appreciation for the

perspectives of others. The researcher then uses fairness in depicting how the participants

view or construct their beliefs which, in turn, frame and support their perspectives. For

Conclusion

The study focused on the perceptions of students of color regarding the cultural relevancy of the rape reduction education materials used at the University of North Florida, as well as the meanings they assigned to the materials. Students' perceptions are important. This chapter has described the methods used in the overall design of the study, the recruitment of students, and the procedures for data collection and for data analysis. In doing so, discussion has included the rationale for using a qualitative framework and the need for great sensitivity while conducting this particular kind of research into issues surrounding sexual assault. The discussion has also included the rationale for techniques used in the analysis of the data. Chapter Four describes in detail analysis of the data, that is, the views and beliefs of students of color. In addition, the next chapter illuminates the patterns and themes in their stories with regard to their understanding of sexual assault and the cultural relevancy of rape risk reduction materials.