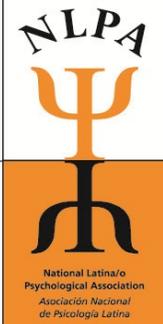


# El Boletín

The Newsletter of the National Latina/o Psychological Association



## From the President

Latina/o Adolescents



As I'm winding down my three-year term as the president of NLPA I'm reflecting back on some very good years. My term as President-Elect actually began at the 2008 conference in California with brainstorming about what to do during my term. I had helped re-start NLPA in 2002 and had been on the EC ever since then, so I knew what our challenges as an organization were.

Now as 2012 is near, I see that most of my goals were achieved. NLPA is on sound financial footing,

we have started our own journal, and the structure of the organization is solid. I feel proud and grateful to have worked with an amazing group of officers and members. I feel proud to have seen graduate students take their first steps into their careers, professionals develop and elders get recognized.

NLPA is 10 years old and it's been a wonderful 10 years. Four conferences (Arizona, Wisconsin, California, Texas and soon, New Jersey). We've recruited hundreds of members, provided thousands of dollars in travel aid to students and set the agenda for Latina/o psychology at national meetings. One of our own rose to the presidency of APA.

I am so thankful to all of you who made NLPA a success with your energy, expertise, time and money. In particular the presidents of NLPA

(Patricia, Azara, Jose and Milton) – your mentorship has been priceless. I have so many people to thank for your professional and personal friendship, thank you all. So as my last words as president I say “We did it, and we’ll keep doing it”.

Adelante mi gente!

Edward Delgado-Romero, PhD  
Associate Professor  
University of Georgia

President  
National Latina/o Psychological Association, 2009-2011

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## Noticias

NLPA events and Accomplishments

### ACHIEVEMENTS



**Dr. Yvette Tazeau**

#### The Hispanic Neuropsychological Society Member of the Month.

Dr. Tazeau is currently in independent practice in San Jose, CA. Her special interests include developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and dementia. Additionally, she had research interests in the intersection of service delivery and linguistically-proficient and culturally-congruent interventions.



**Linda Castillo, Ph.D.**

#### Promotion.

Dr. Linda Castillo was promoted to Full Professor effective September 1, 2011 at Texas A&M University. Congratulations, Dr. Castillo!



**Manuel X. Zamarripa, Ph.D.**

#### Promotion.

Dr. Manuel X. Zamarripa received tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor effective September 1, 2011 at Texas A&M—Corpus Christi.

### SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Recently, the NLPA Executive Committee approved the creation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs). NLPA members . Below are descriptions of three SIGs that have already been approved .

#### Latina/o Child, Adolescent, and Family Psychology

The *Latino/a Child, Adolescent, & Family Psychology* Special Interest Group (SIG) consists of NLPA members interested in issues specific to Latino youth and families. Group members seek to fulfill the NLPA mission by advancing our understanding of the strengths, challenges, and needs of Latino youth – the fastest growing segment of the U.S. population – and the wellbeing of Latino families in general. Members of this SIG are

committed to exchanging ideas, experiences, and research to better understand and meet the needs of Latino families. The group is also committed to using this knowledge in the service of promoting positive youth development and advocating for the mental health and educational needs of Latino youth. The goals of the SIG are to 1) create a forum for sharing and discussing issues related to Latino youth and families, 2) facilitate the dissemination of research related to this population, 3) promote awareness and advocate for issues relevant for Latino youth, and 4) foster pro-

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In addition to the events and accomplishments of the National Latina/o Psychological Association, each issue of *El Boletín* features content centered around a particular topic considered important to the membership.

This issue is focused on Latina/o Adolescents. Topical coverage begins on page 7.

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professional relationships among NLPA members with a special interest in Latino youth and families.

Although the SIG was only established recently, we have a strong group of members who are committed to meeting our goals. To date, we have established an online discussion board where members share ideas and resources. We are also working with the NLPA Executive Committee to establish a relationship with the American Psychological Association's Committee on Children, Youth, and Family. We hope to serve as an important resource linking these two national organizations to ensure that the needs of Latino families are represented. As we continue to grow, we hope to increase our advocacy efforts and our ability to disseminate the knowledge gleaned from our discussions and the clinical and research knowledge generated by our members. For additional information, please contact Omar Gudiño, PhD at [Omar.Gudino@nyumc.org](mailto:Omar.Gudino@nyumc.org).

