McNair Summer Research Journal

2008

McNair Summer Research Journal 2008

Herma Volpe-van Dijk
The College at Brockport, hvolpeva@brockport.edu

Ronald E. McNair

Summer Research Journal

The College at
BROCKPORT
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

2008

TRiO

RONALD E. McNAIR
POST-BACCALAUREATE
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

Volume 13

2008 Ronald E. McNair
Summer Research Journal
The College at Brockport
Volume 13

About TRiO Programs

TRiO refers to six programs funded by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. The original Title IV TRiO programs are Upward Bound, Talent Search and Student Support Services. Even though more programs were added to the grant, the name TRiO has been retained. The additional programs include Educational Opportunity Centers, the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, and a training program for TRiO staff. In general, TRiO programs are focused on providing educational opportunities to first-generation college students who come from low-income families and students with disabilities.

About Ronald E. McNair

Ronald Erwin McNair was born October 21, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina. He attended North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, where he graduated magna cum laude in 1971 with a Bachelor of Science in physics. He continued his education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, earning his PhD in 1976. He went on to become a recognized expert in the field of laser technology with the Hughes Laboratory. In 1978, McNair realized his dream of becoming an astronaut. Selected from a pool of 10,000 applicants for the space shuttle program, McNair became the second African American to fly in space. After his death aboard the space shuttle Challenger in 1986, Congress approved funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program, which is dedicated to the support and promotion of the high standards of achievement exemplified by McNair. Those who knew McNair characterized him as fearless, determined, and accustomed to applying all available resources to resolving any problem he faced.

The Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program at The College at Brockport, State University of New York

Designed for first-generation and low income students as well as students from groups underrepresented at the doctoral level, the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program at The College at Brockport encourages talented students to pursue a doctoral degree.

The program promotes graduate studies by providing participants with seminars and workshops germane to the pursuit of graduate education, a mentored summer research experience, and opportunities to present this research at professional conferences.

Table of Contents:

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Dear Readers:

I am pleased to introduce you to the 13th volume of the Ronald E. McNair Summer Research Journal. This journal is a compilation of the work our scholars complete each summer as they learn to conduct research in their chosen field.

Under the guidance of dedicated faculty members, McNair scholars design and implement projects that teach them the fundamentals of creating and using knowledge, and provides them with their first taste of the graduate and professional world they are preparing to enter.

The Summer Research Program takes our students beyond the average undergraduate experience, setting them apart from their peers as it elevates their education to a level not usually available to students pursuing a bachelor's degree.

I am sincerely grateful to the 40 faculty members who invest so much of themselves in moving our students forward. The expertise and encouragement they provide is critical to the success of our McNair scholars, not only during their undergraduate years, but most importantly when they enter the competitive world of graduate school.

Barbara J. Thompson

Project Director
Ronald E. McNair
Post-Baccalaureate
Achievement Program

The fact that 194 of our 469 McNair alumni have successfully earned master's degrees, 17 JD's, three MD's, and 24 doctoral degrees is a tribute to the quality of the work our mentors expect and elicit from their students. Those involved in nurturing our future professionals in this manner deserve to be highly recommended.

I look forward to seeing our scholars enter the ranks of academia and continue the process of personally investing in future generations, passing on what they have received through the dedication of our mentors, program staff and campus community.

Acknowledgements

Women's Stories

The purpose of this research is to document women's life experiences over the last seventy-five years. Women's stories provide examples of leadership and ingenuity over several generations, and this research uncovers the many hidden intricacies women attach to these experiences. This project suggests that the private nature of women's stories is all too often left outside of public knowledge. However, women's personal triumphs offer a perspective outside the narrow dimensions of historical reference and memory, where age-old record keeping structures are often restricted by patriarchal standards.

Each participant was presented with the following research prompt: Please think about and recall a life challenge you as a woman (or your mother, grandmother, sister, aunt, friend etc.) has experienced on your life's journey and how, if at all, this challenge was overcome? Please include in your story the approximate year in which the "challenge" occurred.

While each story is unique, the broader themes inform our knowledge about women's realities such as "significance of interpersonal relationships," "limitations in achieving success in education," "reaching one's highest potential," "self-expression and self-confidence," and "life as an unplanned journey." People, or lack thereof, were a consistent and reoccurring dynamic. Some women found the relationships to their mothers, or as mothers, to be significant to their memory of self, reporting both admiration and resentment of them as shaping their sense of self. Others experienced a life-long journey in navigating

Jamie Bergeron

Mentor:
Barbara LeSavoy, PhD
Women Studies

toward their mothers. Some women expressed gratitude for motherhood; other women found that it was not a logical path for them to take. Interaction with partners was another interpersonal dimension. For some, an abusive partner relationship served as a catalyst for seeking meaning and determining one's goals. For others, a partner's path served as a guide for a woman's journey. Still others saw their partners as confidants and mentors.

