

# School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences

Applying the Science of Psychology Across the Globe

## What Can You Do With an M.A. in Psychology?

We asked some of our M.A. students at the School of Behavioral and Organizational Sciences what they've been up to since joining the program. The answers were exciting—a broad spectrum of students both working and doing research in applied settings. The innovation these students have shown in their work seems matched only by the compassion they show for the people whose lives they are seeking to improve: preschool children, immigrant workers, students from grade school to graduate school, workers in both blue-collar and white-collar jobs... The list goes on. There seems to be no area of life that our Master's students are not bent on improving.

Some of this work has been done as a part of the students' programs. Some comes from professional pursuits that have been informed by the lessons learned in the classroom. These pages contain a few of the stories we heard, but cannot fully capture the excitement and passion. To do that, you would need to meet every one of our Master's students and spend hours listening to their stories.

Read on, and see how our students are changing their world!

### Meth—A Growing Problem for Immigrant Workers



"Meth is cheap, easy to get, and a growing problem among immigrant workers right now," says MA student Erin Obrien. She and fellow Health Behavior student Hannah Stern, along with Developmental student Ebere Iweriebor, are developing a survey looking at meth use in Hispanic migrant workers for Dr. Jason Siegel's Survey Research course. They expect to find that rather than using drugs for social purposes, this population is using it in order to stay awake through long working hours. They hope that

by establishing a prevalence for the problem, someone will be motivated to develop an intervention.

Erin is also doing research with the Health and Research Lab on Hispanic depression attributions and is looking at the relationship between measures of masculinity and help seeking behavior.

### Improving Employee Morale



Prior to attending CGU, first year student Stephanie Lovett participated in a leadership program with Focus on the Family where she helped develop a training program for change management. During her graduate career, Stephanie was able to see the other side of training programs as a qualitative analyst for Southern California Edison. In collaboration with the learning analytics group, she helped evaluate the effectiveness of training programs aimed at improving employee morale among first line supervisors. The team conducted 96 face to face interview and 140 telephone interviews, and utilized both qualitative and quantitative measures to assess the training program. Stephanie and her colleagues traveled to different sites around Southern California and even got to attend the training session themselves. Stephanie thinks the internship was a great experience. She was able to learn from her colleagues (including other students),

apply her classroom knowledge, and develop an interest in qualitative methods. In the future, Stephanie hopes to work for a consulting firm doing change management or organizational development.

## Measuring the Success of Math Education Curricula



Second year student Nancy Aguirre is working with Drs. Rebecca Eddy and Tiffany Berry to evaluate a math curriculum with Prentice Hall. The evaluation is investigating how the new textbooks function to improve student math abilities and comfort, and also includes training and evaluation of teachers implementing the program. Nancy already knows she would like a career in educational curriculum evaluation, so the experience has been invaluable to her. "I am learning new skills, and developing my existing skills to new levels." Nancy will continue with the project through the summer, and then hopes to get a full-time evaluation position in San Bernardino County. "I think education leads people to the path they will take in their future. It is an infrastructure and needs to be strong for kids."

## Launching into a Consulting Career



Second year student Lindsey Willoughby will start her new career this coming July with Deloitte Consulting in their Organization and Change department. She began the application process this past October and ended up going to about 27 interviews, some of which were out of town. Lindsey credits some of her success with the internship experience she gained last summer working for Google. Her position was in Staffing Analytics, which involved applying a lot of the statistical knowledge she had gained from her first year at CGU. In the near future, she will be helping clients undergo big changes, like restructuring and mergers and acquisitions. Her advise to upcoming second year students who wish to follow a similar path is to start early and really sell yourself.