### **Evidenced Based Practice with Latino Populations**

The *Evidence-Based Practice with Latino Populations* Special Interest Group (SIG) was created to further the NLPA mission by generating and applying knowledge to

effectively meet the mental health needs of the Latino population.

There is a growing emphasis on using evidence-based practices (EBP), with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all people receive the best possible care. Unfortunately, there is limited research specifically examining the use and outcomes of EBPs with Latinos and many potential barriers to implementing EBPs exist. In essence, there is a great desire to provide EBPs to Latinos but little empirical data on how to best accomplish this.

This SIG was formed to target barriers to disseminating information on research developments and clinical innovations related to using EBPs. Members of NLPA have a wealth of clinical and research experience and it is hoped that this SIG can capitalize on this incredible resource to promote best practices for clinicians working with Latinos. The specific goals of this SIG are to create a forum for NLPA members to 1) keep current on the latest research findings, 2) promote and support new research, 3) disseminate practice-based evidence from clinicians experienced in using EBPs with this population, 4) advocate for improved training in EBPs, and 5) discuss barriers to the use of EBPs and potential ways of overcoming these barriers.

To date, we have established and online discussion board for sharing ideas and resources. As our membership grows, we will establish ways of translating our knowledge into products that can be easily disseminated to the broader community. We are committed to ensuring the culturally competent delivery of clinical care and we are excited about working together to increase access to EBPs for Latinos. NLPA members interested in joining this SIG are invited to contact Omar Gudiño, PhD at [Omar.Gudino@nyumc.org](mailto:Omar.Gudino@nyumc.org)

### **Mentores y Líderes: Apoyando a Futuros Profesionales**

The purpose of this group is to cultivate and promote opportunities through (i.e., email exchange/ conversations, social media venues, face-to-face meetings at conferences and gatherings, etc.) for students and psychologists interested in the field of Latina/o psychology to engage in mentorship, professional development and leadership development within NLPA.

Many students in Latino/a psychology have few to no professional role models and mentors to inform, guide, and assist them successfully navigate the challenging process of becoming a psychologist.

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## Noticias

NLPA Events and Accomplishments

Announcing the:

### National Latina/o Psychological Association's Biennial Conference

*Recognizing Our Differences & Promoting Unity:  
Diversity Among Latinas/os*

Conference: October 12-13

Pre-Conference: October 11

New Brunswick, NJ

More Information Available at: [www.nlpa.ws](http://www.nlpa.ws)

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From determining the necessary preparation during undergraduate study, decision making related to pursuing graduate education, selecting and applying to graduate psychology programs, dealing with bureaucracies all along the journey, internship, surviving and thriving in academia and/or other job settings as a doctoral-level professional, scholarship, publication of research, and dealing with the complexities of intersecting ethnic and professional identities.

Through this forum, NLPA members (both students and psychologists) will be able to have access to role models and accomplished leaders from across NLPA's vast membership.

If you are interested in being a part of *Mentores y Líderes: Apoyando a Futuros Profesionales* as either a mentor/mentee or both, please contact us at: [tor-resphd@gmail.com](mailto:tor-resphd@gmail.com) or [linsleym@gmail.com](mailto:linsleym@gmail.com) so you can be added to the group [mentoresy-lideres@googlegroups.com](mailto:mentoresy-lideres@googlegroups.com)

We can also connect through Facebook (mentores y-lideres): <http://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100002821801789>

Please share your amazing wisdom with all of us!

Sincerely,

**Erika Torres, PhD**- Chair-Group development/evaluation & logistics

**Alberto Figueroa-Garcia**-Co-Chair -Leadership development

**Michelle Linsley**- Communications coordinator- Develop and maintain Google group/Facebook page

**Sonia Hart**- Liaison- Resources, outreach in the community and within NLPA

#### CALENDAR

**Winter Roundtable Conference. Beyond Borders: Transforming Lives Through Traditions and Innovations. February 24-25, 2012.** The conference will be held at Teachers College, Columbia University.