Mentor relationships form an overarching theme. Mentors came in the form of family members and friends, and people in the academies. The most significant relationships seem to be those that helped them in achieving goals and self-confidence. Some women sought to reconcile their lack of mentor relationships and viewed their absence as a loss. Academic environments often served to validate and expand their intellectual and self-reflective confidence. Reaching one's highest potential was linked with gaining and maintaining a sense of self and self-confidence. None of the participants had an experience in which they were wholly aware of their highest potential; rather, they sought to reach this potential in a series of calculated acts. Most women found that in gaining awareness of their highest potential, they required a sense of self-confidence which came from the help of mentors, trial and error, and often surprise.

This "Women's Stories" project attempted to give voice to women's realities. Who and what determines how we are; what leads us to know who we are; and what is important in our lives? These women reported that it is all important.

Reinventing Shakespeare in the Twentieth-Century African American Novel: *The Tempest* in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*

In the interest of the literary tradition, the Western canon, a compilation of books and other art forms used to shape critical thinking in Western society, is viewed by some critics as a power structure which disallows African American literature based on its perceived inability to model itself on prestigious authors like Dante, Ovid, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare.

Since the beginning of African American literary culture, Black authors have shared their myths, legendary heroes, inspiration, and historical landscape through the oral tradition of dancing, singing, and story-telling, African Americans continue to reinvent themselves and the world around them through novels. In her novel *Mama Day*, Gloria Naylor connects with sixteenth-century Western culture and their fascination with nature and the unknown. This research analyzes the homogeneous tensions and conflicts narrated in the discourse of Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* and William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Additionally, this research explores both novels for erudite comparisons in their use of divination, astrology, miracles, conjuration, witchcraft, folk cures, ghosts, omens, and magic.

Western novels and poetry are reinventions of borrowed African tales, and massive African symbolism is found in early European literature (Lee 137). In *Mama Day*, Naylor creates a complex landscape of relationships linked to the past, but tied to the present. For instance, the island evokes the magical realm of William Shakespeare's Prospero, an example of Naylor's use of various motifs to deepen the novel. The master magician of Willow Springs is Miranda Day, the spiritual heir of the unusual couple who founded the island community in the early days of the nineteenth century (Pearlman 99).

Naylor's language and character names serve to symbolically connect the relationship of Ophelia to that of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Additionally, the relationship of land and water in *Mama Day* mirrors Prospero's and Miranda's separation from reality and truth in *The Tempest*. The island in *The Tempest* represents an enclosed space where individuals acquaint themselves with one another for the purpose of reconciliation. Likewise, the island in *Mama Day* affords its residents private space separate from the world beyond the bridge.

Throughout her novel, Naylor alludes to the world of *The Tempest* and borrowing from Shakespeare, Naylor intimates his philosophy of the "Elizabethan way of looking at things– the human world mirrors the universe" (Kermode). The mythic ambiance of Shakespeare's sea island characters is magically reinvented in the Day's panoramic view of Willow Springs. Naylor blends the literary past with the literary present to provide an African American perspective on Western literature, with a special emphasis on Shakespearean drama.

Just as literary historians look for the origins of Renaissance literature in Petrarch, Naylor finds the historical grounding for her twentieth-century novel in the works of William Shakespeare. Clearly, Naylor's novel has its roots in *The Tempest* and if read allegorically, critics may envision the many parallels *Mama Day* shares with *The Tempest*.

Melissa Browning

Mentor:
Joseph Ortiz, PhD
English

Persuasion and Prejudice: Reacting to Alternative Viewpoints

The goal of this study is to examine the individual characteristics that determine how likely a person is to be persuaded as well as how prejudice a person would towards an alternative viewpoint. It also examines what type of persuasive appeal works best for which individual characteristics. Lesser known, not necessarily wrong, alternative viewpoints in regards to HIV/AIDS, diet, and 9/11 were used.

My study examined characteristics correlated with degree of persuasion and prejudice toward a minority view. My study had two independent (between-subjects) factors: 1) type of persuasive appeal (an emotional vignette, a logical list of bulleted arguments, or a no-appeal control) and 2) topic (HIV/AIDS, 9/11, or diet). My study administered to 160 psychology students using a survey format. All surveys contained individual-difference measures, followed by mainstream and minority (or control) views.

Sierra Bunton

Mentor:
Kelly Brennan Jones. PhD.
Psychology

Lastly, I assessed persuasion to the minority viewpoint and prejudice toward those holding the minority viewpoint (i.e., dissenters).

Many individual difference characteristics were examined but only one remained significant in a multiple-regression analysis: Results showed that people high in Right-Wing Authoritarianism (who submit to authority, are very traditional, as well as hostile toward outgroups) were less persuaded by alternative viewpoints and more prejudiced toward dissenters. The type-of-appeal factor was not significant, but the topic factor was: There was less persuasion and more prejudice regarding HIV/AIDS relative to 9/11 or diet. It may be that people are less likely to believe alternative HIV-AIDS views because they are less familiar with them, compared with alternate views on other topics.

An Analysis of the Relationship between Family Communication Patterns, Family Functioning, Social Comparison, Body Image, and the Media

Juan Castañeda
Cassandra Hamm

Mentor:
Melanie Page, PhD
Oklahoma State University

Thin ideal internalization characterizes acceptance of, or overt agreement with social standards of thinness, and has been found to moderate the effects of media exposure on body dissatisfaction (Stice & Shaw, 1994). A common factor in both body dissatisfaction and thin-ideal internalization is that of social comparison. However, very little is known about the influence the family has on one's vulnerability to the media and propensity to engage in social comparison.

