Honest Liars: Using Psychological Theory to Understand Self-Deception

Distinguished Lecturer Series
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Lessons Learned From a Law School Graduate With a Psychology Degree

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Psi Chi: The Key to Community Building Among Nontraditional Students

Although there is no certainty when the educational system adopted the term *nontraditional student*, more than a third of undergraduate students are more than 25 years of age, and part-time enrollment and two-year college attendance is up (NCES, 2002). Initially, when one referred to a nontraditional student, it was in reference to a small number of older adults who registered for night classes. However, although age is the variable that seems to define what most of us think of as a nontraditional student, there are other criteria we could use to identify them. For example, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) suggests using three sets of criteria to identify these students: enrollment patterns, financial and family status, and high school graduation status.

Additionally, according to the Center for Postsecondary and Economic Success (2011), many unencumbered 18-year-olds are no longer typical college students. Today, research indicates that most undergraduates have at least one characteristic that would place them in the category of nontraditional student. These could include not enrolling in college straight out of high school, working full-time, being financially independent, being a single parent, having dependents, or even not holding a high school diploma (NCES, 2002). Today, more than ever, there doesn't seem to be a typical undergraduate.

Another important factor that contributes to the image of the nontraditional student is the continued popularity of online courses. According to Sheehy (2013), more than 6.7 million students took at least one online university course during the fall of 2011. This equals 32% of higher education enrollment! And, according to the same study, online course registration continues to increase. The availability of these courses is especially important for what is considered to be a nontraditional student. The fact that 39% of the adult student population work full-time and 53% support more than one dependent certainly contributes to the need and the continued demand for this type of information delivery (NCES, 2002). These studies demonstrate that nontraditional students make up the majority of all postsecondary institutions, with all indicators suggesting that their numbers will continue to increase.

**Identifying the Needs of Nontraditional Students**

NCES also states that nontraditional students have needs that differ from the needs of traditional students. How can institutions of higher education meet these changing needs? A study conducted by a consulting firm (AACRAO Consulting, 2008) suggests that there are a number of things that can be done to benefit nontraditional students and the institutions they attend.

**Cost of Education:** This can begin with discussing cost payment plans at the beginning of their college enrollments because nontraditional students vary in their abilities to pay increasing tuition costs.

**Credit Transfer:** Because many nontraditional students previously have attended other institutions, ease in the transfer credit process would be helpful.

**Community Building:** A very important suggestion, especially for online students, is the offering of orientation and community building. McGivney (2004) found that nontraditional students often express apprehension about college attendance. This is especially true for those who never attended college or who did so many years ago. However, whether one is a traditional or nontraditional student, community building is important at all levels, but especially so for the online and the nontraditional student.

**Inclusive Policies:** Perhaps one of the most important things an institution of higher learning can do, as suggested by McGivney (2004), is to include nontraditional students in the institution’s mission. In a nutshell, I would suggest that meeting the needs of nontraditional students all comes down to inclusive policies and sustained support.

**Psi Chi: Bridging the Gap Between Traditional and Nontraditional Students**

Beyond the university, nontraditional students should be welcomed into academic societies, which foster community and commitment to enriching the student experience. Psi Chi offers these opportunities to students at all levels and at all ages. Numbered among the many Psi Chi membership benefits are seven very important ones (listed in the sidebar!) for all students but, again, especially for those students who may not attend a bricks-and-mortar campus or for those who don't fit the traditional student definition. Psi Chi can offer financial opportunities lacking for many students especially those of nontraditional status.

Certainly, organizations such as Psi Chi play an important part in students’ lives, whether they are of traditional or nontraditional status. Along with institutions of higher learning, Psi Chi can transform the learning experience of nontraditional students through financial opportunities. But most of all, Psi Chi can bridge the gap between traditional and nontraditional students by creating a place where students of all backgrounds can come together to share ideas, participate in chapter activities, and build lifelong relationships. In addition, life experiences are invaluable assets that nontraditional students can share with traditional students who have not entered that stage of their lives. The cohesion of perspectives benefits everyone in the end, because we are all seeking a sense of community.

**References**


Maria Lavooy, PhD
Psi Chi Society President
Florida Institute of Technology

**Seven Nontraditional Psi Chi Student Benefits**

1. **A sense of community**
2. **Forum accessibility** at local, regional, national, and international levels
3. **Opportunities to meet leading psychologists** and students from other chapters
4. **Three publications** to keep all members informed about Psi Chi news
5. **Our website** allows all members to log in and stay up-to-date with their specific chapter
6. **Social media platforms** via LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter make it easy to participate outside the classroom with other psychologists all over the world
7. **$350,000 in yearly awards and grants**, plus an upcoming scholarship program, can offer financial opportunities to many students, especially those of nontraditional status
Internationalizing Psi Chi Through
Personal Connections

After 80 years as the national honor society in psychology, Psi Chi chapters voted to become an international organization in 2009. Since then, 14 chapters (http://www.psichi.org/?page=chapter_search) in 10 countries outside of the United States have joined the Society (and a 15th has been approved). However, we must not stop here; our international connections are priceless. For example, when I was in high school, I spent a semester in Braunschweig, Germany. The family I lived with had two daughters, Kathrein and Antje. Their father had been an exchange student to the United States and was thrilled to have an American exchange student in their home. That semester was one of the most important experiences of my life. Not only did I learn German, take my first international trip, and become immersed in German culture, I also made lifelong friends. The oldest daughter of my German family, Kathrein, later lived for a year in my parents’ home and graduated from my high school. We now consider one another family—I can affirm that international connections can be life-changing.

How can you help Psi Chi continue to make international connections and participate in bringing chapters to other countries? Making the most of your personal contacts by noticing the international connections in your own department may be key. No matter how small or remote your university or chapter, think about what international connections your chapter does have. Does your chapter have members who are students or faculty from other countries, who have lived or worked in other countries, or who speak languages other than English? Exchange students studying psychology at an institution with a chapter may join Psi Chi as long as they meet all eligibility requirements. This means many chapters do have members from other countries. In addition, your full-time faculty with doctorates in psychology may join Psi Chi regardless of their nationality. Members with international experiences can expand individual perspectives while they are on your campus, and later they could take Psi Chi back to their home countries. With these facts in mind, your chapter probably has rich resources for creating far-reaching connections that go well beyond your campus. If chapters encourage members to get to know one another well, doors could open to opportunities around the world. Whether that takes the form of international members sharing their unique expertise at chapter meetings or social events, alumni communicating from afar with current members, or members meeting old friends again during their future travels or career moves, such personal connections could be very enriching and enlightening.

Several chapters have already made online connections with one another across national borders. Students in the United States and Guatemala have met one another using social media platforms such as Skype and Google Hangouts to share ideas for chapter meetings and officer activities. Members all over the world communicate daily via Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. We hope that chapters also consider joint international research projects, and share similarities and differences in psychology education. If your chapter is interested in connecting with an international chapter via social media, contact me at Martha.Zlokovich@psichi.org.

In order to encourage new international connections, Psi Chi is seeking members who are willing and able to volunteer as Psi Chi Ambassadors by visiting a psychology department during their international travels. Ambassadors are typically graduate students or faculty Psi Chi members, but undergraduates may be considered if they have special international connections, travel plans, or study-abroad opportunities. Ambassadors have been involved with their chapter as active members, officers, alumni, or faculty advisors. They should be familiar with the requirements for membership and willing to learn about the requirements to apply for a chapter. With first-hand experience as a member of a chapter, they can explain well what Psi Chi is, why a department should apply for a chapter, what members do on campus, and what benefits a chapter could bring to the students and faculty in the department. Ambassadors visit psychology faculty and students at a campus in or near a city (or cities) they planned to visit anyway to let them know about Psi Chi and how to apply for a chapter. For information on starting a chapter, go to http://www.psichi.org/default.asp?page=start_chapter

Members who plan to move to another country for graduate study or work can also help bring Psi Chi to more universities outside the United States. As long as they are willing to visit at least one psychology department there, members moving to another country promote Psi Chi internationally as well. In addition, if English is not the country’s language, they could be of great help assisting with the department’s application.

