The Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture (ISPRC) was founded in 2000 at Boston College (BC) by Dr. Janet E. Helms to promote the assets and address the societal conflicts associated with race or culture in theory and research, mental health practice, education, business, and society at large. The Institute offers pragmatic information about teaching, conducting research, and applying interventions intended to promote the benefits of racial and ethnic cultural diversity and resolve related social problems. The Institute is unique in its emphasis on addressing psychological issues related to race and ethnic culture from an interdisciplinary perspective.

On October 15-16, 2010, ISPRC hosted its tenth annual Diversity Challenge. The Challenge is a two-day interactive conference that brings together scholars, educators, mental health practitioners, community activists, and other parties interested in promoting social justice across racial and cultural groups. The theme of Diversity Challenge 2010 was “Race and Culture in Teaching, Training, and Supervision.”

Over 110 presentations focused on the Challenge theme in the form of workshops, individual presentations, symposia, structured discussions, posters, and panel discussions. More than 400 people from 36 states and 5 countries attended and participated in the sessions conducted by over 200 presenters.

Invited speakers were well-known experts in the areas of race and teaching, training, and supervision. We extend our sincere thanks to the invited speakers: Nancy Boyd-Franklin, Ph.D., Y. Barry Chung, Ph.D., Anderson J. Franklin, Ph.D., Paula Martin, Ph.D., Kevin Nadal, Ph.D., Lisa Patel Stevens, Ph.D., Usha Tummala-Narra, Ph.D., and LaQueta Wright, Ph.D. Videos of the invited panels along with the conference proceedings are made available on our website: (www.bc.edu/isprc).

The conference concluded with a closing reception, a celebration of culture that featured a vibrant dance performance by Females Incorporating Sisterhood through Step (F.I.S.T.S.), and a spoken word performance by Hammad S. N’cho, a fourth-year doctoral student in the Counseling Psychology program at BC.

Diversity Challenge 2011 will take place Friday and Saturday, October 28-29. This year’s Challenge theme is: “Intersections of Race or Ethnic Culture with Gender or Sexual Orientation.”
A Message from the Director

The Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race and Culture (ISPRC) is beginning its second decade of facilitating theory, research, and practice as it pertains to the social constructs of race and culture.

In this newsletter, we offer an overview of ISPRC’s activities during the past year. I am happy to report that so far ISPRC has survived the recession and the ending of our first major grant, but we continue to search for creative ways to fund our many projects and activities. The ISPRC staff is particularly proud of our community activism this year and urges you to read about our collaboration with the Jeremiah E. Burke High School, as well as workshops and training programs conducted for educational and mental health agencies in the area. Of course, as usual, the annual Diversity Challenge was the highlight of the ISPRC year and, if you missed it, perhaps our synopsis of events will encourage you to join us this year.

Unfortunately, we must bid farewell to several of our staff, Cynthia Chen, Carlton Green, and Marcia Liu, who are moving on to other professional opportunities. Although functioning without them will be a great challenge, please read about them and their work in this issue and join me in thanking them for their service to ISPRC.

~ Dr. Janet E. Helms

Grant Activity

NIMH Grant “Addressing Cultural Factors and Mental Health Disparities in Research and Practice”

Three successful conferences were held over the course of the three-year grant award period, 6/5/2007 – 5/31/2010. Each conference focused on integrating science and practice with respect to specific racial and cultural factors and mental health. The successive themes were the “Intersections of Race and Culture in Scientific Research and Mental Health Service Delivery to Children, Adolescents, and Families” (2007), “Intersections among Race, Culture, and Trauma across the Lifespan” (2008), and “Racial Identity and Cultural Factors in Treatment, Research, and Policy” (2009). The main objectives for each of the three annual thematic conferences were to share state of the art mental health theory, research, and practice with respect to the roles of race and culture in the etiology, maintenance, and remediation of mental health disparities; to use strategies to engage scientist practitioners and mental health service providers in interdisciplinary communication and collaboration to address the role of culture and race in their research, practice, and service delivery; and to develop and disseminate information regarding race and culture and mental health disparities. Each year, invited speakers, representing researchers, practitioners, and community workers, shared critical issues regarding each of these themes from their unique perspectives. Approximately 29 speakers participated on thematic panels comprised of researchers and practitioners. An additional 470 papers and posters were presented over the three years. About 855 people of diverse backgrounds and interests attended the conferences. During the first year, a DVD of invited speakers’ presentations was sent to each conference attendee. Subsequently, conference proceedings and videos of invited presentations were made available on the ISPRC website.

