2011 Winter Research Symposium Program

Miami, Florida • Wednesday, January 19, 2011 • 7–9 p.m.

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Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the 2011 Walden University Winter Research Symposium and to our first symposium held in Miami! As you will see, this symposium offers a range of research from our faculty, students, and graduates. While some of these projects have been funded through internal grants, many projects report cutting-edge findings from doctoral capstones, conducted by Walden students. Further, several of our colleagues are discussing research in its formative stages.

As before, we offer two formats for the presentation of research. Posters give the researchers a chance to engage with all individuals attending the symposium and potentially to network with other interested researchers. Within the roundtable format, a select group of researchers will be available for interactive discussions of their work, with handouts and visual materials available to support the discussion. We encourage you to use the "Contacts" page at the end of this program to record key connections that you will make at this event.

The research topics this year are as diverse as the methodologies used to study them. One common research theme in this symposium, however, revolves around the notion of "challenges," such as those faced by children globally, by oppressed individuals in the United States, and by educators who instruct an increasingly diverse student population.

The strength of the symposium lies in the interactions between presenters and audience. So, please don't be shy—step up, ask questions, make comments, and enjoy the experience.

Symposium Program Committee

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*A special thanks is extended to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Walden
University Board of Directors for their support and assistance with the research
symposium, and their assistance with the selection of awards.*

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Poster Presentations

Completed Research

1. Perceptions of African-American Students About Participation in Gifted Programs

Jenelle Nisly, Ed.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

This phenomenological study examined the perceptions of African-American students about participation in gifted programs. The purpose was to understand attitudes about remaining in or dropping out of gifted programs. Interpretative phenomenological analysis revealed the need for cultural sensitivity in program curriculum and teacher training. The implications for positive social change are higher retention rates in gifted programs, which could lead to higher college graduation rates and greater employment opportunities for African Americans.

2. An Examination of Teachers' Perceptions Regarding Constructivist Leadership and Teacher Retention

Joyce M. Alexander, Ed.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Public school constituencies continue to face a teacher shortage as the number of teachers leaving the profession outnumbers the number of teachers entering or remaining. There are many factors that contribute to the teacher retention problem, including teacher attrition. This mixed-methods study examined teachers' perspectives regarding leadership style, especially constructivist leadership and teacher retention. Specifically, this study investigated whether practicing a democratic leadership style, such as constructivist leadership, would enhance teacher retention.

3. Team Firestopper: Creating Positive Social Change in Home Fire Safety Preparedness

Christina Spoons, Student, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

The American Red Cross of Greater Chicago has partnered with local businesses and fire departments within its seven-county jurisdiction to implement Team Firestopper to determine whether fire safety awareness and preparedness campaigns in communities disproportionately affected by fire would influence the number of home fires occurring in those communities.

4. Socio-Economic Challenges Faced by U.S.-Based Nongovernmental Organizations in Countering Child Sex Tourism in Thailand

Natalie Chrastil, Ph.D., Graduate, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This socio-economic study sought to gather rich contextual data to understand the economic, social, and governmental barriers that U.S.-based nongovernmental agencies face while rescuing children from child sex tourism (CST). Issues analyzed included Thai family social structure, governmental entities, and concerns about working with non-Thai, nongovernmental organizations. Data collected consisted of field report documents and individual semi-structured interviews. Findings indicated economic, social, and governmental barriers, such as the sale of children, parental accountability, and organized crime involvement in CST. Public legislators and other policymakers can begin to restore human rights through national and international public policy; robust, proven governmental nonprofit interventions; effective policing; and deliberate prosecution of those who are involved in CST.

5. Impact of Media Convergence on Africa's Democracy: A Nigerian Perspective

Uchenna Ekwo, Student, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Media convergence gives audiences unprecedented choice and power in the free flow of news and information. In Africa, the traditional news media has been unsuccessful in holding political functionaries accountable to the people, hence the plague of corruption, dictatorship, and abuse of power throughout the continent. This study is exploratory research that examined the influence of media convergence—a mixture of the traditional and new media—on the political culture of Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa. As the media coverage of the recent Iranian election has demonstrated, a converged media environment has the potential to trigger unprecedented demand for change in hitherto undemocratic societies. This study used a qualitative method for interviewing Nigerian editors, reporters, media owners, and other media professionals. Conclusions suggest that a converged media environment engenders transparency, freedom of expression, political participation, and ultimately, renders government ownership and control of the news media unreasonable, unnecessary, and unsustainable.