Every member can share Psi Chi experiences with psychology students and faculty from other institutions. Do not miss this wonderful chance to create long-lasting relationships that you will one day look back on just as affectionately as I do my time with my German family. Spreading the word about Psi Chi is a perfect opportunity for you to meet new people, so be sure to do so wherever you go. If you should ever speak with someone at a college or university who is interested in starting a chapter on their campus, please direct them to the website above. And whether you take a trip near or far, safe travels!
2014 Psi Chi EPA Convention

The 85th EPA meeting in Boston (MA), attended by over 2,000 professionals, kicked off Thursday evening with the Psi Chi distinguished lecture by Dr. Anthony Greenwald (University of Washington). Then Friday began early with a Skype session with the newly installed chapter at the People’s Friendship University of Russia (Moscow). "EPA 101: How to Get the Most out of Attendance at EPA" was led by Psi Chi Past-President Dr. Jason Young (Hunter College). The Psi Chi invited symposium by Dr. Brian Nosek (University of Virginia and the Center for Open Science; COS) reviewed the projects available through the COS, and Psi Chi Eastern Regional Vice-President Dr. Deborah Harris O’Brien (Trinity Washington University) discussed the benefits of the crowd-sourced method for small colleges and geographically isolated institutions. Psi Chi also cosponsored a career planning presentation with Psi Beta led by Dr. Ron Shapiro. The Psi Chi events of the day ended with a leadership workshop by Dr. Natasha Segool (University of Hartford chapter advisor) and her officers.

Saturday included the ever-popular workshops "Preparing for Graduate School in Psychology" and "Applying to Graduate School in Psychology" by Dr. John Norcross (University of Scranton) and the team of Drs. Susan Krauss Whitbourne, Carlos Escoto, and Thomas Hogan. The Psi Chi diversity symposium featured Dr. Carrie Kobek-Pezzarossi (Gallaudet University and diversity advisory committee chair), Dr. Sonia Dhalival (University of Missouri and diversity advisory committee member), and Zubaydah Madyun (Trinity Washington University). Dr. Mercedes McCormick and her officers from Pace University (NY) presented last to show how they had connected with other chapters in New York City.

Psi Chi also sponsored workshops, speakers, and symposia, and over 200 posters were presented by Psi Chi students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. The event concluded with an awards ceremony and reception.

A Dr. Deborah Harris-O’Brien (Eastern Regional Vice-President, Trinity Washington University) with colleague Dr. Debbie Van Camp.
B From the Peoples’ Friendship University of Russia (Moscow), Sofia Kamalova, (chapter president), Valerie Tarkhova, and Elena Chebotareva (chapter advisor).
C Psi Chi members/poster presenters from Wheeling Jesuit University: (left to right) Ryan Nauman, Justin Amos, Killeen Schlegel, and Kristen Custer.
D The University of Hartford panel at the Psi Chi Leadership Session: top row (left to right) Natasha Segool (faculty advisor), Ashley (Reed) Haight, and Katie Dydyn; bottom row (left to right) Cassandra Ekelmann, Janelle Coore, Melissa Kenney, and Jesse Seckel-Cerrotti.
E Psi Chi Distinguished Lecturer and keynote speaker, Dr. Tony Greenwald (University of Washington).
F Dr. Brian Nosek (University of Virginia and Center for Open Science) speaking at the symposium on “Crowdsourcing Science.”
G Dr. Deborah Harris-O’Brien introducing the Psi Chi keynote speaker.
H The diversity panel presenters at EPA: (left to right) Dr. Sonia Dhalival (University of Missouri and Psi Chi Diversity Advisory Committee member), Zubaydah Madyun, (Trinity Washington University Psi Chi member), and Dr. Carrie Kobek-Pezzarossi (Gallaudet University and Diversity Advisory Committee chair).
I Over 800 people attended the Psi Chi keynote address at EPA.
J Dr. Deborah Harris-O’Brien (Eastern Regional Vice-President, Trinity Washington University) with student winners of the Psi Chi EPA Regional Research Awards.
K Psi Chi staff members Lisa Norman and Debbie Garvich hosting the Psi Chi booth at EPA.
L Anthony Cyril Hasaballa (Southern Connecticut State University) and another Psi Chi member attend the Faculty Advisor Breakfast.
M Poster session at EPA 2014.
Some will say “Not much!” Others will add “unless you obtain a graduate degree.” I strongly disagree. However, to those of you who want to attend graduate school but will not (for whatever reasons), what is your backup plan? After all, only “20–24% of psychology baccalaureate recipients continue into graduate study in psychology” (APA Center for Workforce Studies, 2014, p. 3), although other individuals will enter other graduate or professional programs immediately after graduation or later. Furthermore, although the percentage of liberal arts and sciences seniors who applied for a job and received at least one offer increased from 46% in 2013 to 48% in 2014, psychology was not one of the five disciplines showing the greatest improvement (NACE, 2014).

In this column, I summarize major points from three resources that should instill confidence (if you act) that your liberal arts education with a psychology major is a valuable preparation for your life and career. When you enter the workforce, however, do not expect to encounter the immediate and well-paying opportunities offered to your engineering, accounting, or nursing classmates; you may have to experience a few low paying, uninspiring jobs before you achieve your focus. With that in mind, take the time to thoughtfully examine the resources below to learn about what you can expect from the workplace, what the workplace expects from you, and how you should prepare for it.

1. An Online Resource to Enable Undergraduate Psychology Majors to Identify and Investigate 172 Psychology and Psychology-Related Careers by Drew C. Appleby, Brandon S. Millspaugh, and Melissa J. Hammersley (2011).

This extraordinary website identifies numerous potential careers and links them to related resources such as the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT), the Occupational Information Network (O*NET), and the Occupational Outlook Handbook (O*OH). Careers that require an advanced degree are marked with an asterisk. If one or more of these careers interest you, why not conduct informational interviews (described in Hettich, 2012) to gain further information?


In this report, 815 employer responses to a survey about liberal arts graduates in the workplace were categorized by type of organization (for-profit company, nonprofit, government, educational, and health service provider), organization size, economic sector (e.g., professional/scientific services, manufacturing, financial/insurance services, educational services, not-for-profit, government, information services), and the composition (percent) of arts and science, A&S, graduates in the organizations’ workforce (1–25%, 26–55%, and 56–100%).

Of the 27 categories of jobs to which A&S graduates were assigned (Table 2 in the report), the most frequently mentioned were (in descending order from 41% to 20%): administrative services, customer services, business services, marketing, media and communication, information management, human resources, and computer services. The top two assignments were identical in the high, medium, and low composition organizations (Table 3). Although the most frequently mentioned assignments might not inspire you, employers maintain that such positions often require persons who can grasp the organization as a whole, integrate diverse information to make it meaningful, solve problems quickly, and interact with diverse colleagues. “For many A&S graduates, these positions are stepping stones and accelerators into an organization and a career” (p. 4).

Table 4 identifies the most important work attitudes and behaviors that employers seek: strong work ethic, responsibility/accountability, punctuality, cooperation with coworkers, adaptability, and working with limited direction. To what extent do you possess each of these attributes? In what settings could you strengthen them? Chan and Gardner also discuss strengths and weaknesses in A&S students and non-A&S students (Table 5), employer expectations of applicants during the recruiting process (Table 6), and differences in student preparedness required for positions within the five organizational types (Table 7). Tables 6 and 7 are must reads!

Employers were also asked how colleges and universities can better prepare A&S students to be successfully recruited and successful on the job. Respondents’ recommendations were grouped into 11 categories from most to least mentioned. Below are brief summary comments or quotations for each. When you read the full report, note the many incisive (and often biting) comments regarding these issues.

