

The Capacity Builder

Newsletter of the
Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research
University of Illinois at Chicago

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UIC

Center Collaborators

Fabricio Balcazar, Ph.D.,
Center Director,
University of Illinois-Chicago

Yolanda Suarez, Ph.D.,
Associate Director,
University of Illinois-Chicago

Tina Taylor-Ritzler, M.A.,
Center Coordinator,
University of Illinois-Chicago

Celestine Willis, M.A.,
Training Coordinator,
University of Illinois-Chicago

Reginald J. Alston, Ph.D.,
University of Illinois Urbana-
Champaign

Glenn Fujiura, Ph.D.,
University of Illinois-Chicago

Carol Gill, Ph.D.,
University of Illinois-Chicago

Kimberly Hall, M.A.
University of Illinois-Chicago

Brigida Hernandez, Ph.D.,
DePaul University

Christopher B. Keys, Ph.D.,
DePaul University

Paul Leung, Ph.D.,
University of North Texas

Maria E. Restrepo-Toro, M.S.,
CRSP,
Boston University

Henry Scalpcane, B.A.,
University of Montana

For more information, please contact:

Nahrain Israel
312-413-1806 (Phone)
312-413-1804 (Fax)
312-413-0453 (TDD)

Check out our website:
www.uic.edu/orgs/empower

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that we publish this first newsletter of the Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research. We want to take this opportunity to introduce our new Center at the University of Illinois at Chicago and share information about the work that we are doing.

Our Center, funded by National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), aims to build the capacity of state vocational rehabilitation agencies (VR) and community based-organizations (CBOs like Centers for Independent Living and/or other agencies serving minorities with disabilities) to document the impact of their programs and develop more culturally competent services. In addition, we are devoted to improving the capacity of researchers to include individuals with disabilities from underrepresented groups in their research, outreach and dissemination efforts. Our work involves a national network of collaborators who are conducting a variety of research, evaluation, and training projects to fulfill our mission. In this newsletter we introduce our research and training activities and our collaborators. In future newsletters we will highlight the work of our collaborators and provide updates on our research and training activities. We also invite you to visit our website where you can find additional information about our activities: <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/empower>.

It is our hope that we can explore ways to collaborate to improve the inclusion of minorities with disabilities in our communities. Please feel free to contact us if you are interested in any of our research or training. We would welcome the opportunity to work with you.

If you would like more information about our work, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to talking with you soon and exploring possible ways that we may collaborate to improve the lives of ethnic minorities with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Fabricio E. Balcazar, Ph.D.
Director & Associate Professor

Yolanda Suarez, Ph.D.
Associate Director & Associate Professor



Center Staff Meeting.
Pictured (from bottom
left, clockwise):
Noam Ostrander,
Fabricio Balcazar,
Edurne Garcia
(hidden), Alberto
Guzman, Yolanda
Suarez and
Tina Ritzler.

Research and Training Activity

Project A: Building the capacity of community-based organizations for participatory research and program evaluation.

Principal Investigator:
Yolanda Suarez,
Ph.D.



This project aims to increase the capacity of community-based organizations, vocational rehabilitation centers and independent living centers to evaluate their programs and services and provide culturally sensitive services through training and ongoing technical assistance and support. Community-based organizations from five regions of the country are involved in the project and work with our regional coordinators. Agencies that are interested in receiving evaluation training should contact Dr. Suarez at ysuarez@uic.edu.

Region	Base	Location of Target Agencies
South	Paul Leung, TX	Dallas, Miami
East	Maria Restrepo-Toro, MA	Boston, Washington DC, New York
West	Kimberly Hall, CA	Los Angeles, Salinas, San Francisco
North	Hank Scalpcane, MT	Missoula, Billings
Midwest	Christopher Keys, IL	Chicago, Joliet

Some Project A Faces



Left: Edurne Garcia, Graduate Research Assistant and Ph.D. Student in Disability Studies at UIC.
Right: Dr. Christopher Keys, Midwest Regional Coordinator and Professor and Chair, Psychology Department, DePaul University.