More information can be found at [www.tc.columbia.edu/roundtable/](http://www.tc.columbia.edu/roundtable/)

## Editorial: Aunque sea Pobre nosoy Bruta: The Role of Culture in Clinical Psychology

Adriana Pena—Johns Hopkins University,

Dicen que entienden pero no entienden. No tienen conocimiento de la cultura de nosotros. Ya entiendo la razon que se fue Elizabeth de este pais. Creian que ella estaba loca pero no podian entender lo que le pasaba.

They said she had Brief Psychotic Disorder, but did she? We reviewed this disorder in my advanced psychopathology course at Johns Hopkins University and I think the psychologists that reviewed my sister's case had no understanding of Cuban culture.

Los psicologos Americanos me han visto y no saben que decirme porque no entienden que en la cultura de nosotros yo soy normal. Aunque algunos me digan a veces que soy loca por estudiar tanto es mi pasion. Pero todavia yo miro a los otros muchachos en la clase y soy la unica muchacha hispana ahi.

I am tired of being a minority. I was sitting in class last week (Lab Analysis of Psych Data) and realized wow- I am the only Hispanic person in this room. Then I started thinking why did my TA give me a 10/20 on my introduction. It could be because it was poorly written and I know it was. It could be because the formatting was incorrect. It could be because I am just a horrible writer. I presume it is a combination of things that led to this dreadful grade. I know at campus people have very different "research interests" from my own. They don't like to hear about gangs or drugs or violence because they think it doesn't apply. I don't understand. I am not a juvenile delinquent; however, I do enjoy studying them because those are the people I grew up with in my environment. I grew up in an inner city where there was poverty, YES- POVERTY, DRUGS, VIOLENCE. All of these issues are REAL

problems in our world and not made up problems of the mind.

Adonde estan los otros Latinos en este pais si no estan estudiando? Mentablemente muchos estan en la calle en pandilla o en la carcel. Padres, no dejen que sus muchachos se involucren en estas actividades!

There is a culture difference that has not been addressed in this country. As I sat in my Abnormal Psychopathology discussion this evening I realized that most of the students around me did not know how to diagnosis a Latino patient. It is not necessarily that they do not understand their studies of mental illness. I am sure they have read the ins and outs of the DSM and ICD, but culture cannot be learned from reading a book. Culture is learned when you go out of your way to learn about the way of life of different ethnic groups and races. Most could care less and that probably has too much to do with Latino health care disparities in this country. As long as they get their comfortable salary at the end of the day for diagnosing Susy, Bobby, and Jamie everything will be okay, but what are they going to do when a depressed Maria walks in claiming that "los santos" will protect her and that her sister is studying "brujeria"?

Que van hacer cuando Maria va a hablar con el psicologo? Le van a decir que esta loca porque no entienden la cultura Latina. Eso no quiere decir que los psicologos sean malos porque yo misma estoy estudiando para ser psicologa. Solo quiere decir que presten buen atencion a lo que te digan y tenga en cuenta que hay muchas opciones de tratamiento disponibles en este pais. Si es posible recomiendo conseguir un doctor que hable español.

***"...but culture cannot be learned from reading a book."***

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## Editorial

(Continued from p. 5)

Aqui, si uno dice tengo fe en Cristo y tuve una vision de mi abuelito que su murio hace 50 anos le dicen psychotic. En este pais la forma en que tratan los que tienen enfermedades mentales es muy distinto comparado a los paises de nosotros. Aqui las enfermedades mentales las curan en la oficina del doctor que es muy diferente a la forma en que los hispanos curan las enfermedades entre la familia.

Like my professor said today, "The culture is very different. Here most of our homeless have some sort of mental illness." They are seen as outcasts.

En los paises de nosotros no botamos a los locos a la calle si son familia en vez los cuidamos.

Quería ir a estudiar en Colombia y no pude porque no querían transferir los créditos "as predicted they did not have access to a US transcript". Ser pobre no es lo mismo que ser bruto.

Ademas estuve tratando de hacer investigaciones y estudios de las pandillas y del abuso de la droga, pero sabes lo que me dijeron en la escuela? Aqui no hacemos eso. Al final conseguí un doctor que me quiso ayudar en el hospital de Johns Hopkins.

Gang violence and drug abuse plague our communities just as much as the mentally ill homeless men in the streets. Growing up in Newark I saw all of the "risk-factors" before me, but it is becoming more and more difficult for our Latino youth to steer clear of sex, drugs, and violence. There are too many barriers for underprivileged youth and **SOMEbody** has to speak out for them. I come from a low-income family, but I am a mentor, a scholar, and a researcher. I have been studying gang violence for a year now, but it is

not easy to explain criminal minds. It is not easy to get our children off of the streets.

