PROCEEDINGS OF THE 3rd ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON HAITIAN MENTAL HEALTH, ART EXHIBITION & CULTURAL CELEBRATION

Across Waters (Lòt Bò Dlo): Haitian Identity, Migration, and Psychosocial Adaptation

Saturday, May 3, 2014

Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology
1 Wells Avenue
Newton, Massachusetts
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 3rd Annual Conference on Haitian Mental Health was organized by the Haitian Mental Health (HMH) Network and the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP). We would like to thank the keynote speakers and presenters who took part in this year’s conference.

We are grateful to all the members of the HMH Network as well as our colleagues at MSPP, including Dr. Nicholas Covino, President; Dr. Jill Bloom, Core Faculty; Dr. Alan Dodge Beck, Dean Emeritus and Director of Alumni Relations; Dr. Robert Kinscherff, Vice-President of the Department of Community Engagement; and Dr. Bruce Ecker, Director, Concentration on Children and Families of Adversity and Resilience.

Our sincere gratitude also goes to Ms. Pamela Ogletree and Edna Laurent-Tellus at Children’s Services of Roxbury for sponsoring the event.

We would like to acknowledge our partnership with the Haitian Artists Assembly of Massachusetts and the numerous contributions of Charlot Lucien and Joseph M. Chéry to the Annual Haitian Art Exhibition.

Additionally, we thank our devoted volunteers, Marline Amedee, Emmanuel Dorvelus, Fallon Jean-Gilles, Elizabeth Louis, Charline Melon, and Regina Pierre.

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Executive Summary

The Annual Conference on Haitian Mental Health, which is organized by the Haitian Mental Health (HMH) Network and the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP), was borne out of a shared mission to raise awareness about mental illness and its impact on Haitian immigrants; and provide an intellectually stimulating forum where practitioners, researchers, policymakers, educators, faith-based and community leaders, and consumers can come together to engage in a meaningful discourse on ways to promote the mental health and well-being of the Haitian community.

The 3rd Annual Conference on Haitian Mental Health, which was held on Saturday, May 3, 2014 at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology in Newton, Massachusetts, focused on Haitian Identity, Migration, and Psychosocial Adaptation. When Haiti fought for and gained its independence over two centuries ago, it established its identity as the first Black-led Republic in the world. In the post-colonial era, Haitians, as a free people, struggled to redefine their identity in the context of complex social and psychological conditions that have marred their existence. The quest for a “Haitian identity” was further complicated by the deep fissure that existed within the country, and continue to be manifested, in the dualities of class, language, and religion—namely, the great divide between the privileged and the uneducated masses, city dwellers and residents of rural areas, French and Creole speakers, and Christians and those who practice Vodou.

Haitians’ struggle to define their identity has been compounded by the country’s history of natural disasters, political instability, and economic disadvantage—factors that have all contributed to various waves of migration to different parts of the world, creating what is now informally recognized as the “Tenth Department” of the country’s geographical region, the Haitian Diaspora. As Haitians have sojourned by air and across waters (vwayaje lòt bò dlo) in search of a stable life and better economic and educational opportunities for themselves and their progeny, they have not always enjoyed a warm reception abroad. The United States, which has the largest number of Haitians in the Diaspora, has experienced a steady flow of Haitian migration since the 1920s. Yet, Haitian immigrants continue to be at a significant disadvantage due to their “triple minority status”—as Blacks, immigrants, and non-English speakers in the U.S. With an estimated one million Haitians living in the United States, accounting for the third largest immigrant group and the fifth source of Black migration to the country, the trend is expected to continue well into the next century.

The 3rd Annual Conference on Haitian Mental Health drew more than 120 clinicians, teachers, community leaders, students, and other providers from throughout Massachusetts and elsewhere. Some of the key questions raised by the panelists and addressed by the keynote speakers during the event included the following: (1) How has the experience of migration influenced the cultural identity of Haitians living abroad? (2) Is the notion of a “Haitian identity” the same in Haiti as it is overseas? (3) What have been the costs and benefits of maintaining a Haitian identity while acculturating to the American culture? (4) What aspects of Haitian immigrants’ identity can facilitate or hinder their psychosocial adaptation to the United States? and (5) What are the implications for addressing the complex educational, social, psychological, spiritual, and cultural needs of Haitian immigrants and second-generation Haitian American children and adolescents? The conference concluded with an Annual Art Exhibition and a Celebration of Haitian Heritage Month.
The Haitian Mental Health Network
www.HMHnetwork.org

