

AMBER BROWN RUIZ

Browna35@mymail.vcu.edu • Williamsburg, Virginia • (608)772-8812

EDUCATION

Virginia Commonwealth University <i>August 2018-Present</i>	Richmond, VA Concentration: Special Education, Doctor of Philosophy
University of Wisconsin-Madison <i>September 2015-December 2016</i>	Madison, WI Major: Rehabilitation Psychology, Master of Science
University of Mississippi <i>July 2011- August 2015</i>	Oxford, MS Majors: Biology and Psychology, Bachelor of Arts

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

2020	Research to Policy Advocacy Program (RTPA) Grant Recipient
2020	VCU School of Education Howard G. Garner Scholarship
2020	People's Choice Award for Poster Presentation
2019	The Rizpah L. Welch Scholarship
2019	VCU Graduate Student Travel Grant
2016	Rehabilitation Services Administration Grant
2016	Kadane Foundation Scholarship from Autism Society of South-Central Wisconsin
2016	J. Micheal Ferrin Rehabilitation Psychology Graduate Award
2015-2016	Education Graduate Research Fellowship
2015	Ruth Alice and Miriam Howell Jones Scholarship

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

2016	Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC), ID: 00258240
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RESEARCH POSITIONS AND INTERNSHIPS

Aug 2019- Present	Virginia Commonwealth University	Richmond, VA
Graduate Research Assistant		
<i>Mentor: Dr. Christine Spence</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research areas include Early Childhood Interventions and Vulnerable Families • Research duties included qualitative article coding and literary searches • Project manager for the Early Childhood Systems of Care Project 		
May 2019-Aug 2019	American Institute for Research	Crystal City, VA
Center on Knowledge Translation for Employment Research		

Policy, Practice, & System Change Research Intern

- Research areas included for students with disabilities, adults with autism, and vocational rehabilitation relationship with businesses

- Conduct literature reviews to support projects and proposals related to policy implementation
- Assist staff in the review, identification, and development of scholarly information describing research findings
- Participate in the collection, analysis, and review of research and evaluation data
- Develop spreadsheets and databases to support project activities
- Analyze quantitative and qualitative research data and contribute to the reporting and interpretation of findings

Aug 2018-Aug 2019

Virginia Commonwealth University

Richmond, VA

Graduate Research Assistant

Mentor: Dr. Chin-Chih Chen

- Research areas included mental health, student achievement, after-school programs, and social-emotional development
- Research duties included editing of a grant proposals, reviewing journal articles, researching articles, and conducting a systematic review
- Service duties included program re-accreditation and assisting with master's program entrance process

Sept 2016- Dec 2016

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services

Hattiesburg, MS

Internship Student

- Assisted people ages 16 and up with disabilities and Individualized Education Plans by using counseling and evaluations to find jobs or maintain working ability
- Supported clients with bipolar disorder, major depression, and students with autism who have symptoms of depression and anxiety

Mar 2016- Aug 2016

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Madison, WI

Project Assistant

Mentor: Dr. Taucia Gonzalez

- Assisted Special Education professor in conducting research on projects related to teacher readiness for special education, student perspective of schooling/environment, and English Learners with disabilities in special education.
- Duties included drafting reports, collecting data, transcribing, and entering data.

May 2016- Aug 2016

Feist Vocational Counseling & Job Placement

Madison, WI

Practicum Student II

- Trained in job counseling, job development, coaching, and job placement for people with disabilities to help reach their goals and have independence.

Jan. 2016-May 2016

Edgewood College- Cutting-Edge Program

Madison, WI

Practicum Student I

- Assisted students with disabilities with different tasks related to excelling in a college setting such as academic support, tutoring, counseling, learning assessments, and coordination of services for testing

Aug. 2015-Dec. 2015

Mansfield Hall

Madison, WI

Fellow

- Assisted students with disabilities in a supported living facility related to social support
- Provide support in developing life skills
- Provide students with feedback to help them strengthen skills in areas such as self-care, social communication, and community engagement
- Contribute to student plan building and development based on direct work with students
- Create recreational opportunities for students in and outside of the residence hall.
- Facilitate social interactions in common spaces, during mealtimes, and during community events

Jan. 2015-May 2015

University of Mississippi - Psychology Department

Oxford, MS

Research Assistant: CUB (Cognitive Underlying Behavior) Lab*Mentor: Dr. Stephanie Miller*

- Assisted psychology professor with different lab projects that tested memory and executive functions of children
- Responsibilities included administering test, recruiting children and parents, collecting data, entering data and checking data

May 2014-July 2014

Summer Research and Graduate Studies Program

Ronald McNair Program

Oxford, MS

Student Researcher*Mentor: Dr. Stephanie Miller*

- Studied cognitive functions of children from low socioeconomic status that are bilingual, have high parent-child interactions, and compared them to children of high socioeconomic status
- Responsibilities included testing children, collecting data, entering data, and running various statistical measures.