- **Preprofessional Experiences:** Internships are the most preferred experiences.
- **Curriculum:** Acquire a basic knowledge of business and technology.
- **Skills and Competencies:** Master the soft skills (e.g., interpersonal, group, and leadership) and be able to express and apply all of your skills to the workplace.
- **Mindset:** Too many students lack career direction and possess a hazy view of the world of work.
- **Communication:** Although communication skills are a major asset of A&S students, employers strongly believe these skills must be improved.
• **Professionalism (Expectations):** “The gulf between campus and the workplace is enormous. Students have a poor understanding of what is expected of them on the other side” (p. 17; See Hettich, 2013 for additional remarks about expectations).

• **Job Search:** Although career centers play a major role in preparing students for the job search, the big gains in a successful search depend upon students’ ability to resolve the mindset and curriculum issues above.

• **Critical Thinking:** Employers acknowledge that A&S students may be critical thinkers, but students have difficulty transferring this skill beyond academic settings.

• **Analytical and Technology:** Students need more practice in data analytics. (Students: Appreciate your statistics, research methods, and research coursework!)

• **Specific Skills:** “Students need to be proficient in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Outlook” (p. 18). SPSS and Qualtrics are not used in many organizations at the entry level.

• **Entitlement (Attitude):** “Probably no single aspect of today’s youth riles employers more than their sense of entitlement” (p. 19; See Hettich, 2013).

Finally, be sure to review the other informative workplace-related surveys posted on the CERI website.

3. **It Takes More Than a Major: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success. An Online Survey Among Employers Conducted on Behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities by Hart Research Associates.**

This Hart report by the Association of American Colleges and Universities is based on a survey of 318 employers whose organizations operate with at least 25 employees and at least 25% of their new hires possessing an associate’s or bachelor’s degree. The report contains a 6-point overview and 11 key findings. Each of the six points quoted below is thoughtfully elaborated on in the report on pages 1 to 3.

1. “Innovation is a priority for employers today.”
2. “Employers recognize capacities that cut across majors as critical to a candidate’s potential for career success, and they view these skills as more important than a student’s choice of undergraduate major.”
3. “Employers recognize the importance of liberal education and the liberal arts.”
4. “Employers endorse a blended model of liberal and applied learning.”
5. “Employers think that more college graduates have the skills and preparation needed for entry-level positions than for advancement.”
6. “Employers express interest in e-portfolios and partnerships with colleges to ensure college graduates’ successful transition to the workplace.”

The 11 findings that follow the overview generally expand the six points and provide important information, insights, and recommendations for strengthening workplace preparedness.

### Concluding Comments

I focused on these three resources to enhance your understanding of the positive, but complex, relationship between your liberal arts education and workplace issues. However, this article is just a summary. If you truly want to use the resources optimally, then immerse yourself in them. Thoughtfully examine the psychology-related occupations in light of your interests, experiences, and abilities, and conduct informational interviews. Search for connections among these resources, and apply this valuable information to your career planning, course-work, internships, part-time job, and job search. Become proactive by discussing this material with your academic advisor, teachers, family, friends in your psychology club and Psi Chi meetings, and in your capstone and internship courses. Don’t begin to critically examine the relationship between your liberal arts education and the workplace after you have stumbled into a post-college job where you find yourself constantly asking, “Did I have to go to college to do this?” Do it now!

### References

Questions (and Answers) About Graduate School

The following questions were adapted from various posts in the Psi Chi LinkedIn group.

How common is it to go directly from an undergraduate degree to a PhD program?

VanderStoep: At my institution, it is becoming less common. The average age of a first-year student at a top-10 medical school last year was 24.4. So-called “gap years” are being chosen by students and, in my view, being valued by graduate institutions more now than in the past. Spending time in high-quality postbaccalaureate experiences could make you more attractive to future programs. But be advised, if your application materials have a noticeable weakness (e.g., poor GRE, poor psych GPA), experience can only do so much to mitigate these shortcomings. In other words, I don’t believe “I have bad GRE scores so I’m going to volunteer in a psych inpatient unit” is a good strategy unless a lot of time has passed since your GRE. If this is your reason for a gap year, I would instead recommend doing something to erase or diminish those weaknesses such as applying to a master’s program at a less competitive institution or studying for and retaking the GRE. Perhaps my colleagues believe otherwise?

Handelsman: The questions that go beyond how common it is include “What should I do for a year or two?” which Scott addressed in a way I cannot disagree with. The next broader question might be, “What do I want to do with my life, and when can I do what?” Taking some time before graduate school to pursue other dreams (Yes, people have dreams that don’t include psychology!) might be a wonderful idea. It’s also a good idea to take some time if you’re not sure or passionate about your graduate training.

Landrum: I think there is a direct question here and an indirect question as mentioned by my colleagues. To answer your question directly, I’m not sure we have national data about the most common path to PhD programs, whether that be from the bachelor’s degree straight in or via a terminal master’s degree. I do wish there was stronger advocacy for undergraduate psychology majors such that an organization somewhere was interested in answering those types of questions. I think the indirect question is this: “How will I know what I want to do?” And I think the answer is through serious self-reflection; it doesn’t have to be a gap year, but it could be. Students are in such a hurry to “get courses out of the way” and “get through their psychology major” that I think they often fail to stop and think about why they are doing what they are doing, and what will be the next steps. Having a thoughtful plan with accompanying action steps and a strong mentor will go a long way to a successful path, whatever that path may look like.

Is it worth going to a school that doesn’t have a top-ranked graduate program?

VanderStoep: I can give my perspective as someone who has hired about 30 faculty in the last eight years as department chair and divisional dean. And that is, if you are considering an academic career, the very first thing search committees usually look for is a strong record of teaching and a promising area of scholarship (preferably with some refereed publications during graduate school). You can do that at any program if you have a productive advisor. However, search committees also look at prestige of the institution and, thus, you may be at a disadvantage against those from more venerable programs. But it is not at the top of most search committees’ list. Now, if your goal is a career in a clinical or industrial setting, my sense is that the difference between programs means even less than it does in academia. Other thoughts, oh learned colleagues?

Handelsman: First, would you like to know what graduate program I’m from (over 30 years ago) before you believe my answer? It may not be as prestigious as you might guess. Second, think of your most inspirational teachers. Where did they get their degrees, and does it matter? Third, are you at a top-ranked undergraduate program? I think you can take the “LeBron” approach and only play for a team that has a chance to win it all, or you can take the approach (I don’t have a name for it yet) of going to the best team that will have you.

Landrum: This is a situation where a psychology major should be able to apply his or her psychological skills to this question. As you know, psychologists spend a lot of time carefully considering how dependent variables are measured. When an organization like U.S. News and World Report issues rankings, those numbers can be considered dependent variables. So ask all the questions that you would if you were reviewing psychological research: what do the numbers mean, how were the scores calculated, are the data valid and reliable, and so on? At best, these data represent aggregate overall summaries of quality. Say there are 100 schools on the list, ranked 1 to 100. We could find a person at School 1 who had a lousy experience and a person at School 100 who had a world-class experience. So the rankings data are one piece of data, but they should not be the only data considered in a graduate school decision. The key question here is “what is the best graduate school for me?” Answering that question will take a lot of due diligence and the active application of your psychological research chops!

What are the advantages and disadvantages of attending a graduate school that is very far away from where I presently live with all my family and friends?

VanderStoep: I would not frame the question as advantages or disadvantages. If you’re paying attention to distance, it is likely that you may have family or relationship situations that require you to consider distance. This is reasonable. We all must do what is best for the folks with whom we are closest, and those obligations may
conflict with our own professional goals. If your concern is that you would like to stay near family because of comfort, familiarity, or anxiety about the unknown, I would encourage you to move beyond those concerns. The challenge of being away from family will pale in comparison to the challenge of doctoral-level graduate training.