ISPRC 2010 Summer Program

Summer Webinar Series

ISPRC teamed with experts in the area of race and culture to provide a series of continuing education-credited Webinars (training seminars presented over the internet). These sessions allowed participants to take part in live, interactive learning from the comfort of their own locations. The successful online training session topics included:

- Understanding Racial Identity Theory
- Cultural Competence and Working with Survivors of Trauma
- Assessing School Climate: Identifying and Treating Racial Trauma in Schools
- A Multidimensional Culturally Competent Psychotherapeutic Model: Conceptual and Clinical Ideas
- Social Justice as Practice: Creating Lesson Plans for Teaching Counseling Skills.

Special thanks to presenters Dr. Janet E. Helms, Dr. Usha Tummala-Narra, Dr. Martin LaRoche, Dr. Maryam Jernigan, Carlton Green, and Angela Borges.

Alesha Harris
Regional Coordinator and Program Representative
Student Affiliates of Seventeen
Consultation Programs and Community Outreach

**VOICES (Voices of Interconnections: Creating Empowerment & Support)**
Shatina Williams and Alesha Harris collaborated with the AHANA (African-American, Hispanic, Asian American, Native American) Graduate Student Association, which is an organization that supports graduate students of Color at Boston College, to provide a safe space for graduate students of Color and their allies to find fellowship and voice concerns that may arise during their tenure at BC. In expressing concerns, students who attend VOICES encourage and motivate each other over food and conversation.

**AHANA Speaker: Lessons Learned**
In February, 2011, Carlton Green was the keynote speaker for The Sister Thea Bowman Scholars program sponsored by the Office of AHANA Student Programs (OASP) at BC. The annual program is designed to honor students who have self identified as racial or ethnic minorities and/or participated in OASP’s Summer Transitional program and earned a grade point average of 3.4 or higher during the previous spring and/or fall semester(s). Carlton was asked to share a bit of his own academic journey and what contributed to his success thus far. Carlton shared with the room of more than 200 undergraduate scholars the lessons learned from significant academic, professional, and spiritual mentors. In general, Carlton reminded the honorees that students of Color in predominantly White settings owe much to the persistence of the pioneers of Color who integrated institutions like BC. Additionally, he encouraged the students to think of themselves as accountable to the legacy established by those historic figures. Of the lessons he shared, Carlton emphasized that his academic mentors had taught him that although many educators want to believe that we live in a post-racial world, racism and race-related discrimination still exist in higher education and other professional settings. For example, with regard to students of Color at schools like BC, racism evidences itself when faculty and staff continue to have low academic expectations for students of Color and, as a result, fail to attend to racial and ethnic minority students’ academic skills and development. Carlton concluded by emphasizing the importance of remaining connected to a community of mentors who can inspire the students to dream dreams which they may not be able to dream for themselves.

**Respect Day: Race and Social Class at Boston College**
Several members of the ISPRC staff facilitated a workshop about race, racial identity, and social class for the Boston College Office of Residential Life. Almost two-hundred resident assistants (RAs) and resident directors (RDs) participated in this day-long experiential training designed to raise the participants’ awareness of how perceptions of race and social class influence interactions among BC students and the residential living staff. Dr. Janet Helms, Carlton Green, and Dr. Maryam Jernigan facilitated an interactive lecture that provided participants with an overview of social class and race in America, as well as Helms’s White and People of Color Racial Identity models. Participants also learned about the Helms Racial Identity Social Interaction Model, which can be used to assess how racial identity, both individual and organizational, and social power interact in the campus environment and result in growth-fostering or growth-inhibiting relationships.