The Haitian Mental Health (HMH) Network is a Boston-based organization comprised of psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, mental health counselors, psychiatric nurses, pastoral counselors, and students. Members of the HMH Network work collaboratively with community-based agencies as well as local, national, and international institutions to improve access for Haitians to mental health services that are comprehensive, integrated, culturally sensitive, and developmentally appropriate. The HMH Network’s vision is to reduce stigmas and raise awareness about mental illness; and promote access to quality, culturally-oriented, and evidence-informed mental health services for members of the Haitian community locally, nationally, and internationally.

INITIATIVES IN BOSTON AND HAITI

In the Boston area, the HMH Network offers the following services and programs:

• Clinical consultation and training on a range of topics relevant to the health and mental health of Haitian immigrants and Haitian Americans, including the historical context and impact of migration to the U.S.; stigma and mental illness in the Haitian community; and culturally-oriented mental health interventions with Haitian children, adolescents, and families.

• Conferences, community forums, and other professional development events.

• School-based mental health services and psychoeducational programs on trauma.

• Facilitation of consumers’ access to mental health and social services in the Haitian community.

• A Directory of local Haitian Mental Health Providers and Agencies.

• Community-based research on the mental health needs of the Haitian community.

In Haiti, the work of the HMH Network has focused on the following:

• Conducting trauma-informed training and workshops for medical providers and students on the mental health needs of vulnerable groups such as children, adolescents, and the elderly.

• Collaborating with the Haitian Association of Psychology and other organizations to build the local workforce capacity by offering psychoeducational training to Haitian teachers, administrators, and community leaders to better support Haitian individuals and families.

• Facilitating knowledge exchange and knowledge transfer between providers in the U.S. and Haiti through cultural immersion and service learning opportunities.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology

Meeting the Need…Making a Difference

www.mspp.edu

The Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP) educates students for careers that meet the growing demand for access to quality, culturally competent psychological services for individuals, groups, communities and organizations both locally and around the globe. MSPP offers 15 degree programs with a focus on serving vulnerable populations, including children of adversity, Latinos and veterans, as well as organizations and leaders on the forefront of creating long-lasting social change.

MSPP’s commitment to meeting the needs of underserved populations, providing psychological services, and training culturally sensitive clinicians can be seen in its Dr. Cynthia Lucero Latino Mental Health Training Program, Master’s Program in Global Mental Health, doctoral clinical concentration in Children and Families of Adversity and Resilience, and community partnerships with the Haitian Mental Health Network, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and over 350 field placement sites.

The Freedman Center for Child and Family Development, MSPP Interface Referral Service, and the Brenner Center for Psychological Testing also support its training and service mission. These programs, partnerships, field placement sites and areas of training focus on meaningful classroom discussion on diversity, individual differences, and our common humanity as it relates to mental health.

By promoting open dialogue about these crucial issues, MSPP strives to attract a student body that reflects and/or engages with the communities we serve. The core of MSPP’s approach is to provide students with hands-on experience and the clinical skills they need to be effective, pragmatic, and compassionate professionals providing high quality services to their clients and solving complex problems in an increasingly diverse world.
Research conducted with second-generation Haitian immigrants in the United States reveals that their ethnic identity choices are shaped by both the home environment—*Lakay*—and by the external context of American realities that surround them—*Lòt Bò Dlo*. During her Keynote Address, Dr. Zéphir highlighted how identity formation for this particular group is, indeed, a very complex process riddled with pride and prejudice, and peer and intergenerational conflicts, which quite often results in feelings of anomie, alienation, or not belonging. It underscores how these two sets of norms—those of the surrounding milieu and those of the family and ethnic community—interact, compete, and too often clash with one another to produce the multiple trends in ethnic identification that second-generation Haitian immigrants exhibit. She remarked that Haitian youth show very distinct forms of adaptation as opposed to a relatively uniformed path of integration, and they illustrate the complex and multidirectional process of “segmented assimilation” described by various scholars in their discussions of the new second generation. In many ways, this process of identity formation is rocky; it can lead to successes and failures. Some of these success stories are well known. However, lesser-known stories are certainly those of failures, which, in many cases, require psychological interventions. The presentation also focused on the dissonant factors that engender maladaptive or dysfunctional behaviors, which dedicated mental health professionals attempt to modify.
Grieving the Losses and Coping with the Disappointments of the Migration Experience