Handelsman: I love this question (I also love Scott's answer.) because it speaks directly to the fact that graduate training is part of the bigger picture of your life. Sometimes your training is bigger than the other parts, sometimes not. On a more practical level, here's a hint for your long-range planning: If you're looking at clinical training, where you do your internship is often more predictive of where you wind up living than where you do your graduate program. On a personal level, my decision to go halfway across the country to graduate school (after staying very close to home for undergrad) was a great professional decision, which I knew at the time. What I didn't know at the time was that my decision threw me into amazing growth-producing situations that I wouldn't trade for anything.

Landrum: Being in graduate school may be one of the most stressful times in your life, so having a social support network close by makes a lot of sense. On the other hand, having a strong family network nearby can be distracting at times. I remember studying for prelims in graduate school, and my parents wanted to visit the weekend before. It was about an 8-hour drive for them, and I still had a hard time convincing them of the importance of this “test.” It was wonderful that they wanted to see me, but I was torn between studying for the test that would determine if I was admitted to candidacy (or not) and spending time with my parents (or not). If you stay close, be sure to have a conversation about boundaries, and let loved ones know that your availability during graduate school may not be the same as it was during your undergraduate years. And if you go far away, try to save for airfare and/or gas money because that family lifeline is important.

After I get my graduate degree, could I sometimes be told that I am overqualified when applying for jobs? What is the appropriate response to this?

Handelsman: Appropriate responses include the truth about why you’re applying to a job that looks like it requires fewer qualifications or experience than you have. In general, remember that having more education will open up more and more attractive possibilities. But let’s go back to Question 1: If there are jobs you might want to have (at least for a few years) that require less education than you would have, think about the possibility of taking one or two of those jobs to see what it’s like. The world is changing very quickly, but graduate programs will be around for another few years! Taking a bit longer to get your graduate degree can add richness to your experience and your professional life.

Landrum: It’s fun to write this column with two colleagues that I respect and admire because they often take the high road. So I’ll take the other path. Being told that you are “overqualified” could also mean that the employer is being cheap and wants to cut corners by hiring at the lowest salary possible. You asked “what’s the appropriate response to this”; I’d say walk away. You certainly don’t want to get into a discussion as to why you are not as qualified as you are. After attending graduate school, you should have some skills and expertise that the right employer will value. Making connections during graduate school such as during an internship or field placement might make the transition from graduate school to a career a little less bumpy.
Honest Liars: Using Psychological Theory to Understand Self-Deception

Cortney S. Warren, PhD | University of Nevada, Las Vegas | Choose Honesty, LLC

“Humans are excellent liars. We don’t like to think of ourselves as capable of lying; it hurts us too much to admit. So we lie to ourselves about that, too”

(Warren, 2014c, pp. 4).
One of my favorite courses to teach is basic principles of psychotherapy. On the first day of class, students usually look at me quizzically when I state that my primary goal is to help them use psychological theories of human nature to understand themselves. The idea that a course is designed to promote self-understanding while providing foundational content is unfamiliar to many students. Although most are psychology majors, applying theories of human nature to their own personal lives in meaningful ways is a skill that requires practice.

However, in addition to being the basis of psychotherapeutic practice, one reason that psychology is so important as a field is precisely because it can help us understand ourselves and promote life fulfillment. Based on the content of my latest book, Lies We Tell Ourselves: The Psychology of Self-Deception (Warren, 2014c), I wrote this article to help readers use theories of human nature to understand their own self-deception and choose to be more honest. When we use the best of psychology to understand ourselves, we have the opportunity to change and become more honest liars (Warren, 2014b).

As a clinical psychologist, I am consistently faced with the harsh reality that humans lie to themselves on a daily basis. We deceive ourselves about everything from tiny, seemingly insignificant aspects of our lives to our most influential life choices (Warren, 2014c). For example, we struggle to admit how much money we really spend on coffee each week and the real reason that we didn’t pay our credit card bill on time. We also lie to ourselves about why we select certain dating partners or pursue a given career path. Unfortunately for all of us who want to live in an eternally positive fantasy realm of romance and reality, we are attracted to people and occupations for many reasons that have absolutely nothing to do with love!

Although self-deception is a complicated construct, we lie to ourselves at the most basic level by not admitting something that is true or by believing something that is false (Dewees-Boyd, 2012; Paulhus, 1984). At our cores, we deceive ourselves because we lack the psychological strength to admit the truth and change once the truth is acknowledged (Warren, 2014c). As such, self-deception helps us avoid confronting painful life realities. In this way, self-deception is a good coping mechanism because it helps us twist, manipulate, and tweak the truth to be more consistent with what we can psychologically tolerate (Warren, 2014c). That said, self-deception can also cause us profound regret because lying to ourselves will thwart our ability to live the life that would be most fulfilling for each of us.

Theories of Human Nature and Self-Deception

Although few psychological theories of human nature overtly describe self-deception, most can be used to help us understand how we lie to ourselves. Specifically, psychodynamic, cognitive behavioral, existential, and sociocultural perspectives offer us insights into how we deceive ourselves.

Psychodynamic perspective. Sigmund Freud and other psychodynamic scholars first described self-deception through ego-defense mechanisms (Corey, 2009; Freud, 1960, 1995; McWilliams, 2011). These psychological strategies are designed to protect our ego—our core rational sense of self—from information that would hurt us. In true Freudian language, they are designed to help us maintain a big ego.

One of the most common ego-defense mechanisms is denial, which occurs any time you refuse to believe something that is true. Often, the more strongly you want to deny something, the more likely it is to be true. For example, you may emphatically state that you don’t have a problem with intimacy even though you emotionally keep others at arm’s length. You may claim to live a healthy lifestyle even though you smoke cigarettes and rarely exercise. Or, you may refuse to acknowledge how your childhood environment influenced your ability to express emotion effectively.

Another commonly used defense is rationalization, defined as creating a reason to excuse aspects of yourself that you find unacceptable. In essence, rationalization allows you to feel better about yourself by intellectually justifying your thoughts, feelings, and behavior. For example, you may justify cheating on your mate by stating that you were drinking, angry, or hurt because he or she hasn’t spent enough time with you. You may continue dating someone who is not healthy for you by telling yourself that you are in love, thereby justifying your decision to stay. In school, you may tell yourself that you didn’t study for your exam because a friend was in town, you needed a break, or you were too tired to look over your notes in an attempt to make yourself feel less guilty.

A third commonly used defense is projection, which involves taking an undesirable aspect of yourself and ascribing it to someone else. In other words, instead of admitting something that you don’t like about yourself, you see the same flaw in someone else. Often projection makes us look highly hypocritical. For example, you may accuse someone of being a gossip instead of admitting that you are the one gossiping. You may say that you would never drunk dial someone late at night, have a one-night-stand, or think something racist or sexist. However, you quickly point out these behaviors in another person to cover up the fact that you are uncomfortable with your own behavior.

Cognitive behavioral perspective. From a cognitive behavioral perspective, we can understand self-deception through the many illogical or irrational ways we think (Beck, 1975; Burns, 1980; Ellis & Harper, 1975). Prominent theorists like Aaron Beck and Alfred Ellis argued that humans like to think that their thoughts accurately reflect reality. In fact, most of us believe that we are right about everything because we think our thoughts are true. However, the truth is that our thoughts are not an accurate reflection of reality—they are often incredibly biased, skewed, and inaccurate in characteristic ways that harm our ability to be honest. Referred to as crooked thinking or cognitive distortions (Beck, 1975; Burns, 1980; Ellis & Harper, 1975), self-deception often emerges through distorted thinking patterns that reflect painful realities that we don’t want to admit (Warren, 2014c).

One common cognitive distortion is emotional reasoning, defined as thinking that your feelings accurately reflect current reality. For example, when you feel sad,
you may think, “I am so depressed. Clearly something in my current life is causing my sadness,” instead of considering that perhaps your emotion is related to an unresolved issue from your past that is being triggered by a current life situation. When feeling angry with someone, you may think, “You made me feel angry,” instead of admitting that it is your interpretation of a current life event that fundamentally causes your emotional response.

