Applying Dialogic Public Relations Theory to Public Relations Education

by Joshua M. Bentley

This article compares and contrasts theories of dialogic pedagogy with Kent and Taylor's (2002) dialogic public relations model. Several possible explanations are offered to explain the lack of research on dialogic pedagogy among PR scholars and educators. Dialogic public relations is proposed as a helpful approach to make PR education more relational and student-centered. Practical ideas are suggested for applying dialogic PR principles to classroom teaching.

Knowing what a person means by the term, "dialogic," is not always easy. Although the word clearly refers to a dialogue, or conversation of some sort, it takes on different connotations within different academic disciplines. According to Cissna and Anderson (1994), dialogue means one thing when talking about knowledge, and something else in the context of relationships. Dialogue also has specialized meanings for conversation analysts, ethnomethodologists, and literary critics; therefore, when scholars use "dialogue" or "dialogic" to describe education (Freire, 1970/2006), public relations (Kent & Taylor, 2002), mentoring (Bokeno & Gantt, 2000), or religion (Keaten & Soukup, 2009), confusion can arise.

This article argues that principles of dialogue can enhance public relations (PR) education. Some PR educators may be using dialogue in their classrooms already, but there is a lack of scholarly work connecting dialogue with PR education. One reason may be that "dialogic pedagogy"—the approach to dialogue most prevalent in education scholarship—comes from an understanding of dialogue that is problematic for some PR training. Fortunately, PR has its own model of dialogic public relations, based on a different approach to dialogue, which can be extended to PR education. This article will briefly describe dialogic pedagogy, explaining why this approach is often less than ideal for PR education. Then, Kent and Taylor's (2002) dialogic theory of public relations will be discussed, along with two reasons this approach to dialogue should be applied to PR training.

Finally, several suggestions will be offered for how PR instructors might adapt and apply Kent and Taylor's theory to their classrooms.

WHAT IS DIALOGIC PEDAGOGY?

As with dialogue, itself, no single definition of dialogic pedagogy exists. Dialogic pedagogy has been used to identify a set of classroom techniques, as well as a fundamental approach to the construction of knowledge. Burbules (1993) focused on dialogue as both a theory and a practice, suggesting, "Dialogue is guided by a spirit of

discovery, so that the typical tone of a dialogue is exploratory and interrogative" (p. 8). Burbules also distinguished between teleological and nonteleological views of dialogue. Teleological dialogue, according to Burbules, has "a definite, predetermined end point" (1993, p. 5). That is, teleological dialogue is a conversation designed to arrive at a specific truth. A prime example is the Socratic method. An instructor uses questions to engage students and make them think, but the instructor already has some idea where the conversation should go. In contrast, nonteleological dialogue involves setting aside dogmatic positions and simply exploring ideas without a preconceived destination in mind.

Arnett (1992) emphasized the role of values and character development in dialogic pedagogy. He argued that sharing information is not enough. Rather, students must be encouraged to think about how they will use what they learn in the context of civil society. For Arnett, "Dialogic education is a form of communicative praxis inviting conversation about ideas and between people, while asking value questions of how and why particular information will be put into action" (1992, p. 18).

The dominant approach to dialogic pedagogy seems to view dialogue as an entire epistemological approach, rather than a mere classroom technique. For these scholars, Burbules' (1993) teleological dialogue would be considered inauthentic and manipulative. Matusov (2009) has stated, "It is not that pedagogy *should* be dialogic—I rather argue that it is *always* dialogic" (p. 1). This perspective on dialogue derives from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian philosopher and literary critic, who wrote:

> The dialogic means of seeking truth is counterposed to official monologism, which pretends to possess a ready-made truth, and it is also counterposed to the naive self-confidence of those people who think that they know something, that is, who think that they possess certain truths.

> Truth is not born nor is it to be found inside the head of an individual person. It is born between people collectively searching for truth, in the process of their dialogic interaction. (1984, p. 110)

From this perspective, dialogue is not merely a pedagogical device, but the authentic way of seeking truth. According to this view, the process of making meaning is inherently creative. Dialogic communication does not *find* truth but *constructs* it. Matusov (2009) provided three marks of truly dialogic pedagogy. First, teachers should see themselves as learning along with their students. Second, "knowledge, as such, does not exist" (p. 5), meaning that teachers and students should reject certainty. Third, information-seeking questions should be privileged over correct answers.