6. The Effects of eBooks on the Comprehension of At-Risk Readers
Michelle Gonzalez, Ph.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

This study investigated the effect of eBooks on the reading comprehension of 3rd and 4th grade students with reading difficulties. Participants read eBooks with various levels of support and traditional print books with no added support. Results indicated that participants had the highest reading achievement when they read eBooks with full text-to-speech narration.

7. Application of Q-Methodology and Relational Leadership to Understanding Superintendent and Board Members' Relations Using Emotional and Multiple Intelligences Theories
Martha A. Johnson, Ph.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Focusing on subjective perspectives, this Q-methodology study examined relations between superintendent and school boards. Factor analysis of Q-sorts was combined with interview data to identify a consensus factor composed of three behavior perspectives and two other distinct factors relating to superintendent roles and responsibilities. The results offer superintendents and board members ideas for affecting positive system change, such as using collaboration for conflict handling, defining strategic priorities, and supporting leadership practices that facilitate teamwork in the implementation of educational policies in the schools.

8. Perceived Attributes Predict Course Management System Adopter Status
Gayla S. Keesee, Ph.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Rogers's diffusion-of-innovation theory provided the framework for this quantitative study to determine instructors' perceptions of the course management system (CMS). Survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and logistic regression. Findings showed that Rogers's theory can be used to predict adopter status to develop targeted initiatives to facilitate CMS adoption.

9. Associations of Teacher Education, Experience, and Program Characteristics in Childcare

Debra Lawrence-Yaure, Ph.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

This study used archived data and included 617 infant or toddler classrooms with 1,356 teachers and 887 preschool classrooms with 1,915 teachers. Hierarchical linear modeling assessed the threshold of teacher experience, education, and program characteristics that contributed to classroom quality as measured on Environment Rating Scales (ERS).

10. The Effects of Technical and Conceptual Teaching Methodologies on Student Drawing Success in 10 Southwest College Classrooms

Gingher Leyendecker, Ph.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

This quantitative study addressed differences in student outcomes between technical (lecture/demonstration) and conceptual (hands-off) teaching methodologies in 10 life-drawing classrooms in southern Arizona colleges. Results from regression analysis demonstrated that class type significantly affected student outcomes. Results from analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), analysis of variance (ANOVA), and Mann-Whitney U analysis indicated that those in technical classes received higher scores than those in conceptual classes from both judges and students on 10 variables. Implications of these results include students' ability to gain entrance into advanced art programs, graduate schools, museums and galleries, and in gaining employment in their field of study. This study begins to bridge a gap in research in the area of college art teaching methodologies, as it is one of the first of its kind.

11. A Phenomenological Study: Parent and/or Guardian and Special Education Student Perceptions of Transition Beyond High School

Candace M. Robick, Ph.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Research indicates that there is a connection between special education students' success and the individual education program (IEP) team's integration of efforts in preparing special education students for postsecondary options in education or work. Little research has been conducted, however, on special education students' and parents' and/or guardians' perceptions of the transition process while pursuing postsecondary options. This phenomenological study explored how special education students and their parents and/or guardians perceived secondary to postsecondary transition.

12. English Language Learners' Perceptions of Clickers as Communication Aides

Lisa Rodriguez, Ph.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

This Q-methodological study explored the perceptions of adult English language learners about clickers to facilitate communication. Clickers may help English language learners communicate by enabling them to respond nonverbally. Results of this study may promote research of educational technology tools and improved educational practices with all English language learners.

