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Doc 6 Research Forum Abstracts

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Doc 6 Research Forum

April 17–19, 2009

Adult & Continuing Education Doctoral Program
National-Louis University
Friday, April 17

5:00 p.m.  Welcoming Remarks

5:25

**Neida Santamaria-Hernandez:** *Pioneering Spirits + Guiding Lights = Latino Faculty in Illinois*

Committee: Tom Heaney, Ph.D.; Laura Bauer, Ed.D.; Anghesom Atsbaha, Ed.D.

Given the low numbers of Latinos in higher education holding full-time faculty positions, a select number of those who have in fact attained this rare position in Illinois have been researched. Using critical race theory as the analytical framework, the focus of this study was on their stories, backgrounds and how they perceived they were able to secure their faculty positions. Life experiences, common characteristics, qualities and/or strategies used by the selected Latina/o faculty members have been identified. This study will add to the body of research devoted to diversity in higher education and especially to adult education’s impact on formal higher education.

6:10

**Mary Lewis:** *Transformative Learning in the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) Community: An Ethnographic Study examining how and in what ways transformative learning is realized and lived out among members of an MS community*

Committee: Tom Heaney, Ph.D.; Laura Baurer, Ed.D.; and Brad Courtenay, Ph.D.

Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a chronic disease that attacks the central nervous system, which consists of the brain, spinal cord, and optic nerves. At present in the United States, approximately 400,000 people have been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis (MS) and that number is growing with 200 more people being diagnosed every week. Worldwide, MS is thought to affect more than 2.5 million people. Much of the obtainable literature has examined the pathophysiology of this disease; however; limited research exists that explores the psychosocial aspects of living with MS. In an effort to collect and examine the daily experiences of a particular group of people this study is qualitative in nature. A critical ethnographic research design guided this study. The focus of this research asks how and in what ways the learning process differs prior to and after a diagnosis of MS. In order to understand the MSer’s experiences this study incorporates the transformative learning theories of Dr. Mezirow and Dr. Boyd & Dr. Myers. The theoretical perspectives guiding this research are: constructivism, critical reflection, the relationships between chronic illness, disability and MS and lastly the MSer and their relationships. The questions guiding this study were: (1) How do participants make meaning out of the diagnosis of MS; (2) What factors were influential in the participants’ understanding and coping with this disease; (3) In what ways do subsequent life experiences alter the perspective transformation that resulted from the participants’ diagnosis of MS; (4) What factors have hindered the participants’ ability to deal effectively with MS; (5) What role did relationships play in their transformation. Data collection consisted of an initial survey and in-depth interviews conducted in the
participant’s own surroundings. The findings of this study will be beneficial to not only the MSer but for all who instruct and interact with individuals within the MS community.

6:50 Break

7:05

Robert Conrad, SCPO USN (Ret.): The Learning Culture of America’s Armed Forces: A Case Study of Commitment toward Life-Long Learning in United States Navy Senior Enlisted Personnel

Committee: Dr. Elizabeth Peterson, Ed.D.; Dr. Laura Bauer, Ed.D.; and Dr. Jose De Vincenzo, Ph.D.

This qualitative research investigates the learning culture of America’s Armed Forces. Its main component is a case study of U. S. Navy Senior Enlisted personnel, their educational opportunities, accomplishments, and their commitment toward lifelong learning. Conclusions in this study were that the culture of continuous learning is real and self-perpetuating in the U.S. Navy. They sustain an environment of caring that encourages personal growth and professional development. This study found that a culture of learning is sustained by leveraging six critical components of the Navy Learning Culture. They are: Setting Expectations, providing Encouragement along with teaching Responsibility and providing frequent Reinforcement and Recognition of accomplishments while demonstrating a strong sense of Family Support. Those in the military profit from educational opportunity that is there for everyone, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or their present oppressed or marginalized status. I found that upon enlistment, all recruits are thrust into a culture that values the positive attributes of education. One surprising finding, although outside the boundaries of this case study, was the discovery of the ratio of female to male naval personnel in their first enlistment, with females outnumbering their male counterparts by two to one. Questions for further study include how we can leverage the military model to create and sustain a culture of learning among all of our adult students. Also the implications of the apparent feminization of the naval service is an interesting topic that deserves further study, perhaps in the form of a longitudinal study to monitor the evolving culture over time.