Paulo Freire is one of the best-known proponents of dialogic pedagogy (Matusov, 2009). Freire was a leftist educator who viewed traditional teaching as oppressive and dehumanizing. He considered most teaching to be "banking education" in which "students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor" (Freire, 1970/2006, p. 72). This approach, Freire felt, stifled creativity and critical thinking, leaving students at the mercy of the ruling elite. As an alternative, he suggested "problem-posing" education, based on teachers and students learning together through the discussion of relevant questions and problems (p. 80). Freire called for a dialogue between teachers and students based on "love, humility, and faith" (p. 91). He argued that educational content should be determined in response to students' concerns and interests, not imposed by elitist teachers. In Freire's words, "Authentic education is not carried out by 'A' *for* 'B' or by 'A' *about* 'B,' but rather by 'A' *with* 'B'" (p. 93).

Metcalfe and Game (2008) took a similar position when they wrote that education is "a transformative rather than a simply accumulative process" (p. 346). These scholars argued that dialogic education is based on the interactions

between people's differences. Teachers should learn along with their students, working to maintain a nonjudgmental environment in which everyone can express different perspectives.

To summarize, dialogic pedagogy is generally associated with the following beliefs:

1. Knowledge is co-created (not just transferred) by communication between people.
2. The power imbalance between teachers and students in the traditional classroom tends toward oppression.
3. The educational agenda should be influenced by the students, not just imposed by the teacher.
4. Teachers and students should allow one another to share different perspectives in an open, nonjudgmental forum.

Admittedly, these four points gloss over certain nuances within dialogic pedagogy. For a more thorough discussion, see Burbules (1993) and Matusov (2009). The next section discusses the lack of research on dialogic pedagogy in PR and suggests three reasons dialogic pedagogy has not received more attention.

Dialogic Pedagogy and PR Education

Dialogic pedagogy, as outlined above, has not received much attention from PR scholars. An EBSCO search of the top two journals in public relations, *Journal of Public Relations Research* and *Public Relations Review*, found no articles using the term "dialogic pedagogy." Fourteen articles published in *Journal of Public Relations Research* since 2000 used the terms "dialogue" or "dialogic," but none of these articles was about pedagogy. Between 1982 and 2012, 47 articles in *Public Relations Review* referenced "dialogue" or "dialogic." None of these articles discussed dialogic pedagogy, either. Three articles examined dialogic features on university Web sites (Gordon & Berhow, 2009; McAllister, 2012; McAllister & Taylor, 2007), but mostly in terms of marketing, not teaching. Also, one article reported

on the "Dialogue on Public Relations Education" conference hosted by the National Communication Association in 1998 (Kruckeberg & Paluszek, 1999). This article argued, "Communication is the key to reaching consensus on the highest-quality and most relevant public relations education, communication predicated on sound research and two-way symmetrical dialogue" (p. 7). Thus, Kruckeberg and Paluszek called for continued dialogue *about* pedagogy, but did not discuss dialogue in the classroom.

These findings are consistent with Todd and Hudson's (2009) content analysis of PR pedagogy research. Those authors found that from 1998 to 2008, only 23 academic articles addressed pedagogical issues in PR. One article studied the Socratic method in introductory PR courses (Parkinson & Ekachai, 2002), but this method was patterned after law school education, not theories of dialogue. Todd and Hudson found no articles that incorporated the theories of Bakhtin or Freire.

Although dialogic theories have not been directly applied to research on PR education, PR educators may still be using elements of dialogue in their classrooms. A survey by Coombs and Rybacki (1999) found that active learning techniques, such as class discussions, were popular among PR educators. Class discussions can certainly be a component of dialogue, depending on how they are used.

If PR educators are already using dialogic principles, some educators may have adopted these principles for practical reasons, based on years of teaching experience. Others may have studied dialogic pedagogy within the field of education. Still others may have developed dialogic approaches intuitively. Nevertheless, the lack of scholarly research on dialogic pedagogy within public relations means that some educators may be completely unfamiliar with the concept, and others may not know how to incorporate dialogue into their teaching.

Why has published research on PR education paid so little attention to theories of dialogue?

There are at least three likely reasons: (1) lack of time or interest, (2) philosophical objections, and (3) practical concerns.