Small group experiential sessions were facilitated by Marcia Liu and Cynthia Chen, also ISRPC staff members, as well as Angela Borges and Hammad N’cho, counseling psychology doctoral students. The group sessions allowed the RAs and RDs to think about race and culture as important aspects of their individual identities, and to identify specific race- and social class-related attitudes that might be helpful or harmful to their social and professional relationships. The day concluded with participants creating action plans for building inclusive residential living environments that value varying racial and social class backgrounds.

**Unspoken Thoughts**
Shatina Williams and Hammad N’cho collaborated with the BC Black History Month Committee to facilitate dialogue among BC undergraduate students regarding Black romantic relationships. They engaged almost 50 students in a conversation about the foundations of healthy relationships and the effects of educational disparities on Black relationships. Facilitators provided perspectives regarding how racial discourse, history, socioeconomic status, interpersonal communication styles, racial identity, and gender identity affect Black families and male-female relationships.

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Diversity Challenge Closing Celebration, 2010
Burke School Advocacy Program
For the 2010-2011 school year, ISPRC collaborated with Jeremiah Burke High School, a racially and ethnically diverse high school in Dorchester, Massachusetts, to launch a pilot advocacy program. The advocacy program aims to provide students with a voice and empower them to identify the barriers to their success and advocate for their own needs. Ten students in Boston College’s Master’s in Mental Health Counseling program participating in the social justice lab section of the Principles and Techniques class were assigned as advocates to one or two high school students. An ISPRC staff member created an assessment for advocates to administer to their students to determine barriers to student engagement. The information from the assessments is being used for two reasons. First, the advocates are given feedback and training regarding their interviewing skills. Second, the information is being used to create individual and school-wide interventions to address the barriers uncovered through the assessment. Additionally, throughout the year, an ISPRC staff member has conducted trainings for advocates on interviewing skills, working with culturally diverse clients, interfacing with families and teachers, and treatment planning. Interventions conducted by advocates have addressed: helping students improve their self-esteem, navigating the college application process, gaining access to health and mental health services, developing skills for talking to important adults, such as teachers and parents, and providing them with space to express themselves.

Program Mentors
Five BC undergraduate students of Color have been serving as mentors for a group of seniors at the Burke School. As mentors, the undergraduate students work with their high school students on developing a wide range of academic and social skills. During their mentoring sessions, the high school students and their mentors discuss topics such as time management, goal setting, and problem solving. Depending on the students’ personal needs or goals, the undergraduate mentors also assisted the high school students with meeting the academic requirements necessary for graduating from the Burke School at the end of this school year.

Program Evaluations
To meet its students’ diverse needs, the Burke School and its community partners offer a number of programs designed to increase school engagement and graduation rates, raise MCAS scores, and improve academic performance. The ISPRC is collaborating with the Burke School to understand the impact that these interventions are having on the school’s 9th grade students and, where needed, think of ways to strengthen the programs and increase their potential to serve Burke’s students. An ISPRC staff member is currently meeting with several program leaders to discuss what components of the programs have been successful, how the programs have been meeting their goals and the challenges experienced in program management. Following the meetings, ISPRC members will share their findings with the Burke staff and discuss developing a system that can be used for future evaluations.

Training Social Justice Advocates in Counseling Skills
In addition to their training and involvement with the Burke School, the Social Justice Advocates, who are first-year masters students in the Mental Health Counseling program, are trained in counseling skills. Similar to other first-year masters students, the advocates (a) attend a weekly seminar in counseling principles and professional issues, (b) practice their counseling skills in a weekly lab, (c) participate in weekly dyadic role plays, and (d) receive bi-weekly dyadic supervision. However, unique to the advocates’ lab is a social justice focus, in which they discuss social justice issues while learning counseling skills. In these training experiences, the advocates are developing their skills as culturally responsive counselors, and they are also learning how these skills differ from and overlap with being an advocate.