Another common distortion is fortune telling, or believing that a prediction about the future is an already-established fact. When interviewing for a new job, you think, “This company is never going to hire me.” When entering into a new romantic relationship, you may think, “I am never going to get close to people ever again because I always get hurt in the end.”

A third common distortion is overgeneralization. For example, after going through a bad breakup, you may think, “I am never going to meet anyone. It isn’t even worth trying to date.” After getting in a fight with your best friend, you may think, “I am never going to get close to people ever again because I always get hurt in the end.”

Existential perspective. From an existential perspective, self-deception can be understood as a desire to avoid the Givens of Life. Based in philosophy, the Givens are four basic realities of being human that we must face over the course of our lifetimes (Frankl, 1963; Yalom, 2000).

1. Death: we and everyone we love will die.
2. Ultimate aloneness: we are all born and will die as a single person housed in a solitary physical body.
3. Meaninglessness: our lives are inherently meaningless unless we give them meaning because none of us are that important, special, or unique in the grand scope of human history.
4. Freedom: we are responsible for every aspect of ourselves because we have the freedom of choice (Yalom, 2000).

To avoid admitting these realities, we frequently lie to ourselves (Warren, 2014c). For example, you may defer responsibility for your choices by blaming your past. You may say things like, “I am this way because my father was an alcoholic” or “I don’t trust people because I was abandoned as a child.” You may deny your mortality and the mortality of those you love by refusing to write a will, skipping your medical checkups, or avoiding discussions about the poor health of family and friends. You may have an incredibly busy social calendar to avoid being alone or for fear that you will miss out on something fantastic if you don’t show up to every party. You may believe that you would never be mugged, raped, or attacked because you are somehow uniquely protected from harm and special, making you immune from negative life events (Warren, 2014c).

Sociocultural perspective. Multicultural and feminist psychologists describe how cultural norms around race, sex, sexual orientation, and a host of other socially relevant topics affect our psychological health and well-being (American Psychological Association, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2013). Sociocultural theorists argue that we grow up trying to emulate whatever our culture deems to be most valuable because we all want to be desired, loved, and wanted. This generally occurs without our conscious awareness. Consequently, in terms of self-deception, we often believe that what we were culturally conditioned to believe is true instead of determining if what we actually believe is true (Warren, 2014c).

The way we feel about our physical appearance is one obvious way that cultural messages affect us. In mainstream Western cultures, even a cursory glance in a children’s toy store clearly communicates that girls should be princesses dressed in pink tiaras and boys should be car-loving men of action dressed in military fatigues. Over time, we strive to emulate these ideals. Specifically, girls learn that attaining the ideal appearance is fundamental to her gender role and value: the ideal woman looks youthful with perfect skin and big eyes surrounded by long eyelashes, white teeth, and a very thin, yet feminine, figure (Thompson, Heinberg, Altbe, & Tantleff-Dunn, 1999; Warren, 2014a). For men, not only do you need to be muscular and fit, but you also need to make a lot of money, be educated, and be smart. Although you have slightly more flexibility than women around how to be culturally valuable—you can be valued for your money or brains instead of just your physical appearance—you are still evaluated and scrutinized on the basis of these culturally imposed characteristics.

Over time, we consciously and unconsciously internalize cultural norms, evaluating ourselves and others in comparison to them (Warren, 2014c). In this way, many of us lie to ourselves about what we really believe because we internalize cultural messages that compromise our happiness without actually considering whether we agree. For example, you may believe you need to look a certain way, be a certain weight, earn a certain income, get married, have children, and go to church because you learned that this is the way you should be to be valued in your cultural context.

Choosing Honesty and Becoming More Honest Liars

There is an inherent dilemma in choosing to confront your self-deception; you can’t ask yourself how you lie to yourself because that would require you to tell the truth. Given the unconscious nature of self-deception, becoming honest is incredibly challenging. However, confronting your self-deception is critical to long-term life fulfillment and happiness. Below are five specific suggestions to start the process of choosing to become more honest with yourself.

1. Self-awareness. Become an observer of your own life. Without evaluation or judgment, pause. Begin to notice and observe yourself (Warren, 2014c). As you are observing, use the theories of human nature described above to ask yourself questions that target self-deception. When do you most often lie to yourself? What psychological strategies do you use most often to lie to yourself? Do you use denial, rationalization, projection, or emotional reasoning? What existential Givens of Life do you try to avoid confronting to feel comfortable? What cognitive distortions do you use most often to manipulate the truth and feel better?

As you ask yourself these challenging questions, remember that becoming more self-aware and honest is a choice. It takes deliberate effort because admitting the truth will be uncomfortable in the short-term because your self-deception serves a function—it protects you from painful life realities. That said, in the long-term, it is critical to honestly admit who you are so that you can change things that you do not like about yourself.

2. Notice your emotion. Generally, when
we are emotionally reactive to something or someone it is because we are being reminded of something painful, raw, or unresolved in our lives (Warren, 2014c). In these areas, we struggle to admit the truth. For example, if you have trust issues in your romantic relationships, you may feel anxious, angry, or scared when falling in love with a new mate. As this occurs, you may find yourself reactive to your mate in ways that are not warranted based on who this person is. In fact, your reaction may be fundamentally based on who you are and unresolved issues from your past that you are bringing into your new relationship. Given this reality, when you have a strong emotional reaction to something or someone, pause. Ask yourself: What is my emotion a reaction to? Is my emotion really related to the present situation, or is the present situation triggering something in me that is unresolved baggage from my past?

3. Notice your behavior. We desperately want our behavior to be separate from our identity (Warren, 2014c). We don’t want to believe that the way we act reflects who we are. For example, you don’t want to admit that you are jealous even though you check your partners’ phone messages; you don’t want to have intimacy issues even though you sabotage your relationships by breaking up with people when they get too close. However, the truth is that our behavior is a reflection of who we are in some way. When your behavior isn’t consistent with who you claim to be or want to be, pause. Ask yourself: Why am I acting this way? What is motivating my behavior? What do I not want to admit to myself about my behavior? Why?

4. Notice your thoughts. We all want to believe that our thoughts are accurate reflections of reality. However, as outlined by our cognitive behavioral experts, our thoughts are often highly biased and inaccurate. The falsehoods in your thinking tell you something about what is painful for your body. It will lead you to the cause of your self-deceptive tendencies. Given this reality, when you notice your thinking is extreme or irrational, pause. Ask yourself: What words am I using to describe my life? Are my thoughts accurate? Am I using my past to justify my current thinking? How are my thoughts biased?

5. Challenge culturally conditioned messages. As noted by our sociocultural experts, your cultural context will strongly influence what you deem to be desirable and undesirable. As you become more aware of your surroundings and the cultural messages you learned, you must determine whether you aspire to be a certain way because you believe it is right or because you were culturally conditioned to believe it is right (Warren, 2014b). Ask yourself challenging questions about what messages you learned about your value from a cultural perspective. For example, how do you compromise yourself to meet cultural norms? Do you think you need to look a certain way? Be a certain weight? Earn a certain income? Be in a relationship? Be religious? Why do you believe this to be true? Is it because culture taught you that you should be a certain way or because you believe it is right for you to be that way?

Concluding Remarks

Becoming more honest is a lifelong journey (Warren, 2014c). It takes daily practice and effort because most of the time we are completely unaware of the rampant lying going on in our own minds. However, we cannot be honest with others until we are first honest with ourselves. Although we can’t directly ask ourselves how we lie, we can learn about who we really are by consciously observing ourselves, paying particular attention to our emotions, thoughts, behaviors, and culturally internalized beliefs.

In addition to generally helping us live more fulfilling lives, knowing ourselves is one of the foundational principles of being an excellent therapist. In fact, many scholars argue that the most important instrument in any therapeutic relationship is the therapist (Corey, 2009). Really understanding who we are requires brutal honesty. As such, for anyone interested in working with clients or patients in a therapeutic setting, my strong recommendation is that you start working on your self-deception now. Find an excellent therapist and choose to confront your self-deception each day of your life (Warren, 2014c). As we learn about ourselves at a deeper level, we give ourselves the freedom to heal, change, and evolve.