J. Abede Alexandre, ThM, DMin, PsyD

Dr. Alexandre began his presentation by citing a poem written by Edmond Haraucourt (1856-1941) entitled, “Partir, c’est mourir un peu” (To part means to die a little). He noted that the poet seems to strike a raw nerve in all immigrants with his admission that “to part is to die a little.” The literature on immigration, psychological acculturation and adaptation strongly supports the notion of significant losses that immigrants experience in leaving their homeland to migrate to a new country. Among others, those losses include the following: loss of home, loss of status, loss of language, loss of significant relationships, and loss of cultural and personal identity. As for any significant loss, failure to grieve appropriately may lead to various difficulties in coping and adjustments, leading to significant distress and impairment. There is a need for clinicians at all levels to understand the impact of those losses in order develop therapeutic or psycho-educational approaches toward reinforcing the individual’s capacity to become culturally competent in the process of his/her psychological acculturation and adaptation. Dr. Alexandre argued that to be effective, any method of intervention must, a priori, adequately assess the meaning of those losses for separate groups or individuals. There are several factors and variables that such assessment must take into consideration. They include, among others, reasons for the migration, social status and education, socioeconomic conditions, levels of relational attachments, personality factors, age, gender, values, and support networks in the host culture. Dr. Alexandre encouraged some discussions on Haitian migration experiences as they relate to those losses. Moreover, he challenged conference attendees to not only assess the various coping strategies (both adaptive and maladaptive) that Haitian immigrants have utilized in dealing with losses, but also to increase their awareness, sensitivity, and skills in order to assist Haitian immigrants in developing more effective coping mechanisms as they seek to cultivate greater cultural competence and maintain cultural equilibrium.
Almost two million Haitians live lôt bò dlo: across waters in the Diaspora. In the United States, Canada, and even France, many Haitians have not culturally, socially, and psychologically fully integrated into the dominant culture. Newer immigrants struggle to integrate on multiple psycho-social and educational levels due to collective and individual trauma both pre- and post-migration. Resources to deal with the trauma are not completely understood or recognized until there is a crisis and intervention is required, often intervention from outside the Haitian community. The acknowledgement and need to heal from trauma needs to be understood and reinforced within the Haitian community and community at large. The first signs of trauma in Haitian children often appear in the education system of the dominant culture. Dr. Désir explored the process of evolving from a fragmented self to an integrated self through the framework of Haitian Edikasyon. She argued that the western cultural definition of education reinforces learning for self and active participation in society through an independent lens; whereas the Haitian and Diasporic Edikasyon reinforces education for upward mobility for the self, family, community through an interpersonal social and political lens. In the process of migration and successful self-integration, edikasyon must be understood and transmitted from one generation to the next. Diverse psycho-social education/edikasyon journeys via empirical case studies of Haitian children and adults going through migration, including the presenter’s, were examined during the presentation. Psycho-social maladjustment that may occur during this process was also discussed. Dr. Désir used the experience of Haitian children in Cambridge and in Miami to illuminate unique triggers and resources for Haitian self-integration. Mental health practitioners and educators were challenged to examine their own cultural, social, psychological, and cognitive notions of mental health and maladaptive behaviors within the Haitian community.
Panel Presentations & Concurrent Sessions

Degrees in the Diaspora:
Navigating Womanhood and the Haitian Identity at a Women’s College
Esteniolla Maitre, Quéla Jules, Rose Pierre-Louis, and Fallon Jean-Gilles, MSW

The panelists focused on the theme, “Being Haitian: What It Means to Me,” and shared their personal experiences of growing up as Haitian women in the United States. Three of presenters discussed their paths to Bryn Mawr College and their experience as Haitian women on its campus. Esteniolla Maitre talked about the repercussions of rejecting the Haitian identity and its language as a form of protection; Quela Jules discussed how being half-Haitian affects her sense of belongingness to the Haitian culture; Rose Pierre-Louis presented on the challenges of navigating perceptions of womanhood in the Haitian culture and at Bryn Mawr College; and Fallon Jean-Gilles shared her views of her Haitian identity and how she was able to integrate it into her overall identity. Collectively, the presenters’ stories grappled with themes of womanhood, dual identities, and language; and addressed questions such as, what challenges are unique to Haitian and Haitian-American women in college? How does being at an elite college shape the identity of Haitian women? In what ways does the campus culture conflict with the Haitian culture? What strategies have the presenters used to stay connected to their Haitian identity?

