

D52646BA-4535-4233-83BE-715C86B727F6Abstract for International Conference on Diversity in Organisations. Patras Greece. Sent 9.2.19 Conference is 5-7.6.19.

2019 Special theme is Border Crossing Narratives: learning from the refugee experience.

Theme: Diversity in organisations.

Listening but not hearing: Challenging organisational norms of inclusion for marginalised publics.

Abstract

This research investigates the organisations' ability to be inclusive in their public communication practices. The focus is an Australian organisation known for its inclusive practice to identify gaps between Managers' and clients' experiences of being included.

This study examines two of the organisation's minority clients; people who identify with disability and people who come from a non-English-speaking background. These clients, while distinct, share a lack of recognition and representation in organisational communication processes, concurrently they have a right to be included (Thill and Dreher, 2018, Vardemann-Winter, 2011, 2014, Atkin and Rice, 2013).

Communicating with diverse clients so they are heard and listened to is complex and challenges communicators to design processes that empower and enable a mutually rewarding exchange. Documenting these processes exposes power relations and privileging that impact whether the less powerful are recognised and communicated with or ignored (Goggin 2009; Weerakkody 2015, Thill, 2015,p.3).

The review is achieved through a case study of a for-profit organisation. Data were gathered from the organisation's documentation and interviews with managers on their perspectives for including these clients. Feedback from the organisation's clients reported their experience. A thematic analysis of the data isolated: trusting relationships, norms of practice and cultural capital as key themes for inclusion.

Listening is explored as a process and practice for public communicators to obtain and apply feedback to challenge power relations embedded in processes that exclude people who sit outside the organisation's norm of engagement and privilege the more powerful (Vardemann- Winter, 2014, Macnamara, 2016).