

Tina M. Harris, Associate Professor
University of Georgia
Nomination for Regents' Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award

According to Hutchings and Shulman (1999), a scholarship of teaching involves “going meta.” This requires that “faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning – the conditions under which it occurs, what it looks like, how to deepen it, and so forth – and do so with an eye not only to improving their own classroom but to advancing practice beyond it” (Hutchings & Shulman, 1999 p. 12). More importantly, this type of scholarship is an interrogation of the teaching and learning process that evolves in research and is used and evaluated by colleagues as they enrich their own understandings and practices of classroom instruction. As a communication scholar, Dr. Harris’ primary area of research reflects the general principle that guides the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). More specifically, Dr. Harris’ research on interracial communication and the development of ethnic identity has its genesis in the interactions that she sets in motion in her classroom teaching. The outcomes of those classroom experiences serve as the basis for her careful inquiry. The results of that inquiry, in turn, inform Dr. Harris’ subsequent instructional planning. Indeed, the results of that classroom-inspired inquiry have widely informed the teaching of interracial communication and multicultural studies throughout her discipline. As is appropriate to the continuous looping between teaching and scholarship that underlies SOTL, the research-based approaches to teaching interracial communication that Dr. Harris has implemented serve as the touchstone for yet further inquiry in this domain. The following paragraphs will describe the kinds of activities and research that serve as evidence of Dr. Harris’s contributions to scholarship of teaching and learning within the speech communication discipline in general and the teaching of interracial communication in particular.

Dr. Harris’ trek into the scholarship of teaching and learning began shortly after her arrival at the UGA. In the spring of 1999, with the assistance of three faculty members (two Speech Communication and one Journalism), Dr. Harris was awarded a competitive, year-long Diversity Initiative grant from the National Communication Association. They developed a Communication Minority Mentoring Program, and, through mentoring relationships, weekly program meetings, and involvement on a research team, high school, undergraduate, and graduate students learned the inner workings of what it means to be a communication scholar and teacher. At the end of the program, there was a banquet honoring the mentees and, the following fall semester, students participated in their first professional conference. They each gave presentations on their mentoring experience at the annual meeting of the Southern States Communication Association. While the program was short-term, Dr. Harris was able to develop rapport with the students, which fueled her commitment to mentoring students who aspire to become a part of the academic world.

Published Research on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Through qualitative and survey data, Dr. Harris learns what strategies and approaches to interracial communication are most successful in creating effective communication experiences between racially different interactants. Student feedback through data informs her decisions on course design, content, and what activities will enhance student learning. Her research also contributes to communication pedagogy by offering support for use of multiple teaching tools (i.e., class discussion, video tapes, role plays, activities). Dr. Harris has published scholarship on pedagogy in leading peer-reviewed communication and interdisciplinary journals devoted to

instruction and communication (*Communication Education, The Howard Journal of Communications, and Communication Teacher*) and social justice (*Journal of Intergroup Relations*). Her scholarship shows that the media (e.g., films, popular media) have a powerful impact on student learning; thus, Dr. Harris faithfully uses popular films, television shows, and documentaries as texts for class discussions on race. Students are better able to conceptualize race through these visual texts. Her scholarship is beneficial to academicians, students, and society members alike, given the increasing change in the racial landscape of the U. S. Because our country must learn how to deal with the impending racial diversity, Dr. Harris should continue to present theories about interracial communication as practical approaches to dealing with difference in our personal and private worlds.

Dr. Harris' scholarship and research agenda are dedicated to interracial communication pedagogy. She has an obvious commitment to and passion for pedagogical research and uses her scholarship to inform her own research and teaching on interracial communication. It also serves as a framework for effectively addressing communication about race in the college classroom. Dr. Harris co-authored the leading Interracial Communication textbook entitled *Interracial Communication: Theory to Practice* (2001, Thomson-Wadsworth Publishing). Professors Orbe and Harris fill a void in scholarly research that was left vacant after the seminal work of Dorothy Pennington and Jon Blubaugh (1976). Orbe and Harris address the complexities of interracial communication and provide the only comprehensive scholarship on interracial communication. Many scholars across disciplines use their book as a resource for pedagogy and research on race.