Lack of Time or Interest

University professors are busy, and they may not perceive pedagogical research to be the best use of their time. Both Coombs and Rybacki (1999) and Todd and Hudson (2009) noted that pedagogical articles do not always carry as much weight with tenure committees as other types of research; therefore, the incentives to conduct this type of study are low. Even educators who *use* dialogic principles in the classroom may not be interested in *writing* about dialogic pedagogy.

Philosophical Objections

Dialogic pedagogy may pose philosophical problems for some PR educators because of its particular approach to dialogue. Much of the research on dialogic pedagogy relies on Bakhtin (Matusov, 2009), who saw dialogue "primarily as a form of cultural knowing" (Cissna and Anderson, 1994, p. 13). For some PR educators, Bakhtin's emphasis on the co-creation of knowledge may clash with the inherently purposive, strategic nature of PR. How can instructors teach students to be persuasive and strategic communicators if they do not display those qualities themselves? Furthermore, to the extent that PR educators have been influenced by journalistic practices, they may tend to view truth as a concept defined by accuracy and objectivity, not something created through dialogue.

Burbules (1993) also observed that dialogic pedagogy has been influenced by postmodernism, critical theory, and feminist theory. In fact, "the very term, 'pedagogy,' has come to connote a politically charged, Left approach to education" (Burbules, 1993, p. 6). Although a strong proponent of dialogic pedagogy, Matusov (2009) criticized Freire's work. Matusov noted that when Freire was teaching in Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé during the 1970s, "he and his dialogic critical pedagogy willingly and, arguably, uncritically, participated in the political propaganda campaigns of these totalitarian communist regimes" (2009, p. 74). Some PR instructors may be uncomfortable with dialogic pedagogy because of its political "baggage."

If these philosophical problems were not enough, there are certain practical difficulties, as well.

Practical Concerns

One of the practical difficulties with dialogic pedagogy is defining the proper role of the instructor. Proponents of dialogic pedagogy have acknowledged that teachers should not just sit back and let students control the classroom. Burbules (1993) wrote:

> While a broadly egalitarian commitment and mutual respect ought to frame our pedagogical outlook, these should not obscure the ways in which some participants clearly do stand to benefit from an opportunity to learn from (not only *with*) others who know, understand, or can do things that they themselves cannot. (p. 22)

Sometimes it is appropriate for teachers to share their own knowledge and skills. Metcalfe and Game (2008) argued that "when the class calls for a more formal presentation of information from the teacher, this presentation becomes itself a moment in the unfolding dialogue" (p. 352). However, it is not clear *when* these moments should occur. Should instructors wait for students to *request* more formal teaching, or should they *impose* that teaching when the dialogue becomes unproductive? Many students do not know *what they do not know*. Unless an instructor guides them, how will students even learn to ask relevant questions?

Many PR courses emphasize specific skills. Even if dialogic pedagogy could be used in classes like "PR Case Studies" or "Crisis Communication," it would be harder to implement in

"PR Publications" or "Public Relations Research." Activities like teaching students to use software, calculate statistics, or write according to a certain style do not lend themselves to open-ended dialogue. For example, instructors can hardly have a meaningful conversation with students about how they want Adobe Photoshop to work! Certain types of learning center on accumulating specific information, and as Burbules (1993) admitted, "dialogue can be a very 'inefficient' way of pursuing information" (p. 36). In many situations, class time is better spent by having an instructor demonstrate or explain how to do something and then letting students try it for themselves.

The point here is that while dialogic pedagogy may not be incompatible with all PR education, there are several reasons it has not received more attention from PR scholars. Of course, proponents of dialogic pedagogy have also argued that teachers dislike this approach because it threatens their own power and status, and because most schools and curricula are not designed to accommodate true dialogue (Burbules, 1993; Matusov, 2009). However, there is another perspective on dialogue, from within PR itself that may prove more useful to PR educators.

A DIALOGIC THEORY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

As mentioned previously, dialogic theories exist in many disciplines and often conceptualize dialogue differently. Kent and Taylor (2002) have applied dialogue to public relations, drawing on the philosophy of the religious existentialist Martin Buber. Buber's seminal work, *I and Thou* (1958), argued that people either relate to others as objects (*I-It*), or as persons (*I-Thou*). Buber believed that only within the context of *I-Thou* relationships could people know themselves or others. Thus, Buber emphasized dialogue as a way to foster genuine relationships, not primarily as a way of forming knowledge. Kent and Taylor (2002) followed Buber's perspective to formulate a more relational approach to

strategic communication. This section will summarize their dialogic theory of public relations and explain why Kent and Taylor's approach may be more helpful to PR education than dialogic pedagogy.

