

# PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATION: A REVIEW OF THE IPRA MODEL

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## INTRODUCTION

The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) represents public relations practitioners and institutes from about 60 countries ranging from the First to the Third World, including the former Eastern Block. In an attempt to raise the standard of public relations education world-wide, IPRA has formulated The Wheel of Education, a prescriptive model for public relations education. This model, as set out in IPRA's Gold Paper No. 7 of 1990 (p.2), has been produced by IPRA with the assistance of the IPRA Education and Research Committee and the IPRA International Commission on Public Relations Education. Public relations practitioners and educators from all corners of the globe, including Africa, worked for 18 months to formulate this model. Rather than proposing rigidly standardised educational syllabus, the model aims to suggest generally accepted educational standards and requirements.

As South Africa differs from the developed world in which the IPRA model originated, among other things in terms of its development needs, the IPRA model cannot merely be accepted as a blueprint for public relations education in this country. In this article an attempt is made, therefore, to test the validity of the IPRA model for public relations education in South Africa. The validity of the model is reviewed by testing it against available literature. It is reviewed firstly in terms of its international validity and secondly to determine to what extent it can

## ABSTRACT

In this article the question is posed to what extent the prescriptive model for public relations education formulated by the International Public Relations Association (IPRA) can be accepted as a role model for South Africa. This model, known as The Wheel of Education, was proposed by IPRA to suggest generally accepted educational standards. The model takes the form of a recommended curriculum accompanied by a set of general recommendations pertaining to education and research. In this article, an attempt is made to test the validity of this model by reviewing it in terms of both international and South African literature. It is suggested that the model has international validity but lacks sufficient emphasis on international public relations. It is also suggested that the model cannot be applied strictly as a blueprint for public relations education in South Africa, but needs to be adapted to the development needs of this country.

serve as a role model for public relations education in South Africa.

general recommendations pertaining to education.

## THE IPRA MODEL

The IPRA model consists of the Wheel of Education, which illustrates the curriculum recommended by IPRA; a recommended core syllabus for public relations; and a set of specific and more

The model is accompanied by the following recommended curriculum to cover the central circle of the wheel. It is, however, accepted that considerable variation is possible within this general framework (Gold Paper No. 7, 1990:28-30):

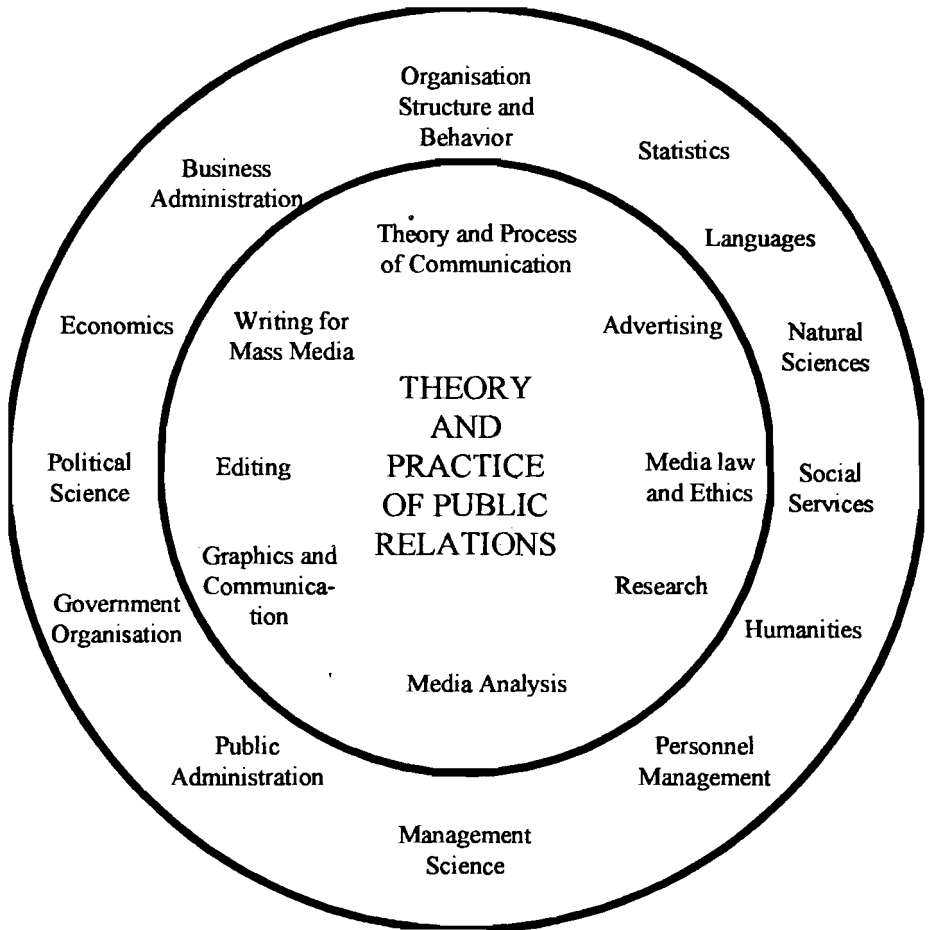


Figure 1 : The Wheel of Education.