Drs. Orbe and Harris argue for a move from a theoretical application to a practical application of scholarly interpretations of interracial communication, which is apparent in how Dr. Harris teaches this class at UGA. She educates students and challenges them to do the same in their course assignments in that use theory to design diversity training workshops that could feasibly be used in a real world context. Students primarily use the textbook and class experiences to generate ideas for this project, which is an exhaustive, extensive review of literature on the social construction of race. Drs. Orbe and Harris provide an historical overview of race and an index of theories explaining understandings of race and racial identities in everyday interactions. Their book makes a significant contribution to the communication discipline and social science research in general. Its utility can be attributed to its interdisciplinary nature and its use by scholars as a handbook for interracial communication research and pedagogy. These projects reflect Dr. Harris' strong record and history of her scholarship of teaching and learning. She has established a reputation at UGA, in the communication discipline, and the state of Georgia for her research on interracial communication. This notoriety is due to her co-authored textbook and several journal articles on pedagogy, race, interracial relationships, and the media.

It is apparent Dr. Harris uses the classroom to improve instruction and scholarship on interracial communication. She has used her data to inform how she fosters a classroom environment that allows and operates as a multifunctional site for scholarship on teaching and learning. Dr. Harris uses the findings and student feedback to determine what changes should be made in the class assignments. She has found that students really benefit from three required class assignments: journal entries, reaction papers to visual texts (e.g., films), and theory papers, which continue to be a part of the interracial communication course. They have also served as data (per IBR approval) that have been extensively analyzed through rigorous research methodology. Dr. Harris used cluster analysis and co-cultural theory to categorize and interpret her data published in the *Journal of Intergroup Relations* (Harris, Miller, & Trego, 2004). This study is an excellent example of her multi-method approach to pedagogy research and evidence

of a co-cultural group identity in the interracial communication classroom. Co-cultural theory argues co-cultural group members, or individuals belonging to historically marginalized groups (e. g., African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans), will adopt various communication orientations, depending on the desired outcome, in order to fit the circumstances of a specific situation. Their study fulfills the mission of the National Association of Human Rights Workers (the publisher of this journal), which is “to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience, and research on topics of great importance to those interested in human rights issues; and to advance generally the science, processes and art of intergroup relations and to improve the standards of work in that field, advancing technical and professional knowledge, standards, and practices.”

Dr. Harris and two graduate students used focus group interviews, written course assignments (e.g., journal entries, theory papers), and participant/observations to gather rich data on student experiences with the course. During the semester, the graduate students/co-authors were participant/observers and Dr. Harris was the professor. The final data included (1) field notes on classroom discussions, (2) student essays reflecting on and describing their classroom experiences with the class and perceptions of the communication strategies deemed central to effective race relations; and (3) focus group interviews. A validity check was conducted weekly to ensure the accuracy of our classroom observations. In order to ensure comfort and confidentiality with the interview process, students were in groups where all participants shared the same racial/ethnic identity with each other and the moderator (either Dr. Harris or one of three graduate students). Students were encouraged to disclose about their experiences with the classroom and were ensured that Dr. Harris would not have access to the audio-taped interviews until after the semester was over. The data revealed, in varying degrees, students who self-identified as belonging to one of three racial/ethnic groups (White, African American, or Jewish) engaged in different communication strategies when interacting with their classmates. Findings suggest that White students enacted the following behaviors more than Blacks: (1) assessing appropriateness, (2) requesting education, (3) strategic distancing, (4) apologizing, (5) averting, and (6) dissociating. Black students used these behaviors more than Whites: (1) affirmation/accepting, (2) apology, (3) confronting, (4) educating others, and (5) communicating self. Jewish students engaged in increasing visibility, and also educated others far more proportionately than Whites. Harris et al. (2004) argue that a student’s racial identity does have a direct impact on their classroom experiences, which tends to be more problematic for White students than Black students and Jewish students. Dr. Harris applies these findings to her teaching by introducing in-class activities and discussions that challenge students to celebrate, appreciate, and learn from the diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural heritages embodied by themselves and their classmates. She continues to include the journal entry and identity paper assignments because, through her scholarship, she has learned they are tools students say allow them to self-reflect about their identities and experiences with race as a direct result of enrollment in the interracial communication course.