Ethan Mereish leads Burke School Advocates in a discussion on counseling skills
What is an Advocate?
By Amelia Dean Walker
What is an advocate? When I first walked through the beeping metal detectors at the Jeremiah E. Burke High School, I had trouble defining the position. Unlike a counselor, I did not plan to assess or treat students for emotional or behavioral issues. And, unlike a tutor, I was not there to focus exclusively on academics. Instead, I intended to explore that messy, in-between space where emotional and academic needs intersect. Over the next six months, my fellow advocates and I worked hard to identify the areas where we could lend support. We quickly learned that our students’ needs were difficult to disentangle, and that we could not focus on school attendance or homework grades without addressing some of the larger forces at play. No matter how we chose to intervene, we did so in a way that acknowledged the social inequalities that shape life both inside and outside the Burke. On good days, I felt connected with my students, actively advocated for their needs, and helped them learn ways to advocate for themselves. On bad days, I felt ineffective and confused—a naïve graduate student stumbling through the hallways of a chaotic world. In the end, the relationships we developed with students changed both people involved. While I worked to encourage and empower, students shared their own ways of seeing and being in the world, inspiring me with stories of tremendous courage and spirit.

Experiences from an Advocate
By John Flowers
Since October, I, and a group of my fellow first-year counseling candidates, have acted as advocates for students at Dorchester’s Jeremiah E. Burke High School. Each week, we car-pool there to act as stabilizing and supportive voices for positive social and academic change. Before last September, I did not know that such a position existed. Now in April, being an advocate is among my biggest sources of pride. It has been quite the crazy ride. Whether we were being mistaken for students, navigating complexities of race, class, or other systemic inequities, or just dealing with what quickly became known as the “crisis du jour,” we experimented with and gradually carved out our ideas of what it means to advocate. Though I cannot speak for others’ approaches, my take on advocacy turned out to be a blend of case managing, life coaching, and fellow traveling. I have no doubt that this work and related efforts create real change in the lives of our community members, because I have now been in the room to watch it happen. And while one-on-one efforts might seem small relative to systemic injustice, I’m hard-pressed to think of a better use of my Fridays. I cannot succinctly describe here the full depth of our experience or the value of the knowledge the ten of us have gained at the Burke. Suffice it to say, our time there has been often heart-breaking, rarely simple, and, more than occasionally, incredibly gratifying.

A Word from Cheryl Windle, MSW CAGS
Clinical Coordinator
Jeremiah E. Burke High School
It was an amazing opportunity when Boston College’s Institute for the Study and Promotion of Race & Culture reached out to the Jeremiah E. Burke High School in an effort to assist us with our redesign plan as a Turnaround School. Dr. Helms and her team have been instrumental in providing our school ten graduate student advocates who volunteer on a weekly basis to work with our students. Every Thursday and Friday, advocates arrive and dedicate their time and energy to work on mutually desired outcomes with their assigned Burke students. Since the advocates started in November, relationships have blossomed, and noticeable improvements in attendance, academic grades, as well as students’ social and emotional well-being have been observed. We are so grateful to Dr. Helms, her team, and the advocates who have assisted the Burke this school year. Thank you for all your support!
Developing New Techniques for Studying Racial Identity

In order to adhere to good reliability reporting practices, ISPRC is currently developing new techniques for studying racial identity. The Black Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (BRIAS), White Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (WRIAS), and People of Color Racial Identity Attitudes Scale (PRIAS) were created to assess individuals’ racial identity schemas or strategies for understanding racial issues. These psychological measures are being examined to address the improper use of Cronbach alpha (CA) as a reliability coefficient across various socio-demographic groups. Implications for reporting, interpretation, and application are proposed.