13. Teacher Perspectives of Instructing Struggling Readers Who Are Children of Military Personnel

Jennifer Sears, Ph.D., Graduate, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Many struggling readers, children of military personnel in particular, would benefit from differentiated instruction (DI) to improve their overall literacy ability. This phenomenological study examined teacher perspectives using DI to instruct struggling readers in military-impacted schools and was based on Tomlinson's DI framework. The results indicated military-populated schools should offer more professional development opportunities for educators and community stakeholders. Literacy is essential to academic success; this study contributes to social change by providing military-impacted schools with information regarding the benefits of instructing struggling readers using DI.

14. Communal Photosynthesis: Metaphor-Based Heuristic Study of Service-Learners in Security Management

Emmanuel Nii Tetteh, Ph.D., Graduate, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

This metaphor-based heuristic study explored whether the plant-life process of communal photosynthesis (CP) could serve as a metaphor that clarifies service-learning experiences in security management. Qualitative data from interviews with 10 service-learners revealed that the CP metaphor constitutes a long-term process, common identity convergence pattern, and modes of learning transformation that lead to a productive-growth experience. Results contribute to positive social change by providing a teaching-learning device to guide learners in a specific service-learning approach that will directly contribute to increased civic engagement.

Proposed or In-Progress Research

15. Registered Nurse Education Program's Admission Criteria and Selection Process: The Effect on South Carolina's Student Nurse Cultural Diversity

Mary Ann Jarmulowicz, Student, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

This quantitative study seeks to substantiate or refute the existence of gate-keeping and to quantify and analyze relationships between pre-licensure registered nurse ethnic diversity; liberal, behavioral, progressive, humanist, or radical adult-teaching philosophy of faculty; and the complexity of admission criteria of South Carolina nursing education programs.

16. Negotiating the Social Ladder: Age Discrimination Among Adult Professionals

Adam Smith, Student, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Perceptions of age discrimination threaten the establishment of an accepted and favorable social identity; everyone ages, and thus, is likely to experience age discrimination at some point during the lifespan. Perceiving age discrimination also serves as a barrier to both professional and personal goal achievement and subjective well-being. This proposed quantitative study will explore the relation among age group, subjective social status, and perceived age discrimination among a cross-section of professional adults. Social change aimed at integrating members of various age groups would promote long-lasting relationships through which individuals could gain from insight of shared identification.

17. Students' Research Skills and Self-Efficacy Gained in an Online Laboratory

Lee Stadtlander, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Martha Giles, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Amy Sickel, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Stadtlander and Giles showed the feasibility of an online psychology research laboratory. The proposed study extends their work by examining whether students' research skills and self-efficacy improves in an online lab, as has been reported in land-based research labs.

Roundtable Sessions

1. The Child Protection and Psychosocial Impact Assessment (CHPIA) in Haiti

Karine Clay, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Proposed Research Project

The earthquake that struck Haiti impacted many individuals tragically, especially children, through the loss of lives, and destruction of educational services, resources, and infrastructures. To promote the psychosocial care and protection of children in safe and supportive learning environments, disaster-induced issues must be reduced during the recovery period— these include sexual abuse, abduction, trafficking, and lingering psychosocial concerns among children in Haitian relief camps. This research project will achieve this goal by conducting a participatory impact assessment (PIA) to explore the positive and negative effects of existing post disaster humanitarian psychological and social program support services on the well-being of vulnerable learners and children in Haiti.

2. Great City School Fiscal Challenges: Gentle Rain or Raging Flood?

Paula Dawidowicz, Ph.D., Faculty, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Phyllis Durden, Ed.D., Faculty, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Completed Research Project

The Federal Government provided Recovery Act funds to compensate for funds lost during the recent economic downturn. This study examine how those funds were allocated in Indianapolis and how district residents perceived use of those funds. Narrative, critical discourse, and content analysis of archival sources allowed identification of the funding process, as well as challenges faced in determining funding usage and concerns among residents over the use of those funds.