Kent and Taylor's Dialogic Theory

Kent and Taylor identified five aspects of dialogic public relations: (1) mutuality, (2) propinquity, (3) empathy, (4) risk, and (5) commitment. These five elements will be discussed individually.

Mutuality. Mutuality is an "acknowledgement that organizations and publics are inextricably tied together" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 25). Without their publics, organizations would serve no purpose; therefore, organizations should seek collaboration with their publics in a spirit of equality and respect. This requires another dialogic principle: propinquity.

Propinquity. Propinquity (i.e., nearness) is the idea that organizations should make themselves physically and emotionally accessible to their publics. Kent and Taylor (2002) called on organizations to engage with their publics, explaining that "dialogic participants must be willing to give their whole selves to encounters" (p. 26). Propinquity requires that organizations consider how their actions will affect their publics and even seek input from those publics before making decisions. This kind of close relationship naturally fosters empathy.

Empathy. Kent and Taylor (2002) described empathetic organizations as "'walking in the shoes' of their publics" (p. 27). Empathy means supporting others and confirming the importance of their views, even if a person or organization disagrees with those views. Empathy also requires a communal mindset, in which organizations consider how to build the whole community, not just themselves. It is important to recognize that these three elements of dialogic public relations necessarily involve a fourth element: risk.

Risk. "Implicit in all organizational and interpersonal relationships is some risk" (Kent &

Taylor, 2002, p. 28). Sharing information and collaborating with others leads to vulnerability and unexpected consequences. Kent and Taylor also called for "recognition of the strangeness of others" (p. 28). The differences in others should not be seen as obstacles, but as valuable contributions to dialogue. The final component to dialogic public relations is commitment.

Commitment. The first four elements of dialogue: mutuality, propinquity, empathy, and risk, are not easy or comfortable to implement; therefore, Kent and Taylor (2002) called for a commitment to the process. This commitment involves genuineness or authenticity, as well as a willingness to make conversations work and to give others the benefit of the doubt when interpreting their statements.

Kent and Taylor's (2002) theory has influenced many PR scholars. When using the search and citation-indexing tool, Web of Knowledge, one sees that Kent and Taylor's seminal work has been cited heavily in organizational communication, as well as in public relations. Dialogic public relations theory has been applied to a range of issues, such as online communication (Rybalko & Seltzer, 2010), organizational-public relationships (Bruning, Dials, & Shirka, 2008), and risk communication (Rød, Botan, & Are, 2011); however, the dialogic PR model has not been applied to PR education.

Dialogic Public Relations Compared to Dialogic Pedagogy

As discussed earlier, there may be certain objections to dialogic pedagogy that have kept it from being widely applied to PR education; however, dialogic public relations theory may be more useful to PR instructors. A brief comparison of dialogic public relations and dialogic pedagogy will help clarify this point.

In some ways, dialogic public relations and dialogic pedagogy are similar. Both require a willingness to hear others with an open mind. Both value equality and mutual respect. However, there are also important differences, at least

in emphasis, between the two because they are based on different approaches to dialogue (Cissna & Anderson, 1994). Following Bakhtin, dialogic pedagogy tends to emphasize epistemic uncertainty (Matusov, 2009; Metcalfe & Game, 2008). It implies that teachers should not act as if they know more than students, and it implies that instructors who use the lecture format instead of holding conversations are being oppressive. By contrast, Kent and Taylor's (2002) dialogic public relations theory follows Buber and focuses on acting with care and consideration for others. Kent and Taylor do not give the impression that individuals or organizations should abandon their own agendas, but merely that they should hear from and try to understand other perspectives before making major decisions. Perhaps some proponents of dialogic pedagogy would agree with this approach, but their writings are less clear on the issue. For that reason, dialogic public relations theory appears more realistic and practical. According to Kent and Taylor's (2002) theory, teachers could be considered unethical when they act without care or concern for their students, but not just because they claim to know things their students do not.

Why the Dialogic PR Model Makes Sense for PR Education

Applying a public relations theory to education may seem odd at first, but it makes sense for two reasons. First, PR is essentially a form of education without any direct power. Although teachers can use grades to control their students' behavior, PR professionals can only try to persuade their publics to listen and care about an organization's messages. Thus, PR instructors who wish to minimize the power imbalance in a traditional classroom might find a public relations approach quite helpful.