A recent review of the literature indicated that there is a dearth of research pertaining to the influence that aspects of family functioning and communication patterns have on one's susceptibility to the ideal physique portrayed in the media and unhealthy levels of social comparison. General family functioning as well as family communication have played key roles in various areas of psychological research including but not limited to topics in self esteem, depression, and eating pathology. The current study's main purpose was to explore and analyze how specific family processes (functionality and communication patterns) may contribute to individuals' susceptibility to negatively perceive their body images and their tendencies for unhealthy levels of social comparison. The study also explored relationships between media, body image, and social comparison.

An independent measures t-statistic was utilized to first assess the effect that the media has on perceived body image. It was found that individuals in the experimental condition (M = 6.7, SD = 1.37) had significantly higher scores on a measure of body satisfaction than individuals in the control group (M = 5.6, SD = 1.34), t (24) = -2.12, p= 05. T-tests further indicated that having high levels of tendencies for social comparison did not have a significant effect on perceived body image assessed by the Body Image States Scale, t(24) = .021, p> .05.

Bivariate Correlational analyses were also performed to assess the relationship between body image, family functioning, social comparison, and family communication processes. The data revealed a moderate, positive, and significant correlation between family functioning and one's tendency for social comparison, r(24) = .47. Positive significant correlation were found between family communication style and perceived body image assessed by the Body Image States Scale (r = .51) and the Multidimensional Body-Self Relations Questionnaire – Appearance Scales (r = .67). The analysis also revealed that tendencies to socially compare had strong and significant correlations with body image assessed by the Appearance Schema Inventory-Revised (r= .5) and the Body Image Quality-of-Life Inventory (r= .51).

The findings did not support the current literature regarding one's tendency to socially compare and the media's affect on perceived body image. The relationship between family processes (functioning and communication patterns) and body image was assessed. The findings pertaining to this element of the study indicated that individuals with functional families and conversation oriented communication patterns have a positive attitudinal disposition towards one's perceived body image indicating that these individuals tend not to measure their self worth by their physical appearance. The results of the study also indicated that individuals who have functioning families also have less of a tendency to socially compare themselves to others. This may be occurring because functional families comprise of supportive environments that provide adequate emotional support within the family domain, in turn leading the individual to seek less approval through social comparison. However, more research overall is needed to expand on the current findings.

The Prevalence of Alcohol Abuse in African American Adolescents

Raquel Cherry

Mentor:
Celia W. Watt, PhD
Health Science

The focus of this literature review is to bring attention to the prevalence of alcohol use in African American adolescents because there are very few studies that focus on this topic. The articles reviewed focus on different combinations of problem behaviors concerning adolescents in conjunction with alcohol use.

Several themes emerged such as early childhood factors and alcohol use in adolescents, other substances and use of alcohol among adolescents, consumption rates of alcohol in adolescents, problem behaviors and the use of alcohol, socio demographic, family and peer influences on alcohol abuse and other problem behaviors, and interventions used to stop the use of alcohol in adolescents.

Hayatbakhsh, Mohammad R., Mamun, Abdullah A., Najman, Jake M., O'Callaghan, Michael J., Bor, William, & Alati, Rosa (2001) look at early childhood use of alcohol factors which may have lead to the use of alcohol and other substances. Reifman, Alan, Barnes, Grace M., Dintcheff, Barbara A., Uhteg, Lois, Farell Michael P. (2001) examine how adolescents' health values buffer their social – environmental risks for adolescent alcohol use. Barnes, Grace M., Farell, Michael P., Banerjee, Sarbani (1994) examine family influences on alcohol abuse and other problem behaviors among African American (and white) adolescents. Another article by Cloud (2008) examines the question of whether or not parents drinking with their kids presents risks. The association of early childhood factors and the use of alcohol are elaborated on and examined. Factors such as peer drinking, parental alcohol abuse, poor parental monitoring, and poor communication between parent and child were all discussed.

In another area, McLeod (2008) examines the interaction between caffeine and alcohol and its impact on impairment. This study also includes disturbing data on how these products are marketed towards adolescents.

Consumption rates of drugs and alcohol in adolescents of different racial backgrounds were reviewed by Warheit, George J., Vega, William A., Khoury, Elizabeth L., Gil, Andres A., Elfenbein, Pamela H. (2008). In this study, a comparative analysis of cigarette, alcohol, and illicit drug use among an ethnically diverse sample of Hispanic, African American, and non-Hispanic white adolescents shows that non-Hispanic white and Hispanic adolescents had higher substance use rates than African Americans. Also Economist (2008) examines drinking of alcoholic beverages by adolescents which shows that the rate of teenage drinking has recently declined due to increased abstinence by African American and Asian teenagers.

Co-occurring problematic behaviors of adolescents using alcohol are discussed in a few studies. Barnes Grace M., Welte John W., Hoffman, Joseph H., Dintcheff, Barbara A. (2005) look at shared predictors of youth gambling, substance use, and delinquency while Fletcher, Bernadette J. (1997) examines the influence of race on initial service planning for distressed African American adolescents.