No es facil.

It is not easy, but there are always two sides of a coin. On one hand I am a double major in Neuroscience and Psychology with a pre-medical curriculum doing research at the Child Psychiatry Unit at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

On the other hand.

Todavía soy la Cubanita Colombiana de Newark, NJ.

It doesn't matter. I am still the same person on both sides working towards the same goals to help educate our youth and to stop the violence plaguing our streets.

Aunque sea pobre no soy bruta.

***"There are too many barriers for underprivileged youth and **SOMEbody** has to speak..."***

## Latina/ Girls on the Edge: The Importance of Parental Involvement

Brandy Piña-Watson, M.S. & Linda Castillo, Ph.D.

Latina adolescents have the highest rate of suicidal ideation and attempts than any other race or gender pairing within this age group (National Adolescent Health Information Center [NAHIC], 2006). It is estimated that one out of every five Latinas between the ages of 14-19 has seriously considered committing suicide within the last 12 months. This is nearly double that of Latino boys (Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System [YRBSS], 2006). According to YRBSS (2006), over half of the Latinas who think about suicide end up making an attempt even though Latina adolescents have similar rates of depression as other adolescent racial groups (Zayas, Lester, Cabassa, & Fortuna, 2005). Little is known about why suicide ideation and attempt rates differ so drastically. Findings of a recent study we conducted as part of a Texas A&M University Counseling Psychology research team, found that sociocultural factors play an important role in predicting whether or not a Latina teen will think about suicide.

It is common knowledge in Latino mental health research that familismo is an important cultural value that often serves as a protector from mental health problems. Using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health) Wave 1, the research team conducted a secondary logistical regression data analysis to investigate whether the adolescent's perceived familial factors, such as being connected with one's mother and father, parental caring, autonomy, and parental academic interests, would protect Latinas from suicidal ideation above and beyond established correlates to suicide—depression and acculturation.

The Add Health project is a longitudinal study that examined a school-based cohort of students that is nationally representative of public and private middle and high schools in the United States. Wave 1, which consisted of 20,745 adolescents, was administered the in-home interview, which was made available in both English and Spanish. These in-home interviews were administered from April 1995 to December 1995 amongst 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade stu-

dents. The Latina adolescent suicide study sample consisted of 234 respondents who were reported as: (1) being female; (2) being of Latin descent; (3) being between the ages of 12-20; and (4) having a mother and father figure in their lives.

Using odds ratios, it was determined that participants who reported symptoms of depression were 12% more likely to have reported thoughts of suicide. In regards to parent-adolescent relationships, only mother connectedness significantly predicted suicidal ideation. A one unit increase in participants' perception of having a mother who was warm and loving towards them decreased the odds by 10% that participants reported suicidal ideation. This is consistent with previous research that shows the importance of mother-daughter relationships as a powerful protective factor against suicide (Zayas et al., 2005, 2009).

A noteworthy finding of the study was that the Latina's perceived level of parental interest in their school life was a significant predictor of suicidal ideation for the participants. Results suggested that a one unit increase in participants who reported having parents who talked to them about how they were doing in school decreased the odds by 31% that they would report suicidal ideation. This supports previous research about the importance of parental involvement in school (Coatsworth, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2002).

Given the findings of this study, prevention efforts are needed that help strengthen the connectedness that a Latina adolescent feels with her parents. Incorporating family into therapy and prevention efforts, instead of solely including the adolescent, which is typical of community and school based interventions, may prove to be beneficial to these girls in preventing suicidality. Furthermore, public health professionals can work in conjunction with school districts in offering Latino parents opportunities to be more involved in their child's school. Utilizing a community-school collaboration can help improve parent-daughter connections as well as reduce the prevalence of suicidal ideation.