May 2013-July 2013

Summer Education Research Program

Madison, WI

Student Researcher*Mentor: Dr. Kimber Wilkerson*

- Studied students with disabilities and behavior issues in the alternative school setting versus the traditional school setting under the advisement of the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin- Madison
- Responsibilities included school coding, collecting data, entering data, and running various statistical measures.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT AND VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES

Mar 2017-May 2018

Mississippi Rehabilitation Services

Canton, MS

Counselor II

- Assisted people with disabilities by using counseling and evaluations to find jobs or maintain working ability
- Case Management Services which included initial assessments, interviewing clients, creating comprehensive treatment plans, providing job seeking skills training, job placement, and career counseling
- Mostly assisted people with mental health diagnoses of bipolar disorder, depression, anxiety, and people with autism who have symptoms of depression and anxiety

Jun 2015- Aug 2015

Increasing Minority Access to Graduate Education (IMAGE)

Oxford, MS

Summer Bridge Mentor

- Advised and tutored incoming freshman students, lead discussions about career pathways, and assisted in the learning of campus climate

Sept 2013-May 2015

AmeriCorps

Oxford, MS

Teacher Assistant: JumpStart Volunteer

- Volunteered as a teacher's assistant for children ages 3-5
- Tasks including teaching literacy, phonemic awareness, math, and social skills

RESEARCH

Refereed Publications

Chen, C-C., Xu, Y., Spence, C., Zhang, F. , and **Ruiz, A.B.**, (*Accepted*) Low birth weight and prematurity as Predictors of children receiving special education services. *Early Child Development and Care*.

Scott, L.A., **Brown, A.**, Wallace, W., Powell, C., & Comier, C., (*Accepted*) "If We're Not Doing It, Then Who?:" A Qualitative Study of Black Special Educators'. *Exceptionality*.

Washington-Nortey, M., Zhang, F., Xu, Y., **Ruiz, A.B.**, Chen, C., Spence, C., (*Accepted*) The Impact of Peer Interactions on Language Development Among Preschool English Language Learners: A Systematic Review. *Early Childhood Education Journal*.

Brendli, K., Scott, L.A., Taylor, J., **Ruiz, A.B.**, Powell, C., Mehtaji, M., (*Revise & Resubmit*) Won't Stop, Can't Stop: Alternative Route to Licensure Special Education Teachers' Persistence in their Careers. *Action in Teacher Education*.

Ruiz, A.B. & Scott, L.A. (*Revise & Resubmit*) A Culturally Responsive Framework and Guiding Questions for Pre-Employment Transition Services. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*.

Spence, C., Rooks, D., **Ruiz, A.B.**, Fish, L.A, Jones, B., O'Grady, C., Sulinski, E., (*Revise & Resubmit*) "They Love Their Child, But...": Images When Supporting Families in Vulnerable Circumstances. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*.

Coleman, A.C., Newman, P.N., **Ruiz, A.B.**, Williams, S. E., Hanley, E.M., Sea, H.M., (*Submitted*) Hopeful Pedagogical & Black Feminist Stakeholding: Doctoral Students in Education Collaborative Autoethnography. *Emerging Voices in Education*.

Xu, Y., Chen, C., Spence, C., Washington-Nortey, M., Zhang, F., **Ruiz, A.B.**, (Submitted) Embedding Teacher Scaffolding in Peer Tutoring to Promote Young English Learners' English and Literacy Skills. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*.

Non-Refereed Publications

Scott, L.A., Ruiz, A.B., & Powell, C. (2020). Deconstructing racial and ethnic inequalities in special education: Perceptions from a Black professor and Black doctoral students. In R. Gargiulo & E. Bouck (Eds.). *Special Education in Contemporary Society*. SAGE Publishing.

González, T. & **Brown, A.** (Submitted). *Vocational rehabilitation services and interventions associated with improving employment outcomes for Latinxs*. Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Targeted Communities: Educate, Empower, and Employ (Project E3).

