N*W*C and its Implications on Campus Climate

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Abstract

This study sought to make a contribution to the growing body of research being conducted at a large Midwestern university on campus climate and the experiences of underrepresented groups by documenting reactions to the N*W*C play. Participants in this study included: (a) an administrator at a large Midwestern university, (b) ethnic faculty members at the university, and (c) students who attended the play. The responses to the play were studied using an ethnographic research design. Data were collected using the following qualitative methods: (a) field notes, (b) interviews, and (c) document analysis.

The Problem

A large Midwestern university experienced instances of racial intolerance and mockery in the form of racially-themed parties during the 2006-2007 academic year. To alleviate racial tensions and promote discourse on involuntary stereotypes, the N*W*C play was invited to perform at the university’s Center for Performing Arts.

Research Question

• What were the responses to the play?
• What were possible implications on campus climate?

Participants and Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Field Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/18/2007</td>
<td></td>
<td>Forum on Race and Ethnicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/20/2007</td>
<td>N<em>W</em>C Play; Talk Back</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/21/2007</td>
<td>N<em>W</em>C Play; Talk Back</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/12/2007</td>
<td>University Administrator (n=1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/17/2007</td>
<td>Ethnic Faculty Members (n=2)</td>
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<td>10/1/2007-</td>
<td>Students Who Attended the Play (n=7)</td>
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<td>11/15/2007</td>
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Results

“I’ve never experienced such a big degree of racism as I have here [University] than I have anywhere else.”

Latina Student

“The show [N*W*C] was not about disarming stereotypes, but it would have been a great show if it was about the coming of age.”

Ethnic Faculty Member

“We [university] are better as a result of seeing the production.”

University Administrator

Implications of the Study

• Campus Climate
• Coordinating Campus Activities
• Future Study

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using procedures associated with the grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2000) and naturalistic interpretation (Denzin, 1989).

Contact Information

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