



Overview of Articles in the Special Issues

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Below I provide a brief overview and commentary on each article in these special issues of the *Global Journal of Community Psychology Practice*. In describing each article below, I have noted the practice competencies highlighted by the authors, and also listed in brackets any other competencies that seemed to me to be especially involved in their work. I also listed any Proposed Competencies specified in each article.

See *Table 1* for a list of articles organized by competencies that each article covers.

Caterina Arcidiacono

The Community Psychologist as Reflective Plumber

Competencies Emphasized: Foundational Principles, Small and Large Group Processes, Participatory Action Research

Proposed Values and Methods: Trustfulness, Reflexivity, Intersectionality, Positionality (TRIP)

Caterina Arcidiacono's principal theme is that while the SCRA competencies specify important competencies for community psychology, they are too brief and incomplete. They need more specification of methodologies and practical skills. Moreover, many of these competencies are characteristic of other social sciences and professions; thus, what is the distinctive contribution that a community psychologist can make?

Her answers emphasize an ecological and constructivist perspective, skills related to individual emotional and motivational states as well to group processes, and how these interact with and are influenced by power and by social forces. Some of the specific practice methods she mentions are also advocated by Donna Francescato and Bruna Zani in this volume (Community Profiling; Participatory Multidimensional Organizational Analysis). Arcidiacono's distinctive additions concern methods for community practice related to values of Trustfulness, Reflexivity, Intersectionality, Positionality (acronym: TRIP). She describes a number of specific methods that apply these values in community practice.

A strength of this article is its wide-ranging, interdisciplinary perspective and its attention to the distinctiveness of community psychology.

Foundational Principles	
1. <i>Ecological Perspectives</i>	Clifford et al.; Collins et al.; Henderson et al; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian; Sarkisian & Taylor; Scott; Arcidiacono
2. <i>Empowerment</i>	Bayaa et al.; Henderson et al; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor; Scaccia et al. [Collins et al.; Scott]
3. <i>Sociocultural and Cross-Cultural Competence</i>	Collins et al.; Henderson et al; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor; Scaccia et al.; Scott; Underwood
4. <i>Community Inclusion and Partnership</i>	Henderson et al; Collins et al.; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor; Scaccia et al.; Underwood [Arcidiacono; Scott]
5. <i>Ethical, Reflective Practice</i>	Henderson et al; Langhout et al.; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor
Community Program Development and Management	
6. <i>Program Development, Implementation and Management</i>	Collins et al.; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor; Underwood [Scott]
7. <i>Prevention and Health Promotion</i>	Bayaa et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor; Scaccia et al. [Collins et al.]
Community and Organizational Capacity-Building	
8. <i>Community Leadership and Mentoring</i>	Sanchez et al.; Scaccia et al.
9. <i>Small and Large Group Processes</i>	Francescato & Zani; Sarkisian & Taylor [Arcidiacono; Collins et al.; Scott]
10. <i>Resource Development</i>	Sarkisian & Taylor
11. <i>Consultation and Organizational Development</i>	Bayaa et al.; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor [Francescato & Zani]
Community and Social Change	
12. <i>Collaboration and Coalition Development</i>	Bayaa et al.; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor; Scaccia et al.
13. <i>Community Development</i>	Bayaa et al.; Sanchez et al. [Francescato & Zani; Henderson et al]
14. <i>Community Organizing and Community Advocacy</i>	Clifford et. al.; Sanchez et al. [Francescato & Zani]
15. <i>Public Policy Analysis, Development and Advocacy</i>	
16. <i>Community Education, Information Dissemination, and Building Public Awareness</i>	Clifford et. al.; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor; Scaccia et al. [Faust et al.]