Jean-Rene Rinvil, MFA
“Culture Clash” - How Film Presents Self-Awareness in Caribbean Americans

Jean-Rene Rinvil’s documentary, Culture Clash, is guided by the writings of Jamaican-born British scholar Stuart Hill who, in his 1990 article entitled, Cultural Identity and Diaspora for the publication, Identity: Community, Culture, Difference, presents a theoretical basis for how visual media informs cultural identity. He argued that identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an accomplished fact, we should think of identity as a “production,” which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation. Hill further posited that understanding culture is a dialogue or representation. Hill defined cultural identity in terms of one’s shared culture, a sort of collective or one true self, hiding inside the many others, more superficial or
artificially imposed “selves,” which people of a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Mr. Rinvil remarked that visual media has been a common tool for people of marginalized communities in the Caribbean to come to terms with their identity. The arts have been a cathartic, self-healing process for Caribbean-Americans. Through interviews, dramatizations, and auto-ethnographies, the documentary presents how Caribbean American immigrants, many of them young people, have made the transition to American society and formed a new identity. Conference attendees were engaged in a discussion on the process of cultural identity formation among Haitians and other Caribbean Americans, and ways to break free from self-identity as being “marginalized” to belonging to an “empowered” community. The relevance of this documentary to mental health professionals lies in how the film shows the many ways in which those who have struggled with this transition have successfully overcome the many physical, economic, mental, and spiritual obstacles that they had encountered.

Recovering from Social Rejection, Embracing Self-Acceptance and Committing to Valued Actions

Marie Mesidor, Ph.D.

During her presentation, Dr. Mesidor indicated that Haitians who have grown up in the United States have faced issues of social rejection, isolation, and bullying for which they have received inadequate support from their families and local communities. Also, issues of acculturative stress have not fully been addressed for this community. As a result, many have struggled with self-acceptance that has had a negative impact on general well-being and life satisfaction. Recently, the principles and values of mental health recovery have been embraced by the field. SAMHSA’s 2012 definition identifies recovery as “a process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.” Dr. Mesidor argued that many Haitians who grew up in the United States are recovering from the social rejection that they experienced in schools and local communities. SAMHSA’s ten guiding principles of recovery (i.e., Hope, Person-Drive, Peer Support, Relational, Culture, Addressing Trauma, Strengths/Responsibility, and Respect) were applied to this group and recommendations were made for improving general well-being and life satisfaction. Acceptance, as defined by ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy), was recommended as a critical step in helping Haitians, grappling with these issues, to take actions based on their chosen values that lead to greater wellbeing and life satisfaction.
The 3rd Annual Haitian Art Exhibition, *Vibrant Streets of Haiti*, featured more than 35 original artworks from artists in Jacmel, Haiti, and New England. The exhibition is the result of a collaboration, which started a year after the January 12, 2010 earthquake in Haiti, between the Haitian Mental Health (HMH) Network, the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology (MSPP), and the Haitian Artists Assembly of Massachusetts (HAAM) and its cultural partner Brockton Arts.

In addition to sales proceeds that have gone directly to the artists over the past three years, other unexpected outcomes have been reported. For instance, older artists are becoming cultural mentors to younger children in Jacmel, and art supplies are being sent to the children and to the Réseau des Artistes de Jacmel (Jacmel Artists Network). More recently, HAAM has started to ship art supplies to youth on the Southern island of Ile-à-Vache in Haiti. Through this initiative, over 70 children and adolescents have attended art workshops under the supervision of six teachers.

To learn more about HAAM and the Jacmel art project, please contact Charlot Lucien via email at Charlotlucien@yahoo.com.
The conference concluded with a *Celebration of Haitian Art & Culture*. Haitian Heritage Month (May 1-31), which was first celebrated in Boston in 1998, aims to raise awareness and understanding about Haitian culture and traditions, strengthen the self-esteem and ethnic pride of Haitian and Haitian-American youth, and celebrate Haitian achievements and contributions across the globe. The month-long celebration is typically marked by a variety of culturally-focused activities, including parades, flag raisings, and art exhibits that are organized by local agencies (e.g., Haitian-Americans United) and national organizations.