Dr. Harris has a particular affinity for using the media in her classroom, which she attributes to her study on student reactions to the use of the documentary “The Color of Fear” and the popular culture film “Rosewood.” Using cluster analysis as the research methodology, Dr. Harris analyzed student reaction papers and determined what recurring clusters and sub-terms were present in the data. Her study was published in the *Howard Journal of Communications*, whose aim is to “examine ethnicity, gender, and culture as domestic and international communication concerns” as they relate to “culture, ethnicity, and gender influence [on] multicultural organizations, mass media portrayals, interpersonal interaction, development

campaigns, and rhetoric.” The clusters and subterms from the reaction papers were determined by the frequency of like terms and the intensity of terms used by the students to react to and/or describe the two films shown in class. Each cluster reflected similarly themed points or issues described in student essays. These clusters and sub-terms also varied in their level of intensity, thus connoting emotional responses one or more students had to the messages communicated in the film(s). By using cluster analysis, Dr. Harris discovered students had several reactions to the films and perceived the use of visual texts as a powerful tool in educating them about racism and its impact on interracial communication. From this study, she learned how to integrate media as a pedagogical tool in most classes she teaches, especially for her courses involving the topic of race. Her research and informal conversations with students support her strategy of informing students about or preparing students for the potentially emotional or visceral reactions they may have to the film content. Dr. Harris’ pre- and post-debriefing of the film allows students to anticipate some sort of response to the film yet encourages them to engage in the visual text (film) as a tool that allows them to better understand race and its impact on interracial interactions. Her research and personal observations indicate students prefer multiple teaching tools, as it makes the classroom experience simultaneously enjoyable and educational.

Her scholarship and anecdotes have shaped Dr. Harris’ approach to teaching in a number of ways. Recognizing that her role as professor often multiplies when teaching race-related courses, Dr. Harris describes these experience, students observations of the course, and course assignments in a third publication. This study clearly demonstrates what she has learned and how it contributes to her scholarship and pedagogical practices. The article, “Impacting Student Perceptions of and Attitudes toward Race in the Interracial Communication Course,” is published in *Communication Education*, a journal noted for publishing the best scholarship on “communication instruction, the systematic development of communication skills, and communication in instruction.” This work is published in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning section of the journal, “[which] builds upon the movement in education studies and policy that ...recognizes that teaching communication is a form of scholarship, just as is the scholarship of discovery or of critical analysis.” Dr. Harris’ article asks questions of how students learn from a given “teaching practice or innovation” “... [and how this practice] influenced the teaching and learning of a particular subject.”

Dr. Harris shared that there were three learning outcomes that emerged, which included (1) a cognitive domain or “intellectual (re)awakening,” or a transformation in a student’s thought processes about race and interracial communication; (2) an affective domain, including students’ emotional reactions and experiences in a new learning environment; and (3) a behavioral domain, signifying the use of communication skills and behaviors addressing racism, prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination. Through this project and her interactions with students, Dr. Harris continues to learn that, as a result of being in this class, students do tend to learn and adopt specific communication strategies and behaviors they observe as most effective in facilitating positive race relations. While helping students navigate through the course, Dr. Harris is constantly aware of her need to negotiate between several roles that create and maintain a healthy learning environment: (1) moderator, (2) discussion facilitator, (3) conflict negotiator, (4) counselor, and/or (5) nurturer.