## A Vision for Our Future: Three Considerations for Research with Latina/o Youth in the U.S. I. David Acevedo-Polakovich, PhD; Central Michigan University

The growing demographic importance of Latinas/os in the United States (US) is well documented. Between 2000 and 2010, Latinas/os grew to represent 16% of the US population, accounting for over half of the population growth (Passell & Cohn, 2011). **Among Latinas/os, youth are particularly important. While only one out of five Americans is under 18 years of age, one out of every three Latinas/os falls in this age category** (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011). Despite their growing importance, Latina/o youth are underrepresented in research (Isaacs et al., 2008; Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). A review of all empirical articles published in six leading adolescent research journals over a five year period found that only 26 out of over one thousand empirical articles focused on Latinas/os (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). Clearly, there is an increasingly urgent need for research that is focused on US Latina/o youth. This article introduces three important considerations for such research.

### **First consideration:**

***If we want US Latina/o youth to be successful, success is what we must study.***

Most of the limited research focusing on US Latina/o youth has examined deficits (e.g., substance use, mental illness, school dropout, etc.) (Rodriguez & Morrobel, 2004). To be sure, deficit-focused research can identify factors that influence adverse outcomes (Kuperminc, Wilkins, Roche & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2009). However, the prevention of adverse outcomes is most effective when focused on psychosocial factors that broadly foster successful development (Kuperminc et al., 2009). Stated plainly, if we want US

Latina/o youth to be successful, success is what we must study.

We know little about the factors that foster positive outcomes—such as leadership, social responsibility, community involvement, and academic success (defined as success rather than the absence of failure)—among US Latina/o youth (Acevedo-Polakovich et al, *in press*). Although it is helpful to know what empowers US Latina/o teens to keep from engaging in problem behaviors (e.g., drug abuse, gang activity, dropping out of school), it is arguably more helpful to know what drives them to succeed (e.g., do well academically, create change in their community) (Acevedo-Polakovich et al, *in press*).

### **Second consideration:**

***A complete understanding of Latina/o youth can neither ignore cultural processes nor reduce Latina/o youth to these processes.***

Within the limited scholarship on Latina/o youth, cultural processes such as enculturation, acculturation, and ethnic identity have received relatively more attention than other variables (Acevedo-Polakovich et al, *in press*). This makes sense; there are important positive consequences for the health and wellbeing of Latina/o youth that come from learning to negotiate the contrasts between mainstream US culture and their Latina/o heritage and from understanding the implications of these contrasts for their self concept (Acevedo-Polakovich et al, *in press*).

Despite their clear importance, it is inappropriate to reduce the study of Latina/o youth to cultural

*“Despite their clear importance, it is inappropriate to reduce the study of Latina/o youth to cultural processes.”*

## A Vision for Our Future

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processes. Although cultural processes should inform—and arguably be the foundation for—a complex developmental understanding of Latina/o youth, these youth deserve to be understood with the same complexity that is implicit when their non-Latina/o peers are studied. Like their peers, Latinas/os aspire to succeed, face challenges that must be overcome, and must develop and maintain assets that will help them overcome challenges and achieve their aspirations.

**Cultural processes should be considered as a foundation for—but not instead of—a complex understanding of the development and ecology of US Latina/o youth.**

### *Final consideration:*

***The choices psychologists make determine whether their research empowers or oppresses Latina/o youth.***

With limited exceptions (e.g., James, 1910; Lewin, 1946), the prevailing perspectives regarding the conduct of psychological research in the US have incorporated the assumption that psychologists are experts who should make decisions regarding what to research and how to do so (Acevedo-Polakovich, 2007). At its worst, this top-down assumption leads to a state of affairs where people are perceived as existing in the service of psychological science (e.g., as the subjects of research with foci and methods determined by psychologists). When this happens—as some have argued tends to be the case with psychology in the US—scientific methods and theories are advanced without offering tractable solutions to the issues considered important by the people who are the focus of science (Acevedo-Polakovich, 2007). Psychological science advances while the issues people face remain unchanged (or worsen).

In contrast to this top-down assumption, throughout the twentieth century Latin American thinkers (and others in the developing world) began refining a per-

spective that actively places science—including psychology—in the service of people and society (e.g., Freire, 1970; Martín-Baró, 1996). This perspective undergirds various contemporary approaches to science including participatory research, participatory action research, emancipatory research, and community-based participatory research (Acevedo-Polakovich, Kassab, & Barnett, *in press*). A common core of these approaches is a focus on genuine collaborative engagement between researchers and those whom they study. As psychologists move forward with efforts to better understand Latina/o youth in the US, the real world relevance of their work would increase with the use of approaches such as these, which can answer questions that are scientifically meaningful and of importance to US Latina/o youth.