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## Origins and principles of public relations

- Nature and role of public relations: definitions
- Societal forces affecting public relations
- History of public relations

## The public relations field

- Duties of public relations practitioners
- Career-long professional development
- The public relations department
- The public relations counselling firm
- Qualifications, education and training needed

## Public relations specialisations

- Publicity and media relations
- Community relations
- Employee relations
- Consumer relations
- Financial/shareholder relations
- Public affairs/lobbying
- Fund-raising/membership development
- International public relations

## Public relations research

- Public relations research / designs / processes / techniques
- Public opinion polling / surveys
- Fact-finding/applied research
- Observation/performance measurement
- Social audits/communications audits/employee audits
- Issues tracking
- Focused interviews/focus groups
- Use of external research services/consultants
- Media analysis/clippings analysis
- Historical research

## Public relations planning

- Setting goals, objectives, strategies, tactics
- Audience segmentation
- Problem/opportunity analysis
- Budgeting
- Contingency/crisis/disaster planning
- Issues management
- Timetables/calendaring
- Assigning authority/responsibility

- Planning theory / techniques / models
- Organisational background/ philosophy / culture

### Public Relations ethics and law

- Ethics and codes of practice, public relations and other professions
- Credibility
- Public relations law
- Compliance, regulatory agencies, etc.

### Public relations action/implementation

- Campaigns
- Continuing programmes - personnel, safety, suggestions, etc.
- One-time incidents / crises / situations
- Individual actions by public relations
- Individual actions by employer or client
- Meetings / workshops / seminars / conventions, etc.
- Other special events

### Public relations communication

- Planning, writing, producing and delivering print communication to audiences
- Planning, writing, public producing and delivering audiovisual, electronic, videotape and multi-

media communication to audiences

- Employee/internal communication
- New public relations tools and techniques
- Message strategy
- Persuasion
- Controlled (advertising) versus un-controlled communication (publicity)
- Interpersonal communication
- Communication theory / concepts / models
- Layout and graphics
- Speech-writing / speech-making / speech bureaux
- Feedback systems
- Spokesperson training
- Propaganda
- Photography and film-making
- Corporate/graphics identity
- Working with outside suppliers

### Public relations performance evaluation/measurement

- Measuring programme effectiveness
- Decision-making based on results (planning)
- Tools/methods of evaluation/measurement

- Setting performance/success criteria
- Reporting on results of public relations efforts
- Measuring staff/public relations counsel effectiveness

The following is a summary of the recommendation included in Gold Paper No. 7 (1990):

1. It is recommended that an ideal standard of acceptance for accreditation should be to provide students with a common body of knowledge in public relations. The Commission also recommends that all programmes should have many different courses in public relations, an internship, more than one instructor with a professional as well as an academic background, guest lecturers from practice, a balance between theory and concepts and practice, monitoring of the success of graduates in public relations careers and support materials - books and case studies of high quality. Computer-aided materials and other electronic material will become of increasing importance (p. 25).
2. Public relations full-time education should be offered at leading universities and other higher education institutions at first degree, postgraduate and doctoral levels. These degrees will equip successful students to fill positions in the profession at different levels (p. 27). Public relations education should ideally be provided mainly for those students who already have received a first university degree in other fields, such as commerce, sociology, psychology and journalism (p. 5). It is accepted, however, that there are two schools of thought about the purpose of a public relations training programme, one being it to be a technician-based communication skills programme and the other suggesting that it prepares students for roles as managers (p. 6). It is nevertheless recommended that efforts be made to establish public relations courses also at the post-graduate level. It is recognised that, depending on the education systems in different countries, public relations could be offered as a complete university curriculum of five to six years (the implicit model) or as part of (on top of) a complete curriculum (explicit model).
3. Public relations should be taught as an interdisciplinary subject with both academic and professional emphases (p. 27). The Commission does not wish to recommend any specific home for the discipline but cautions against law schools, business schools, and other professional programmes teaching their own courses in public relations without professional assistance (p. 13).
4. Courses should be taught by individuals with substantial experience and sound understanding of both the academic and professional aspects of the field (p. 27). It is also recommended that they continue to develop their professional experience while they hold teaching appointments (p. 11). Those who teach public relations should, wherever possible, receive a doctorate degree, or at least a master's degree, at universities where there exist public relations scholars under whom they

can study. Some teachers will benefit from considerable course work, and perhaps even degrees, in related fields such as commerce, psychology, sociology, journalism, communications, political science, and so forth, but ideally these studies will be conducted under the supervision of a public relation specialist (p.12). Specialists are also needed from other disciplines in public relations courses, like lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, scientists, economists and linguists (p. 11).