References


Cortney S. Warren, PhD, is a licensed clinical psychologist with a passion for understanding mental illness from a cross-cultural perspective. Raised traveling the world, Dr. Warren gained a unique perspective about how culture influences eating norms, food rituals, and ideals of beauty. She earned her PhD in clinical psychology in 2006 from Texas A&M University after completing her internship at McLean Hospital, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School. Most of Dr. Warren’s research explores eating pathology, addictions, and the practice of psychotherapy. Her work appears in some of the field’s top journals including the International Journal of Eating Disorders, Appetite, and Obesity. She has won some of the most prestigious awards in her field including the 2011 Theodore H. Blau Early Career Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Clinical Psychology (awarded jointly by the American Psychological Foundation and the American Psychological Association) and the 2010 Samuel M. Turner Early Career Award for Distinguished Contributions to Diversity in Clinical Psychology (from the American Psychological Association). Although she received tenure in 2012 from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, she formally retired from academia in 2014 to pursue a career that would allow her more time with her family and more interaction with the general public. In a recent TEDx talk called, Honest Liars: The Psychology of Self-Deception (http://youtu.be/YpEeSa6zBTE), she described her decision to retire from academia and her view that self-deception is our biggest obstacle to life fulfillment. For more information and resources, visit www.choosehonesty.com.
Dr. Keltner is the creator of the Jen ratio, a means to calculate the good and bad things in a person's life. This ratio involves putting as many positive things as you can think of in the numerator of a fraction and then all the negative things in the denominator as a measurement of goodness. He chose this concept not only to honor the ancient Confucian principle, but also because it summarizes a lot of what researchers have learned: the more good that people bring out in themselves and others, the more inspired, purposeful, and healthier they feel.

As he says in his book, Born to Be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life, “One can apply the Jen ratio to any realm: our interior life, more satisfying and more trying periods for a marriage, the tenor of a family reunion, the goodwill of a neighborhood, the rhetoric of presidents, the spirit of historical eras.”

Taking a moment to make your own Jen ratios helps you “take stock of your attempt at living a meaningful life” (Keltner, 2009, p. 5).

Dr. Keltner studies multiple Jen emotions such as embarrassment, smiling, laughter, touch, love, and compassion. In particular, he focuses on awe, which has long been valued by philosophers and even environmentalist perspectives. However, surprisingly few researchers have applied scientific efforts to understand how awe works and where it really comes from.

The Importance of Awe

Tornado and thunderstorm warnings threaten the nation, yet it is warm and sunny in California when Dr. Keltner sits down to speak with us at Psi Chi. As he explains, “The field of emotions mainly focused on negative emotions until Barb Fredrickson, Mike McCullough, and Bob Emmons got us to think about the positive ones. This delay may have occurred because, in some ways, emotions are difficult to study. I might also speculate that people tend to shy away from studying things that seem mystical or magical because they do not often think those things can be put through the lens of study.”

However, he and others are beginning to find that awe is actually crucial in shaping human lives. In fact, he believes that measuring awe could become one of the most important health markers that we have.

“We’re learning that the experience of awe in the lab and out in the world makes people modest. It makes them humble and makes them want to share resources with others. Awe makes them feel less entitled and less egocentric. Data are starting to show that awe is associated with an increase in oxytocin, which makes people kinder to others. Awe is also beginning to be associated with reduced levels of cytokines, which are part of the body’s inflammation response to toxins and injury, and when produced at chronic levels, are bad for health.”

Dr. Keltner has conducted many studies to simulate the sensation of awe—even once with a tyrannosaurus rex skeleton in the Berkley Life Sciences Building (Hochman, 2010). “In studies with tall beautiful eucalyptus trees, it literally took only a minute or two for people to feel more purposeful...”
Distinguished lecturer and humble. “In some sense, generated experiences via television and videogames will never duplicate the pure awe that people feel, for example, “while backpacking in the Eastern Sierra. Anyone who loves the outdoors knows how important awe is within our appreciation of nature.”

“It will never be the same—not even with IMAX!” Dr. Keltner jokes, although he fully acknowledges that incredible technology platforms are always improving. “These platforms allow us more of an opportunity to make people feel awe, but we’re also starting a partnership with the Sierra Club to study how awe in nature helps people reorient their approach to the world.”

**Spoiling Awe? Or Solving It?**

Dr. Keltner has often been asked, ‘don’t you think you’re going to ruin awe if you study it?’ but luckily that hasn’t happened yet. In his opinion: “One of the interesting things we’re uncovering in our work is how awe varies from person to person. In particular, we’re starting to study how some people get goosebumps all the time, although others rarely experience them.” This research is beginning to show that awe originates from the emotional response of a subordinate to a powerful and potentially harmful leader or thing. As stated in a recent article, “In our primordial past, in order to ensure stability in important social hierarchies, awe might have been the mechanism prompting adaptive submissive responses to those more powerful” (Smith, 2013, para 9).

This is why most instances of awe involve something larger than the beholder. “I think the answer we can provide right now of why encounters with big things cause us to...”
feel awe is because (a) they’re threatening and (b) they require that we really orient and explore carefully. The world is always providing things that are more vast than our understanding, though awe does not always come from large things.”

For example, when asked to list a few things that cause Dr. Keltner to feel awe, he readily and reverently describes

- redwood trees;
- patterns of light and shadow on the ground;
- when he hears the wind;
- when he watches little babies move around their environment;
- inspiring political figures; and
- music like Iggy Pop.

“Awe has always been really important to me,” Dr. Keltner says. “I feel it every day. It happens through people, nature, aesthetics, and politics. That is what is really challenging about the emotion—it comes through so many things.”

This is nothing new for Dr. Keltner. He grew up with an appreciation for art because his mother was a literature reviewer and his father was an artist. In his own words, he was something of an “unhappy kid.” “But then, the thing that really excited me—the thing that got me interested in Jen science even—occurred when I started reading about the Paul Ekman ‘atlas of emotions’ and the Darwinian look at the body, face, and voice. I was truly blown away by the fact that it is possible to scientifically study emotions, and that has really run through my work in every imaginable way from studying embarrassment to power to goosebumps to emoticons.”

Emoticons?

“Yes!” Dr. Keltner insists, indeed meaning the smiley faces most often seen on social media. “Emoticons are important for many reasons. They are artistic. They are funny. They are ways that we can communicate subtle things ironically or in a satirical way.”

In fact, Facebook has hired Dr. Keltner and a Pixar illustrator to apply concepts in Charles Darwin’s book, The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals (Darwin, 1872), to design new animated emoticons that use universally understood expressions. “We created an emotion for feeling dumbfounded, and people love that they can share that. From the psychological science perspective, millions of viewers have crafted—through evolutionary processes—tone of voice, facial expression, and all these things that we study, so the challenge is to move this into the site. The pile of dirt, the deadpan face, or the little sympathy expression—these are all evocative. They all give us a really precise emotion that is a little bit softer than saying, ‘hey I’m angry with you.’ So in some ways, showing an emoticon of frustration can be easier than expressing it with words.”

The Greater Good Science Center

Dr. Keltner is presently faculty director of the Greater Good Science Center, which started at UC Berkeley in 2001. “The Center’s mission is to take new emotions science and translate it in a way that gets it right out to the people who make a difference and change the world like teachers, judges, nurses, and doctors. What we do,” Dr. Keltner explains, “is we have a dynamic prize-winning website where hundreds of thousands of people come, for example, to learn how to teach fourth graders about compassion. We are actively getting into schools through a Greater Good Summer Institute for Educators, and we also host The Greater Good Gratitude Summit through the John Templeton Foundation to profile, house, and amplify researchers’ works.”