Connell, Arin M., (2007) examines family interventions and the association of engaging to reduce adolescent problem behaviors. Becker, Sara J. (2008) examines the effectiveness of outpatient interventions for adolescent substances abusers.

The Archaeology of Health

Health conditions and the ways in which people coped with health problems are crucial aspects of the behaviors of individuals in the past. The 19th century marked a time of dramatic transformation in medical knowledge and practices. Ideas such as the germ theory of disease were developed during the 19th century, and medical practices like homeopathy and vegetarianism were made popular during this time.

The literature discussing healthcare systems often depict a clear cut scenario where individuals adhere to only one or the other model of healthcare. The justification for this is often tied into a reaction to the current accepted model of healthcare. The popularity of the new model often depended on its ability to discredit the system that preceded it. Patent medications are often advertised as alternatives to the heroic medicines, or treatments administered by the regular doctors. Much of their appeal was based on how dissatisfied the general public was with the bleeding and purging practices of heroic medicine.

Medicine bottles are commonly found on historic period archaeological sites. They are an indicator of not only what types of medicines were being consumed but also of the origin of the medication and whether they were patent medications or prescriptions from a doctor. In the case of patent medicine bottles it is possible to identify contents that may yield inferences about the illnesses or diseases

Dustin Conklin

Mentor:
LouAnn Wurst, PhD
Anthropology

that individuals may have been suffering from. My investigation will focus on the medicine bottles recovered from the various sites excavated as part of the SUNY Brockport Finger Lakes National Forest Farmstead Archaeology Project over the last eight years.

It is possible to observe patterns pertaining to health and healthcare by analyzing the medicine bottles recovered from archaeological sites. While the literature often depicts healthcare systems as being at odds with one another, it is much more plausible that individuals augmented either of the systems and created their own personalized regimen based on other factors in their lives. Different factors such as age and composition of a household, gender, possible alternative uses for medications, and cost may influence decisions pertaining to healthcare and choice of medications. It seems plausible that medicines associated with female illnesses would be associated with households with more females present in a household, and a household that has an older average age may be associated with medicines for pain relief. By analyzing the assemblages of medicine bottles from these sites, I hope to contribute a greater understanding of healthcare practices by inferring different patterns and factors that may influence healthcare, as well as possibly linking illnesses to demographic information.

Barack Obama:
Is He Black Enough and Does it Matter Anymore?

In my original research project, I asked the question, "Barack Obama: Is He Black Enough?" My research started out as an investigation of an alarming trend I noticed in the writings of several prominent African American writers. The immediate issue was the authentic blackness of presidential candidate Barack Obama. However, I noticed that this same issue was addressed in the book Contending Forces, by Pauline Hopkins and The Sport of the Gods, by Paul Laurence Dunbar. In their writings both authors addressed this issue and showed how it has been a re-occurring theme in the African American community.

In particular I wanted to see how the phenomenon of questioning a person's authentic blackness played out in the area of education. I wanted to look at the effects to the individual and the community as a whole when academically successful blacks have their blackness put under a microscope. Both authors, Hopkins and Dunbar, showed in their writings that this is a dangerous trend. In the long run it stifles the potential of promising African Americans, instead of being able to excel in their chosen areas of expertise. They are always confronted with the idea of their accomplishments being judged by their identities as African Americans. Under this dynamic, if they have an idea that does not play out very well, it is because they are African American. However, if, on the other hand, they have an idea that is original, creative, and electrifying, then it is perceived as due to some special privileges they may have received.

Wali M. Hamidullah

Mentor:
Rynetta Davis, PhD
English

As America approaches November 4, 2008, it begins to appear more and more that Barack Obama has a very good chance of securing the position of President of the United States of America. It is the most powerful political position in the world and the first person of any African descent, whole or partial, to achieve that position.

During an appearance by General Colin Powell on Meet the Press, when he gave Barack Obama his endorsement for President of the United States of America, Powell could not deny that the election of Obama would be "electrifying" for the world, America as a nation, and African Americans in particular. It is perhaps this dynamic that will "electrify" our society bylooking at Mr. Obama simply based upon his experience, skills, and accomplishments. By the same token, it is hoped that other people of color and people in general will begin to be judged on these merits alone.

With this in mind I believe that the effects will trickle down through our society, so that young African Americans and other minority groups will finally be able to excel academically without fear of having their blackness questioned. This, in turn, will allow for more intellectual freedom which can only be a benefit to our nation as a whole. Furthermore, America will be able to set the trend and reclaim its position once again as the promoter of human rights throughout the world.

Tokenism:
What is the Learning Process Really Like for Minority Students?

Nikki Haynesworth

Mentor:
Lynne Moulton, PhD
Sociology

The purpose of this study is to reveal the true experiences and feelings of minority college students when sensitive issues about their culture or heritage are the topic in the classroom, particularly when it is being taught by a teacher who is not of the same culture/ethnicity.

