

THE SUMMER INSTITUTE IN SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY GOES TO PRINCETON

By Mollie A. Ruben



“Before attending SISP, a SISP veteran told me that it was, ‘the best thing she did in grad school,’ now that I am a SISP veteran myself, I have to concur.” - Paul Conway, University of Western Ontario.

The fifth Summer Institute in Social Psychology (SISP) hosted 88 graduate students from around the nation and world from July 24 to August 11 at Princeton University and many shared Paul Conway’s experience. Funded by the National Science Foundation, The Society for Personality and Social Psychology offers a two-week intensive summer school for up to 100 pre-doctoral students in social psychology. Students attended one of five intensive courses:

- 1) Accuracy in Judgments of Personality and Social Relations taught by Dr. Judy Hall and Dr. Tessa West.
- 2) Health Psychology taught by Dr. Sally Dickerson and Dr. Traci Mann.
- 3) Self Knowledge and Understanding taught by Dr. David Dunning and Dr. Simine Vazire.

- 4) Social Influence in Groups taught by Dr. Fabrizio Butera and Dr. John Levine.
- 5) Social Psychological Intervention taught by Dr. Hart Blanton and Dr. Deborah Prentice.

Students also attended one of three full-day statistics or methodology workshops that included: 1) Implicit Measurement taught by Dr. Keith Payne, 2) Introduction to Secondary Data Analyses taught by Dr. Kali Trzesniewski, and 3) Missing Data: Analysis and Related Research in Social Psychological Research taught by Dr. John Graham.

Students had the opportunity to critically read and discuss (or in some instances debate) new literature in areas of social psychology that they would otherwise not have exposure to at their home universities. Students were also encouraged to create new research projects alone and in collaborations by utilizing new literature or methodologies learned at SISP. Students also made lasting friendships and future collaborations while living on

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Princeton's campus for two weeks, eating in the dining halls and sleeping in the dormitories. "SISP was a great opportunity to get to know my future colleagues on both a personal and professional level. I am still amazed by how many intelligent, friendly, and interesting people I met at SISP," Sarah Gomillion, University at Buffalo, SUNY. Angela Legg from UC

Riverside reflected about SISP, "the best part of SISP, hands down, was meeting so many amazing people. I know I'll have these new friends and colleagues for the rest of my career and THAT is priceless."

The criteria for selecting students are academic merit, promise as a researcher, and diversity (including gender, ethnicity, year in graduate

school, area of interest, and particularly graduate departments -- that is, the committee will seek to admit students from different graduate programs).

If you're interested in applying for the next SISP, check the website in late 2011 for more information on the next edition of the Institute, which is anticipated to be held in the summer of 2013 (<http://www.spsp.org/sisp/>).

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: UPDATES ON THE GRADUATE STUDENT COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES

By Marina Milyavskaya

Autumn is in the air (at least in Canada, where it is already getting colder), and the campus is once again swarming with undergraduates, all of which can only mean one thing: summer is over, and the new school year is upon us. Over this summer, I was fortunate to attend SISP, where I met many of you and got to hear what's on students' minds (turns out it's karaoke!). I then attended the SPSP Executive Committee meeting, and was able to bring the students' viewpoint to the table, as well as present to them the GSC's ideas for new and exciting projects for the SPSP conference in San Diego.

The Executive Committee was extremely supportive of both our ongoing and proposed projects, which include a pre-conference on research methods, a symposium on alternative careers to academia, the mentor lunch for both graduate and undergraduate students, a social event, and a first-time attendee breakfast, among others – stay tuned for more details. In addition to supporting the GSC's activities, the Executive Committee is working very

hard themselves on some new initiatives which will have an impact on all SPSP members. Two of these initiatives in particular are especially pertinent to students:

First, for the upcoming SPSP conference, the convention committee came up with a way to make it cheaper for students to stay in the conference hotel (who doesn't like to roll out of bed and go right to a symposium?) Since they can't actually change the price that the hotel charges per room, instead they are giving a discount on the registration to anyone who is staying at the conference hotel. If you book a room at the conference hotel, you get a \$50 discount on your registration, and with 4 people per hotel room, for 4 nights, that amounts to saving \$50 per night!