It is an unfortunate testament to the implicitly prejudiced history of US psychology that we know so relatively little about US Latina/o youth. However, it is also an opportunity to establish an approach to psychological research that is complex, balanced, and uplifting. An approach that considers youth as agents rather than victims, and that envisions and facilitates their meaningful involvement in determining the foci and the methods of research. **Young Latinas/os meaningfully involved in a science that reflects their lived realities and portrays them with dignity.** That is quite a vision for our future.

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## Graduate Student Spotlight: Michelle Cruz-Santiago

### Pursuing and Discovering Latina/o Pathways of Success

Interview by Manuel X. Zamarripa; Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi



Michelle Cruz-Santiago has always believed that furthering her education would allow her to be in a position to make significant, positive impacts in the lives of Latina/o youth. This belief is being realized

even as she completes her doctorate in Clinical/Community Psychology. For example, she was recently awarded the 2011 Campus Award for Excellence in Public Engagement at her home campus of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign for her sustained involvement in outreach and advocacy efforts on behalf of low-income Latino families. El Boletín is grateful to have the opportunity to highlight the life and work of one of NLPA's most promising future Latina psychologists.

Working and going to school is a reality that has been a part of Michelle's life since middle school. Her family's modeling of hard work and insistence on excelling in education were the primary motivators for her academic persistence. However, it was a particular faculty member in her undergraduate experience that opened the possibility for Michelle to consider a doctoral program. As Michelle de-

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## Graduate Student Spotlight

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scribes, “It was so inspiring to see a Puerto Rican woman faculty member with a thick accent have so much power and respect in the department”. She was the first to say, ‘You are PhD material’ and she made sure that I pursued opportunities that would prepare me for graduate school.” Always attentive to the monetary realities of continuing her education, Michelle applied to many programs but considered only those that had funding possibilities. She also looked up zip codes of the areas where she applied and researched the cost of living in each of these cities. Although students in her department come from diverse ethnic backgrounds, Michelle noted that she seemed to be one of few students from a low-income family. She noticed that she was often the only one who was vocal about contextualizing psychological phenomenon from an SES framework, particularly the influence of neighborhood poverty and crime.

Indeed, Michelle’s research agenda has consistently explored contextual influences on the mental health of low-income Latinos. She has published on the effect of neighborhood violence and other environmental stressors on substance use among Latino youth, and on parenting among Latino parents in low-income high-crime neighborhoods. Additionally, her interdisciplinary dissertation research focuses on the pathways by which Latino males from low-income backgrounds move from high school to 4

-year universities. Across her work, Michelle combines research with action. For example, she helped create an after-school program for Latino immigrant children. This program, which began in a mobile home community, is now funded by the University of Illinois and will certainly continue beyond Michelle’s tenure at the university. Michelle also created and taught her own service-learning course which, for four years, trained undergraduate students to be action-researchers within the afterschool program.

This willingness and ability to work outside the proverbial “box” is a clear strength. Michelle’s advice to other Latina/o graduate students is to be “very proactive” in all aspects of the educational process. This applies not only to seeking out opportunities and mentorship, but also being passionate about the research and scholarly interests students pursue. “Be active about everything!” Michelle stated. When students are passionate about the work they are doing “it shows”, she added.

El Boletín is proud to highlight the work and life of this outstanding Latina graduate student. She embodies the Latina/o value of familismo and is already positively impacting the lives of students and community members with whom she is in contact. As Michelle concludes, “Everything I want to do is to promote the advancement of Latina/os at multiple levels.”

## Becoming a Latina/o Psychologist: Adriana Umaña-Taylor

THE PATH TOWARD LATINA/O ADOLESCENT RESEARCH—Interview by Manuel X. Zamarripa, Ph.D.; Texas A&M University– Corpus Christi

Dr. Adriana Umaña-Taylor's career focusing on adolescent ethnic identity had contributed significantly to the field of Latina/o Psychology and has continued to reinforce the importance of context in understanding the importance of ethnicity for Latina/o youth. Currently, Dr. Umaña-Taylor is an associate professor in the School of Social and Family Dynamics at Arizona State University and has taught courses related to adolescence, family relationships & diversity, as well as courses focusing specifically on Latina/o children and families. Her research and productivity along with her commitment to mentoring Latina/o students (and other marginalized students) made Dr. Umaña-Taylor an ideal candidate for inclusion and recognition in this issue of *El Boletín* where we are highlighting Latina/o adolescents.