Saturday, April 18

8:00 a.m. Refreshments and Welcome

8:30

Jennifer L. Kushner: Wangari Maathai: Righteous Leader of Environmental and Social Change

Committee: Scipio A. J. Colin III, Ed.D.; Thomas Heaney, Ph.D.; and Stephen Brookfield,
This Africentric historical inquiry introduces Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize recipient and internationally renowned Kenyan activist, as a visionary adult educator and leader of the liberatory environmental movement known as The Green Belt Movement. The Movement addresses decades of mis-education through grassroots and culturally grounded adult education activities that help communities understand the linkages between environmental degradation and poor governance, and educate people to participate in democracy. The study describes Maathai’s philosophy and how it informed her leadership of adult education for environmental, political, and social change. The African philosophical framework of Maat, and the principle of serudj-ta (repairing, renewing and restoring the world) provide a lens and conceptual grounding for understanding Maathai’s philosophy. Maathai’s message, that equitable and sustainable management of natural resources is inextricably bound with issues of governance and social justice, suggests the consciousness that allows exploitation and domination of people is the same consciousness that allows exploitation and domination of nature. Adult education is central to the project because of its role in helping people understand and address root causes of injustice, in all its forms.

Maathai’s success at mobilizing thousands of people at the grassroots, many marginalized, to both challenge oppressive systems and affect environmental change one tree at a time at the local level speaks to the power of culturally grounded adult education. Through the Green Belt Movement, Maathai employed adult education as a decolonization process, to foster the revitalization of indigenous culture, self-ethnic identity, women’s empowerment, and participatory democracy. For activist-scholars in the field of adult education concerned with the environment, Maathai’s work teaches us that we must not isolate our work in that domain from the larger, systemic and root causes of environmental problems.

9:15
Committee: Elizabeth Peterson, Ed.D.; Tom Heaney, Ph.D.; Stephen Brookfield, Ph.D.; Vanessa Sheared, Ed. D.

This was a phenomenological study of racial privilege as experienced by White people who have struggled to become more racially aware and socially active in dismantling racism and White privilege. The primary conceptual framework for this study is Critical Race Theory with Transformative Learning theory and Racial Identity Development as additional theoretical lenses. The purpose of this study was to expand the body of research and literature that explores, explains, and inspires social action that alters the dynamics of racial oppression. Its goal was to promote and influence White adult educators to find explicit ways in which to address White privilege and racism in adult education settings.
There were seven participants in this study. These were White adults who could articulate their understanding of White privilege and were willing to share those critical incidents that led to an increased consciousness about that privilege. An additional characteristic was participants who intentionally acted in ways that neutralized their privilege. The findings of the study revealed seven common experiences among these participants. Each began an understanding of privilege through a Black/White binary and had limited contact with people of Color growing up. They had self-constructed a deep reflective process, learned empathy, and their growth and development was a continuous process. Each struggled with their intention to not be racist when in fact they could not help but act in racist ways. In addition, each experienced many critical incidents that were transformative in nature. Within these incidents, common elements emerged that contributed to and influenced their growth and development in their understanding of racial privilege. More importantly and perhaps surprisingly, these elements did not exist in isolation. Instead, there seemed to be a convergence of these elements that, when combined, fostered growth. These elements were: 1) the critical incident that challenged the participants previous assumptions; 2) involved a mentor-type relationship with a person of Color; 3) some kind of moral or ethical anguish or regret; and 4) a relational nature and deep commitment to the growth of themselves and others.