Recent Reliability Reporting Practices in Psychological Assessment: Recognizing the People Behind the Data

ISPRC has committed to defining good practices for internal consistency reporting, interpretation, and analysis consistent with an alpha-as-data perspective. In reminding the psychological community about best standards for reliability reporting, Helms, Henze, Sass, and Mifsud (2006) expanded on previous arguments that reliability coefficients are group-level summary statistics of samples’ responses, rather than stable properties of scales or measures. Additionally, they encouraged researchers to investigate characteristics of reliability data for their own samples and subgroups within their samples. As a follow up to the Helms et al. paper, we conducted two individual yet related studies to investigate the use of the alpha-as-data perspective in psychological analysis. In Study 1, we reviewed past and current reliability reporting practices in a sample of Psychological Assessment (PA) articles published across three decades (i.e., 1989, 1996, and 2006). Results suggested that contemporary and past researchers’ reliability reporting practices have not improved over time, and generally were not consistent with good practices. In Study 2, we analyzed an archival dataset to illustrate the real-life repercussions of researchers’ ongoing misconceptions of measures, but as data about test scores that potentially have real-life implications for the people behind the data.

Comparing Individual and Group-Level Reliability of Racial/Ethnic Groups’ CES-D Scores

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression (CES-D) Scale is one of the most widely used self-report measures for assessing depression in various racial/ethnic, as well as other demographic groups in both research and clinical contexts, although it was originally developed on a White American sample of respondents in the United States (Radloff, 1977). Most cross-racial interpretations of the CES-D as assessing depression are based on the erroneous presumption that high reliability coefficients obtained in some samples are pertinent to the sample at-hand. However, many studies do not report reliability information, but instead assert that none is needed because the CES-D has “acceptable reliability,” but for a long time, measurement experts and professional societies have advised that reliability is not a stable property of scales or measures; instead, it is a characteristic of a known sample’s responses to a set of items administered under certain conditions. In virtually all of the studies in which the CES-D scale was used and researchers reported reliability data, Cronbach’s (1951) coefficient alpha (CA) was the reliability statistic of choice. However, use of CA, a group-level statistic, provides no direct information about how individuals within the sample responded to the items (i.e., the extent to which each person’s responses were internally consistent). With the new development of Helms’s iota, the purpose of this paper is to investigate individual-level internal consistency of responses to the CES-D scale as an attempt to compensate for the limitations of using CA with racially diverse samples.

Helms’s PRIAS with Adolescents: A Reliability and Skewness Analysis

Recently, Green, Chen, Helms, and Henze (2011) found that skewness statistics can be used in place of item means to calculate Cronbach alpha (CA) with a sample’s responses to the CES-D-12 (Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression scale; 12 items). In this investigation, responses from a sample of 408 adolescents, ranging in age from 13 to 18 years old (M=16.25, SD=1.53), to the PRIAS were used to investigate whether skewness statistics might account for a large proportion of CA in a scale using Likert-type responses. This study presents CA reliability statistics for an adolescent sample from varying racial and ethnic backgrounds. The assumptions of using CA were checked using procedures described by Green et al. (2011). These assumptions include (a) normal distribution, (b) homogeneity of variance, and (c) positively correlated item responses within each subscale. Analyses suggested that alpha (internal consistency) calculated using skewness statistics for each subscale accounted for as much as 97% of the CA statistic.
Current Projects: Research Initiatives

Training Experience Project (TEP)
Multicultural competence is an essential component of training programs for mental health professionals who plan to work effectively with diverse populations. Examining and understanding counselors’ training experiences and the ways in which they achieve multicultural competence is critical. To better understand the various components and considerations related to multicultural competence in a social justice-focused program, Boston College’s masters-level counseling students and their doctoral-level counseling laboratory leaders completed a survey that assessed multicultural training experiences. Data collection consisted of quantitative and qualitative surveys, which were distributed at the end of the fall and spring semesters of the masters students’ first year in the program. Data analysis is currently in progress. ISPRC members plan to present their findings to the counseling psychology staff at the end of the academic year.