By applying Kanter's theory of tokenism, I will examine the responses of minority students who have been a part of the described setting. The purpose of this project is to find out whether an increase in the number of both minority students and faculty could improve both the learning process as well as the attrition rate of minority students at the collegiate level. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the intricate relationship between minority college students, college faculty who have a historical tendency to be of the predominant race, and the feelings generated by the students during class discussions. Of particular interest is the discourse among the minority student and the instructor when sensitive subjects such as the student's ethnicity or culture are the topic of instruction. This study will examine if there are barriers on a large scale scholastically, culturally and beyond. If data collected reveals that there are in fact barriers or gaps between students and instructors, the examination will seek to identify the implications these divides have on the students attempting to get an education, the instructors attempting to present a meaningful lesson and ultimately the integrity of the classroom/lesson.

This study is important because years after civil laws have attempted to offer minorities equal opportunities, the numbers minorities represent in institutions of higher learning remain disproportionately low. This study could dispel some myths as well as answer questions about the gorged numbers that have been baffling policy makers, educators and researchers alike. Examining and dissecting the experience of the minority student could also be a useful model for future studies. A hands-on, truthful narrative from one's own lived-experience could provide information that is more conducive to promoting the change needed to increase the numbers of students who attend and decrease student attrition rates.

The method used for this study will follow a tripartite model. It will consist of participant observation, formal and informal focus groups, and interviews. This is meant to be a pilot study on the campus of The College at Brockport, State University of New York. It will be expanded nation-wide to other U.S. college campuses in the future and include a survey. Based on preliminary findings through informal dialogue and literature reviews, I expect to find that there are cultural and academic differences that are serving as factors that have an adverse affect on the numbers of minorities represented at the collegiate level. Also, based on Kanter's theory of tokenism, I expect to find that minority students' educational process is a dichotomy from student classed in the predominant group.

Women's Social Transgression in Literature:
Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Crux* in Dialogue with Women's Literature

Maria Wargo Lasch

Mentor:
Rynetta Davis, PhD
English

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there seems to be a common theme in women's literature of the heroine's social transgression. Heroines in literature follow varying paths of social transgression, but how their stories end reflects the consequences of their actions. Oftentimes the stories of heroines who act against the strictures set for them end tragically, suggesting that somehow these women could not exist within the cultural landscape. Charlotte Perkins Gilman uses this theme of social transgression in her novel The Crux, yet she revises the ending. In juxtaposing Gilman's novel with three other canonical texts and discussing the transitional time period, one can see how Gilman modifies the typically tragic ending to allow her heroine's survival and happiness.

The climate of transition at the turn of the century questioned women's place as they moved from domestic to more public roles, gaining education and professional freedoms they did not previously have. Women writers situated their heroines in this transitional space, between the traditional ideals of the Victorian Woman and the modern freedoms of the New Woman. Kate Chopin writes of Edna Pontellier seeking independence from the ideal wife and mother in The Awakening, only to commit suicide rather than be stifled by tradition. Edith Wharton uses the ambiguous death of Lily Bart in The House of Mirth to suggest that whether or not Lily's death is the result of an accidental or intentional overdose, she simply could not survive the society's expectations of her to marry and

act as an ornament for her husband. Similarly, Nella Larsen in the 1920s writes Helga Crane in Quicksand struggling with the expected role of wife and mother. These three heroines initially try to assert themselves as individuals and create their own identities apart from what society expects of them, yet they find that the society condemns them for their actions. Unable to negotiate the expectations of the traditional society with the new expectations emerging for women, these heroines end tragically.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman follows this theme of women's social transgression in her novel The Crux, yet she modifies it, changing the expectations and changing the ending. The heroine, Vivian Lane, is stifled in the expectations laid out for her by the traditional New England society in which she lives with her parents. Like the other heroines, she does not fit in the traditional society. Vivian removes herself from the society which restricts her, and in the company of other women, moves west to find herself and create her own identity. She geographically separates herself from the traditional society and its expectations of her as a woman, leaving her parents' home before she is married. She refuses to live within the societal expectations set for her. This social transgression ensures her survival. Vivian stands up for herself and is able to take responsibility for her own decisions. In the end, she finds herself, happiness, and independence even in marriage. Gilman writes Vivian a happy ending in response to the tragic endings written by Chopin, Wharton, and Larsen. Clearly, it is possible for a woman to create her own identity and survive happily.

The Effects of Parenting Courses Offered to Incarcerated Women

Anna Lawson

Mentor:
Jason A. Dauenhauer, PhD, MSW
Social Work

Background

Approximately 70% of incarcerated women between the ages of 18-34 have children under the age of 18. While in prison, many of these women are denied access to their children and must show evidence of being able to provide care for them upon completion of their sentences. The goal of the Step by Step organization in Rochester, NY is to help incarcerated women recognize their gifts and strengths as the pathway to restore their lives. Currently, the program offers a parenting course for women who are incarcerated at Albion Correctional Facility.

Purpose

The purpose of this proposed research project is to formally analyze pre/post evaluation forms designed to assess the self-reported knowledge of women who have successfully completed the course. This proposed project will provide Step by Step with valuable information about their curriculum by helping to determine which aspects of the course need to be modified to improve knowledge. Results of this research can assist Step by Step in obtaining grants that will continue to fund their programs.