9:55 Break

10:10

Nancy E. Jackson: Creating a Comprehensive Broad-Based Curriculum Model for Adult and Alternative High School Education Based in the African Centered Paradigm: an Empirical Study

Committee: Elizabeth Peterson, Ed.D.; Thomas Heaney, Ph.D.; Elio DeArrudah, Ed.D.

The primary problem this presentation is designed to address is the lack of an African Centered comprehensive curriculum for use in Adult and Alternative Education, where large numbers of Black students ages 17 years old and up are being served.

10:55

Rosalind Dale: It Takes a Village: Program Planning for Africentric Culturally Grounded Community Based Educational


The purposes of this qualitative study were to examine the roles that African American adults assumed in developing Africentric Culturally Grounded Community Based Educational Programs (Colin, 1999). The elements of the programming process including the purposes, goals, and content were analyzed and the implementations of the programs were observed. Data was collected using document analysis, in-depth interviews and on site observations.
This Africentric Case Study was conducted in a manner consistent with methods for the examination of the lived experiences of African Americans as articulated by Akbar (1991) and Asante (1990). In addition, the conceptual, theoretical, philosophical, analytical, and interpretative frames were embedded within the Africentric Intellectual Paradigm.

The findings revealed that participation in these programs significantly contributed to the development of a positive selfethnic image, instilled a sense of selfethnic pride, and resulted in a commitment to community development.

As a result of the analysis it is recommended that 1) Adult education coursework include concepts and theories relative to designing and implementing African Centered Education for adults; 2) African American adults should begin to seek opportunities to expand their selfethnic knowledge and begin to design, develop, and implement Africentric Culturally Grounded Community Educational Programs in their communities for children, young adults, and adults. 3) African Diaspora adult education graduate students should undertake research that examines the experiences and practices of African Centered Educators in an effort to design educational programs for African American adults that wish to learn indigenous pedagogical approaches and activities.

This study is significant to the field of adult education in that it expands the knowledge base regarding program and community development goals and processes and informs practitioners in terms of the most appropriate context and content of programs that are designed for this specific racial group.

11:35 Lunch
12:45 p.m.


Committee: Randee Lipsom Lawrence, Ed.D.; Laura Bauer, Ed.D.; Layla Sulieman, J.D., Ph.D.

Using the perspectives of Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1993; Delgado, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995) Latino Critical Race Theory (Delgado & Stefanić, 2001; Arriola, 1997, Heany-Lopez, 2000) and Critical Race Feminism (Anzaldúa, 1999; Mohanty, 2003; hooks, 1994; Sandoval, 2000)) I examine the untold stories, also known as counter-narratives, of second generation Puerto Rican women who have been born and raised in Humboldt Park. This investigative study is a narrative inquiry investigation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Atkinson, 2007 & 1998; Chase, 2005) that calls for a broader understanding of who U.S. Latinas are while challenging adult educators to take a deeper look at the identity constructs of second generation Puerto Rican women. By centering women who have consistently described themselves as “invisible,” this investigation proposes new imaginings for who second generation Puerto Rican women are and will be. The performance-text is constructed through data that was collected through five interviews that reveals and centers the women’s marginalized lived experiences and histories.
With little research aimed at second generation Puerto Rican women this study proposes to challenge the academy in various ways and contribute to the body of knowledge respective to qualitative research and adult education. First, this study examines how race, ethnicity, gender, and colonialism shape the lives of marginalized women. Second, this study explores how those stories and the narrative as data, can be presented in a performance-text (Denzin 2003, Conquergood, 2006; Saldana, 2004; Madison, 2006). Thirdly, the study highlights how the use of a dual methodology, narrative inquiry and performance text, blend to contribute to a body of knowledge for the academy. Even more important is that the performance text has agency for second generation Puerto Ricans in the U.S. This new body of knowledge contests traditional forms of qualitative inquiry; the research is conducted by a member of a subaltern group. It also divulges and centers the experiences of a subaltern researcher and the women she interviewed as she conducted a moral and political qualitative investigative study in her own community, among her own people.