The other development is (drum roll please)...a brand new interactive website for SPSP! Meant to encourage greater networking, the new website will make it easy to find others with similar research interests, have discussions with fellow students, and even view job postings. Think of it as an alternative to

facebook, except you won't have to feel guilty for spending so much time on it, since it's psychology-related!

Once the website goes live later this month, every SPSP member will be able to set up their profile to include their interests, background, and even a list of publications. This will allow even those of us who are not tech-savvy to have a web presence. We will also be able to post blogs and wikis, and even have a private student discussion area accessible only to other students. The website (<http://spsp.site-ym.com/>) will be officially released sometime this month, so stay tuned!

The 2012 SPSP convention in San Diego is shaping up to be a great one, but if you have any ideas for making it even better, we'd love to hear from you! The GSC is here to represent all SPSP student members, so let your voice be heard. I encourage you to contact any of us on the GSC if you have any questions, suggestions, or just to say hi. I hope to see all of you in sunny San Diego!

HELPING YOUR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS NAVIGATE THE GRADUATE SCHOOL APPLICATION PROCESS

By Krista Hill

The fall is upon us and it is time to start up our undergraduate labs again. Fall also marks the beginning of the graduate school application process. For those of you who have undergraduates in your lab this may be a time that they come to you for advice, but what should you tell them? Here are a few helpful hints:

What is Graduate School? Many of your students may not know the difference between a PhD program and a PsyD program. This would be a good start for your discussion. While a PsyD program is intended to prepare graduates for careers as practicing psychologists and is clinically focused, a PhD program involves training in research. If your expertise is in PhD programs, it may be best to focus on discussing these while referring your student to a clinical psychologist to discuss PsyD programs.

When discussing PhD programs it is important to communicate to your students that they are for people who love research, scholarship, and teaching. The ultimate goal of most PhD students is to get jobs as college professors, or perhaps jobs in industrial or government research. More specifically, PhD programs involve intensive study and research in the field. The programs typically take between five and seven years and each year is a bit different. The first year typically consists of many classes and a lot of structured readings designed to give you a general background of your particular field. The next few years of graduate school are usually focused on finding a topic for one's masters and dissertation, along

with additional coursework and teaching assistantships. Graduate school ends with a public presentation of your original research. Discuss your personal experience with your students so they have a good idea of what to expect.

Getting into Graduate School. When a graduate school selection committee looks at an application their principal question is, "Is this person going to be good at research?" Therefore, this is the primary question students should be asking themselves as they look at their resume. This starts with doing well in research based classes, but also requires the students to have experience working in labs. Since they are coming to you most likely they have worked in your lab, but think about what their contributions have been. Have they mostly just run participants without knowledge or any background about the project or have they been very involved, contributing ideas to make the experiment (and even paper) better? If your answer is the former than you may want to offer them more responsibility this semester to help build their resume. Ask them to come up with a research topic or to help edit or write a manuscript. You may even ask them to join you at a conference to help present a poster. Getting your undergraduates more involved in the research process will not only help their resume, but it also may help them to decide whether a research degree is what they really want.

The other important variable for getting into a PhD program is to find a good match between your interests and

abilities and those of a faculty member. Encourage your undergraduates to seek out advisors that are studying what they ultimately want to study as opposed to seeking out a university they believe has a good reputation. This is one of the biggest misconceptions undergraduates have about PhD programs so make sure that you communicate to them that a student-advisor match is of upmost importance. You can also help them find this match by providing them with papers written by advisors who study what they are interested in.

The Application Process. As you remember, the application process can be stressful so any help that you can provide your undergraduates with will be greatly appreciated. Once they have chosen schools you should suggest that they contact the advisors they want to work with, expressing their interest and inquiring as to whether they will be accepting students this year. If so then they can begin the application process, which includes writing a statement of purpose and soliciting recommendations. The statement of purpose requires students to explain why they want to go to graduate school and to discuss research topics they are interested in. Encourage your students to share their writing statement with you and take your job of editing the statement seriously. Make sure that they demonstrate that they know what research is, that they have at least some idea of what kind of research they want to do, and that they argue for why they

are a good match for the university they are applying to.

