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Critique of the American Community Survey as a Valid Instrument for Estimating Future Earning Capacity..

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Abstract: The primary purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the utilization of the American Community Survey (ACS) and determine if it is a reliable and valid methodology to estimate the earnings capacity of individuals who are completing a vocational evaluation. The sample for this study consisted of 412 participants who were all current rehabilitation practitioners working with persons with disabilities. The survey instrument for this study was created by the researchers in collaboration with a Delphi Panel consisting of ten forensic vocational experts with a mean of 31.13 years of clinical experience. Panel members participated during three rounds of review and feedback. Participants were asked to describe the economic effect of experiencing a disability as defined by the ACS on their earning capacity. Prior peer-reviewed research has determined that any earnings capacity or worklife expectancy model which assumes that Census and ACS disability measures are permanent conditions are empirically invalid as individuals can transition into and out of a disability. The results of the current study found the participants who reported experiencing a disability according to the ACS definition had higher average earnings when compared to those who never experienced a disability, \$125,664 vs. \$122,830 respectively. Thus, this research shows that utilizing ACS survey data that was designed for macroeconomic policy decisions for a vocational evaluation in the (N=1) context operates under the assumption of “once disabled always disabled” and produces spurious conclusions. Only when the specific conditions of an individual are evaluated at the micro level (e.g., educational attainment, familial history, intelligence and personality testing data, medical and psychological evidence) can the degree of disability and other confounding variables be properly accounted for in a vocational evaluation.

Re-Conceptualizing Vocational Assessment and Career Placement of Racial and Ethnic Minorities Using an Integrated Multicultural Model Approach.

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Abstract: Scholars have acknowledged that vocational and assessment placement models used by rehabilitation counselors in providing services to racial and ethnic minorities impact perceptions of rehabilitation potential of minorities (Cormier, Nurius, & Osborn, 2003; Rosenthal, 2004), decisions about eligibility, service planning and delivery (Rahimi, Rosenthal & Chan, 2003), and vocational outcomes (Cormier et al., 2003). However, existing models and frameworks are fragmented and do not adequately address the vocational assessment and career placement of minorities. The purpose of the study therefore was to propose an integrated multicultural approach to vocational

assessment and career placement that addresses cultural, racial and contextual factors that impact the delivery of these critical services to minority clients.

Utilizing Peer-Mediated Instruction within Post-Secondary Classrooms.

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Abstract: Enrolling in a post-secondary education program (PSE) is a potential option in establishing independence for students with intellectual disabilities (ID), as well as an important factor in terms of obtaining gainful employment. Traditional teaching methods (e.g., lecture) have been found to be problematic for all students, especially those with ID in K-12 and post-secondary settings. Educators are faced with finding multiple opportunities to actively engage students in the classroom in all settings. Actively engaging students with ID within instructional lessons allows the students to rehearse the skills being taught, as well as collaborate with peers who can offer different perceptions of the content that the individual with ID may understand better. To promote the active engagement of students with ID in PSE programs, the authors recommend for teachers to provide cooperative learning strategies such as peermediated instruction, which will be discussed in this article. The authors discuss several peer-mediated instructional strategies that can be implemented in PSE programs. A sample lesson plan will be provided as well as a discussion on future research implications.

Response to: Appropriate Use of Vocational Opinions to Rebut a Scheduled Rating in California Workers' Compensation

Claims for Permanent Partial Disability After Dahl and After Senate Bill 863.

Cloie B. Johnson and John R. Cary

Abstract: Van de Bittner and Moeller (2016) commented on the historical use of the opinions of vocational experts to “support a more accurate permanent disability rating for injured workers with claims for permanent total disability and for claims for permanent partial disability” (p. 37) in California workers’ compensation cases. They presented four rebuttal methods to apply to an individualized vocational evaluation to identify the most accurate disability rating in rare cases involving a claim for permanent partial disability. They indicated that these four “rebuttal methods probably apply to workers’ compensation systems in other states and in other venues as well” (p. 46). We have explored this suggestion specific to Washington’s workers’ compensation system based on our experience as vocational experts in this venue. Although there is currently no known avenue for a vocational expert to rebut a scheduled PPD rating in Washington State, we have identified two potential applications for implementing Van de Bittner and Moeller’s (2016) methodology. These applications may possibly be utilized in rare cases in Washington State similar to the application of the rebuttal methods for rare cases in California as indicated by Van de Bittner and Moeller (2016).

Understanding Perceived Short-Term Outcomes from a Professional Rehabilitation Cultural Experience to Cuba.

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Abstract: Background: An opportunity to visit Cuba, to learn about the medical, psychiatric, religious, arts, music, and sociopolitical culture of Cuba was offered to the predominantly U.S.-based professional rehabilitation community in January of 2016. This short-term study-travel experience for adult professionals, as offered by the Rehabilitation Institute of Memphis University and the American Board of Vocational Evaluators (ABVE), was designed to provide participants with an introduction to social justice practices and issues in Cuba, particularly with respect to children and adults with disabilities. Purpose: The purpose of this study was to pilot a survey created by the researchers on knowledge and attitudinal change of rehabilitation professionals participating in international travel and determine benefits of the trip for participants in the areas of skills, knowledge and cultural competence. The survey was designed to investigate the benefits and effectiveness of this program for its participants and to establish a foundation for future research in the minimally explored area of 7-14 day, short-term cultural tourism for adult professionals. Methods: The sample for this pilot study included 27 professionals who participated in a one-week educational experience to Havana, Cuba in 2016. Participants were asked to voluntarily complete a pre- and post-visit survey that included both Likert-scale and open-ended questions on skills, knowledge, expectations, and benefits of international professional travel during the trip. Results: On average, participant strongly agreed (means distributed between 4.71-4.81) that professional international travel improves multicultural awareness and competencies; provides a fuller understanding of people, their viewpoints, values, and concerns; broadens awareness of the experiences of others; and, assists one in becoming more culturally competent practitioners. Participant perceptions of educational opportunities for people with disabilities in Cuba and the benefits to Cuba from an exchange of ideas between the U.S. and Cuba were significantly higher between the pre- and post-visit survey; as well, the decrease in perceptions of employment opportunities of people with disabilities in both Cuba and the U.S. proved statistically significant. Participants noted the greatest need was physical accessibility in Cuba (although ranked the lowest for the U.S.) and mental health services in the U.S. (ranked 9th for Cuba in conjunction with medical services at 10th). Discussion: Participants felt before and after the experience that professional international travel does improve skills in the areas of cultural awareness and competence, and pre-travel knowledge did change in a few rehabilitation-related areas. Participants stated the travel experience raised their awareness of multicultural issues in their personal and professional interactions with clients, colleagues and acquaintances of different cultural backgrounds. The experience seemed to raise participant awareness about political issues and how these issues impact day-to-day life in Cuba. Recommendations for future research are also discussed.

Cultural Considerations in the Labor Market:

Dimity J. Peter

Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to explore the impact of race and gender on the ability of clients with disabilities to access the labor market. The theory of intersectionality is used as a framework to understand the complexity of the differing employment participation rates of clients with minority statuses. The paper then examines data from the US Department of Labor and explores the possible factors and explanations in regard to the unbalanced access to the labor market. Research from multiple disciplines is discussed suggesting that skills, education, and criminal background only partially account for significant unemployment rate differences between clients with and without minority status(es). The evidence strongly suggests that discrimination is a significant barrier to employment for clients with disabilities from non-white backgrounds. Finally, the paper considers the implications for labor market analyses in the field of forensic vocational rehabilitation and particularly Social Security consultations.