1:30

**Bonnie Flynn: Blood, Sweat and Tears: Insights into the Lived Experiences of Graduates of an Accelerated Undergraduate Degree-Completion Program**

Primary Advisor: Randee Lawrence, Ed.D.; Tom Heaney. Ph.D.; Claudia Miller, Ph.D.

With the growing popularity of adult education programs in higher education, older working adults have more options for completing their bachelor degrees. Accelerated degree-completion programs emerged in the 1970s and have gained popularity over the years. These programs are an option for adults to complete their studies without disrupting their schedules. The purpose of this critical engagement project was to understand the lived experience of adult learners in an accelerated undergraduate degree-completion program. This was a qualitative study using a phenomenological research methodology and the theoretical framework of transformative learning. The literature review discussed relevant research addressing both accelerated programs and transformative learning. There were fourteen participants in the study who were recent graduates of an accelerated undergraduate degree-completion program. The research method included a combination of semi-structured interviews and a review of reflection papers written by the participants. The findings revealed the emergence of the following four themes: motivation, value of collaborative process, pedagogy and self concept, with related subthemes identified. The findings indicated that many participants experienced transformation as a result of their educational experience. Since accelerated learning in higher education is not confined to undergraduate students, future research studies might focus on graduates of an online accelerated undergraduate program or an online or face-to-face accelerated master degree program.

2:10  Break

2:25
Fredericka Cleo Griffith Liggins: The Adult Education Vision of Arturo (Arthur) Alfonso Schomburg

Committee: Scipio A. J Colin, III, Ed.D.; Thomas W. Heaney, Ph.D.; James E. Conyers, Ph.D.

The historical development of adult education literature has ignored people of African Ancestry. Additionally, it has failed to recognize both the producers and consumers of programs specifically designed by and for those of African Descent.

Overall, the purpose of this historical study was to expand the knowledge base of adult education by the inclusion of the involvement of this group in the delivery of and participation in adult education programs. The specific purpose of the study was twofold: (1) to document the adult education efforts of Arturo (Arthur) Alfonso Schomburg to rescue and reconstruct the evidence of the worldwide accomplishments of African Peoples’, and (2) to demonstrate how Schomburg achieved his goal of providing liberatory adult education to his race through culturally grounded adult educational activities (Colin, 2007) he initiated.

The study specifically focused on the contributions of Arturo (Arthur) Alfonso Schomburg in his delivery of adult education services to his community during the period 1911-1938. Material for the study was obtained primarily through the “Arthur A. Schomburg Papers” manuscript collection, and led to two major findings: (1) that Schomburg crafted an education that heightened race consciousness and reawakened long-repressed ideas of selfethnic reliance and reflection in order to galvanize this much-maligned group towards the goal of liberation; and (2) that Schomburg, within the framework of his Africentric Culturally Grounded Educational Activities, provided a multidimensional approach to the study and interpretation of his people’s history and culture, for both the general public and the scholar.

The study concluded with recommendations for future research and the implications of these findings for adult education practice.

3:10

Joyce D. McNickles: Interracial Marriage and Black Women’s Racial Identity: Polyrhythmic Voices and Realities

Committee: Elisabeth Peterson, Ed.D.; Thomas Heaney, Ph.D.; Vanessa Sheared, Ed.D.; Carol Harvey, Ph.D.

Since the country’s inception, White supremacy and racism have shaped social interactions between Whites and Blacks (Jordan, 1968; Woodson, 1918). Some have argued that racism has directly shaped the racial identity of all racial groups within the United States (Hardiman & Jackson, 1992). How Black identity is experienced has been the subject of research for adult and social justice educators, psychologists, civil rights activists, and cultural workers. For Blacks who are interracially married, concerns about loss of identity, assimilation, and racial authenticity have emerged in racial identity politics discourse.
After 1967 when the U.S. Supreme Court finally overturned the remaining anti-miscegenation laws, interracial marriages have steadily increased (Romano, 2003). Though marriages between Black men and White women continue to be the largest percentage of these marriages, within the last twenty years interracial marriages between Black women and White men have increased at a faster rate. Between 1980 and 2004, the number of Black women with White husbands increased from 45,000 to 126,000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