The other component in the application process is obtaining letters of recommendation. Encourage your students to choose professors who know them and can vouch for their ability to fit in well in graduate school. If they do not know any professors personally, encourage them to start making contacts either by joining a research lab of these

professors or even scheduling meetings with professors they have had in the past to catch up and allow the professor some time to get to know them again. Your students may even want to email or describe a relevant paper they have previously written to their professors of choice to showcase their interests and skills.

Getting Accepted or Rejected.

Most students will not know if they are

accepted until April or May so make sure to support them and answer any questions they may have along the way while they wait for their letters. Keep providing them with opportunities to get involved and to build their resume so that if they need to apply again their skills will be stronger and they will have a better chance of getting in.

TIPS FOR WRITING A SUCCESSFUL GRADUATE FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION

By Shimon Saphire-Bernstein

The new school year is about to get into full swing, and if you are like most of the graduate students I know, that means your schedule is about to get very crowded. For graduate students and prospective grads planning on applying for fellowship funding during the 2011-2012 academic year, now is the time to take stock of your situation and plan out the application process, before things get truly hectic. In the following, I briefly consider some well- and lesser-known reasons to consider applying for a graduate fellowship, and then present a handful of tips culled from my own fellowship application experiences, successful and otherwise.

Why should you apply for a graduate fellowship? The most immediate and obvious benefit of obtaining a fellowship is the ability to make a living in graduate school without shouldering the numerous responsibilities that accompany a teaching assistantship. But even for those who have the good fortune to not need outside funding, there are additional reasons to consider applying for fellowship support. First of all, any

fellowship award makes an excellent addition to your CV, serving not only as an award recognizing your accomplishments but also as a way of letting prospective employers know that you have the potential to obtain external funding. In addition, many organizations that issue fellowships take an active interest in the research generated by their fellows and seek to publicize the research findings that are generated with their support. For those seeking to gain a wider audience for their research, these organizations can provide a free publicity platform that would otherwise be unavailable.

Tips for Fellowship Applications:

1) Get organized: Find the website for the fellowship you are applying for and read through the requirements carefully, noting important technical specifications and the official due dates for the various components of your application. Although this information will generally be available on the website of the institution funding the fellowship, it may be useful for you to compile all of the relevant info on requirements and deadlines into one

dedicated document, perhaps in Word or Excel. Outline the major steps you will need to complete during the course of the application process, and create a plan detailing when you expect to complete each of the different steps that need to be taken.

2) Get ahold of and read through successful applications from previous years: Many departments hold on to successful fellowship applications from their students for just this purpose. Alternatively, you can ask friends, colleagues and acquaintances who have won the fellowship in question to let you look at their application materials. Most people will be happy to oblige with such a request. As always, however, be careful to only use these materials as exemplars for the formatting, tone and style of your essay and never to infringe upon your colleagues' intellectual property.

3) Identify and contact potential letter-writers: I tend to favor lining up letter-writers early in the process, under the assumption that more time should be allowed for factors that are outside of your personal control. Letter-writers like

plenty of advance notice, and it is usually considered polite to formally request a letter of recommendation at *least* a month in advance of the date it will be due. Depending on your relationship with the prospective letter-writer, however, you may wish to give even more than a month's notice, as he or she may wish to get additional info from you or even meet with you to discuss your proposal and your interests. Be sure you leave time for these crucial activities, as nothing improves the quality of a letter of recommendation as much as detailed information on your personal inclinations and capabilities!

4) Meet with advisors and potential collaborators: Most fellowship applications will require 2-3 letters of recommendation from advanced scholars in your field, so you should not rely solely on getting a strong recommendation from your primary advisor. Your second letter-writer should also be someone who is thoroughly familiar with your research interests and has at least some appreciation of your ability to generate novel hypotheses and design studies to

test them. If you have not already identified and met with a faculty member and prospective letter-writer (*other* than your primary advisor), now is certainly the time to do so.