Dr. Harris’ commitment to the intermarriage between scholarship and teaching is extended to her invited lectures at UGA. She has given 2 lectures and presented or facilitated 19 programs on campus. Invitations were extended to her by students who worked in the Department of Housing, most of whom were undergraduates enrolled in her interracial course.

Several invitations came from other Resident Advisors and Graduate Residents interest in doing programs on race. They requested Dr. Harris present her research or serve as facilitator for group discussions about race and race relations on campus. At each presentation, Dr. Harris recreates her classroom environment by creating an informal, “safe space” for learning of her scholarship on interracial communication and its practical implications and application to student life at the university. Her presentations often times generate interest in her classes, whether or not they deal with race. Dr. Harris also developed a Training and Development Workshop specifically for the Department of Housing (Spring 2004). She trained senior staff members on how to apply communication skills to address issues of diversity among staff and incoming students in the residence halls. Overall, the workshop was well received by participants, some of whom expressed interest in her research and graduate teaching.

Dr. Harris has learned from her research and made purposeful efforts to share these findings and effective teaching strategies with other communication scholars. She has garnered a reputation as a leading interracial communication scholar. Dr. Harris was recently invited by the editor to publish information on instruction in interracial communication course in the journal *Communication Teacher*. This journal is a “quarterly publication dedicated to the identification, assessment and promotion of quality teaching practices in the K-12, community college, and university communication classrooms.” Dr. Harris has secured this national recognition by coordinating and facilitating pre-conference professional workshops at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association. Registered. Short-course participants were scholars and students interested in teaching and/or conducting research on interracial communication. Participants were provided a copy of the textbook and instructor’s manual as well as a variety of handouts that would aid in teaching this class at their respective institutions. The short-course also involved a discussion of Dr. Harris’ personal experiences with teaching the course and their influence on her research. She also enlisted co-facilitators who were graduate students who had taken her graduate interracial communication course or assisted her on a study. Dr. Harris has also presented several conference papers and participated on many panels and pre-conferences on the scholarship and pedagogy of interracial communication.

Dr. Harris’ recognition as a leading scholar in this area of scholarship has resulted in 6 national lectures at Ohlone College (Fremont, CA), Savannah State College (Savannah, GA), Vanderbilt University (Nashville, TN), Wayne State University (Detroit, MI), Virginia Tech (Blacksburg, VA), and Towson University (Baltimore, MD). She was specifically invited to present lectures highlighting her research, textbook, and teaching experiences with interracial communication. These invitations are indicative of a strong interest within the communication discipline and other areas of the social sciences in Dr. Harris’ scholarship on and pedagogy of interracial communication.

Dr. Harris’ research, service, and invited demonstrate her obvious ability to engage in a form of scholarship that allows her to interrogate the teaching and learning process colleagues and students use to enrich their own understandings and practices of classroom instruction. In the words of Hutchings and Shulman (1999), she commits herself to “fram[ing] and systematically investigat[ing] questions related to student learning... – and do so with an eye not only to improving [my] own classroom but to advancing practice beyond it.”

(See References in back of packet)

References

- Blubaugh, J.A. & Pennington, D.L. (1976). *Crossing differences...interracial communication*. Columbus: Charles Merrill.
- Harris, T. M. (2004). Interracial Communication. *Communication Teacher*, 18 (4), 132 - 135
- Harris, T. M., Miller, A., & Trego, A. (2004). A co-cultural examination of community building in the interracial communication classroom. *Journal of Intergroup Relations*, 31, 39-63.
- Harris, T. M. (2003). Impacting Student Perceptions of and Attitudes Toward Race in the Interracial Communication Course. *Communication Education*, 52, 311-317.
- Harris, T. M. (2001). Student reactions to the visual texts “the color of fear” and “rosewood” in the interracial classroom. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 12(2), 101-117.
- Hutchings, P. & Shulman, L.S. (1999). The scholarship of teaching: New elaborations, new developments. *Change*, 31(5), 10-15.
- Orbe, M. & Harris, T. M. (2001). *Interracial Communication: Theory To Practice*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Tina M. Harris

