

PROJECT EMPOWERMENT

Race, Ethnicity, and
Disability Research:

Modern Advancements and
Future Endeavors in the Field

Editors: Paul Wehman, PhD
Kelli Williams Gary, PhD

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Research at a Glance



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This research monograph entitled “Race, Ethnicity, and Disability: Modern Advancement and Future Endeavors in the Field” represents the mission of VCU Project Empowerment. This grant project was developed to:

1. evaluate the current practice and methods use to conduct minority disability research,
2. offer research findings initiated at VCU, and
3. improve the research capacity of partner minority-serving institutions.

Therefore, the monograph describes the culmination of minority disability research conducted directly under the auspices of this grant over the past 4 years or at other institutions that clearly represent our mission. Authors who presented at our “Race, Ethnicity, and Disability: State of the Science Conference” in 2012 and other affiliates from partner minority-serving institutions were invited to contribute original or updated research that highlights multiethnic and multicultural issues for a myriad of disabilities. In addition, the monograph includes results from several surveys developed to evaluate the capacity to conduct and utilize minority disability research among rehabilitation faculty and professionals, as well as, the perception of its usefulness to minority rehabilitation consumers.

Section I: Community Integration & Involvement

Improving Recruitment of Minorities in Translational Research: Why Laypersons Matter

Maghboeba Mosavel, PhD
& Michelle Laws, MA
(Virginia Commonwealth University)

Training laypersons, who are also members of minority, poor and under-resourced communities, to conduct research has tremendous potential for building community and enhancing research capacity. Including laypersons in community research has significant implications for the translational nature of health disparities research, especially intervention research. For decades, the practice of research in minority communities has been perceived by the affected communities as an outsider activity with little, if any benefits or relevance to their lived context. With more dedicated funding for community-engaged research, there has been a burgeoning interest among academic researchers and community partners to explore the merits of engaged research. Laypersons, trained in the role of community researcher, embody the principle of capacity building and provide yet another avenue to enhance the translation and applicability of research findings. However, engaging the layperson from the minority or affected community in the overall design and implementation of the research is not without some considerable challenges. Furthermore, unique ethical considerations are necessary to ensure that there is no undue burden to the layperson. Nevertheless, engaging laypersons as community researchers within their own communities can be immensely empowering, and can ensure that interventions develop from findings that are contextual, relevant and effective.

Proposed 10-Step Guidelines: Connecting Minority Clients to Community Resources

Jeong Han Kim, PhD
(Virginia Commonwealth University),
Emily M. Mastroianni, MA (Ball State
University), Lara Barbir, MS, & Tamala U. Taylor,
MS (Virginia Commonwealth University)

Building Cultural Competence at the Pre-Service Level: Incorporating the Service Learning Component

Jenelle Pitt, PhD (California State
University, Fresno), Keith Wilson, PhD (Southern
Illinois University, Carbondale), Jason E. Gines,
MEd, MDiv (Pennsylvania State University),
Allen Lewis, PhD (University of Pittsburgh),
Quinton Boston, PhD (North Carolina A&T State
University), & Garballe Conroe, MS
(Team Decision Making Program)

Descriptive Qualitative Analysis of Minorities with Traumatic Brain Injury Reintegrating into Communities with Different Levels of Socioeconomic Status

Kelli Williams Gary, PhD (Virginia
Commonwealth University)

Advocacy and service delivery are important aspects of training and practice for both mental health and rehabilitation counselors in order to better help minority clients. One way in which counselors can advocate for their minority clients, encourage autonomy and empowerment, as well as address clients' multiple needs, is by directing clients to utilize community resources. Unfortunately there currently are little or no clear step-by-step guidelines to help trainees and professionals navigate the process of connecting clients to community resources. By drawing on the theories, knowledge, and skills of the rehabilitation and mental health counseling fields, this article proposes a set of broad guidelines that can be used by counselors who want to refer their minority clients to community resources.

Building cultural competence in graduate rehabilitation counselor training programs is consistent with the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accreditation standards and Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors issued by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC). While, scholars, practitioners and consumers more or less agree regarding the importance of enhancing cultural competence among those at the pre-service level, more debate exists regarding the most effective ways in which to do so. Rehabilitation counseling research has vetted the utility of a single-course focused on multiculturalism and cultural competence, as well as an infusion approach. However, less emphasis has been placed on "service learning" in rehabilitation counseling literature as a technique to help students develop in this area. Although, many definitions of service learning exist, it can be defined as, "structured learning experiences that facilitate the acquisition of awareness, knowledge, and skills while promoting a commitment to personal, social, civic, and professional responsibility" (Burnett, Long, & Horne, 2005, p. 158). High quality service learning experiences include the following components:

- (a) integrating service learning goals and academic learning goals and objectives,
- (b) meeting real defined community needs,
- (c) engaging in critical reflection throughout the experience, and
- (d) having a structured and transformative learning experience with attention given not only to duration and intensity, but also power differentials in the academic and community partner relationship during development and implementation of the entire experience.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) typically results in physical, cognitive, and emotional deficits that have devastating and long-term effects on subsequent community reintegration (CR) after injury. In addition to injury characteristics, environmental and community factors may also present barriers to successful CR. There is a paucity of research literature that qualitatively examines challenges faced by minorities with TBI as they attempt to reengage in different types of community settings after injury. Using constructs from Christiansen and Baum's (2005) Person Environment Occupational Performance Model as a theoretical framework, a descriptive qualitative analysis was conducted on seven minorities with TBI from middle and lower SES communities in the New York City area. Findings from this qualitative

analysis were matched with preconceived assumptions from previous research literature and five prominent themes emerged related to diminished capacities, emotional state/well-being, personal advancement, social integration, and community support. This research provides a rich description of socioethnic and injury related factors with a community focus and offers empirical support for proposed community-based interventions needed to enhance CR for vulnerable populations with TBI.

Project Empowerment Project Use Survey: A Discussion of Access and Barriers to Research Outcomes for Persons with Disabilities

Steven L. West, PhD, Adam P. Sima, PhD, Jessica L. Bourdon, BS, BA, Peter E. L. Temple, MS, Carolyn W. Graham, PhD, Kelli Williams Gary, PhD (Virginia Commonwealth University), & Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla, PhD (University of Deusto)

Although there is much research exploring barriers and access that people with disabilities (PWDs) encounter (e.g. in rehabilitation, employment), there is no documentation of their access to research outcomes. As part of a multi-project grant with the aims of exploring minority PWDs, Project Empowerment administered a “research use survey” to PWDs of all races/ethnicities. The survey assessed PWD access to research outcomes, including where they find information, access to research about minorities with disabilities, and the relevancy of research to their culture. It was administered to ten non-profit rehabilitation organizations that served PWDs, and from the organizations was sent out to PWDs across the country. It was found that most PWDs only access research a few times a year and when they do, they do it to stay informed on the latest research and learn more about their disability. Further, most use the internet to find research (specifically Google and government websites), and in general feel that disability about minority PWDs was more accessible.

Section 2: Rehabilitation Services & Intervention

Vocational Rehabilitation Professional Accessibility to Multicultural Research

Kelli Williams Gary, PhD, Carolyn W. Graham, PhD, Steven L. West, PhD, Adam P. Sima, PhD, (Virginia Commonwealth University), & Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla, PhD (University of Deusto)

There is documented evidence of health employment disparities among minority populations and particularly within ethnic minorities with disabilities (Capella, 2002; Mays, Cochran, & Barnes, 2007). When investigating employment outcomes of people with disabilities serviced by vocational rehabilitation professionals, European Americans have more favorable employment outcomes than African American and Native Americans (Capella, 2002). It has been reported that ethnic minorities with disabilities may receive less effective vocational rehabilitation than European Americans (Bellini, 2003). This suggests that vocational rehabilitation professionals need more training and access to ethnically diverse research. Current curriculum requirements of vocational rehabilitation programs include at least one multicultural course. However, a 2007 study reported that only 7.7% of the journal articles in four rehabilitation journals focused on ethnic diversity (Lewis, Shamburger, Head, Armstrong, & West, 2007). With one multicultural course and a small amount of research articles addressing ethnic issues in rehabilitation counseling, do vocational rehabilitation professionals believe they have access to adequate multicultural research?

Improving Outcomes for Minorities with Disabilities: The Role of Culture in Rehabilitation

Silvio Lavrador, PhD (Kessler Foundation Research Center) & Denise Krch, PhD (Kessler Foundation Research Center; University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey)

The United States is home to a growing population of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals, with approximately 55 million people speaking a language other than English. Unfortunately, individuals with disabilities from ethnic minority backgrounds receive fewer and poorer quality rehabilitative services; they experience poorer outcomes, lower functional status, poorer standard of living, and diminished rates of return to work or school. Although some of these disparities are explained by differences in socioeconomic status and access to healthcare, discrepancies in rehabilitation progress persist even after adjusting for these factors. Research suggests, rather, that cultural issues play an important role in the overall efficacy of treatment outcomes in minority populations. Culture is a powerful factor that has the ability to influence an individual's perception of illness and recovery, presentation of symptoms, and use of rehabilitation services, thereby impacting outcome potential. Recent studies in medicine (e.g., depression, substance abuse, diabetes) have shown that when culture is addressed in the treatment design, outcomes are significantly improved. Remarkably, culture has not yet been embraced in rehabilitation medicine as a prominent factor in treatment outcomes, making the field inadequately equipped to manage the health care needs of our ethnically diverse population. Two primary approaches to address culture in rehabilitation are proposed:

1. culturally tailoring treatment methodology, and
2. implementing cultural competency training with staff.