5) Develop an original research idea that fascinates and excites you: The judges who review your application will be looking for a demonstration of your ability to come up with an original program of research that is firmly grounded in the existing literature but nevertheless has the potential to make a meaningful novel contribution to your field. Give the judges as clear a sense as you can of the depths of your creative imagination for research and the extent of your ambition as a future research scientist.

6) Draft your essay(s) and get feedback from colleagues and mentors: I won't go into a lot of detail on how to write for an academic audience. Instead, I would like to emphasize the importance of getting a number of different people to read your proposal. Do your best to continually revise the draft after each new reader gives you feedback before sending it on

to another reader for comments, and bear in mind that you will need to complete a decent rough draft some weeks before the application deadline to give yourself time to have multiple versions of your proposal read and commented upon.

7) Present your proposal at (a) lab meeting(s): Prospective fellowship applicants should try to take advantage of any opportunity to have their proposals read and critiqued by an appropriate lab group. Indeed, I strongly recommend that applicants who are not affiliated with a regular lab meeting make this a top priority on account of the utility I have seen derived from this process for the betterment of my own work and of the work of my peers in graduate school.

In conclusion: The process of applying for fellowships can be long and complicated, but in the end the potential rewards far outweigh the costs in terms of expended effort. However, fellowship deadlines will be upon us sooner than you expect, so if you plan to apply for fellowships this year, now is the time to start the ball rolling. Good luck!

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES TO CONDUCTING ORIGINAL PROGRAMMATIC RESEARCH AS A GRADUATE STUDENT

By Lillia Cherkasskiy

There are many challenges to conducting original programmatic research while in graduate school. First, this article will define programmatic research and argue for why students should do it (collaborating on the programmatic research of your advisor doesn't count). Second, the article will describe 3 common challenges to

conducting programmatic research and list several resources for locating proven strategies for overcoming them.

What is programmatic research?

Programmatic research has been defined as a process for conducting a series of experiments that represents "a systematic step-by-step approach to theory development... a logical

progression from experiment to experiment must be evident." (Randolph-Seng, 2006) Importantly, each experiment in the series is an application of the scientific method to testing one or more predictions of the theory, such as the kinds of situations it should apply in or an investigation of a

Potential mechanism of a known effect (Randolph-Seng, 2009)

Why should graduate students do original programmatic research?

Graduate students should do original programmatic research that is distinguishable from that of their advisor for 5 reasons. 1. Being a modern psychological scientist by definition includes the ability to conduct such research (Proctor & Capaldi, 2001; Klahr & Simon, 2001), so we should practice these skills in graduate school. 2. Articles published in top journals now feature programmatic research almost exclusively, and for a graduate student to be the first author on this kind of article it is likely that the program of research will need to be of their original design rather than that of their advisor. 3. Calls for grant applications at both the graduate student and junior faculty levels (e.g. NSF, NIMH) often specify that programmatic research is the kind of research they are looking for. 4. Designing and conducting programmatic research forces the researcher to more carefully consider how conceptual

variables are operationalized because they are thinking ahead to several future experiments, which will likely result in a stronger research program overall (Randolph-Seng, 2006). 5. Academic job advertisements often request explicitly that applicants have experience performing this kind of research.

Three Challenges to conducting original programmatic research as a graduate student and suggestions for overcoming them:

1. How do I get a good idea? See Tesser (2001) for a goldmine of strategies for getting great, impactful ideas, such as systematically looking for surprising implications of the banal. Also see De Bono (1973) for a new (yes, still new 40 years later because it is so unconventional) way of thinking that increases creativity by giving you strategies for letting yourself think thoughts that are objectively “wrong” to lead you to new discoveries.
2. “Where will I find the time to design and conduct programmatic research in addition to teaching and the

other research I am doing? Many psychologists have written about strategies for improving organization and time management which will help you create this “extra” time (e.g. Basco 2009; Johnson, this newsletter). There is also a useful website describing several widely-used time management strategies from the business world as well as references to some empirically-based strategies (Wikia Lifestyle, 2011).

3. What if my exciting but high-risk programmatic project fails? Sommers (2011) suggests that students pursuing original programmatic research should also have a safe project on the side (study #4 in your adviser’s grant?), which as it progresses smoothly will give students the confidence to pursue their own programmatic work in the face of difficulties. Dweck (2007) also counsels that adopting an “incremental” mindset regarding your abilities as a researcher should buffer you against future failures, allowing you to keep looking for new ways to conduct programmatic research when your first attempt or two do not pan out.