Refereed Presentations

Scott, L.A., **Ruiz, A.B.**, Powell, C., Comier, C., & Wallace, W. (2021, March). *Black Teachers Persistence: Why they Stay in the Profession*. Accepted by Council of Exceptional Children Conference, Baltimore, Maryland.

Ruiz, A.B., Scott, L.A., Wallace, W., Powell, C., & Comier, C. (2021, February) *"If Not Us Then Who": Black Teachers Persistence in Special Education*. Accepted by American Association of Colleges in Teacher Education Conference, Seattle, Washington.

Brown, A., & Brendli, K. (2020, June) *Diverse Families' Perceptions of Their Child with ASD Post-School Outcomes*. Poster Accepted by Division of International Special Education and Services Conference, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Powell, C., **Brown, A.**, Scott, L.A., (2020, March) *Teachers of Color: What Motivates Us to Stay*. School of Education Research Colloquium, Virginia Commonwealth University.

Coleman, A., Williams, S., Sea, H.M., Newman, P., **Brown, A.**, Hanley, E. (2020, April) *Hopeful Pedagogical & Black Feminist Stakeholding: Using Collaborative Autoethnography to Explore Doctoral Student Perspectives in Education*. Paper Accepted at the American Educational Research Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA.

Scott, L.A., Brendli, K. Taylor, J., **Brown, A.**, Wallace, W. (2019, November) *Despite the Barriers: A Look into Early Career Special Educators' Persistence*. PowerPoint presentation at the Teacher Education Division (TED) 42nd Conference, New Orleans, LA.

Brown, A. (2019, October). *Steps toward a culturally responsive self-determination learning model of instruction: Implementation considerations*. Poster Presented at Annual International Division on Career Development and Transition Conference, Seattle, WA.

Murphy, K., & **Brown, A.** (2019, September). *National employment team members: Supporting vocational rehabilitation's outreach to businesses*. Paper presented at the 2019 KTER Center's State of the Science Conference on Employment Research, Portland, ME.

Murphy, K., **Brown, A.**, Scardaville, M. (2019, September). *Knowledge brokering in vocational rehabilitation agency contexts*. Paper presented at the 2019 KTER Center's State of the Science Conference on Employment Research, Portland, ME.

Chen, C. C., Dawes, M., **Brown, A.**, Farmer, T. W., & Hamm, J. V. (2019, March). *Aggressive behaviors in students with disabilities: Investigating the role of classroom peer norms*. Paper presented at the 2019 SRCD Biennial Meeting, Baltimore, MD.

Brown, A., & Miller, S. E. (2014, July). *Family matters: Can bilingualism and caregiving be protective factors in executive function?* Poster accepted for presentation at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students

Brown, A., & Wilkerson, K., (2013, July). *Who Are Those Kids: Descriptive Characteristics of Traditional School vs. Alternative Secondary Schools*. Poster presentation at the University of Wisconsin- Madison Summer Education Research Program Presentation

Non-Refereed Presentations

Ruiz, A.B. (2020) *Mental Health & Post-Secondary Transition for CLD Students with Disabilities*, **Virginia LEND, Virginia Commonwealth University**

TEACHING

Aug. 2020-Dec. 2020	Virginia Commonwealth University	Richmond, VA
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Adjunct Faculty

- Special Education and Disability Policy 216: Family and Professional Partnerships

Jan. 2020 - May 2020	Virginia Commonwealth University	Richmond, VA
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Teaching Intern

Supervisor: Dr. Christine Spence

- Early Childhood Special Education 641: Interdisciplinary Methods

Jan. 2012-Dec. 2012	University of Mississippi	Oxford, MS
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Teacher Assistant

Supervisor: Dr. Kelly Wilson

- Psychology 110: Hometown Science

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

University Service

2018 Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Re-Accreditation for Masters Level Special Education Program at VCU

2020 Promotion and Tenure, Student Member

Editorial Activity

2020, Jun. Editorial Board Member of the Inclusion Journal, American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)

2019, Nov. Ad hoc Manuscript Reviewer, *Inclusion*.

2018, Dec. Ad hoc Manuscript Reviewer, *Behavioral Disorders*.

Leadership, Organizations, and Activities

2020-Present Student Leadership Council, Co-Chair
2019-Present American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) Holmes Scholar
2018-Present Virginia Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (Va-LEND) Autism Fellow
2018-Present Council for Exceptional Children- Division of Career Development and Transition
2018-Present Society for Research in Child Development Member
2016-2017 International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals Member
2015-2016 Autism Society of South-Central Wisconsin Member
2014-Present Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Updated October 15, 2020