Much to Do

Dr. Keltner has many—he says too many!—plans for the future. “I’m helping people figure out how to study the benefits of outdoor immersion in activities run by the Sierra Club. I think we’ve got 5 or 10 more years to work on awe, and maybe we’ll be able to answer where awe comes from in our evolution in a few years too. We’re going to remote parts of the world to study emotions in other cultures. I’m excited about strengthening the Greater Good Science Center to build educational curriculum or health curriculum to help with healthcare. I will write more books and do more teaching. I’ve also been helping Facebook for the past few years to make some of the problems on their site more resolvable, friendly, and compassionate.”

Along with this, Dr. Keltner has a busy home life too. “Having kids and raising young children really taught me that Darwin was right about sympathy being our strongest instinct. It was that massive example of caring, touch, and all the things I had studied that persuaded me in my personal life that we need to be compassionate. There’s a lot of data that says the key to happiness is in helping others, so making other facets of life into opportunities for compassion has become a thread throughout my experiences working for Pixar and everywhere else.”

In that regard, Dr. Keltner concludes with some straightforward advice to help students interested in pursuing a career in Jen science. “First, the Greater Good Science Center has a free moot course on ‘The Science of Happiness’ that launches in the fall.” He encourages students to take that along with a class on music appreciation, painting, environmentalism, and then a class on human emotion.

References


Dacher Keltner, PhD, received his BA from UC Santa Barbara in 1984 and his PhD from Stanford University in 1989. After a postdoc at UCSF with Paul Ekman, in 1992 he took his first academic job at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1996, he returned to Berkeley’s Psychology Department where he is now a full professor and director of the Berkeley Social Interaction Lab. Dr. Keltner’s research focuses on the biological and evolutionary origins of compassion, awe, love, beauty, power, social class, and inequality. He is the coauthor of two textbooks and author of the best-selling Born to Be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life and The Compassionate Instinct. His publications include over 160 scientific articles, and he has written for the New York Times Magazine, The London Times, and Utne Reader. His research has been covered in TIME, Newsweek, the New York Times, the BBC, CNN, NPR, The Wallstreet Journal, and has been a focus in two panels with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. Dr. Keltner has collaborated with directors at Pixar, a design team at Facebook, on projects at Google, and was recently featured in Tom Shadyac’s movie I Am. He has received the outstanding teacher and research mentor awards from UC Berkeley and seen 20 of his PhD students and postdoctoral fellows become professors. WIRED magazine recently rated Dr. Keltner’s podcasts from his course “Emotion” as one of the five best educational downloads, and Utne Reader selected him as one of its fifty 2008 visionaries. Dr. Keltner also serves as the faculty director of the Berkeley Greater Good Science Center.
On Autism and Language Comprehension

With Morton Ann Gernsbacher, PhD

How can we most effectively comprehend, communicate, and ultimately accommodate the needs of others? Dr. Morton Ann Gernsbacher (University of Wisconsin–Madison) has conducted research revolving around these questions for the past 35 years. She has extensively researched language comprehension on everything from conceptual anaphors to the role of suppression in sentence comprehension. She then shifted her interests to autism research, largely to identify and disprove common myths created by nonautistic people, who would rather cure autism than learn how to accept and appreciate autistic people for who they are.
Which term is correct? Persons with autism or autistic people?

Throughout this discussion, I will be using the term autistic adult(s), autistic child(ren), and autistic person(s) rather than adult with autism, child(ren) with autism, or person(s) with autism. My word choice is purposeful and derives from my deep respect for the autistic community who tend to prefer Identity-First Language (e.g., autistic people) over Person-First Language (e.g., people with autism).

In fact, 99% of the first 100 Google hits with the term autistics or autistic people lead to organizations, blogs, and websites run by autistic people. In contrast, all of the first 100 Google hits with the terms children with autism or people with autism lead to sites run by nonautistic professionals, parents, researchers, or the like. If you’re interested in this topic, please read the classic manifesto, “Why I dislike ‘Person-First’ Language,” by Sinclair (1999).

Are autistic persons the only group who encourage Identity-First Language?

It’s not just autistic persons; members of other disability groups frequently prefer Identity-First Language too. For instance, the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) adamantly rejects Person-First Language (Jernigan, 2009; Vaughan, 1997). According to the NFB, blind people do not want to be called people with blindness. They want to be called blind people.

Similarly, I think most of us rolled our eyes when we read a few years ago that world-class sprinter, Tyson Homosexual, had qualified for the Beijing Olympics. The sprinter’s name is Tyson Gay, but at least one newspaper refused to use the term gay, instead insisting upon using the term homosexual despite gays preferring to be called gays (Akers, 2008).

This newspaper might have been well-intentioned, but the question remains: Who gets to decide what people are called? Is it the people themselves, in this case gay people or in the case we’re discussing disabled people or autistic people? Or is it nongay, nondisabled, and nonautistic people who get to decide what gay, disabled, or autistic people are called?

In one of a series of articles about Person-First Language, Roger Collier writes that “tucking the names of diseases and disabilities in the shadows may have the opposite effect of what is intended. It could stigmatize words that were never considered derogatory or pejorative in the first place” (Collier, 2012, p. 1977).

Collier’s point is easily illustrated in the pages of our scholarly journals and textbooks. Although they all insist that autistic children be referred to as children with autism, they never insist that typically developing children be referred to as children with typical development. As Sinclair (1999) wrote in his manifesto: “It is only when someone has decided that the characteristic being referred to is negative that suddenly people want to separate it from the person” (para. 4).

Which would you say is the most popular autism stereotype and why?

I think the most prevalent—and deleterious—myth in both the public and research arena is that autistic people lack empathy. That pronouncement is one that autistic people fight against every day because it has real-world repercussions. When we assume that another person lacks empathy, we open the door to all sorts of dangerous assertions; we trick ourselves into thinking that this person doesn’t care; we envision that this person will only respond to us with callous disregard; we erroneously claim that this person is likely to commit mass murder.

However, the tide is turning a bit. For example, last fall Mediaite [a news and opinion blog] called out a popular TV talk show for making the unfounded assumption that autistic persons lack empathy (Christopher, 2012). Unfortunately, we still have a long way to go before the general public—and researchers—don’t make this unfounded assumption.

Why don’t more studies involve autistic adults as opposed to children?

You are absolutely right that there are far too few studies about autistic adults rather than children. A couple years ago we even evaluated the hypothesis that when the general public thinks about autism, they think about children rather than adults (Stevenson, 2011).

We found that state and local autism societies were more likely to showcase photos of children on their websites’ homepages, and autism charities were more likely to describe autism in terms of children. Therefore, it’s not too surprising that the vast majority of autistic characters in fictional books, movies, and TV programs are children rather than adults. The news industry even has a strong bias toward featuring autistic children rather than autistic adults.

All of these biases coalesce to make autistic adults invisible or to juvenileize those adults we do hear about. We could learn so much by studying autistic adults who have succeeded in living satisfying lives—and they have done so not by becoming no longer autistic but instead by living successful lives as autistic persons.

Why aren’t more autism researchers autistic people themselves?

I can’t imagine the utter frustration and indignity that autistic persons face daily when the plethora of myths about them are not only touted in research articles, textbooks, and the popular press but also thrown back into their faces as a way to discount their contributions and perspectives. It’s that frustration that keeps me motivated to do research (and other writing) to dispel these myths.

I am a firm believer that research should not be done on autistic persons but with autistic persons. These days, we would never think it is okay for a group of Whites to do research on Blacks, or a group of non-Latinos to do research on Latinos without being guided by Latinos, etc. But for some reason nonautistic researchers think it’s okay to do research on autism without being guided by autistic persons. I disagree, and I’m always looking for new autistic collaborators—and autistic-driven ideas.

For you, what is the correlation between autism, language communication, and now your most recent endeavor into online communication research?

The communality are the cognitive components of communication. In my language comprehension research, I have sought to understand the general cognitive processes and mechanisms that underlie psycholinguistic phenomena such as how we understand pronouns, ambiguous words, who’s doing what to whom, and narrative passages and stories. In my autism research, I have worked with my autistic colleagues to understand the cognitive
profile that underlies atypical (and typical) communication, as well as typical and atypical focus of attention. And in my online communication work, I have sought to understand what cognitive features underlie our current preference for asynchronous text-based communication (e.g., e-mail over voice mail; text over phone call; Internet discussion board over in-person forum).