Research Activities

Project B: Racial identity and cultural mistrust as psychocultural correlates of rehabilitation success for African Americans.

Principal Investigator:
Reginald J. Alston,
Ph.D.



Empirical evidence of how cultural and/or sociopolitical forces may impact the worldview of an ethnic minority with a disability is integral to improving our understanding of the complex interplay among client characteristics, agency variables, societal factors, and rehabilitation success. In regard to African American clients, racial identity and cultural mistrust are two psychocultural factors that may have a profound influence on their successful rehabilitation and may help to explain the low representation and poor outcome of African Americans in the rehabilitation process.

The research objectives of this project are to:

1. delineate the field implications of racial identity development for rehabilitation counseling practice with African Americans,
2. identify counseling challenges associated with providing rehabilitation counseling services to African American clients who exhibit manifestations of cultural mistrust, and
3. identify ways in which rehabilitation counselors' perceptions of the client may factor into their professional decision-making when serving African Americans with non-internalized racial identity or rehabilitation barriers.

Dr. Alston is currently recruiting state VR agencies to participate in this project. To participate, contact Dr. Alston at alston@uiuc.edu.

Research Activities (Continued)

Project D: Disability determination and provision of vocational rehabilitation services: How good are the tools that are used?

Principal Investigator:
Brigida Hernandez, Ph.D.



The Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) is a federal agency that is authorized to carry out key provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. By providing funds to state vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies, RSA establishes programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment and independent living goals.

The purposes of this research project are to:

1. review existing literature concerning the assessment of ethnic minority individuals when making disability determination and providing vocational rehabilitation services;
2. investigate the most commonly used standardized tests, surveys, and procedures for making disability determination and providing VR services in the states of Illinois, California, Florida, and New York,
3. conduct a capacity-building workshop in the four aforementioned states to improve the process of disability determination and provision of VR services for ethnic minority clients,
4. develop and disseminate a practitioners' guide to culturally-competent diagnosing and service delivery, and
5. disseminate project findings via conferences (including a national conference sponsored by the center), research publications in rehabilitation/disability/psychology journals, and the center's website.

Project E: Standards for Culturally Competent Disability and Rehabilitation Research.

Principal Investigator:
Glenn Fujiura, Ph.D.



The goal of this project to develop and publish three authoritative works on disability research in the area of minorities and disability. The intent is to make available to the research community a comprehensive synthesis and analysis of the current status and gaps in the methodologies used in extant research. The work should serve as a methodological guide for future efforts. The synthesis and analysis will provide: (1) a critical evaluation of existing research tactics, including review of sampling strategies, measurement validity, and design, and analysis; and (2) identification of critical gaps in the epistemological process and recommendations for filling those gaps (for example, the need for more outcomes-based evaluations, or recommended use of multi-level statistical methods to account for neighborhood poverty).

Training Activity

Cultural Competence Training Workshops

Celestine Willis, M.A. and Fabricio Balcazar, Ph.D.



The purposes of the training are to:

1. increase awareness of participants' (and others') cultural identify and Ethno-history, attitudes and values about cultural diversity,
2. increase participants' knowledge of factors that determine cultural differences between African Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans with disabilities,
3. help participants identify ways to create a more welcoming environment to consumers from various cultures, and
4. help participants plan specific actions to improve services to consumers from different cultures.



Some of our Center Staff

UIC-based Center Research Assistants and Key Support People

Vladimir Cuk
Shawn Dimpfl
Carlos Drazen
Edurne Garcia
Alberto Guzman
Nahrain Israel
Ximena Melo
Shelby
Scarborough
Maria Urso



Paul Leung



Fabricio Balcazar



Alberto Guzman



Tina Taylor-Ritzler

University of Illinois
at Chicago

Center for Capacity Building on Minorities with Disabilities Research



Department of Disability and Human Development (MC 626)
College of Applied Health Sciences
1640 West Roosevelt Road
Chicago, IL 60608-6904

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