Although Dr. Umaña-Taylor has become one of the leading psychologists in Latina/o adolescent ethnic identity, her initial research interests beginning as an undergraduate at the University of Texas at Austin had nothing to do with either adolescents or the topic of ethnicity. Adriana's initial interest was to become a child psychologist and work primarily as a clinician. However, as she became involved with her first research labs she was taken with all aspects of the research process. The idea of posing research questions and subsequently devising avenues for at-



tempting to answer those questions was incredibly appealing. This experience led Dr. Umaña-Taylor to think that perhaps she could have a broader impact on the well-being of children through research and scholarship that could inform clinical practice and the field of child psychology in general.

As a master's student, again at the University

of Texas, Dr. Umaña-Taylor became more interested in the role of families in child development partly due to the work she was conducting in her graduate research lab. At this point she still

was not excited about the role of culture or ethnic identity. However, the turning point for her when she really began focusing on Latina/o research and scholarship also came in her first year of graduate school. In doing the readings for her graduate course and learning more about the dominant theories in the field, she was very surprised and frustrated to discover that her experience was not portrayed. This was a "very powerful realization for me", Dr. Umaña-Taylor stated. In addition to this, she worked in a graduate research lab that investigated young adults' reasons for commitment in romantic relationships. There was very limited mention of the role of family in these decisions. This was a very curious omission, because the role of family had always played a prominent role in such de-

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## Becoming a Latina/o Psychologist

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cisions in her own life. At this point, Adriana began to wonder if it was culture and her cultural background that was the distinguishing factor. This eventually led to her interests in ethnic identity. Then, because of her interest in identity formation, she was led to the field of adolescence since most research indicates that this is a crucial time period for identity formation.

This new focus had particular relevance for Dr. Umaña-Taylor. Growing up in Texas where the majority of Latina/os are of Mexican origin, her ethnic identity development as a child of Colombian immigrants was distinctly salient. Thus, the role and importance of context in what it means to be Latina/o in the U.S. has played a significant part in Adriana's research partly based on her personal experience. Since then, the study of adolescent identity with Latina/os has become a focal point for Dr. Umaña-Taylor. She has published over 35 articles and 15 book/book chapters on ethnic identity, Latina/o adolescents, and the role of families in the lives of Latina/os.

Adriana noted that a key element to her success as a graduate student and now as a professional is a supportive network of people who encouraged her and believed in her. As a graduate student, she noted that many individuals in her "supportive team" were from other departments and most did not even

share the same research interests. However, each were encouraging, interested in her work, and most importantly nurtured her development as a scholar. Thus, her advice to other Latina/o students would be to build such a "team" in and out of their respective departments. Additionally, it is important to be assertive in introducing oneself to other Latina/o professionals at conferences who share research interests. Finally, Dr. Umaña-Taylor stated, "I know it sounds cliché, but don't give up. There have been times in my career where it seemed like every door was closing. Remind yourself that the product will be worth the challenge. The goal is worth pursuing." These are the sentiments she passes on to the many undergraduate and graduate Latina/o students she mentors. Given her experiences becoming a Latina psychologist, she considers mentoring students a primary goal.

As the Latina/o population continues to grow and continues to be a young population, Dr. Umaña-Taylor's work with Latina/o adolescent identity development will continue to provide critical information about the protective role ethnicity and families play for Latina/o development. The field of Latina/o psychology is elevated by the contributions of this dedicated and persistent Latina psychologist.

***"...the role and importance of context in what it means to be Latina/o in the U.S. has played a significant part in Adriana's research partly based on her personal experience."***

## Recent Publications by NLPA Members

The recent publications of NLPA members are listed in this section as a service to the membership, and with the intent of facilitating the exchange of new information among Latina/o psychologists. All citations are provided directly by the authors. It is *El Boletín's* policy to include in this section all submissions by members that (1) have been published since the last issue of *El Boletín*, and; (2) Can be best described as books, full chapters in edited books, or articles in peer-reviewed publications.