Method

A total of 11 parenting classes have been provided to approximately 140 incarcerated women at Albion Correctional Facility in Batavia between January 2005 and April 2008. Staff members selected only participants who 1) completed the skills class and 2) completed both pre and post evaluation. This selection process narrowed the information to 61 participants. Each participant was administered a 17-item questionnaire that covered demographics as well as open-ended and multiple choice knowledge questions.

Results

Of the 61 women whose evaluation forms were analyzed, each participant reported having 2.89 children (SD: 2.20), range 1-11. A majority (78.7 %, n = 48) reported having regular contact with their children, some (6.6 %, n = 4) reported having no contact, and 14.8 (n = 9) reported having contact with some, but not all children. Letters were the most frequently reported form of contact (91.8 %, n = 56), followed by phone calls (62.3 % , n =38), and visits (41% , n = 25).

This study concluded that most participants score positively on the pre and post test. Several questions showed a slight improvement in knowledge, some showed a decrease, and some stayed the same. The knowledge question with the most improvement was "It is easiest to get children to tell you how they feel by; making an open-ended statement that shows you are listening," (pre-test: 88.5 % vs. post-test: 95 %). Another question that showed improvement was: "The job of teenagers is to grow up and grow away. They learn to do this by …" (pre-test: 83.6 % vs. post-test: 88.1 %). Questions related to domestic abuse and child punishment stayed the same.

Conclusion

The results of this evaluation indicate the program is successful at improving incarcerated women's parenting knowledge. However, there is a need to conduct future research due to limitations regarding unknown reliability/validity of knowledge questions and the small sample size. Follow- up of this study will include further analysis of qualitative/open-ended questions, a larger sample size, and reliability/validity testing of measures.

How Do Hospitals Address Uncompensated Care

Gabriel Perez

Mentor:
Thomas J. Golaszewski, EdD
Health Science

Background:

America is in a state of economic crisis. With a recession looming, Americans face an ever growing cost of living. The price of food has risen, home foreclosures are rampant, gas prices at one point topped $4 a gallon, and the cost of accessible health care continues to outpace the cost of living. Recent data indicates that the cost of health care has doubled since 1999. As a result, fewer people can afford coverage. Research indicates that at any given time in our nation, 15% of the population has no form of health care available to them. This result is not a function of recent immigration; four out of the five of this 15% are U.S. citizens

The uninsured are sometimes labeled the "forgotten population." In the United States, over $30 billion goes toward uncompensated medical care, a bill that providers cannot support. To ignore this population is irresponsible; the number is steadily growing and becoming a major national issue. Given the above, the purpose of this research is to examine how hospitals address uncompensated care.

Method:

Dr. Thomas Golaszewski, EdD, who oversees the Health Care Administration concentration for the Health Science department for The College at Brockport, advised on the necessary research methods and provided useful insights in the field. The project consisted of a literature review and site visits to Rochester metro hospitals. The main resources at these sites were interviews conducted with people who work at the account receivable offices of the hospital; their titles were Medicaid Liaisons experts. Their specialty is to handle issues for people who come in with little to no insurance. The Medicaid Liaisons experts assist people in receiving some form of health coverage to compensate their stay in the hospital. The College at Brockport Drake Library provided resources and search engines which were used to identify articles and peer-reviewed journals. Search terms included: population in the U.S. without health coverage, hospitals and uncompensated medical care, and health insurance.

Preliminary Findings:

To help address the issue of uncompensated care, hospitals have programs in effect known as Charity Care, which fall under the umbrella of financial assistance. There are times when consumers need care and will have a difficult time paying for services provided to them. Charity Care programs provide discounts to qualifying individuals based on income. Consumers with limited income, no insurance, or limited health insurance are normally the ones who qualify. In addition, these programs can help patients apply for free or low-cost insurance if they qualify. All medically necessary services are covered by the program, which includes outpatient services, emergency care, and inpatient admissions.

In spite of the current economic crisis, in the state of New York, people who need emergency service can receive care and get a discount, as long as they meet the income limits and complete the Charity Care application process.

Barack Obama's Political Discourse
of the Rhetorical Narrative of the "American Dream"

David M. Richardson

Mentor:
Floyd Anderson, PhD
Communication

The 2008 election year proved to be historic and forever memorable with the election of our nation's first African-American President Barack Obama. On the campaign to the Whitehouse, Obama strategically gave speeches to the American people based on the idea of the American Dream. Specifically, on November 7, 2007, in Bettendorf, Iowa, Obama delivered his speech titled, "Reclaiming the American Dream." This speech provides an example of and insight into rhetorical narrative discourse. Furthermore, rhetorical narrative theory developed by Walter Fisher, provides crucial understanding into exploring the speech. This paper identifies and analyzes the narrative of the American Dream presented from Obama's speech.

Obama's speech contains many deep and rich personal narratives of his family and their experience of opportunity in America. In the speech, Obama makes reference to his grandparents, who were given the opportunity to attend college after the war, and of his mother, who struggled to provide for her family with the use of food stamps. The most compelling personal narrative in the speech is of Obama's father-in-law, a city worker in Chicago, diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, and continued to work everyday of his life. Obama's speech makes reference to idea that all American people share the common belief of hope in the American Dream.