In a historical context marked by White men’s enslavement, sexual abuse, and exploitation (Bambara, 1970; King, 1988), Black women married to White men may have unique ways of experiencing and constructing Black identity. The purpose of this grounded theory research was to identify how Black women who are married to White men understand and describe their Black identity. Secondly, the purpose was to generate a theory that would illustrate the learning process by which they came to describe and understand their black identities.

Using a womanist perspective and Black feminist epistemology as my conceptual lenses, I conducted interviews with 10 Black women who are currently married to White men. The ages of the women ranged from 31 to 72 years old, and their marriages were between 6 and 21 years in length. The geographical representation included the Northeast, South, and Midwest regions of the United States.

The major finding was that the women experienced a polyrhythmic reality (Sheared, 1999) by constructing identities that were based on prior gendered and racial experiences. This resulted in the conflation of racial identity with interracial couple identity as a nuanced expression of Black identity, referred to as exogamous Black identity.

3:50 Break

4:05


The purpose of this qualitative Africentric case study was to identify and analyze the role of culturally grounded coping mechanisms (Colin, 1999) incorporated by African American males while pursuing academic success in mainstream institutions of higher education. Colin (2001) defines culturally grounded coping mechanisms as those values both philosophical and spiritual that are: “rooted in and reflective of the sociocultural history and life experiences that are indigenous to the racial group of members of the African Diaspora. The importance of connectedness to one’s family (“by blood or by bond”) and to their community is of importance. This connectedness fosters a sense of self, support, and empowerment. These culturally grounded coping mechanisms are thusly: plans of action or strategies that have ties to the African continent and the seven
basic values The Nguzo Saba, (The Seven Principles in Swahili) of African culture, which contribute to building and reinforcing community among African Diaspora people, as well as members of the African Diaspora throughout the world.” (p. 58)

Utilizing the Africentric Intellectual Paradigm this Africentric case study describes and identifies culturally grounded coping mechanism through the lived experiences of the participants. This research gives voice to the lived experiences of four African American males. In depth interviews provided former students with a mechanism for exploring the impact of individual, institutional and intellectual racism on African American male students. The significance of this study is that it highlights an area of adult higher education which historically neglects to address the issues faced by this population.

4:50

Laura Lee Larson: A Study of Exceptional Mentoring: Insights for Adult Education and Emerging Mentors

Committee: Randee Lipson Lawrence, Ed.D.; Elizabeth Peterson, Ed.D.;

This study has uncovered characteristics common to five exceptional mentors, who served as research participants being interviewed according to Narrative Inquiry methodology. Listening attentively, I heard what they believed has inspired them and how they have been successful in assisting others in reaching more of their potential. The stories told by each of these exceptional mentors, and their words of wisdom, can be motivational to emerging mentors -- those interested in becoming mentors. Through the lens of transformational leadership, I, the researcher, already having realized the power of mentoring in corporate America, expanded my conviction to the field of Adult Education. Adult Educators, being in a leadership role by virtue of their position, and their students, needing guidance as they learn new perspectives as well as new aspects of themselves, can benefit from what mentoring offers. Fostering a culture that encourages caring relationships conjures visions of successful collaborative learning communities that can benefit all concerned. Questions for future study could include how to identify specific mentoring needs among adult educators, and how to uncover key attributes of effective programs that foster mentoring relationships. The concluding chapter provides the reader with additional information on this topic in the form of an exceptional mentoring website which provides key takeaways from this research, as well as additional resources.