Table 1: Articles Listed by Practice Competencies
Continued on next page

Community Research	
17. <i>Participatory Community Research</i>	Arcidiacono; Faust et al.; Francescato & Zani; Sanchez et al.; Scaccia et al.; Scott
18. <i>Program Evaluation</i>	Faust et al.; Francescato & Zani; Sanchez et al.; Sarkisian & Taylor; Scaccia et al.; Wolfe & Price
Additional Proposed Competencies	
<i>Competencies for Community Research</i>	Faust et al.
<i>Ethical Critically Reflexive Anti-Racist Feminist Praxis</i>	Langhout et al.
<i>Financial and Management Skills</i>	Wolfe & Price
<i>Continuing Professional Development</i>	Wolfe & Price
<i>Community Profiling</i>	Francescato & Zani
<i>Participatory Multidimensional Organizational Analysis</i>	Francescato & Zani
<i>Sociopolitical Empowerment Training</i>	Francescato & Zani

Table 1 (cont.): Articles Listed by Practice Competencies

Jonathan Scaccia, Noé Rubén Chávez, Lena Hatchett, Kymberly Byrd, Shanika Blanton, Kassandra Alia, Laura Jean Brennan, Paul Howard, Niñon Lewis, Soma Stout.

Community Health Improvement and the Community Psychology Competencies

Competencies Emphasized: Ecological Perspectives; Empowerment; Sociocultural and Cross-Cultural Competence; Community Inclusion and Partnership; Prevention and Health Promotion; Community Leadership and Mentoring; Collaboration and Coalition Development; Community Education, Information Dissemination and Building Public Awareness; Participatory Community Research; Program Evaluation

Jonathan Scaccia and co-authors address how the SCRA practice competencies are exemplified in the work of three community health coalitions, in low-income, multi-ethnic urban neighborhoods (in Chicago, Boston, and Los Angeles). Each coalition involves multiple sectors in under-resourced

neighborhoods, and seeks to promote health equity and improve the overall health status of community members especially with regard to chronic illnesses. Community psychologists can use specific practice competencies to contribute to the work of initiatives like these.

Proviso Partners for Health, in Chicago, seeks to strengthen organizational and community capacity for urban farming and access to healthy food. They have worked to address racial inequities in the coalition’s decision-making and foster participation and influence by all coalition members. Vital Village Network, in Boston, is a community coalition that has worked to bring together neighborhood organizations concerned with early child social-emotional development, to address unmet needs and use community assets. San Gabriel Valley Healthy Cities Collaborative, in Los Angeles, works to foster youth knowledge of healthy eating and exercise, and to develop youth leaders as community health educators. These three

coalitions exemplify the importance of the SCRA practice competencies listed above to strengthen organizational and community capacity and promote verifiable program outcomes that benefit the health of community members.

A strength of this article is its comparison of the SCRA competencies with the actual practice of community psychologists and community coalitions.

Donata Francescato and Bruna Zani

Strengthening Community Psychology in Europe Through Increasing Professional Competencies for the new Territorial Community Psychologists

Competencies Emphasized: Participatory Action Research; Program Evaluation; Small Group Processes

Proposed Competencies: Community Profiling; Participatory Multidimensional Organizational Analysis; Sociopolitical Empowerment Training

Donata Francescato and Bruna Zani call for integrating “activist” and “professional” roles in community psychology practice, especially in the European, specifically Italian, context. They focus on areas of convergence between (a) the mission and values of the European Community Psychology Association, (b) an activist model based on critical community psychology and liberation psychology perspectives, and (c) the new professional role of “territorial community psychologist” in Italian city and regional governments. Francescato and Zani describe the recent history of territorial community psychology initiatives in Italy, in which crisis intervention with individuals has often assumed primacy. A 2016 conference articulated a distinctively community psychology approach for this position; it focused on working with organizations and communities, concerning strengths, resources, networking, conflict mediation, empowerment, participatory

action research, concern for the most marginalized populations, and other community-psychology-related approaches.

Francescato and Zani articulate competencies needed for this role, including some from the SCRA list of 18 competencies (e.g., Participatory Action Research, Program Evaluation, Small Group Processes). Their discussion also seemed to me to involve some aspects of other competencies on the SCRA list: Community Development, Community Organizing and Advocacy, and Consultation and Organizational Development. Francescato and Zani also propose additional specific competencies, including Community Profiling, use of Participatory Multidimensional Organizational Analysis, and Sociopolitical Empowerment Training. These suggestions deserve close attention as conceptions of practice competencies evolve. Their integration of multiple perspectives, to respond to a developing trend in Italy, is a strength of this article.