## Working Together to Improve Student Satisfaction



Second year students and SAA student-faculty representatives, Julie Sokolsky (Development/Evaluation) and Garrick Wahlstrand (Cognitive/Evaluation), along with PhD student Bi-hong Deng, are working to get input from SBOS students. They are holding a lunch on March 6 aimed at getting feedback from first year students about their experiences thus far. The idea is to see if students' expectations are being met, if they are satisfied with the program, and to see what types of activities they would like to see more of in terms of workshops, social events and academic events. Julie, Garrick and Bi are currently working with Dr. Jason Siegel to design a survey that will be administered to students during the feedback lunch. They will later analyze the survey and present the

findings to the faculty in order to promote positive change. "We want to make sure the students' voices are heard," says Julie. Julie is also working with Dr. Berry on an evaluation of the New Horizons Family Center, an Even Start program in Glendale. Julie hopes to work with School Psychology in the future and believes her evaluation experience is helping her learn more about the school system, how it works, and the politics therein.

Garrick is working with Drs. Eddy and Berry to evaluate a 6th grade math curriculum. The curriculum is designed to foster math communities in the classrooms by encouraging students to communicate their ideas and consider multiple approaches to solving problems through hands-on math activities. Garrick has enjoyed applying his psychology and evaluation learning to real world issues.

Garrick has also developed a new interest in how to use psychology to leverage behaviors and attitudes towards climate change mitigation. Though most of the literature takes a social point of view, Garrick is interested in combining a cognitive perspective. To this end, he has collaborated with a team of students in Dr. Siegel's Survey Research class to design a survey that examines whether or not the Theory of Planned Behavior can predict the intention to use compact fluorescent light bulbs. This project was inspired by Pasadena Water and Power's plan to distribute these light bulbs within the city and Garrick's team may have the opportunity to work with the utility. Garrick plans to apply his psychology and evaluation skills to influence climate change in his future career.

## Anger Management for the Homeless



Sarah Sadeghi has been working with Dr. Eddy on an evaluation of an anger management class at a homeless shelter in Loma Linda since last spring. She is now in the process of writing up her final report, and will present her paper at the upcoming WPA conference. The main questions that this evaluation seeks to answer are whether attitudes and behaviors changed as a result of the anger management class, and if these people were in need of the program. Sarah found that all of the participants she spoke with agreed that they had been experiencing difficulties with anger, and that the program was helpful for them. Although her sample was small and she admits she cannot draw large conclusions from the evaluation, Sarah hopes this drives more research and evaluation to see if all homeless shelters could benefit from offering anger management courses.

Sarah already has more evaluation in her future. Sarah and her classmates developed an evaluation plan for the San Bernardino Blood Bank for their Evaluation Procedures course. The stakeholders are now interested in having the students come in to perform the evaluation, which will be of a training program in the Organizational Development department.

## Education and Policy



A second year student of Policy and Evaluation, Missy Coffey has an interesting variety of professional experience in her field. She is currently working on a middle school mathematics project with Texas Instruments looking at the effect of various components of the program on student achievement. This is Missy's third year on the project and she has gone all over the country, visiting various sites. Missy is also doing some work for West Ed. She works with schools to gather data and administer surveys, and serves as the face of the company by visiting the sites and connecting with principals and teachers.

Missy has also done quite a bit of policy work. She worked with the Department of Education, in conjunction with the State Department, on an international middle school math performance initiative with international Muslim leaders. "We have a lot of similar issues in our educational systems. I learned so much from working these leaders." She even worked in the governor's office in Washington, DC to help create policy positions for No Child Left Behind. This summer, she has been awarded a fellowship to participate in the Education Pioneers program and hopes to do some work with public schools and urban policy. When asked what she wants to do after CGU, Missy does not hesitate: education policy.

## Increasing Opportunity in Higher Education



Deryn Dudley is working with Dr. Rebecca Eddy on the CoyoteCareers program evaluation for California State University San Bernardino. The program is in its early stages and is aimed at decreasing attrition rates among minority and low-income students in "smart" fields (mathematics, technology, hard sciences, and foreign languages). Research shows that these students often change their majors because the subjects are too difficult and the schools lack the necessary resources to give students the help they need. Currently, the program is trying to revamp the school's learning centers by providing peer and professional tutors. The program has also allotted a certain amount of grant money to go towards internships for minority and low-income students as these students are often unable to get internships relevant to their field, which are usually unpaid, due to their need to earn money. In addition, the program is also establishing an Hispanic

Alumni group that will volunteer and serve as mentors to current students in the program.