5. It is highly desirable for a public relations programme at a university to have a strong faculty team with complementary strengths and adequate physical and library resources (p. 27). A university should not attempt to begin teaching public relations unless it is prepared to provide sufficient resources. Ideally, a university should have at least one full-time faculty member for every fifteen to twenty public relations students. In addition to providing these faculty positions, universities also should make certain the financial resources are there for secretarial and office staff, space, equipment, library, computer and travel needs of the faculty (p. 14).
6. Sound ethical standards for students and practitioners should always be emphasised and correct professional attitudes and standards encouraged (p. 27).
7. It is neither desirable nor necessary for public relations education to be uniform throughout the world. Rather is it essential that curricula should take into account local and national cultures, religions and indigenous conditions (p.

27). It is realised that the concept of an ideal public relations education situation should never ignore the present reality of public relations education in some countries. For various reasons, public relations education does not exist in many countries. In these cases, the national public relations associations should give priority to the establishment of education at 'grass roots' level before seeking public relations sequences at academic level. Public relations educators associated with better organised programmes in the more developed countries should be encouraged to train and advise those teaching public relations in developing nations (p. 12).

8. There should be an integrated approach to programmes of education and professional advancement for those working in public relations. These educational opportunities should branch out into related disciplines (p. 27). The various regional and national public relations professional associations should provide both technical and theoretical educational opportunities for practitioners at various levels of expertise and experience. Courses could be conducted in cooperation with management association, university extension programmes, or other appropriate bodies (p. 15).
9. Encouragement should be given to the provision of new texts, especially those dealing with specialised aspects of practice and research. The production of suitable electronic material should be encouraged in every way (p. 27).
10. Public relations departments of universities should consider it their

duty to cooperate with national public relations associations in the provision of short courses at varying levels (p. 27).

11. UNESCO should be urged to continue their support for the series of regular educators' meetings organised by IPRA in many different parts of the world. These have played an important part in the continuing development of public relations education (p. 27).
12. IPRA council members and representatives of national and regional public relations associations should seek a dialogue with university bodies in their area to establish a rapport between the professional field and academia (p. 27).
13. IPRA must offer to act as a clearing house between public relations bodies and university authorities (p. 27).
14. Positive efforts should be made to bring about a continuing dialogue between academics and professionals for their mutual benefit (p. 28). Practitioners can encourage the development of education in a number of ways. First they must believe in public relations education and be advocates for its development and growth. They can also assist by providing internship opportunities for students, serving on advisory boards of public relations departments and by working with educational committees of the various public relations societies such as national organisations and IPRA. When possible, practitioners should be involved in dialogue with educators concerning curriculum development and research. In some situations, practitioners also can assist university programmes in fund raising and development (p. 12). Practitioners should also do everything possible to keep professors updated on developments in areas such as case studies, budgeting, research methods, etc. (p. 12). Dialogue between education and practice would be improved if extreme attitudes could be rejected: elitist teachers claiming the total responsibility in their own field without any interference by practitioners and elitist practitioners demanding training that is 100 per cent devoted to practical situations. It must be clear that these disparate points of view harm the education of young people who seek a career in public relations practice (p. 16).
15. Research, both pure and applied, should be encouraged in educational spheres and in practice (p. 28). It is pointed out that an increase in doctoral level programmes at universities could not only help to provide more guidance on evaluation problems, but would also help to extend and upgrade public relations education generally (p. 24).
16. Professional advancement programmes should be expanded in all countries (p. 28).
17. There should be a regular interchange of information and ideas between public relations educators in different countries. This can be effective through IPRA world congresses, educators' meeting, the professional press and by direct contact (p. 28).
18. CERP (Confederation of European Public Relations Associations) Education should be

supported as should all other regional educational foundations or associations in India, Latin America, North America, Africa and elsewhere (p. 28).

19. Efforts should be increased to ensure that in business and management schools at university and other levels public relations is included in management education programmes, taught by qualified faculty or by experienced public relations practitioners on a visiting faculty arrangement (p. 28).

## REVIEW OF THE IPRA MODEL

As the United States and Britain are generally regarded as most advanced in the field of public relations education, this section includes several references to literature from these countries. This is supplemented by references to South African surveys. It should, however, be pointed out that there is little literature available on research into the adequacy of public relations education in South Africa. This is largely due to the fact that most of the research to date has been informal. Although many educational institutions in South Africa do research to determine educational needs in public relations, this mostly takes the form of discussions with advisory committees, contact with employers and contact with the Public Relations Institute of Southern Africa (PRISA), mostly by means of the Educators' Forum. Few of these results have been published. As far as formal research is concerned major nation-wide surveys completed recently are Roodt's (1988) investigation into the knowledge dimension as a requirement in the professionalisation of public relations and Ferreira's

(1990) evaluation of the technikon training of public relations practitioners. A less recent survey is that of Van Biljon (1982) who researched the group media knowledge and skills required by public relations practitioners and Lomborg (1978) who researched the expertise required by public relations consultants. All four surveys were completed as master's dissertations.