Greg Meissen, Kyrah Brown, Ashlee Lien, and Mike Lemke

Integrating the 18 Community Psychology Practice Competencies into Doctoral Education

Competencies Emphasized: All

In this article, graduate students and faculty member Greg Meissen at Wichita State University (WSU) describe how their program used the 18 SCRA competencies in a comprehensive strategic planning process to revise the curriculum in their PhD programs in Community and Clinical-Community Psychology. This process involved faculty, graduate students, and community partners, with genuine listening to the voices of students and community partners. At key points, outside facilitators led large group retreats.

Participants in this process compared the SCRA competencies to the existing

Community Psychology curriculum for both doctoral programs, in a curriculum mapping approach. In a series of task force meetings and retreats, all three groups then used the 18 competencies as a basis of discussion for desired future changes. Issues intensively discussed included: (a) the existing strengths and resources of the program; (b) which of the 18 competencies were most important for the WSU program; (c) determining the four Cornerstones of the WSU Community program (Ecological Perspectives, Sociocultural and Cross-Cultural Competence, Prevention and Health Promotion, Program Evaluation); (d) which competencies could effectively be learned to the high-experience or expertise levels with the available resources of the program and community; (e) what courses or other experiences needed to be modified to provide better opportunities for learning key competencies; (f) discussing and deciding on specific curriculum changes; (g) deciding what specific planning and action steps would be taken.

The process led to specific changes in the WSU curriculum. To an outsider like me, it is recognizably the same program, with its distinctive strengths, just probably more transparent and articulate about what practice skills its students will be able to learn, and with new capacity to deepen the level of learning of selected key competencies. Two strengths of this article are its comprehensive description of the curriculum revision process, and how students and community partners were involved in an empowering way.

Huda Bayaa, Claire Cahen, Angela Doss, Rachel Fusco, Rebecca Gordon, Gregor Sarkisian and Sylvie Taylor

Learning Community Psychology Practice Competencies (CPPCs): Student Pathways through the Applied Community Psychology Specialization

Competencies Emphasized: Empowerment; Prevention and Health Promotion; Consultation and Organizational Development; Collaboration and Coalition Development; Community Development

The first five authors of this article are students or graduates of the Antioch University Los Angeles program in Applied Community Psychology. This paper presents their narratives of how each student learned practice competencies from the SCRA list. This first-person perspective is a strength of this article; it provides a valuable, distinctive perspective on the processes and contexts of learning practice competencies.

Three students developed skills related to the competencies of Prevention and Health Promotion and Consultation and Organizational Development. Through coursework and an AmeriCorps placement, Huda Bayaa developed psychoeducational workshops on mental health and social support networks for Arab and Muslim refugees and asylum seekers. Rachel Fusco, with prior experience directing youth leadership programs, engaged in a free consultation experience with an after-school literacy program. She directly contributed to initiatives that increased the capacity of the organization to pursue its goals. Angela Doss helped develop and present technical reports to community agencies focused on family care-giving and on parenting (also involving a focus on Collaboration skills). She now develops psychoeducational workshops as well. Claire Cahen learned to use an ecological and assets-based community development perspective in a faculty-led workshop, then

developed an asset-mapping workshop for an agency concerned with transportation in a low-income neighborhood (Community Development competency). Rachel Gordon focused on the importance for her of the foundational principle of Empowerment; she helped develop a psychoeducational workshop on empowerment for an agency having difficulty resettling Iraqi refugees.

The authors conclude that all five students experienced shifts in perspectives influencing their community work: from a needs perspective to an assets perspective, and from reactive services to proactive-preventive work. The authors also discuss how the processes of learning competencies might be assessed for program and curriculum planning through assessments involving instructors, students and their peers, community partners, and ongoing feedback to students on skill development.

Gregor Sarkisian

The System: A Multilevel Social Services Simulation

Competency Emphasized: Ecological Perspectives

Gregor Sarkisian developed this group simulation exercise to foster experiential learning that promotes taking an ecological, systems-level perspective on social services and learning about social power dynamics in those systems. Experiential role play exercises can foster understanding of complex system processes in a relatively safe, structured workshop or classroom setting. That understanding can then be extended to real-life community experiences. This simulation is a tool to consider in teaching and possibly in practice as well.