PRESENT POSITION

Associate Professor
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EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, University of Kentucky
Major: Interpersonal Communication
Dissertation: Interracial Dating: The Implications of Race Within Romantic Relationships
May, 1995

Master of Arts, University of Georgia
Major: Speech Communication
Thesis: A Campaign for Cultural Diversity Within Law Schools Across the Nation
June, 1992

Bachelor of Arts, University of Georgia
Major: Speech Communication
June, 1990

PROFESSIONAL POSITIONS HELD

August 1998 -

Assistant/Associate Professor, University of Georgia, Dept. of Speech Communication
Undergraduate Courses Taught: Business and Professional Communication, Interracial Communication, African American Relational Communication, Intercultural Communication, Advanced Interpersonal Communication, Communication Theory
Graduate Courses Taught: Interracial Communication, Media, Communication, and Culture

August 1995 - August 1998

Assistant Professor, Bowling Green State University, Department of Interpersonal Communication
Undergraduate Courses Taught: Interracial Communication, Introduction to Communication, Intercultural Communication, Advanced Interpersonal Communication, Communication and Conflict, Romantic and Marriage Relationships, Interpersonal Communication for Non-Majors.
Graduate Courses Taught: Interracial Communication, Women in Communication, Romantic and Marriage Relationships, Mentoring and Communication

SCHOLARSHIP ON PEDAGOGY**Peer Reviewed Books**

Orbe, M. & Harris, T. M. (2001). *Interracial Communication: Theory To Practice*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Instructor's Manual

Dorgan, K., Silk, K., Harris, T. M., & Orbe, M. (2000). "Interracial Communication: Theory To Practice" Instructor's manual. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co.

Peer Reviewed Articles

Harris, T. M. (2004). Interracial Communication. *Communication Teacher*, 18 (4), 132 - 135

Harris, T. M., Miller, A., & Trego, A. (2004). A co-cultural examination of community building in the interracial communication classroom. *Journal of Intergroup Relations*, 31, 39-63.

Harris, T. M. (2003). Impacting Student Perceptions of and Attitudes Toward Race in the Interracial Communication Course. *Communication Education*, 52, 311-317.

Harris, T. M. (2001). Student reactions to the visual texts "the color of fear" and "rosewood" in the interracial classroom. *Howard Journal of Communications*, 12(2), 101-117.

SERVICE GRANT

Harris, T. M., Duncan, V., Garner, T., & Brooks, D. (1999-2000). Recipients of the NCA Diversity Initiative grant for the Communication Minority Mentoring Program for high school, undergraduate, and graduate students interested in or currently studying in the field of Speech Communication.

PROFESSIONAL PEDAGOGY WORKSHOPS

Harris, T. M. (2000). Engaging Students in the Interracial Communication Classroom. Short-course conducted at NCA in Seattle, Washington.

Harris, T. M., Coleman, C. & J. F. Wood (1999). Racializing Communication: Teaching Interracial Communication on the Undergraduate and Graduate Levels. Short-course taught at NCA in Chicago, Il.

Harris, T. M., Coleman, C. & J. F. Wood (1998). Racializing Communication: Teaching Interracial Communication on the Undergraduate and Graduate Levels. Short-course taught at NCA in New York, NY.

INVITED LECTURES (Scholarly Presentations)

Ohlone College, April 23-27, 2002, Keynote Speaker for Unity Week. "Building Interracial Alliances: Bridging the Gap of Ignorance in World of Intolerance."

Savannah State College, April 7-9, 2002. "Waiting to Exhale" or "Breath(ing) Again": A Search for Identity, Empowerment, and Love in the 1990's."