The current paper will review existing culturally-sensitive interventions in minority populations, with suggested guidelines for implementing culturally tailored strategies in practice. Additionally, key elements in cultural competency training in rehabilitation, using Pederson's developmental model of multicultural competency as a framework, will be discussed. Emphasis will be placed on developing skills specific to working with Hispanics, the largest ethnic minority group in the U.S. Implications for research and clinical care will be discussed.

Confronting Disparities: Challenges for Vocational Rehabilitation Research

Paul Leung, PhD
(University of North Texas)

There is general consensus that minority racial/ethnic populations have not benefited as well as the majority white population with regard to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) defined in this chapter as the state/federal VR program funded primarily by the federal government in partnership with the states. The U.S. Congress recognized in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 that specific populations were "traditionally underserved." While the term "underserved" may have different meanings to different individuals, the term as used in the Rehabilitation Act refer to groups not served as well because of race and ethnicity. In more contemporary terminology, "traditionally underserved" would be considered to be disparity between these racial/ethnic populations and more mainstream white populations.

Establishing the Need for Work-Life Interventions Among Culturally Diverse Caregivers of Persons with Traumatic Brain Injury

Portia L. Cole, PhD (Virginia State University) & Kelli Williams Gary, PhD (Virginia Commonwealth University)

With the increasing incidence of traumatic brain injury among culturally diverse families, there has also been increased attention to the dual demands of employment and caregiving. In this article, we contend that culturally diverse caregivers are an understudied group of workers. We examine literature to assist in conceptualizing the relationship between cultural orientation and caregiving, work-life stress, and organizational responses. Implications for strengthening the cultural responsiveness of work-life initiatives are discussed.

Profile of Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity in a State Behavioral Health Care Organization

Pamela Lewis, PhD (Department of Medical Assistance Services)

Persistent racial and ethnic disparities in access and utilization of behavioral health care services have highlighted the need for cultural competence among providers. Despite recent advances in educational interventions and cultural competency, identifying effective educational interventions will help improve the quality of care by increasing cultural competency among behavioral health care providers. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of a planned intervention (cultural competence education course) among behavioral health care providers. Employing a repeated measures design, baseline surveys were administered and participants were randomized to control and intervention conditions and participants were tested again at Time 2 (post-test) and Time 3 (follow-up). Data was analyzed using profile analysis. The results suggest that the cultural competence education intervention had a significant positive effect on the level of Cultural awareness and sensitivity (CAS). This study shows some support for the usefulness for planned change interventions to both improve the quality of care and cultural competence of behavioral health care providers' journey toward improving recovery among persons with behavioral health and developmental disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Acceptance: Rationale for Bias in the Rehabilitation Process

Keith Wilson, PhD (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale), Jason E. Gines, MEd, MDiv (Pennsylvania State University), & Kelly F. Glassett, PhD (Office of Teacher Education)

Given the demographic shift in the United States, it is obvious that we are transitioning into the new millennium with actual and projected growth in the racial and ethnic minority populations. However, racial minority consumers remain underrepresented among those receiving services from vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies. While we recognize many variables that can affect VR outcomes (e.g., severity of disability), there is a theme that is consistent through many of the outcomes relative to VR eligibility and acceptance. This article briefly examines the findings of past researchers who have explored the reasons for discrepancies within the vocational rehabilitation (VR) system. Future research and considerations for VR counselors are discussed.

Section 3: Faculty Access & Mentoring

Research Productivity Supports Among Rehabilitation Faculty

Carolyn W. Graham, PhD, Kelli Williams Gary, PhD, Steven L. West, PhD, Adam P. Sima, PhD, Peter E. L. Temple, MS (Virginia Commonwealth University), & Juan Carlos Arango-Lasprilla, PhD (University of Deusto)

Faculty evaluations are based on teaching, research, and service (Green, 2008; Terpstra & Honoree, 2009; Youn & Price, 2009). The weighting of each of these three domains within the tenure and promotion review process, varies depending on the type of institution of higher education (IHE), with more emphasis typically placed on either research or teaching (Green, 2008; Terpstra & Honoree, 2009; Youn & Price, 2009). For example, smaller minority serving institutions typically place a higher value on teaching and student advisement; whereas, larger research-intensive universities value the publications and monies secured from external grant funding (Carey, et al., 2005). However, research productivity and teaching are both important for tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure faculty (Bland, Center, Finstad, & Risbey, 2006; Wong & Tierney, 2001; Youn & Price, 2009). Although the value assigned to research productivity may be weighted differently based on the type of institution, assessment of faculty research productivity is typical component of faculty evaluation, particularly in the case of tenure (Chapin, 2006; Dunn, Millard, Satcher, & Cain, 2003; Green, 2008; Hadre, Beesle, Miller & Pace, 2011; Youn & Price, 2009).