The narrative paradigm is a rhetorical theory, which maintains that humans are predominately story-telling creatures. In turn, according to Fisher, human communication of reality is expressed primarily in the form of storytelling. Political rhetoric, from Fisher's perspective is one form of storytelling. The main assumption from Fisher's theory is that humans tell stories to create and express reality in life. The stories given by humans are tested under narrative fidelity, do the stories ring true with the stories we know, and narrative probability, is the story able to be true. Also, "good reasons" warrant the acceptability of narratives based on fidelity and probability. This rhetorical theory is significant for shedding insight into the interpretation of Obama's political discourse of the American Dream.

In conclusion, rhetorical criticism provides an important aspect to further understanding the implications behind political discourse. The narrative theory creates an opportunity to explore Obama's speech to understanding how language is used in the speech as a form of storytelling. In addition, humans make sense of the world through discursive practices such as political speeches, thereby giving importance to the interpretation of Obama's speech. Obama tells the story of the American Dream which fulfills our ontological desires of hope in this country. This speech is important for understanding how politicians use language to influence and persuade individuals. The American Dream is warranted by narrative probability and fidelity to the American people from the personal narratives of Obama's family members who have lived the dream. The acceptance of these "good reasons" contribute to warrant the American Dream as being real, and a value held by all American citizens.

Between Medical and Self-Diagnosis-Internet Labs and the Emergence of "Scientific Self Diagnosis" of Celiac Disease

Giuseppina Valle

Mentor:
Denise Copelton, PhD
Sociology

My research examines the social experience of persons diagnosed with celiac disease and the struggles that they have faced in receiving a diagnosis. Specifically, I compare medical diagnosis and self-diagnosis, and explore an emergent middle ground of diagnosis that I call scientific self-diagnosis.

Celiac disease is an auto-immune disease triggered by the ingestion of gluten. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye. When an individual with celiac ingests gluten, the immune system sees it as a foreign substance and damages the villi in the small intestine, causing these individuals to not be able to absorb nutrients properly. It is estimated that 1 in every 133 Americans has celiac disease. However, a majority of these individuals go undiagnosed since physicians were taught that a patient has to gastrointestinal symptoms to have celiac disease. Even though doctors now recognize that the autoimmune response can affect any organ in the body, these individuals are experiencing an average of 11 years between symptom onset and diagnosis. Conventional testing that allows for diagnosis of celiac disease by the medical community includes a serological antibody test, an endoscopy/biopsy, and improvement on a gluten free diet.

In order to examine the various paths of diagnosis, I looked at past research and compiled a literature review. I compared struggles of individuals with celiac with others who have medically unexplained physical symptoms (MUPS), such as fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and Gulf War Syndrome. In addition, I examined one popular celiac discussion board (Celiac Disease and Gluten-Free Forum). I analyzed threads pertaining only to symptom experience and diagnosis from January through July of 2004.

The findings from conducting this research demonstrate that individuals used a combination of medical (blood test/biopsy/improvement on gluten-free diet) and lay diagnosis (only gluten-free diet), along with pseudo scientific self-diagnosis (Enterolab) as means of diagnosis.

The use of internet discussion boards allowed participants to construct their own diagnostic standards and discover alternative paths to diagnosis, which differ from the gold standards promoted by the medical community. This supportive self-help community allowed individuals to seek out multiple opinions from other discussion board participants to help themselves better understands their own experiences.

Enterolab is an online laboratory that specializes in the analysis of intestinal specimens for food sensitivities. Enterolab uses stool testing to test for gluten antibodies, which in turn detect gluten sensitivity. The analysis of the celiac discussion board reveals that both the alternative forms of diagnosis, Enterolab, and a gluten free diet both promote and validate their own self-diagnosis. Enterolab is the emergent middle ground between medical and lay-diagnosis that I term scientific self-diagnosis. It offers more legitimacy then self-diagnosis but less legitimacy than physician diagnosis. To participants, it appears scientific, but the testing methods are unproven and many physicians do not accept Enterolab as a legitimate means for diagnosing.

The contributions of the research can lead other scientists to examine the various paths of diagnosis for many other illnesses. With the availability of the internet, people are able to locate a great deal of information and gain knowledge, which can ultimately lead to the de-professionalization of medical authorities.

The 1963 Birmingham Desegregation Campaign and Barack Obama

Willie Watson
Mentors:
Michael Boston, PhD
History
Sandy Dwayne Martin, PhD
Religion

In 1963, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) began a desegregation campaign in Birmingham, AL, that would press forward the African American Civil Rights movement. This campaign, led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Birmingham minister Fred Shuttlesworth, would last for a little over a month but would forever change racial equality and politics in America. This research focuses on the 1963 Birmingham Campaign because it was the most influential and important organized civil rights campaign to take place during the modern Civil Rights Movement. This campaign would subsequently lead to the desegregation of public places with the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights bill and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which would ensure the protection of African American voting rights and prevent infringement of these rights in state and federal elections. A long term impact of this desegregation campaign in Birmingham was made evident on June 3, 2008 when Barack Obama became the first African American to be named the Democratic Party candidate for the 2008 Presidential election.