Resources:

- Basco, M. R. (2009). *The procrastinator's guide to getting things done* The Guilford Press.
- De Bono, E. (1977). *Lateral thinking: A textbook of creativity* Penguin books.
- Dweck, C. S. (2007). *Mindset: The new psychology of success* Ballantine Books.
- Klahr, D., & Simon, H. A. (2001). What have psychologists (and others) discovered about the process of scientific discovery? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 10(3), 75.
- Proctor, R. W., & Capaldi, E. (2001). Empirical evaluation and justification of methodologies in psychological science. *Psychological Bulletin*, 127(6), 759.
- Randolph-Seng, B. On becoming a theorist in psychology.
- Randolph-Seng, B. (2009). Doing programmatic research: Two case studies from social psychology. *The New School Psychology Bulletin*, 4(2)
- Sommers, Samuel. (2011). Fishing for Food and Fishing for Fun: Striving for Balance in New Research Programs. Dukes, K.N. and Hughes, S. *Developing Tools of the Trade: Tips for Success as a Student Writer, Researcher, and Collaborator*. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego.
- Tesser, A. (2001). Theories and hypotheses. *Guide to Publishing in Psychology Journals*, , 58-80.
- Wikia Lifestyle (n.d.). Psychology Wiki. *Time Management*. Retrieved August 31, 2011, from http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Time_management

HOW TO BALANCE WRITING, RESEARCH, AND TEACHING DURING A BUSY SEMESTER

By Megan K. Johnson

As the school year starts, we are once again faced with a busy schedule full of classes, teaching, research, writing, and meetings. Often, we forget how busy our lives get during the school year and remaining productive in all spheres of our jobs – teaching, writing, and research – seems impossible. The bottom line is that we have a limited resource of time, so we need to learn how to BALANCE these different jobs effectively! Below are some tips for balancing these three parts of our jobs.

Writing

1. Pick your best time of day available (i.e., you are the most alert) and block out an hour (or more if you can) of writing time during that time. Often as graduate students, we don't have much control over our schedules, so just pick the best time of day that you are free (e.g., no teaching, meetings, classes). Once you do this, heavily *guard* that time. Do not schedule student meetings, participants, or anything else during this time. Do not work on prepping courses. Do not work on class assignments or homework. Commit to working solely on writing projects during this time (thesis, dissertation, manuscripts). You will be amazed at how much writing you will get done just by guarding an hour or so of your day.

2. Remember that writing and research are as much a part of your job as teaching. Many graduate students let their teaching obligations eat into time that should be spent on their writing and research obligations. Why? You have to show up. However, keep in mind that publishing and researching is what gets you your degree and

ultimately a job. Do whatever it takes to remind yourself of this throughout the semester. Below are some specific tips on how to teach more efficiently so that you have more time to write.

Teaching

1. Do not over-prepare the courses you are teaching. Often, a mistake many graduate students make is to spend grueling amounts of time over-preparing for a course. The general rule is that your prep time should be a one-to-one ratio with your teaching time. So if you are teaching three hours a week, you should be prepping three to four hours a week. Doing so will cut down on your time AND increase spontaneity in the classroom, which will ultimately help your students learn better (Boice, 2000).

2. Schedule in time for class preparation and grading. By allotting a specific time for these tasks in your schedule, you should avoid last minute rushes and contain your teaching preparation to specific, allotted times. It will probably take you a few weeks to figure out how much time is sufficient but once you do, schedule it in!

3. Outsource some of your teaching work to your students by making them active participants in class. As you teach, remember that your job is not solely to transfer information from your head to your students' heads. Rather, students should be *actively* involved in the classroom. Doing so creates a better learning environment and reduces your teaching load. For instance, if you want to bring a current events article to class once a week to tie into that day's lecture, have your students find the articles. Of course

students will need guidance, but know that they are a valuable resource to help out with your teaching.