The Impact of Native American Images
Building on the previous research on The Impact of Native American Images on Researchers (a manuscript currently under review), the ISPRC is continuing its collaboration with Dr. Alfred Bryant, Jr. at University of North Carolina, Pembroke in order to investigate how a sample of high school and college-aged Native Americans react to stereotypical images of Native Americans. In this quantitative study, participants’ racial identity attitudes are hypothesized to account for their reactions to images. Furthermore, the research proposes to investigate the relationships between racial identity, physical health outcomes and behaviors, and experiences of racial discrimination.

Social Justice in Action: Training Masters Students to Engage in Culturally Sensitive Advocacy with High School Youths and Families
There has been a call within the field of counseling psychology for professionals to engage in social justice work and to train future counseling psychologists to be agents of social change. One way to train students to become social justice agents is to involve them in nontraditional experiential learning, such as advocacy, prior to clinical work. There is little research on advocacy programs, few models for implementation, and even fewer suggestions for training of advocates prior to, and during, their experiences. Through the use of interviews, this qualitative study examines the experiences of advocates and trainers in a pilot advocacy program through Boston College’s Lynch School of Education. Findings will help counseling psychology programs determine (a) how to appropriately train advocates to enter and engage in this type of work and, (b) where the counseling and competence training literature is insufficient, to address the issues experienced by advocates.

Diversity Challenge Analysis
When race and culture are introduced into counselor and psychology education, as well as mental health training, both instructors and students experience challenges. Research has shown that White instructors tend not to broach diversity-related conversations in predominantly White classrooms (Prieto et al., 2009). On the other hand, when ALANA faculty introduce racial and cultural topics, they encounter resistance. Students question the ALANA faculty person’s academic credentials and give faculty poor course evaluations. As a result, faculty may question their own expertise in addressing multicultural issues and avoid these topics completely (Sue & Sue, 1999). It is important for all counseling psychology and other educators to acquire strategies and skills for addressing race-related resistance. In light of such classroom related issues, as well as a qualitative content analysis from the first annual Diversity Challenge that revealed themes related to the intersections of race, ethnic culture, and teaching, ISPRC once again focused on the 10th annual Diversity Challenge, “Race and Culture in Teaching, Training, and Supervision.” To discover whether themes have changed over time, this year’s program was evaluated to identify specific aspects of the conference that enhanced participants’ strategies for, and knowledge related to, incorporating race and culture in teaching, training, and supervision. Findings concerning current themes and trends from more than 110 presentations that emphasized the intersections of race and culture, teaching, training, and supervision will be presented at the APA conference in Washington, D.C. in August.

ISPRC Staff Update

Cynthia Chen will be moving to Chicago for her predoctoral internship at La Rabida Children's Hospital. Her internship will focus on fostering and developing her clinical skills in pediatric psychology, child maltreatment, and general child psychology. In addition, Cynthia will gain valuable training in trauma-focused psychotherapy, psychological assessments, play and family therapy, and medical consultation.

Carlton Green will be completing his predoctoral internship at the University of Maryland Counseling Center during the 2011-2012 academic year. Carlton will be providing individual and group psychotherapy, consultation, and outreach services in a diverse college setting. He is grateful to Dr. Helms and the ISPRC family, whom he will greatly miss.

Marcia Liu will be working as a Psychology Intern at the Veterans Hospital located in Brooklyn, New York. She will be primarily focusing on integrated behavioral medicine, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance abuse treatment with male and female veterans.
2010-2011 ISPRC Staff

Janet E. Helms (Director)
Kathleen Flaherty (Administrative Associate)
Susan Ginivisian (Administrative Associate)
Cynthia Chen (Research Assistant)
Dana Collins (Research Assistant)
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ISPRC Staff Publications and Presentations