Shaping the Future: The Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty in Allied Health

William Talley, RhD &
Gail M. Lankford, MEd
(University of Maryland, Eastern Shore)

The literature supports the assumption that promoting diversity in behavioral and allied health profession faculty may have a positive impact on improved access and quality of care for minority populations. The subsequent lack of minority faculty in academic settings can therefore be seen as a barrier in both the recruitment and retention of minority students and the ability of their respective fields to effectively serve a population that is becoming increasingly diverse here in the U.S.A. The author proposes to examine the literature to explain how this is currently being addressed and what best practices exist.

Alcohol and Drug Consumption of Ethnic Minority College Students with Disabilities

Steven L. West, PhD, Carolyn W. Graham,
PhD, & Peter E. L. Temple, MS (Virginia
Commonwealth University)

Although college student alcohol and drug consumption rates are reported frequently, the consumption rates of college students with disabilities have not been examined. A national survey of college students with disabilities was conducted to determine the alcohol and drug consumption of college students with disabilities. This study examines the consumption rates of African American and Hispanic college students with disabilities and academic correlates (GPA, probation, and suspension).

Section 4: Student Access & Mentoring

Mentoring: Can It Help Latinos Move Up the Ladder?

Anitza M. San Miguel, EdD (Northern Virginia
Community College)

A phenomenological study was conducted to reveal a broad understanding on how mentoring can help Latino students achieve a college degree and move up the career ladder. In-depth interviews, coding, analysis, and careful interpretation resulted in two major themes: support system and importance of mentoring. These themes revealed common traits and characteristics the participants shared that made them successful. The results of the study revealed that it is essential to have a support system, the support and encouragement of mentors is crucial in an individual's career advancement, and mentoring can be important to an individual's success both academically and professionally. The findings suggest that creating and implementing mentoring programs would have positive impact on the Latino population and that this may encourage Latinos to successfully pursue a career.

The Relationship Between the Use of Academic Accommodations and Successful Program Completion of Students with Disabilities at Community Colleges

Mark A. Richardson, PhD
(Virginia State University)

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the use of academic accommodations and successful program completion of students with disabilities enrolled in community colleges. Current and past research has focused on the role, faculty perception and student satisfaction of Disability Support Services (DSS) at postsecondary institutions. However, evidence that the use of academic accommodations actually aids in the successful program completion rate of post-secondary students with disabilities does not exist. A causal-comparative research method approach was taken to examine secondary data provided by the Office of Student Accommodations at large two campus community college. Through this approach, this research study questioned whether a relationship exists between a dependent variable (successful program completion) and independent variables (use of academic accommodations, disability category, academic program and academic campus setting). This research study also questioned whether there exists a relationship between a dependent variable (use of academic

accommodations) and independent variables (disability category, academic campus setting, academic program and successful program completion). Results indicated that users and non-users of academic accommodations are both highly successful in completing their programs. Students with medical and physical disabilities are less likely to access accommodations than those with other disabilities, more likely to never access academic accommodations, less likely to use accommodations frequently and consequently less likely to successfully complete their program than students with other disabilities. Findings also indicate that students with disabilities at the suburban campus were more likely to use and access accommodations frequently and more likely to successfully complete their academic programs than students with disabilities at the urban downtown campus. Furthermore, this study found that there was no significant relationship between the use of academic accommodations and program/major or a significant relationship between frequency of use and program/major. Results of this study and the impact of these findings are discussed.

Accessibility of Higher Education Web Pages for Students with Disabilities

Alberto Guzman, PhD (University of Arizona),
Shawn Dimpfl, MA, & Fabricio Balcazar, PhD
(University of Illinois at Chicago)

The ADA mandates that all public institutions, such as state universities, be accessible to people with disabilities. Due to the growing importance of the internet, online learning, and an ever widening digital divide, we wanted to see if state university websites were digitally accessible as their campuses are becoming increasingly physically accessible. Fifty university home pages (one from each state) and their corresponding disability services web pages were tested for accessibility using the automatic tool WebXact, manual inspections with a screen reader and visual inspections. Findings illustrated that both sets of pages continue to include inaccessible features many of which can be easily resolved and without compromising the main structure or context of the web page. Furthermore, the results showed the importance of conducting manual checks in addition to automatic checks that are insufficient alone to uncover all of the inaccessible aspects of a given web page. Recommendations are given for future research on web accessibility as well as potential negative consequences of inaccessible web pages to universities and people with disabilities.

For more information regarding this upcoming Project Empowerment Research Monograph, and to purchase, please go to the following website:

www.vcu-projectempowerment.org



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