Research

1. Decide at the beginning of the semester on a realistic amount of data to be collected, then schedule out over the entire semester how to make this happen. Do you need to get those final Studies 4 and 5 of your dissertation done? Decide at the *beginning* of the semester on a realistic amount of data to be collected (depending on participant pool, amount of R.A.s assisting, and your own time). Then, sketch out over the entire semester how much time per week you will need to spend collecting data to achieve this goal.

2. Allot a specific time two to three times a week to analyze data and to research/brainstorm new research ideas. Often, research lags behind schedule because things are not kept in motion. So, it is crucial to schedule specific times during your week to sit down and clean and analyze datasets that have been collected. Also, you should schedule one or two times a week to be working on new research ideas so that you have projects ready to go for the next semester.

The key to balance is efficiency and scheduling allotted times for each task. Don't forget to take some time off on the weekends each week to give yourself a break. This will keep you refreshed and alert for all of the work you have to do. And find a few hobbies and exercises that help keep you active and give you a break from all of the writing, researching, and teaching you will be doing this semester.

About the Forum

The Forum is published four times a year by the Graduate Student Committee of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology to provide a wealth of advice and support on issues directly relevant to graduate students. The Forum aims to offer strategies for graduate teaching and research, highlight funding and conference opportunities, and promote the wider values of SPSP.

Meet the 2011-2012 Graduate Student Committee:

As a committee of and for graduate students, the SPSP GSC is committed to advocating the interests, concerns, and ideas of the SPSP graduate student caucus. The GSC serves as a link between students and established personality and social psychologists. We aim to continue beneficial programs started by our predecessors while remaining open to new ideas, so that we may evolve with the times.



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RESOURCES

Upcoming Conferences:

- 3rd Global Conference on Bullying and the Abuse of Power (from the playground to international relations)
 - November 3-5, 2011 in Prague, Czech Republic
- New England Psychological Association Annual Meeting
 - October 28-29, 2011 in Fairfield, CT
- 19th International Conference on Eating Disorders (Anorexia, Bulimia nervosa, Binge Eating, Obesity)
 - October 20-22, 2011 in Alpbach, Austria
- International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology (ICEEPSY)
 - October 19-22, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey
- Cognitive Neuroscience of Learning: Implications for Education
 - September 22-24, 2011 in Aspen, CO
- 25th European Health Psychology Conference (Engaging with Other Health Professions: Challenges and Perspectives)
 - September 20-24, 2011 in Hersonissos, Greece

Teaching Resources

- <http://www.socialpsychology.org/teaching.htm>
 - Your one stop shop for a variety of social psychology teaching resources, including recommended textbooks, classroom activities, demonstrations, assignments, study aids, on-line resources and much, much more!
- www.teachpsychscience.org
 - TeachPsychScience provides a range of classroom and lab resources such as demonstrations, activities, assignments, exercises and PowerPoint presentations to facilitate teaching research methods, statistics and experimental design in Psychology.
- www.gocognitive.net
 - The goal of the GoCognitive web project is the creation of an online center for teaching cognitive psychology and cognitive neuroscience. The website provides online demonstrations of cognitive and neurological phenomenon as well as video content related to research in neuroscience.
- www.psychradio.org
 - A recently developed webpage that provides a host of podcasts covering all sections of social and personality psychology including Self-Esteem, Implicit Bias and Learned Helplessness.

Job Search Resources

- We recommend joining graduate student and early career listservs for the various psychological organizations like SPSP or APA. Often, early notification of post-doctoral or faculty position openings will appear there before they are available on a university's website.
- The monthly publications of the APS (observer) and the BPS (the psychologist) have job opportunity sections
- <http://www.spsp.org/student/career.htm> APA Job Search – <http://jobs.psyccareers.com/search.cfm>
- SPSP Student Career Center
- <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/jobs/>
 - APS Employment Network
- http://www.easp.eu/themes/job_offers.htm BPS Employment Section - <http://www.psychapp.co.uk/>
 - EASP Job Postings
- <http://www.socialpsychology.org/forums/jobforum/>
 - Socialpsychology.org Job Forum

Funding Resource

- <http://www.socialpsychology.org/funding.htm>.