### The IPRA Model As A Whole

Brody (1991:47) believes that Gold Paper No. 7 suggests a predisposition on the part of IPRA's leadership to lead rather than seek consensus. In turn, according to Brownell and Niebauer (1991:81) it can be assumed that higher levels of education (with emphasis on theory and research) lead to more sophisticated approaches of public relations, which in turn lead to more professionalism. As Brody (1991:46) believes that the educational model recommended by IPRA, correlating with IPRA's broad definition of public relations, demands education and not merely technical training one could assume that the IPRA model recommends a high level of education. The IPRA model is broader and more demanding from an educational perspective than implied by domestic public relations curricula (Brody, 1991:46).

### The Outer Circle Of The Wheel Of Education

Support could be found in the available literature for 12 of the 13 study field indicated in the outer circle of the IPRA Wheel of Education. According to Burson (1993:7) knowledge of the external environment, including business, finance and government, is essential in public relations. Two surveys among



practitioners in America indicated a need for training in the social sciences and business administration (Gibson, 1992-1993: 45-48; Wilcox in Gibson, 1992-1993: 45). Another by Schwartz et al. (1992:19,24) indicated a need for training in the social sciences and humanities. It is argued that an in-depth study of the latter teaches practitioners critical analysis ability - the ability to synthesise, analyse and solve problems. As far as South Africa is concerned, respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:244-245) indicated that the training in the following fields were either essential or useful in public relations: languages, business sciences, people skills, political sciences, economics, marketing and marketing management, and psychological sciences. In Ferreira's survey (1991:94,98) the majority of respondent regarded training in the following areas as essential: organisational communication, intergroup relations, marketing, political systems, economic systems and social systems. In Ferreira's survey (1991:95) 41% respondents indicated that they needed knowledge of statistics and the majority indicated that they needed knowledge of management in their jobs.

Support could be found in the South African body of knowledge of public relations (Krause, 1980:33-39) for the inclusion of public administration in public relations curricula. But in Roodt's survey (1988:244) only 4.2% respondents indicated that training in the natural sciences could be useful in public relations.

### **The Middle Circle Of The Wheel Of Education**

Strong support could be found for each of the eight study fields indicated in the middle circle of the IPRA Wheel of

Education. According to Gibson (1992-1993:45-48) several surveys in America indicated the following as desired outcomes of public relations training: communication, analytic, research, and management skills and knowledge of ethics, communication theory, persuasion, and the mass media. Wilcox's survey also indicated a need for courses in news writing (Gibson, 1992-1993:45).

As far as general education is concerned respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:244) indicated communication science as the most important field. The same survey also indicated training in writing skills and advertising as important. Respondents regarded training in the legal sciences as useful (p. 244). Respondents in Ferreira's survey (1991:95,98-100) indicated the subject Communication Science as the most valuable part of their training at technikons. The majority of respondents also indicated that they needed training in the following areas in their jobs: research, mass media, advertising, and news writing. Insufficient training in journalistic skills was listed as the most serious shortcoming in the technicon training programme.

The fact that 61,4% of the respondents in this survey worked in the corporate/business sector stresses the need for training in business.

### **The Inner Circle And Core Curriculum Of The Wheel Of Education**

#### ***The desirability of a core curriculum***

According to Renfo (1992:17) it is not advisable to identify a core curriculum for public relations as the latter is not a

science. He believes that practitioners coming from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds actually strengthen the profession. This viewpoint, however, seems to be that of a minority. The majority of high-levels practitioners who took part in a research survey in America in 1993 believed public relations educators should spend less time on theory and research methods and more on practical issues (Adams, 1993:12). Wilcox's survey (Gibson, 1992-1993:45) also indicated a strong need for a core course in public relations.

In South Africa, Roodt's survey (1988: 235,240,242) among accredited public relations practitioners indicated that tertiary training directly related to public relations is desirable. Virtually half of the respondents' qualification can be regarded as providing an education which has a direct bearing on their field of expertise, these being in public relations (23,9%), communication (16,9%), journalism (5,2%), industrial editing (0,5%), media studies (0,5%) and publicity (0,5%). Of the 50 disciplines into which respondents' qualifications were classified, public relations was the biggest, communication in fourth position and journalism in eighth position. This correlates with Roodt's findings on which tertiary qualification respondents regarded as most suitable in order to enter the profession: a degree in communication was in top position, followed by the technikon diploma in public relations in second position and a degree in journalism in third position.

Each of the broad themes contained in the core curriculum as well as the most relevant recommendations are subsequently compared to some of the literature sources.

## **Origins and principles of PR**

The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:245) rated knowledge of the following themes as very important in public relations: the nature and role of public relations and the historical context of public relations.

### **The PR field**

The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:245) rated knowledge of the organisational and professional contexts of public relations as very important.