### Peer-Reviewed Articles

- Arredondo, P., & Castillo, L. G. (2011). Latina/o student achievement: A collaborative mission of professional associations of higher education. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 10*, 6-17.  
doi:10.1177/1538192710391907
- Cano, M. A., & Castillo, L. G. (2010). The role of enculturation and acculturation in Latina college student distress. *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education, 9*, 221-231. doi:10.1177/1538192710370899
- Castillo, L. G., Perez, F. V., Castillo, R., & Ghosheh, M. R. (2010). Construction and initial validation of the marianismo beliefs scale. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly, 23*, 163-175. doi:  
10.1080/09515071003776036
- Schwartz, S. J., Weisskirch, R. S., Zamboanga, B. L., Castillo, L. G., Ham, L. S., Huynh, Q. L., Park, I. J. K., Donovan, R., Kim, S. Y., Vernon, M., Davis, M. J., & Cano, M. A. (2011). Dimensions of acculturation: Associations with health risk behaviors among college students from immigrant families. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 58*, 27-41. doi: 10.1037/a0021356
- Torres, L., Yznaga, S., & Moore, K. (2011). Discrimination and Latino Psychological Distress: The Moderating Role of Ethnic Identity Exploration and Commitment. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 81*, 498-506.
- Zamarripa, M.X., Lane, I., Lerma, E., & Holin, L.M. (2011). Self-knowledge and identity in a Mexican American counseling course: A qualitative exploration. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, 33*, 88-104.

## Recent Publications by NLPA Members

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### Chapters

- Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D., Crider, E., Kassab V.A., & Gerhart, J.I. (2011). Increasing Service Parity Through Organizational Cultural Competence. In L. Buki & L.M. Piedra (Eds.). *Creating Infrastructures for Latino Mental Health* (pp.79-98). New York, NY: Springer.
- Acevedo-Polakovich, I. D. & Gering, C. (2011). Evidence-based Practice with Latina/o Adolescents and Families. In M. Gallardo, C. Yeh, J. Trimble, & T. Parham (Eds.). *Culturally Adaptive Counseling Skills: Demonstrations of Evidence-Based Practices* (pp.113-125). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Stough, L. M., Villareal, E., & Castillo, L. G. (2010). Disaster and social vulnerability: The case of undocumented Mexican migrant workers. In J. D. Rivera and D. S. Miller, *How ethnically marginalized Americans cope with catastrophic disasters: Studies in suffering and resiliency* (pp. 297-314). Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
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## **“I am/Yo soy.....”: Introduction and Musings on Identity**

*From the Editor*

I am privileged and honored to serve as the next editor of *El Boletín*. First, I would like to thank Dr. David Acevedo-Polakovich for the outstanding job he did and for his years of service as editor of *El Boletín*. NLPA is a stronger organization because of his dedication to producing timely, informative, professional, and inspiring issues of our newsletter. On a personal level, I am extremely grateful for all his help in my transition to the role of editor.

As the title suggests, I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the readers of *El Boletín*. As is the case with many of us, I consider NLPA my professional familia and the relationships I have built as a result of being involved in NLPA has been an extremely important aspect of my professional and personal development as a Latino psychologist. Currently, I am an associate professor at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. I was born and raised in San Antonio and have a deep connection to the city and its history. However, growing up in San Antonio also taught me early lessons in both ethnic identity and social justice. At a young age, I recognized the socioeconomic and ethnic divisions in the city, particularly as they manifested themselves in the educational system. Throughout my life these issues and others have been important in shaping my personal and professional goals.

I am extremely pleased that my tenure as editor began with an issue on Latina/o Adolescents. My interest in adolescence and ethnic identity development is what motivated me to pursue a career in psychology. Growing up, I was keenly aware of the lack of Latina/os in school curriculum and wondered how that fact could impact the identity development of Latina/o students in schools where they were in the majority. The role of context in the study of Latina/o adolescents was also highlighted by our invited contributors in the current issue. I would like to thank Dra. Adriana Umaña-Taylor, Dr. David Acevedo-Polakovich, and Michelle Cruz-Santiago for sharing their thoughts and experiences regarding Latina/o youth in our society.

I am...extremely happy to be serving our familia in my new role as editor. As I see it, each issue of *El Boletín* has contributed to our growing and ever evolving ideas of Latina/o Psychology and of who we are as Latina/o psychologists. I am looking forward to collaborating with many of you in the future to continue this tradition.

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Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi  
Editor

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