The method for this research consisted of a literature review critically analyzing primary and secondary sources. The primary sources ranged from firsthand accounts from participants in the Birmingham Campaign such as Dr. King and Reverend Ralph Abernathy, while some of the secondary sources used in this research included compilations of studies on the Civil Rights Movement from historians such as Juan Williams, Bruce Dierenfield and Peniel Joseph. Other secondary sources used in the literature review included books from King Scholars such as David J. Garrow, Clayborne Carson and Taylor Branch.

The literature review underscored that the meticulous planning and organization of the Birmingham Campaign made it a success that the SCLC did not experience in its first campaign in Albany, GA in 1962. In addition, the ability of the SCLC to adapt and implement a very controversial "Children's Crusade" showed the determination and fortitude of the leaders to succeed. Finally, the literature showed that the African American Baptist church and the religious faith of the participants were instrumental in overcoming nearly a century of racism and oppression in Birmingham.

This research shows that the 1963 Birmingham Desegregation Campaign paved the way for racial equality and the guarantee of Constitutional rights as equal citizens for all African Americans. In 1964 the Civil Rights Bill was passed through Congress guaranteeing equal rights for African Americans and 58.5% of the African American population voted in the Presidential election, making these two events the first major implications of the Birmingham Campaign. Eight years later in 1972 Shirley Chisolm became the first African American to run for President, and Reverend Jesse Jackson would follow suit in 1984. Perhaps the greatest implication of the 1963 Birmingham Desegregation Campaign will be manifested in a few weeks as Illinois Senator Barack Obama may finalize his historic run for President that only 45 years ago would never have seemed possible.

State of Diversity:
The Realization of Minority Faculty in Higher Education

Lacie White

Mentor:
John K. Marah, EdD
African and
African-American Studies

Diversity in higher education is increasingly becoming an issue of importance. With the changing paradigm of society from an individualistic view to a globalized one, diversity is now at the top of many institutions of higher education's initiatives. This research is aimed to determine how diversity is being realized in terms of minority faculty representation. Minority faculty representation can be one determining factor in the environment of an institution of higher education because it is a reflection of the minority student population; it is also one facet of diversity. Under the definition of diversity from an institution of higher education perspective diversity includes but is not limited to a vast representation of world views. By increasing minority representation the sphere of influence that is gained from numerous world views will in turn heighten the diversity of the education of the student population.

In my research I aim to determine the presence of minority faculty on U.S college campuses. I also aim to find out what is behind the presence or lack of minority faculty. By determining this I will be able to examine the issues that minority faculty face and what draws them to, keeps them from joining, or being retained at institutions of higher education. I also aim to discuss the importance of minority faculty to minority students enrolled in higher education. My methodology in this research will be to conduct a literature review in order to discover the presence of minority faculty. Upon IRB approval, I will also conduct a qualitative survey of minority students on the campus of The College at Brockport, State University of New York. This pilot study will help determine what is being done in terms of diversity of the faculty population, what needs to be done, and the emotional climate of the minority students.

This study is one of personal importance and one that, in our society, is an ongoing topic of discussion. As of now, my initial assumptions and findings are that the presence of minority faculty representation has increased as diversity has been a top initiative and that the environment of that presence, however, can be considered stifling for many faculty. This can be accounted for by a variety of reasons including racism, refusal of tenure, marginalization, and barrierization in what can be considered cultural and ethnic programs. As far as the minority student population, my assumptions are that they would like to see a more equalized representation across the board in various degree programs, and they would like to have a quality minority representation.

My assumptions are based upon findings that show that minority faculty were either propelled into higher education or shunned away from it, based upon institutional factors. These factors include the representation of minority faculty when they were in their formative years, the environment of their undergraduate as well as graduate experiences including encounters with minority and non minority faculty.

My hope for the conclusion of this research study is to help institutions of higher education in their quest of knowledge on the subject of providing a diverse educational environment out of which future educators will emerge. I hope to also bring a student perspective to the table in the hope that this will enlighten the conversation of those who have the power to impact the presence of minority faculty.

Trio Program Staff
Herma Volpe-van Dijk, Associate Project Director
Barbara J. Thompson, Project Director
Stacy Burke, Administrative Assistant

Program Staff

Barbara J. Thompson, Project Director
Herma Volpe-van Dijk, Associate Project Director
Stacy Burke, Administrative Assistant
Nikki Haynesworth, Office Assistant
Leona Johnson, Office Assistant
Willie Watson, Office Assistant

Advisory Board

Betsy Balzano
Mark Chadsey
Joel Frater
James Georger
Mary Ann Giglio
Barbara Lesavoy
Isabella Mark
Betty Mathewson-Garcia
Barbara Mitrano
Ken O'Brien
Adam Rich
Susan Stites-Doe
Tammie Woody

Contributors

Herma Volpe-van Dijk, Executive Editor
Virginia Campbell, Managing Editor
Brian Robbins, Designer
James Dusen, Photography