### **PR specialisation**

The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:246) rated knowledge of areas of specialisation in public relations as very important. Ferreira's survey (1991:98) indicated that at least some of the responding practitioners have worked in each of the following areas of specialisation: corporate/business (61,4%), educational context (41,4%), entertainment context (32%), government context (28,1%), membership organisation context (25%), social services context (21,9%), sports context (18,8%), cultural context (18%), financial context (17,2%), health context (14,1%), international context (12,5%), and religious context (7%).

### **PR research**

Practitioners and executives in the American survey of Schwartz *et al.* (1992:19) indicated a need for training in research skills, issues analysis and audience analysis techniques.

The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:246) rated knowledge of the role of research in public relations

as very important. In Ferreira's survey (1991:96) 44% respondents indicated that they needed knowledge of communication audits in their jobs.

### **PR Planning**

The American survey of Schwartz *et al.* (1992:24-25) indicated a need for training in the following areas: strategic communication planning, situation and audience analysis, audience segmentation, goal setting and evaluation.

The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:239,245-246) rated knowledge of the following as very important in public relations: the process of public relations, the target publics of public relations, the theoretical context of public relations and the social context (incl. issues management) of public relations. The same survey indicated that accredited practitioners regarded planning and organisational skills as the most essential skills in public relations. Respondents in Ferreira's survey (1991:97, 100) indicated insufficient training in budgeting as one of the shortcomings in their technikon training. The technikon qualified practitioners who took part in the survey also indicated a need for the following management skills in practice: planning and organising, objective formulation, time management, issues management, and strategic planning.

### **PR ethics and law**

The survey of Schwartz *et al.* (1992:19) indicated a need for ethics training.

The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:245) rated knowledge of the legal context of public relations as very important. Ferreira (1990:205) recommended that the technikon pro-

gramme pay more attention to the code of conduct of the then Public Relations Council and to legal contexts that are applicable to public relations.

### **PR action/implementation**

The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:246) rated knowledge of the techniques of public relations as very important. Practitioners and executives in the American survey of Schwartz *et al.* (1992:19) indicated a need for training in public opinion concepts and research, case analysis and leadership skills. Ferreira's survey (1991:99) indicated that all of the following public relations functions were performed by at least some of the responding practitioners: promotions and special events (94,4%), public relations programmes (82%), corporate advertising (68%), sponsorships (65,6%), corporate identity (65,6%), social responsibility/investment (61,7%), fundraising (46,1%), crisis communication (34,4%), and membership drives (25,8%).

### **PR communication**

Wilcox's survey (Gibson, 1992-1993:45) in America indicated a need to write and speak well in public relations. The practitioners in the survey of Schwartz *et al.* (1992:21) rated courses in writing as an "overwhelming must". The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:239,245) rated knowledge of the communication context of public relations as very important. The same survey indicated that accredited practitioners regarded writing as the second most essential skill in public relations. Participants in this survey also indicated that training in the following areas is useful: computer science, printing and production, protocol and etiquette and creative think-

ing. Respondents in Ferreira's survey (1991:100) indicated insufficient training in the following areas as shortcomings in their technikon training: computing and word processing, budgeting, photography, liaison with printers, public speaking, media liaison, and page layout. The majority of respondents in Ferreira's survey (1991:94-96) among technikon qualified practitioners indicated that they needed knowledge in the following areas in their jobs: writing of news releases, speeches, reports, advertising copy, articles, photography, public speaking, production of slide presentations, chairing meetings, etiquette and protocol, use of audio-visual aids and printing and production processes. Fifty respondents indicated that they needed knowledge of graphic communication in their jobs, 43% needed knowledge of scripts and video production, 43,8% needed knowledge of desk top publishing, and 42,2% needed knowledge of speaking in front of a television camera or radio microphone. The same survey also indicated that training in the following forms of communication is essential: interpersonal communication, small group communication, non-verbal communication, persuasion, mass communication, organisational communication, intercultural communication, communication by objectives, intergroup relations and negotiation and conflict management. Van Biljon's survey (1982:37) among practitioners in South Africa indicated a need for knowledge of the following minor media: print, audio-, audio-visual and visual.

### **PR performance evaluation/measurement**

Practitioners and executives in the American survey of Schwartz *et al.*

(1992:19) indicated a need for training in public opinion concepts and research, case analysis and leadership skills. The majority of respondents in Roodt's survey (1988:239) rated problem-analysis and solving skills as very important in public relations. Respondents in Ferreira's survey (1991:97) also indicated a need for training in staff management, problem solving and decision-making and counselling management and clients on practice and policy.

## **Other Aspects**

### ***The internship recommended by IPRA***

Wilcox's survey (Gibson, 1992-1993: 45) among employers in America indicated that the ideal applicant for a public relations job will have some previous work experience in the field. A survey among public relations practitioners and executives in America (Schwartz *et al.*, 1992:19) indicated that an internship and work experience were rated as the second most important requirement for a career in public relations. Based on several surveys among employers in America, Gibson (1992-1993:47) recommends that once they have completed their training students be armed with a résumé and portfolio which contain information on internships, memberships in professional associations, and participation in campus media.