(Source: [www.haitianheritagemonth.net](http://www.haitianheritagemonth.net))

**Haitian Heritage Month**

*May 1*: Labor & Agriculture Day  
*May 17*: Teachers’ Day  
*May 18*: Haitian Flag Day  
*May 20*: Toussaint Louverture’s Birthday (*Leader of the Haitian Revolution*)  
*Last Sunday in May*: Mothers’ Day
Appendix A: 
BIographies of Presenters

J. Abede Alexandre, ThM, DMin, PsyD.
Dr. Alexandre holds a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology from George Fox University (PsyD, 1989), and a Master’s degree and Doctorate in the field of Theology and Pastoral Ministry from Dallas Theological Seminary (ThM, DMin). He currently works as a School Psychologist for the Boston Public Schools. He is also the Founder and Senior Pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Congregation in Roslindale, MA. He and his wife Edith are the proud parents of two sons: Jean Abede II (27) and Jonathan (25).

Charlene Désir, Ed.D.
Dr. Charlene Désir received her doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is a research professor at the Abraham S. Fischler School of Education at Nova Southeastern University. Dr. Désir’s academic interest is in the social and psychological adjustment of immigrant students in public schools, specifically school’s social curriculum, social trauma occurring in schools, and how social issues affect learning. Dr. Désir has presented various papers and presentations on the topic of immigrant students and their adjustment to the U.S. She has also published on the topic of immigrant identity and becoming a reflective researcher. In addition, she co-founded T.E.N. global, an empowerment network for Haitian women and children, was the 2012 president of the Haitian Studies Association, and was also appointed by Governor Rick Scott to serve on the Children’s Services Council in Broward County, FL. Dr. Désir has worked as a school psychologist, K-12 school counselor, school administrator in Massachusetts district schools, and as an academic advisor and professor.

Fallon Jean-Gilles, MSW
Ms. Fallon Jean-Gilles is a Haitian American who was raised in Haiti by her grandmother. She moved to the United States at the age of 12 where she lived with her parents and four siblings. Since moving to the United States, she has continued to travel back to Haiti. Ms. Jean-Gilles attended the University of Rhode Island where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology. Two years later, she returned to school and graduated with a Master’s degree in Social Work. Her hope is to become an International Social Worker and work in Haiti. Ms. Jean-Gilles currently works at South Bay Mental Health in Brockton as a clinician. She enjoys playing sports, traveling, dancing, and spending time with her family.

Quéla Jules
Ms. Quela Jules was born in Boston, Massachusetts to a Haitian father and an African-American mother. Her Haitian identity began to form after her parents’ divorce in 1999 when she was at the tender age of five years old. In her father’s absence, Ms. Jules’ understanding of her Haitian identity continued to grow as she spent time regularly with extended paternal relatives. Her mother raised her to view all art forms as important and essential to personal growth. Ms. Jules took classes in voice, dance, various instruments, theater, and art throughout her childhood. Eventually, she chose visual art as her artistic avenue and
attended the Boston Arts Academy in 2008. During her time at the Boston Arts Academy, Ms. Jules and her classmates held an art sale to contribute to earthquake relief efforts in 2010. The sale was a success and featured artwork honoring the national Bird of Haiti, the Hispaniolan Trogon. Ms. Jules is a Posse Foundation full tuition leadership scholarship recipient at Bryn Mawr College where she is pursuing her Bachelor’s degree in English, and a minor in Education. When she is not planning her career as an early childhood educator, she enjoys studying film and literature of the African diaspora, and continuing the development of her Haitian identity through food, dance, family, and research.

**Esteniolla Maitre**
Born in Brooklyn, New York, and raised in Mattapan, Massachusetts, Esteniolla Maitre has always grown up in Haitian communities. Coupled with the experience of being the daughter of hard-working Haitian immigrants, she learned at a young age that education was the only tool that could counteract the “triple minority status” that dictated her life and that of her family. In high school, Ms. Maitre engaged in community organizing with Vigorous Youth as part of the Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition. Along with other Haitian youth, she worked on initiatives that educated the Haitian community on food deserts, urban gardening and farms, and physical fitness. Ms. Maitre carried her commitment to community education into the classroom where she taught Haitian youth 7th grade algebra and music at the Youth and Family Enrichment Services’ summer program. Despite her deep engagement with Haitian communities, she recognizes that feeling “Haitian enough” has always been a challenge since she does not speak Kreyòl fluently. She expressed these sentiments in the college essay that led to her admission to Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. She is currently studying English with double minors in Education and Africana Studies. She is also a Posse Scholar, the recipient of a full-tuition leadership scholarship, and a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow where she is researching her interests in African American Vernacular English. Ms. Maitre is expected to graduate with certification in secondary education. She enjoys reading, dancing, and playing her clarinet for fun.