Deryn is currently writing the literature review for the project to help communicate why this program is needed and should continue to receive funding. Deryn will continue on with the evaluation to its conclusion, and is excited about moving forward with the process and getting more data. She hopes to one day work with diversity initiatives at a large university.

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## Uncertainty: How It Is Used By Leaders & Poses a Threat to Teens



First year applied social psychology student David Rast is working on a number of interesting research projects. One project consists of basic research with Dr. Michael Hogg in the Social Identity Lab. The underlying question this study seeks to answer is: can prototypical leaders utilize uncertainty to enhance group identification? They expect to find that highly prototypical leaders will be able to use uncertainty to strengthen in group identification more than non-prototypical leaders. If their findings support the hypothesis, this research would lend theoretical support social identity theory and Hogg's own uncertainty-identity theory. David and Dr. Hogg will be running this study with students from the 5 Claremont Colleges, pending IRB approval. David is also assisting Dr. Hogg and Dr. Richard Crisp, of the University of Kent, on a study of depersonalization and how it can reduce uncertainty and increase group identity. For more information on the Social Identity Lab, visit: <http://www.cgu.edu/socialidentitylab>.

This summer David will work with Dr. Jason Siegel on some follow up research behind Dr. Siegel's work on adolescents, uncertainty, and popularity. "Dr. Siegel actually found that 50% of the adolescents he surveyed were willing to harm themselves to be popular." David will travel to summer camp sites around Southern California, and possibly Arizona, to administer surveys to adolescents. He hopes to uncover motivational and group factors that contribute to adolescents' willingness to harm themselves. David will simultaneously conduct his own study examining popularity and uncertainty.

David is also in the works of designing some of his own studies in the Social Identity Lab, which he hopes to begin running next fall.

## Can Trust Reduce Seizures?



Although treatment exists for epileptic seizures, there is no existing treatment for sufferers of nonepileptic seizures, or *pseudo-seizures*. First year student Beth Terris is the lead on a research project with Dr. Paul Zak examining the oxytocin levels of patients with nonepileptic seizures. "When someone does something nice for you that would elicit trust, oxytocin is released in the brain. We have reason to believe that people who experience pseudo-seizures have a dysregulatory oxytocin release, and are not as trusting of others." The ability to trust plays a big role in building strong social support networks. In the laboratory, participants are exposed to a situation where they are expected to gain trust and experience a release of oxytocin. Their levels of oxytocin are then measured and recorded. "Disorders often manifest themselves when a good social support system is lacking. If we do uncover that these patients have a dysfunction with oxytocin, hopefully researchers will be able to develop a way to fix it, and this will reduce the occurrence

of these pseudo-seizures."

## Improving Literacy in Los Angeles



Second year Developmental/Evaluation student Linda Meyer has been working for the Los Angeles Unified Preschool (LAUP) since July of last year. She has helped to design and implement an evaluation of a pilot literacy program, which is currently operating in 10 sites. LAUP wants to improve the program before they implement it network-wide to 200 sites. Linda and her colleagues are observing the classroom environment, teacher practices and evaluating teacher training. Linda has enjoyed the experience of stepping outside the classroom with her evaluation knowledge and really applying it. "The experience has really influenced my long-term aspirations and goals," she says.

Linda believes the literacy program is an important intervention for these children. The program itself targets children at high-risk from families with low income and low literacy. "If the program is successful, these children will be a lot more prepared for kindergarten next year than they would have been otherwise. If the program needs improvement, this will be important to do before the program is implemented further." Linda does hope to continue to work with early development and literacy in her future career.