A strong rationale for the inclusion of an internship in the training of public relations practitioners was found in both major surveys completed in South Africa. Roodt's survey (1988:240) indicated that 90,6% accredited practitioners believed that public relations skills should be acquired through a combination of tertiary education and experi-

ence. According to Roodt this points to an awareness of the fact that skills, based on theoretical principles, should be acquired through a tertiary institution and be sharpened by experience. Ferreira's survey (1991:99-100) indicated that of the nine aspects technicon qualified practitioners regarded as the most valuable part of their training, the practical nature of the training was listed in third position and the period of in-service training in fifth position. Not enough practical application was also listed as the second most serious shortcoming in the technicon training programme.

### **Management education in public relations**

In the available literature there is agreement that public relations practitioners operate on both the level of technicians and managers. Managers are involved in policy-making and strategic decision-making, whereas technicians are associated with activities which serve to implement the policy decisions of others (Kinnick & Cameron, 1994:76). As indicated in chapter 2 there is general acceptance today of the fact that public relations is a management function. If public relations is to be raised to the level of management, sufficient management education is essential. This need is also stressed in the IPRA model. The need for management education is also evident in American and South African literature. According to Kinnick and Cameron (1994:74) fulfilling public relations as a management function requires practitioner knowledge of business and management skills needed to earn significant involvement in organisation decision-making. According to Burson (1993:7) public relations professionals need to be both knowledge-based and technique- and

skill-based. Examples of technique and skills include good judgement, the ability to communicate, to write; a knowledge of the media and ; and the ability to solve problems. He also believes that practitioners who have management potential will increasingly have M.B.A.s. A survey completed in America by Turk (Kinnick & Cameron, 1994:74) indicated that a lack of the following skills was seen as the greatest deficiencies in practitioners moving from technician to manager roles: financial and budgeting, problem-solving and decision-making, goalsetting and prioritising, planning and organisation, analytical and time management. Based on a survey of the public relations management content of 59 universities in America, Kinnick and Cameron (1994:83) recommend that public relations management be taught to undergraduates; that public relations management courses make provision for both strategic decision-making and more technical managerial skills, such as accounting, budgeting, scheduling and monitoring programme implementation; and that instructors make clear to students the consequences of failing to develop management skills.

Ferreira's (1990:184) survey revealed that at least 18% of practitioners who have completed the National Diploma in Public Relations since it was introduced at technicons in 1981 were already operating on the level of middle management or top management by 1989. This stresses the fact that also in South Africa, and including technicons, management training is essential on the undergraduate level. Lack of training in management was in fact identified in the same survey as one of the shortcomings in the technicon programme (Ferreira, 1991:100). Roodt's survey (1988:244) also indicated that South African accredited public rela-

tions practitioners are aware of the importance of executing public relations at management level and of the importance of business knowledge.

### **Where public relations should be taught**

Whether public relations should be taught in schools or faculties of journalism or (mass) communication versus business schools or faculties has been an ongoing debate for many years. Those who favour business school settings (like Tidwell, Plank and Jackson, in Prepon, 1993:12; King, in Pincus *et al.*, 1994:56-57) believe that public relations being taught in business schools will advance the profession because it will lead to greater respect for public relations as a management function. Those who favour a journalism or communication setting generally stress the communication aspects of public relations. One example is Van Slyke Turk (Prepon, 1993:13) who believes that other faculties cannot provide adequate training in writing, message strategy and message production. Grunig and Hunt (1984:79) believe that the traditional offerings of a journalism programme became insufficient when public relations evolved into the two-way asymmetric and symmetric models. However, they believe that being a multidisciplinary field public relations programmes can be located anywhere in an educational institution.

Falb (1991-1992:42-43), however, believes that the development of public relations training units should be separate entities within the academic structure, away from journalism, mass communication and business schools. He argues that public relations will develop to its fullest extent only when functioning independently but still

taking advantage of the offerings of both business and mass communication faculties.

In South Africa public relations is also taught in both business and journalism/communication units - at both technikons and universities. As it was not one of the objectives of this study to investigate the desired positioning of public relations programmes in academic institutions, the viewpoint of IPRA is accepted that public relations can be taught in a variety of academic homes as long as an interdisciplinary approach is followed. Interestingly the respondents in Ferreira's survey (1991:99) regarded the interdisciplinary nature of the technikon diploma as one of the most valuable aspects of the training they underwent.

### **Public relations as part of M.B.A. programmes**

There is also a lot of strong support in the available literature for the inclusion of public relations in M.B.A. programmes. Pincus *et al.* (1994:55) argue that without the inclusion of public relations training in M.B.A. programmes the public relations profession will never realise entry to the highest levels of corporate decision making. Others who favour the inclusion of public relations training in M.B.A.s include Van Slyke Turk (Pincus *et al.*, 1994:56), Plank (Prepon, 1993:12) and Baskin and Wright (Pincus *et al.*, 1994:57).