**Marie Mesidor, Ph.D.**
Dr. Marie Mesidor is a licensed clinical psychologist at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System. Her work involves program development, staff training, individual and group services, and supervision of interns and fellows. Her research has focused on the mother-daughter relationship and psychiatric disability as well as healthcare access and integration for individuals living with serious mental illnesses. She completed the Advanced Rehabilitation Research Training Post-Doctoral Fellowship at Boston University’s Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation. For two years, Dr. Mesidor worked as a Senior Research Associate conducting evaluations of federally funded programs serving racial/ethnic minority communities. Her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology was completed at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She was born in Haiti and moved to the United States as a child.

**Rose Pierre-Louis**
Ms. Rose Pierre-Louis was born in Haiti, lives in Boston, and attends Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. She is currently attending Spelman College for one semester in Atlanta, GA. Ms. Pierre-Louis has grown to learn that being a Haitian woman in all of these places mean vastly different things. She constantly
negotiates identities as she shifts through these spaces and hopes to one day join them. In addition to being a Posse Scholar at Bryn Mawr College, Ms. Pierre-Louis is a student activist and the founder of a mentoring program for young girls in Philadelphia.

JEAN-RENÉ RINVIL, MFA
Mr. Jean-René Rinvil is a filmmaker and documentarian who was born in Fauché, Haiti. He holds a Master of Fine Arts in Film, Video & New Media from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communications from the University of South Florida. In 2006, Mr. Rinvil directed a documentary titled, Territories of the Breast. This documentary reveals the experience of five women, gender crisis, support systems, health inequality, medical narratives and art cultural production. Mr. Rinvil currently works at Shriners Hospital for Children as a Medical photographer and graphic designer.

FLORE ZÉPHIR, PH.D.
Dr. Flore Zéphir, a native of Haiti, came to the United States in 1975. She attended Hunter College at the City University of New York where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in French and Education in 1980. She attended Indiana University-Bloomington where she earned two Masters of Arts degrees in 1983, and a Ph.D. in French Linguistics in 1990. Professor Zéphir has been teaching at the University of Missouri-Columbia since 1988 in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. She is currently professor of French, coordinator of the Master’s program in foreign language teaching, and department chair. She also serves as acting director of the Afro-Romance Institute. She teaches French language classes at all levels, as well as courses in foreign language teaching methodologies, French linguistics, bilingualism and multicultrualism, and minority and Creole languages. In 1995, she was one of the recipients of the prestigious Kemper Award for Excellence in Teaching; in 2003, the recipient of a Faculty Advising award; and 2004, the recipient of a Missouri University Faculty Alumni Award. Her research interests include foreign language education, bilingual education, Creole studies, sociolinguistics, and ethnic and immigrant studies with a particular focus on the Haitian diaspora in the United States. She is a regular presenter at the various foreign language teaching conferences, as well as linguistics meetings. Given her expertise in the areas of bilingual, multicultural, and foreign language education, as well as immigrant studies, Professor Zéphir is a well sought-after speaker, invited to conduct workshops and give presentations on these topics. Her numerous articles and review essays have appeared in the French Review, Foreign Language Annals, Modern Language Journal, Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages, Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, Ethnic and Racial Studies, Afro-Hispanic Review, and PALARA among other professional journals. Her first book, Haitian Immigrants in Black America: A Sociological and Sociolinguistic Portrait, was published in 1996 by Bergin and Garvey; her second, Trends in Ethnic Identification among Second-Generation Haitian immigrants in New York City, was released in summer 2001 also by Bergin and Garvey; and her third, The Haitian Americans, was published in August 2004 by Greenwood Press as part of its New Americans series. She served as book review editor for the Journal of Haitian Studies from August 2003 to May 2013. She is currently working on projects dealing with the transformation of the Haitian diaspora as a result of the January 2010 earthquake.