Sunday, April 19

9:00 a.m. Refreshments and Welcome

9:30


Committee: Scipio A.J. Colin III, Ed.D., Thomas Heaney, Ph.D., and Darise Tolliver, Ph.D.
The purposes of this historical study were to 1) document the Selfethnic Liberatory adult education nature and goals of the poetry of Langston Hughes (from 1921 to 1933); and 2) to document the impact this poetry had on the field of adult education. In addition, the goal of this research was to expand the historical knowledge base of the adult education field, so that it is more inclusive of the contributions of African Americans.

This study addressed the problem that the adult education field does not, to any significant degree, include in the required and sanctioned historical texts of the field, the contributions of African Americans.

Framed within an African Centered Historical Paradigm, this qualitative study analyzed sixteen of Hughes’s poems, his essay entitled, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”, (1926) and the Foreword to his college senior research project. The units of analysis were the conceptual elements embedded in the Theory of Selfethnic Reflectors (Colin 1989) and the Theory of Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education (Colin 1998).

The results of the data analysis showed that each literary piece contained these conceptual elements: Hughes addressed the negative impact factors of sociocultural and intellectual racism; he used African Centered concepts, including the Nguzo Saba; and/or that he developed and promoted a positive Selfethnic Image through these works. Further, this study provided a new meaning construct for using literary art as a specific curricular element in Selfethnic Liberatory Adult Education; thus, the concept of Selfethnic Liberatory Literary Adult Education was developed.

10:15

Loren N. Moore: “We Can Work It Out” Using Collaboration in the Workplace to Inspire Inclusion, Support and Commitment.


The purpose for this qualitative action research study was twofold 1) to examine the use of collaboration for the purpose of inspiring inclusion, support and commitment in the workplace and 2) to create a collaboratively built inclusive performance management process that promotes support and commitment from employees. This research study used collaboration as the catalyst for the creation of an inclusive performance management process. This study addressed organizational effectiveness, longevity, and customization issues necessary to give organizations a competitive advantage. This study also addressed the lack of documentation on the importance of using collaboration in the workplace for the purpose of creating or revising human resource development programs. The primary research questions guiding this study were: what elements of collaboration inspire inclusion, commitment and support within the workplace (?), how does collaboration work as an effective method for promoting inclusion, commitment, and support based on the participants experience in a collaborative work group (?), and what are the resulting components of a collaborative built performance management process? The framework within which the research was organized drew upon ideas related to adult learning theory, specifically andragogy as proposed by Malcolm Knowles. It also drew upon collaborative learning theory to
analyze the perceptions and benefits of using collaboration in the workplace. Human Performance Technology was the diagnostic tool used to improving the performance management process. The methods of gathering data for this study included three iterative action research cycles (planning, action and reflection), which involved recorded collaborative group discussions with observation notes, a follow-up questionnaire and one-on-one interviews. Four themes emerged as it related to inclusion, support and commitment resulting from the collaborative effort: 1) procedure, 2) acquisition of knowledge, 3) personal investment and 4) representation. The data provides insight into the benefits and advantages for using collaboration to implement process improvements and solve problems. This research study also provides an example of a collaboratively built inclusive performance management process that inspires commitment within the workplace.

10:55       Break
11:10

Rob Morrison: Culturally-Relevant Information Literacy: A Case Study


This single case study examined the role of culture in the information-seeking process. Three students at an academic institution were interviewed to determine how they located, evaluated, used, and incorporated information into their knowledge base and how they constructed knowledge. Students who initially self-identified as Hispanic were interviewed and named their own ethnic identity in this study. The purpose of this study was to identify the role of culture in the information-seeking process in order to inform librarians on how they can provide culturally relevant instruction and to help transform the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. The ACRL Standards are used for best practices by librarians to promulgate universal standards and processes for becoming information literate. This study questioned the universality of this process as being grounded in Western culture and knowledge. Concepts from Critical Theory (Frankfurt School), Cultural Capital (Critical Race Theory), and Culture (Talmadge Guy) were used to analyze data. The findings include: the complexity of ethnic identity, culture does play a role in the information-seeking process by valuing local, community sources of information, and that oppressive ideologies in education and American society do impact the information-seeking process.

11:50-Noon       Closing