### **Training in international public relations**

A distinctive characteristic of international literature on public relations education since the beginning of the 1990s, is its emphasis on the importance of training in international public

relations. Ogbondah and Pratt (1991-1992:38), for example, believe that any curriculum that excludes international public relations courses is ineffective in addressing student and practitioner needs, particularly for the next century. Burk (1994:40) points out that public relations personnel of multinational corporations need to be taught multi-cultural awareness and sensitivity. Sommerness and Beaman (1994:91-92) argue that public relations education should teach students an awareness of the global economy.

In view of increasing globalisation one could predict that training in this field will become increasingly important. The available literature, however, also reflects the fact that educational institutions have not yet caught up with the trend toward globalisation. Burk (1994:43), for example, points out that there are currently few academic programmes that offer an international public relations specialisation. He believes that the British, and not the Americans, are on the cutting edge of integrating public relations into global planning. Ogbondah and Pratt (1991-1992:36) point out that by the end of the 1980s, in spite of many studies done to point out inadequacies in public relations training in America, no known published work has argued for courses in international public relations. A study by Sommerness and Beaman (1994:92-93) of the curricula of 119 colleges and universities in America revealed that only one university offered a course in international public relations.

The lack of literature on the importance of training in international public relations in South Africa could possibly be attributed to the country's isolation from the international scene prior to its first democratic election in April 1994. It is, however, worth mentioning

that 12,5% of the practitioners who took part in Ferreira's survey (1991:98) indicated that they have worked in the international context of public relations. This study also recommended that technicians make provision for the international context of public relations in their public relations curricula (Ferreira, 1990:207).

### ***The need for post-graduate education***

According to Brody (1991:46) explosive growth of knowledge in areas ranging from the social sciences to computers and satellites is straining undergraduate curriculum capacity to the breaking point. "Five year undergraduate curricula, or removal of non-technical curricular components to the master's level, appear to be the only logical result."

Ferreira's survey (1991:91) indicated a need for the introduction of post-diploma courses in public relations at technicians.

### ***Professional development***

In Roodt's survey (1988:249-250) practitioners rated continued education in public relations as very important. Eighty per cent respondents felt that continued education should be a combination of both theoretical and practical aspects. Training in both theoretical and practical aspects is evident in the topics of professional development seminars of the Institute for Public Relations Research and Education in America: an overview of the communication process, communication and public relations theory, strategic planning, internal and external communication, developing greater organisational influence for the function, research, leadership and management

of the function, stakeholder relationships, and financial and investor relations. Seminars are also held on: crisis and issues management, ethics and social responsibility and marketing and advertising, listening, establishing and maintaining constructive relationships with other corporate functions, television and presentation workshops, international communication, and managing the public relations function in the face of restructuring and diversity (Wright, 1994:4-7).

## **To What Extent The Ipra Can Serve As A Role Model For Public Relations Education In South Africa**

South Africa has seen profound social and political changes the past few years. These changes are also reflected in the public relations profession, with changing audiences and strategies. Priorities have also changed. For example, a PRISA survey on the perceived past and future importance of areas in public relations has indicated that employee relations and community relations now top the list in contrast with corporate and marketing public relations. International public relations and issues management are now also seen as more important than in the past (Rhodes & Baker, in Lubbe & Puth, 1994:286-287). These changes necessitate profound changes in public relations education. Public relations education in South Africa has to be adapted to the new social and political order (Mersham, 1992:59).

This firstly calls for greater emphasis on development. Faure (1995:11) and Megwa (1994:7-8) call for greater emphasis on training in development communication. According to Mer-

sham (1992:55) the task of the public relations educator is to educate students, who, in turn will educate managements about the need to focus on development. As far as issues management is concerned, provision has to be made in the education of practitioners for the issues that are of particular concern for Africa. According to Mersham (1992:55) the following issues should currently be regarded as key components on the agenda: political change towards multi-party democracy; community involvement; environmental issues; education; housing; provision of basic services; the rise of trade unionism; jobs, employment and affirmative action; sport, trade and cultural opportunities; the management of change; and Pan Africanism.

Secondly there is a need to train students to balance first world and third world concerns in public relations. According to Rhodes and Baker (Lubbe & Puth, 1994:293) it is an indictment of the public relations industry in South Africa that practitioners have largely applied Western cultural norms to their communication strategy and tactics, even though, in many cases, the receivers were from African cultural groups. In South Africa the Western model of public relations has to be adapted to African conditions. Environmental concerns in Southern Africa, for example, are not so much issues like global warming, but the issues of providing jobs, food, shelter and warmth for the rural poor while conserving unspoiled wetlands and wildlife (Rhodes and Baker in Lubbe & Puth, 1994:289).

This balancing of first and third world concerns is a real challenge for public relations. While bringing students up to date with latest technologies in public relations, such as the use of CD-Rom publication and multimedia on the



Superhighway (Duffy & Palmer, 1994:27) they should be made aware of media suitable for rural and illiterate communities in Africa.