Second, by bringing the dialogic public relations model into more PR classes, teachers can help students see how this model applies in the context of real relationships. A report by the Commission on Public Relations Education titled

"The Professional Bond" (Turk, 2006) identified several skills that PR students need to learn, such as developing "relationships and relationship-building," practicing "ethical decision-making," developing "critical listening skills," and "applying cross-cultural and cross-gender sensitivity" (pp. 43-44). These skills are important elements of dialogic public relations, as well. The next section offers a number of suggestions for how Kent and Taylor's (2002) dialogic theory might be applied in PR education.

Practical Suggestions

A major strength of Kent and Taylor's (2002) dialogic public relations theory is the way it simplifies and clarifies the concept of dialogue. Kent and Taylor's approach makes "the concept of dialogue more accessible for scholars and practitioners interested in relationship building" (p. 22). This section attempts to explain, through specific ideas and suggestions, how instructors might apply dialogic public relations to PR education. Kent and Taylor's five points will be followed in order.

Mutuality

Instructors and students need each other. As Matusov wrote, "the teacher cannot force the student to learn and cannot learn for the student" (2009, p. 79). Instructors can be upfront about this fact with their classes, promising to provide students with the *opportunity* to learn, but acknowledging that students make the ultimate choice about how much they get out of any class. Instructors can also encourage students that their questions and input will make the class more beneficial for everyone. Mutuality involves collaboration and a spirit of equality (Kent & Taylor, 2002). This concept is especially relevant to PR education because most careers in public relations also require collaboration. The ability to work with others inside the organization, as well as journalists and external publics, is vital to achieving organizational goals.

Obviously, group projects are a helpful way for students to learn collaboration. Other options might include letting students critique one another's work (Giese, 2005). However, instructors can go farther, by participating in some projects with their students. For instance, in a PR research class, an instructor might act as a participant in a focus group, answering questions posed by student moderators. This kind of interaction would probably feel strange to both parties at first, but it would promote an atmosphere of equality and mutual respect. Such an exercise would be more comfortable if the instructor had previously fostered a sense of propinquity in the class.

Propinquity

Propinquity requires that instructors make themselves accessible to students. Accessibility means more than holding office hours. Instructors should get to know students in and out of class. By learning about students' long-term goals, instructors can tailor their lessons to be more relevant. One element of propinquity is "immediacy of presence" (Kent & Taylor, 2002, p. 26).

Communication about decisions should take place as part of the decision-making process, not after the decisions have been made. Instructors can involve students in planning certain portions of a class. Lewis and Hayward (2003) described how choice-based learning was implemented in an organizational communication class. Students were allowed to select from various assignments, including making audio or video productions, writing traditional research papers, or job-shadowing professionals in the industry. Stevens and Levi (2005) also outlined a procedure for letting students design grading rubrics for their own assignments.

The immediacy of communication in a class is certainly influenced by the way instructors grade students' work. Not only do students want to get their grades back quickly, but they also want meaningful feedback from their instructors about what they did well and how they can improve (Holmes & Smith, 2003; Smith, 2008).

Providing this kind of feedback often requires more work from instructors, but when instructors think about the situation from their students' perspective, they may find it easier to make the additional investment of time and energy.

Empathy

Empathizing with students means understanding their point of view. This understanding comes from listening to student's questions and suggestions, and acknowledging their ideas, even when the instructor does not necessarily agree. Studying generational cohorts is one way for instructors to learn more about how students view the world. For instance, Millennials are students born in the late 1970s or 1980s who tend to be technologically savvy, optimistic about the future, and interested in working together with others (Donnison, 2007). However, each student is unique and instructors should not *assume* that they understand a particular student based on generation alone.

Risk

Lecture-style teaching probably appeals to some instructors because it is low-risk. With a little preparation, an instructor can talk for an hour and maintain complete control over the classroom; however, dialogue is unpredictable. Students may ask questions for which the instructor does not have a ready response. Instead of making up answers, or telling students that such questions are off the subject, the instructor should honestly say, "I don't know," and then help the students find answers. This kind of openness may feel uncomfortable but could help to foster trust between the students and the instructor.