In the simulation, participants are assigned roles as clients, line staff workers, or administrators in a child welfare agency. Participants in their roles then must respond to a fictitious new state law that mandates

funding changes and other changes in client services. Only those in administrator roles know about this macro-level change (the new law). At regular intervals during the simulation, administrators initiate scripted changes at the meso (administrator-staff) and micro (staff-client) levels of interaction. Clients must complete specified tasks, with staff involvement, in a climate that grows increasingly difficult. Debriefing the simulation includes making everyone aware of the macro-level change, and discussing how that affected the lives and work of participants in all roles. The exercise can generate conflict, and that conflict must be managed by the facilitator and participants. The simulation illustrates and helps participants deepen understanding of the dynamics of social systems (ecological perspective) and the three forms of social power (Gaventa, 1980). Sarkisian's article appendix includes more specific description and directions for the simulation and debriefing.

Bernadette Sanchez, Tiffeny Jimenez, Judah Viola, Judith Kent, and Ray Legler

The Use of Community Psychology Competencies in a Fieldwork Practicum Sequence: A Tale of Two Graduate Programs

Competencies Emphasized: all Foundational Principles; Community Education, Information Dissemination, and Building Public Awareness; Collaboration and Coalition Development; Program Development, Implementation and Management; Community Leadership and Mentoring; Consultation and Organizational Development; Community Organization and Advocacy; Community Development; Program Evaluation, Participatory Community Research.

In this article, the authors, at DePaul University and National Louis University, offer valuable descriptions and analysis of

how each community psychology program uses the SCRA practice competencies to design and implement graduate practicum fieldwork courses. DePaul is a scientist-practitioner PhD program with Community and Clinical-Community specializations; graduates pursue academic, practitioner, or other positions. National Louis Community PhD students are mainly “master’s-level full-time professionals with strong community-based experiences, but with less traditional academic credentials” [the authors’ description], who usually seek practitioner positions. In this article, the authors focus on fieldwork experiences, not on learning of competencies in other courses, and not on experiences that principally involve community research.

In both programs, students enroll in part-time fieldwork experiences lasting for an academic year or more. Faculty supervise students in person and online, lead group meetings with students, and require self-reflective journals and papers, progress reports, and a final product of value to the field setting. Both programs require all students to learn about Foundation Principles, especially Ecological Perspectives, Empowerment, Sociocultural and Cross-Cultural Competence, and Ethical, Reflective Practice. They also emphasize experiences in Community Education, Information Dissemination, and Building Public Awareness.

At DePaul, students initially rate and describe their level of skills on each of the 18 SCRA competencies, and choose a setting for their year of fieldwork that offers opportunities for development in competencies they choose. Students often concentrate on Program Development, Implementation and Management; Consultation and Organizational Development; or Program Evaluation, although some choose other competencies.

At National-Louis, over a number of sequential fieldwork experiences, students

develop professional goals and mentors, choose a community and setting in which to work, and develop a consultation project with a community organization. In addition to competencies listed above, these consultation projects often involve these competencies: Collaboration and Coalition Development; Program Development, Implementation and Management; Community Leadership and Mentoring; Community Organization and Advocacy; Community Development; Program Evaluation; and Participatory Community Research.

A strength of this article is its detailed descriptions of fieldwork experiences in the context of two different doctoral programs

Victoria Faust, Mason Haber, Brian Christens, Ray Legler and Members of the Council of Educational Programs, SCRA

Intersections of Competencies for Practice and Research in Community Psychology

Competencies Emphasized: Community Research

If it is important to articulate competencies for practice, isn’t it important to articulate them for community psychology research? What research competencies are important for practice, and what others are important, even if not used for practice? Do we need a list of competencies for research? Aren’t both research competencies and practice competencies dynamic, always changing and differing by context? I distinctly remember discussion of these questions in 2012, as the Executive Committee of SCRA considered the draft of the practice competencies document that they ultimately revised and approved. These important questions are addressed in this article by Victoria Faust and her co-authors.