A comparison between the IPRA model and the South African body of knowledge of public relations (Krause, 1980:33-39) reveals that the following section should be regarded as a deficiency in the IPRA model:

### **Socio-economic environment of South Africa**

Knowledge of the cultural, historical, ethnic and religious structure of the Southern African sub-continent, with specific reference to:

- identification of social groupings in sociometric terms;
- current political and economic structure;
- development tendencies

It should be borne in mind that more than a decade and a half has passed since the official South African body of knowledge of public relations has been compiled (this body of knowledge is currently being revised). South Africa has since been readmitted to the international scene and relations with the rest of Africa have been resumed. With the adoption of the Reconstruction and Development Programme by the Government of National Unity, there is greater emphasis on the development needs of the country and the sub-continent. An affirmative action policy has been introduced and where the country had two official language before the 1994 election it now has eleven. Any training programme in public relations in South Africa needs

to be adapted to these recent changes.

## **DEFICIENCIES IN THE IPRA MODEL AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It can be concluded from section 3 that there is support for the inclusion of:

- all the study fields listed in the outer circle of the IPRA Model except for the natural sciences
- all eight study fields listed in the middle circle of the IPRA Model
- each of the broad themes contained in the core curriculum of the IPRA Model
- the inclusion of an internship and management training in public relations education
- the inclusion of public relations in M.B.A. programmes
- IPRA's viewpoint that public relations can be taught in a variety of academic homes and disciplines
- the need for post-graduate training and professional development in public relations.

The lack of emphasis on training in international public relations, however, can be regarded as a possible deficiency in the IPRA model. Although international public relations is listed as a specialisation in the core syllabus recommended in Gold Paper No. 7 it is not dealt with as a separate and detailed topic or course. If taken into account that the core curriculum recommended by IPRA is based on a survey done in 1987, the need to update the

curriculum by adding greater emphasis on international public relations becomes apparent.

Sommerness and Beaman (1994:93) suggest that the following form part of training in international public relations: technology and culture affecting communication between multinational organisations and foreign governments; issues management in cross-cultural situations; public relations strategies in multinational environments; and international public relations case studies. Burk (1994:42) suggests that the training of international public relations practitioners provide them with specific information concerning the target countries' economic, social and political climate, quality of life, everyday behaviours, decision-making styles and typical experiences. This would enable them to make an appropriate assessment of attitudes, opinions, and assumptions about target cultures. Ogbondah and Pratt (1991-1992:38) believe that training of international practitioners should equip them with knowledge of the geography and the geopolitical, socio-economic and cultural milieus of major world regions. They argue that it is also important that practitioners be aware of the politics of ethnicity, religion and cultural dichotomies of major target countries. According to Tung and Miller (Ogbondah & Pratt, 1991-1992:38) the following are suitable courses to teach students about other cultures: international business, international relations, foreign language and area studies.

Apart from the suggestion above Ogbondah and Pratt (1991-1992:40) also recommend that international public relations courses should introduce students to:

- the history and development of public relations in other cultures
- the practice and function of public relations abroad
- the dynamics of multinational corporations
- comparative legal, political and ethical dimensions of public relations practice at home and abroad
- the media abroad
- public relations aspects of major international political, diplomatic, cultural and socioeconomic developments with special emphasis on superpower relations and regional bilateral cooperation
- various international organisations, associations and agencies that provide resources for public relations practitioners (e.g. Amnesty International, International Organisation of Journalists, International Association for Medical Assistance to Travellers).

According to Farinelli and Mann (1994:36) one way of increasing opportunities for training in international public relations is to provide opportunities for internships for students from abroad.

As far as the South African perspective is concerned, there are some additional deficiencies in the IPRA Model. It is evident in section 3.6 that the model lacks focus on issues that are of particular concern for the Third World, Africa and South Africa in particular. The model also lacks focus on development needs and development communication as well as communication with rural and illiterate communities.

It can therefore be assumed that, apart from additional training in international relations, training in the following should be added to the IPRA Model to make it more applicable to South African conditions:

- development, with specific reference to the RDP
- development communication
- environmental issues in Africa
- the political, economic, cultural, historical, ethnic and religious structure of the sub-continent
- African languages
- the mass media in Africa
- folk media in Africa
- alternative media for illiterate audiences and rural communities
- greater emphasis on social investment
- greater emphasis on employee and community relations
- management of change.

Apart from the recommendations above, it should be noted that PRISA has committed itself to greater contact with the public relations industry in the rest of Africa. Public relations educators can assist in this regard by making students aware of public relations societies and consultancies in the rest of Africa - in line with IPRA's recommendation for greater international contact.

## CONCLUSION

This article reviewed the IPRA model for public relations education in terms of its international validity and its validity for South Africa. It was reviewed mostly in terms of American, British and South African literature. It was found that the model has international validity but needs greater emphasis on international public relations, an area that has grown very fast since the IPRA model was formulated. It was also found that the IPRA model cannot be applied strictly as a blueprint for public relations education in South Africa, but has to be adapted to unique conditions of this country, especially its development needs.

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