Vanderbilt University, March 18, 2002. "Building Interracial Bridges: Understanding Racial Differences in Various Social Contexts"

Vanderbilt University, March 18, 2002. "Student Reactions to the Visual Texts 'The Color of Fear' and 'Rosewood' in the Interracial Classroom."

Wayne State University, Department of Communication (College of Fine, Performing, and Communication Arts), April 10-14, 2001. Invited Lecturer for "Communication Week" program.

Virginia Tech, "First National Conference on Stepping" funded by the Virginia Foundation for

the Humanities, April 6-8, 2001.

Towson University, Department of Mass Communication and Communication Studies, Oct. 25-31, 2000.

TEACHING AWARDS/RECOGNITIONS

Golden Key International Honour Society (Fall, 2004). Honorary membership conferred at the University of Georgia (student nomination).

Outstanding Teacher (Fall, 2001) recognition by University of Georgia's Student Government Association (SGA). Reception held to honor recipients at the "Third Annual Student Government Teacher Recognition Banquet" on Thursday, Dec. 6, 2001.

Outstanding Teacher (Fall, 2000) recognition by University of Georgia's Student Government Association (SGA). Reception held to honor recipients at the "Second Annual Student Government Teacher Recognition Banquet" on Monday, Nov. 20, 2000.

Mortar Board National Honor Society (Spring 1998) recognition by Bowling Green State University undergraduates for excellence in teaching and dedication to the pursuit of education.

SCHOLASTIC AND PROFESSIONAL HONORS

"Honorary Educational Program of the Year," (Feb. 24, 2003), UGA National Residence Hall program facilitated for the Residence Hall Association. "Slavery Reparations in the 21st Century."

"Media Exposure and Attitudes About Human Genetic Research" (2003). Tina M. Harris, University of Georgia; Kami Silk, Pennsylvania State University; Roxanne L. Parrott, Pennsylvania State University; and Celeste Condit, University of Georgia. Selected as the "Top Faculty Paper" for the Mass Communication Division of SSCA.

"Contact, Cultivation, or Dependency: Three Competing Explanations For the Formation of Our Interracial Dating Attitudes" (2003). Norman C. H. Wong & Tina M. Harris, University of Georgia. "Top Student Paper" for the Interpersonal Communication Division of SSCA.

2002-2003 Mentoring Fellow, The Institute for Behavioral Research, University of Georgia.

"2001 Image Award" (May, 2001). Recognition by the University of Georgia Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for dedication to the chapter as Advisor for the 2000-2001 academic year.

"Recognition of Scholarship and Publication" (Nov. 1999) from the African American Communication and Culture Commission and the Black Caucus of NCA.

"Top Ranked Panel Proposal Award" (April 1999), Instructional Development Division, SSCA.

PUBLICATIONS

Harris, T. M, Weiner, J., Parrott, R., & Condit, C. (In Press, 2005). Genetic Counseling and Race in the age of "The X-Files." *American Journal of Health Studies*.

Bates, B.R., Poirot, K., Harris, T.M., Achter, P.J., & Condit, C.M. (In Press, 2004). Evaluating direct-to-consumer marketing of race-based pharmacogenomics: A focus group study of public understandings of applied genomic medication. *Journal of Health Communication*.

Parrott, R., Condit, C., & Harris, T. M. (2004). Culture's role in Shaping Perceptions of Genetic Discrimination and Genetic Racism. *Journal of National Medical Association*.

Bates, B. R., & Harris, T. M. (2004). The Tuskegee study of untreated syphilis and public

- perceptions of biomedical research: A focus group study. *Journal of the National Medical Association*, 96(8), 1051-1064.
- Condit, C. M., Parrott, R. L., Harris, T. M., Lynch, J., & Dubriwny, T. (2004). The role of “genetics” in popular understandings of race in the United States. *Public Understanding of Science*, 13, 249-272.