Faust and co-authors reviewed sources on community psychology research methods, and conducted semi-structured interviews with a number of leading researchers in community psychology, asking about

research methods and skills, as well as theoretical perspectives that especially inform research in our field. They used the exposure-experience-expertise levels also used in the practice competencies list. The initial findings led to a third category of concepts: foundational, overarching research competencies that help to determine use of specific methods and skills in a given setting. The authors continued an iterative process of analyzing, presenting, re-interviewing, and revising their list. In this article and its appendix, Faust and co-authors present the current version of this list as a “living” document for graduate programs and individuals to use as a proposed guide and basis of further discussion (as with the practice competencies, *not* for certification of individuals or accreditation of programs).

Faust et al. also discuss the distinctions and similarities of community research and practice, and compare several parts of the practice competencies and research competencies lists (especially the Community and Organizational Capacity-Building and Community Research sections in the practice competencies). They propose specific challenges and skills for integrating community research and practice, raising issues for practice not covered in detail in the original practice competencies list (e.g., communicating research findings accurately and fairly in contentious public contexts, and research approaches useful for practice besides participatory action research and program evaluation). The co-authors also present a new, detailed conception of the cycle of research and action (Figure 1). Finally, Faust et al. propose that there is a useful distinction between community research and community practice, as long as we recognize their areas of convergence and discuss the tensions that can arise between pursuing research and practice aims. This article is important for developing future conceptions of both community research and community practice.

Susan Wolfe and Anne Webb Price

The Application of the Community Psychology Practice Competencies for Community Consulting Practice in the U.S.

Competencies Emphasized: All; with special attention to Program Evaluation

Proposed Competencies: see Table 2 in the article; especially Financial and Management Skills; Continuing Professional Development

Susan Wolfe and Anne Webb Price provide a valuable, comprehensive review of how each of the 18 competencies is applied currently by community psychologists acting as community consultants in the U.S. A key theme is that the competencies needed depend on the contexts of the consulting work and on the aims and levels of action chosen by the community members with whom a community psychologist works. Wolfe and Price address connections between these competencies and current attention given to “collective impact” in community change efforts, articulating the importance of program evaluation as an element of the work of many consulting community psychologists.

They also compare the 18 competencies recognized by SCRA to related conceptions in the fields of public health and social work in the U.S., and with related competencies emphasized in Italy, Canada and Australia. These comparisons suggest competencies for future inclusion in the SCRA list, and identify issues in adapting these competencies to local contexts.

A strength of their article is its wide-ranging overview for expanding and implementing concepts of practice competencies.

Daniel Clifford, Nicole M. Freund, Jasmine A., Douglas, Julia Siwierka, Anna Turosak, Rhonda K. Lewis, PhD, Jessica Drum, Deborah Ojeda-Leitner, Refika Sarionder, Anna Caroline Chinnes, and Paige Keller

Using the community psychology competencies to address sexual assault on a college campus

Competencies Emphasized: Ecological Perspectives; Information Dissemination & Building Public Awareness; Community Organizing & Community Advocacy

The authors, students and faculty (Rhonda Lewis) at Wichita State University, planned and conducted a qualitative focus group study to understand sexual assault at the University, and to identify ways that this problem could be addressed within the local university context. A secondary aim of this study was to introduce undergraduate students to community psychology practice and research, through participation in the research project and partnering with graduate students. The focus group findings were later used to develop a campus-wide survey.

In the focus groups, graduate students experienced in focus group techniques and participatory research mentored less experienced graduate and undergraduate students in leading the groups, using a structured script, including questions on defining sexual assault, what would be useful in reporting it, responding to a hypothetical scenario, interacting with law enforcement, and identifying safe and unsafe areas on and near campus. The authors present individual responses and qualitative findings from the focus groups. While their work involved many of the 18 competencies, three competencies were highlighted as the most central to this project; these are the ones listed above.

A strength of this article is the collaboration of faculty and students to use the

competencies to address an important social issue.

Notes: The articles by Akhurst et al., Arcidiacono, Ciofalo et al., Kuperminc et al., Maya Jariego, Meissen et al., and Wolfe & Price concerned the competencies list as a whole, and I only listed them here if they also emphasized specific competencies.

If I believed that any article was especially relevant to a specific competency, but the authors did not explicitly include that competency in their discussion, I included it above in brackets.