Kent and Taylor (2002) stated, "Dialogue, by necessity, involves the sharing of information, individual beliefs, and desires, with others" (p. 28). Instructors can bring their old projects to class for students to critique, or share embarrassing stories about their early careers. As long as an instructor is well-qualified, these expressions of vulnerability will serve to humanize, not discredit

the instructor. When students know that an instructor is not perfect, many will find it easier to have their work criticized by that instructor.

Commitment

All of the elements of dialogue, as applied to education, require hard work from instructors and students. Forcing oneself to listen instead of speaking takes conscious effort. Showing respect for an idea that seems silly or wrong is not easy. Allowing students to work through a problem without jumping in and supplying the answer can take tremendous self-control. There are many days when incorporating dialogue into a class period is much harder and more time-consuming than simply recycling old lecture notes and presentation slides. For all of these reasons, instructors can only use dialogue in their teaching if they genuinely believe in it.

Preparation for Professional Practice

As mentioned earlier, PR professionals need many of the skills associated with dialogue. When PR educators follow dialogic principles, they are not just adding new classroom techniques to their repertoire, they are also adding new content to their courses. Dialogic teachers can model for their students ways of handling conflict, managing decisions, and considering the needs and perspectives of others—all skills related to successful PR practice. Table 1 was created to illustrate the correlation between dialogic principles in PR education and dialogic practice in the real world. Perhaps if teachers point out the connections suggested in Table 1, students can begin to conceptualize the way they themselves will eventually practice their profession.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This article has argued that Kent and Taylor's (2002) model of dialogic PR has potential applications for PR education. The practical suggestions provided are meant to illustrate that potential, not provide an exhaustive list. Future research should use surveys and interviews with

Table 1

Applying Principles of Dialogic PR to Pedagogy and Professional Practice

Principles	Pedagogical Applications	Professional Applications
Mutuality	• Acknowledging that learning requires teachers and students • Group projects • Peer critiques • Teacher participation in student projects	• Appreciating the interdependence of organizations and publics • Functioning in teams and workgroups • Giving and receiving criticism • Giving and receiving instructions
Propinquiry	• Getting to know students' career goals and customizing lessons accordingly • Allowing students to propose or choose assignments that fit their interests • Involving students in the creation of grading rubrics • Providing prompt, meaningful feedback on students' work	• Environmental scanning (especially seeking to understanding the interests of key publics) • Looking for win-win solutions in negotiations • Informing publics of organizational plans before decisions are finalized • Responding promptly and helpfully to inquiries or information requests
Empathy	• Actively listening to students' questions and perspectives • Studying values and characteristics associated with generational cohorts or different cultures	• Creating forums for feedback • Showing sensitivity to public concerns (especially when differences of gender, culture, or socio-economic status may exist)
Risk	• Holding open discussions instead of lecturing only • Allowing students to critique the teacher's past projects • Sharing failures and embarrassments (teachers and students)	• Consulting key publics before announcing major initiatives • Meeting with critics of the organization to understand their concerns • Admitting mistakes promptly and taking corrective action
Commitment	• Showing respect for ideas that seem strange or wrong • Taking time to build relationships with students • Redesigning lessons to increase student involvement	• Dealing fairly with activist groups • Cooperating with difficult co-workers • Investing time and resources in organization-public relationships • Revisiting organizational practices to find new opportunities for dialogue

PR educators to identify other pedagogical techniques that fit the dialogic approach. These studies could also help give scholars a better picture of how dialogic instructors already are using dialogue in their classrooms and what areas represent opportunities for growth.

Of course, theories require testing. Dialogic education appears to offer theoretical advantages by fostering better relationships between teachers and students. Some of the applications discussed above have received empirical testing outside the PR field; however, more research within PR education is needed to determine how dialogic principles affect educational outcomes.

Conclusion

The practical suggestions in this article are not novel. What may be new for some readers is the framework provided by dialogic public relations theory. Kent and Taylor's (2002) approach can help PR educators think about their work in the context of *relationships*, not just a job. Some

proponents of dialogic pedagogy, who see dialogue as a way of knowing, will probably view this article as too shallow: however, for reasons discussed above, "pure" dialogic pedagogy is not necessarily a good fit for most PR classes. The approach offered here is intentionally more modest. Perhaps this modesty will also make dialogue more accessible and useful to PR educators and encourage PR scholars to focus more of their research efforts in this neglected area.

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