3. Shared Stories of Successful Graduates of Juvenile Residential Programs

Barrett Mincey, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Nancy Maldonado, Ph.D., Faculty, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership

Matthew Collins, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Completed Research Project

This phenomenological study explored stories of successful graduates of residential programs regarding their experiences while in treatment. Participants were selected purposefully, and data were collected through audio-taped interviews and analyzed for themes. Shared stories indicated the impact of counselors, negative and positive aspects of programs, peer relationships, and personal responsibility.

4. A Case Study of Three Transsexual Women of Mexican Origin

Stacee Reicherzer, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Completed Research Project

This roundtable will invite discussion and reflection around the presenter-host's case study research, which examined resilience factors in the lives of three transsexual woman of Mexican ethnic origin working as entertainers in Texas. Data were collected by interviewing each participant, observing performances—directly and indirectly—and reviewing the artifacts that symbolized personal strength in their lives. Major themes of resiliency have clustered around an ethic of giving back and community support for participant "Diana," a strong pragmatism that guides personal decision making through periods of conflict for participant "Amanda," and the ability to rely on her career as a comedian for participant "Valerie."

5. Cultural Framework for Treating Trauma in African-American Children

Pamela Robinson, Student, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Brian Ragsdale, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

Lisa Johnson, Ph.D., Psychologist, Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland

Proposed Research Project

African-American children are disproportionately represented among reported child abuse and neglect cases in the United States. Counseling and clinical services must combine existing trauma theories with culturally informed intervention strategies to meet the needs of traumatized African-American children. This roundtable discussion will present ideals for developing a theoretical framework when working with African-American children and families.

6. Photovoice and Participatory Action Research: A Crouzon Syndrome Case Study
Kelly Wheeler, Student, College of Social and Behavioral Health Sciences
Jody Oomen-Early, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Proposed Research Project

This roundtable discussion will focus on the use of Photovoice as a method for participatory action research within the field of public health. A proposed study using Photovoice and participatory action research to explore perceived bio-psycho-social, environmental, and socio-economic quality of life factors among adults with Crouzon Syndrome will be presented as a case study to elicit discussion about the benefits and challenges of integrating participatory action research with grounded theory.

7. The Counselor's Perceptions of Self-Efficacy Scale: Development and Psychometric Evaluation
Donna Sheperis, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Carl Sheperis, Ph.D., Faculty, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences
Proposed Research Project

Online counselor education programs are increasing, but there are few measures available to determine if differences exist between these students and those trained in a traditional classroom. Self-efficacy is an important aspect of career performance and preparation. The purpose of this research is to develop an instrument to measure perceived self-efficacy among counselors-in-training.

8. Educators, Technology, and 21st-Century Skills: Dispelling Five Myths
MaryFriend Shepard, Ph.D., Faculty, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership
Steve Canipe, Ed.D., Faculty, The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership
Completed Research Project

This research project, conducted by The Richard W. Riley College of Education and Leadership, surveyed more than 1,000 U.S. K–12 teachers, principals, and assistant principals in regard to their perceptions about technology use in classrooms based on 21st century skills. The implications of these findings will be addressed in this roundtable, with the participants sharing five myths of technology integration that were debunked by this study.

Publication Opportunities at Walden

Positive social change requires the timely and effective communication of information and best practices. Accordingly, Walden University supports a collection of peer-reviewed journals designed to advance change and share the scholarly contributions of our students, faculty, and professional partners. All members of the Walden community are encouraged to submit articles on their completed research to a Walden journal that fits with the topic. Currently, three options can be found by visiting the Center for Research Support website (http://researchcenter.WaldenU.edu/Research-Opportunities-at-Walden.htm). These include:

- *The Journal of Social Change* www.journalofsocialchange.org—*The JSC* is Walden's flagship journal dedicated to advancing the core mission of the university.

- *The International Journal of Applied Management and Technology* www.ijamt.org—*The IJAMT* serves to advance knowledge and applied practices within the fields of management and technology on an international scale.

- *The Journal of Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences* www.jsbhs.org— *The JSBHS* advances positive change across a variety of professional disciplines that contribute to improving the quality of daily life.

Contacts

Be sure to jot down names and contact information of Walden University faculty members and students who are doing work in your area of research interest.

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