How did you become interested in language comprehension research? Anyone in my presence for more than two minutes would not be surprised that I study language, given how frequently and copiously I produce it. However, prior to starting my doctoral training, I planned to study visual memory. Unfortunately, just a few weeks before I arrived as a first-year student, the professor with whom I had planned to work left. To my great fortune, another professor, Donald J. Foss, was willing to take me under his wing. Professor Foss was one of the world’s leading experts on language comprehension, having authored the definitive textbook and conducted seminal research in the field.

What strategies and courses should students take to improve their chances of becoming involved in communication research? I firmly believe that a strong background in experimental methodology (research design, statistics, and the like) is key to doing good psychological research including research on human communication. Understanding the necessity of control conditions, random assignment, hypothesis testing—to say the least of appreciating the grandeur of counterbalancing—are the keys to the research kingdom.

What can we expect to see from you in the future? I think the next 5 to 10 years will bring fascinating changes both to higher education and to scholarly publication. I’m not at all certain where we are going, but I greatly look forward to being along for the ride.

References
Little Albert’s Impact on Us All
With Hall “Skip” Beck, PhD

By Bradley Cannon

With a sense of wonder, Dr. Beck says, “Every time I think we’ve learned what Albert has to teach us, he opens a new door, and we find out that we are closer to the start than the end of our journey.”

In 2009, Dr. Beck, his colleagues, and his students reported the discovery of Douglas Merritte, an infant who had much in common with Little Albert. Douglass Merritte died in 1925, a few years after the attempt to condition Albert (Beck, Levinson, & Irons, 2009). Nevertheless, the journey and its surprises did not end there. Soon afterward, social and clinical psychologist Dr. Alan Fridlund (University of California, Santa Barbara) noticed something strange when he watched the black-and-white videos of Little Albert being conditioned to fear white rats. He quickly e-mailed Dr. Beck to ask how sure he was that the child was healthy, and Dr. Beck acknowledged that he had his suspicions too.

Unfortunately, Dr. Beck had no way to prove Little Albert’s condition, so he encouraged Dr. Fridlund as well as neurologist Dr. William Goldie to pursue the idea. Dr. Beck rightly declares, “I think involving others with unique skillsets is one of the things you’ve got to do.” Indeed, the inclusion of these additional minds led to the discovery that the child in a film long presumed to be Albert was developmentally delayed (Fridlund, Beck, Goldie, & Irons, 2012).

Additionally, Dr. Beck says, “Even apart from taking the health of the child into account, there are many methodological short-comings in Watson and Rayner’s (1920) research that cast doubt on whether they conditioned Albert to fear at all. However, Watson was absolutely correct that emotional conditioning does occur. His concepts were solid even though his procedure was clearly inadequate.”

Over time, hundreds of other investigations have examined similar conditioning. In particular, most will recognize the study conducted by Ivan Pavlov, though some students may not fully grasp the importance of this work.

“A problem that students often encounter when first learning about Pavlov and conditioning is that they fail to recognize how important this type of learning is in their lives. Much of who they are as individuals is determined by Pavlovian conditioning.” He elaborates by giving a few applied examples. “Many of our likes, dislikes, and emotions are acquired via Pavlovian procedures. Even our responses to drugs are impacted by Pavlovian conditioning. If you’re a coffee drinker, just the smell can increase your physiological arousal. Pavlovian conditioning is also a powerful tool used in other areas of psychology such as neuropsychology. Many behavioral therapy techniques such as systematic desensitization and flooding have a significant Pavlovian component.”

“It is interesting to me that a poorly conducted inquiry of doubtful ethics would be a landmark in behavioral psychology, a movement that would eventually benefit the lives of millions of people. However, history is not so much about the past as it is about the future. You must look to yesterday to help you understand tomorrow.”

Thus, Dr. Beck asks you to consider the following lesson from the Albert study: “Do you think John Watson would have induced fear in a banker’s son?” Then, to put this question into context, he explains that Little Albert’s mother was a wet nurse. “She survived by providing breast milk to other people’s children, so she was not in a position to refuse any request for tests that were performed upon her son. If her economic position is one of the reasons that her son was chosen by Watson, then we must ask ourselves today if similarly economically disadvantaged children receive a fair opportunity from our society.

“We must also consider that ethical values involve a subjective assessment and change over time. For example, most people today would consider inducing fear in a baby unethical, yet this seems to have provoked little criticism in the 1920s. Today there are...
a number of prominent ethical issues such as the use of animals in experimentation and whether psychological techniques should be employed in what have been called enhanced interrogations. If you can use a procedure to build a person up, you can probably use it to tear that person down.”

Even 95 years later, John Watson’s research on Little Albert is especially important because of its ability to make us think about our ethics. According to Dr. Beck, “Little Albert’s most precious gift to us is that he helps us better understand John Watson, one of the most creative and influential psychologists of all time. More specifically, Little Albert speaks for the need for an ethical code.”

Success Depends on Who You Ask

Sometimes a person’s most important project is the one that made the most difference in society’s eyes. “However,” Dr. Beck warns, “if you let people’s reactions to your work be the final arbiter, then you’re giving others far too much power over yourself.”

Despite his success with human-computer interaction research, college retention, and the search for Little Albert, the work that he is the most proud of occurred when he directed a behavior therapy program for severe and mentally challenged children. “I never went home from work feeling that it was just another day on the job. And in terms of research, the work that Linda Pierce, Mary Dzindzole, and I conducted in efforts to reduce death by friendly fire was perhaps the most fulfilling. If someone is alive today because of our research, then the breaths that she or he takes more than justifies those investigations.”

Dr. Beck and his students are currently conducting research in three areas. “We’re working to improve the graduation rates of students, we’re conducting further studies on human-computer interaction, and we’re conducting a historical inquiry about the recording of human female sexual response prior to 1936.”

On top of this, Dr. Beck and his students cannot help revisiting the mysteries surrounding Little Albert, which continue to inspire and surprise researchers no matter how many times they believe they have found the truth. “In 2013, two Canadian psychologists and a genealogist discovered a boy named Albert Barger, who was also involved in the infant studies,” he reports. “I would like to believe the next important finding is the research that my students have been doing regarding the reliability of the data reported by Watson and Rayner (1920). That’s quite different than questions regarding the interpretation of data or the depiction of the studies in secondary studies. Instead, my students have been looking at the actual data to determine the accuracy of events reported by Watson and Rayner (1920).

“What I’ve learned to do,” he concludes, “is to look at Watson’s many descriptions of the Albert study as a whole in order to better understand the role of Little Albert in psychology. Watson and Rayner’s (1920) article is one of a number of descriptions Watson provides of the attempt to condition Albert. If we look at them all, we can get a better picture of what happened.”

Listen Up, Psychology Students

“If you think of the great problems besetting our planet such as questions regarding the environment, overpopulation, war, violence, and ignorance—they all have a significant behavioral component,” Dr. Beck insists, having been captivated by the study and future of psychology for over 30 years. “As I am sure both Watson and later Skinner would agree, exclusive reliance on physics, chemistry, and biology will never adequately address these problems. The behavioral component inherent in each of them must be taken into account. As scientists of behavior, we must move forward and take an increasingly prominent role in the emerging new society. That is the obligation of the next generation of psychologists.

“For students interested in historical studies, the first step is to take a history of psychology course and have a general grounding in history. You need to understand how a particular individual or a set of ideas fits within a time period. Unfortunately, we do not typically teach students in historical research techniques as we do with experimental methods. However, I instruct the students in my lab in the application and use of multiple information sources.” He recommends reading a short article by Lizette Royer (2008) to get started learning about archival research.

“To research something historically, we usually have to look at it from a bit of a distance.” In the past, people would not have reacted to Little Albert’s discovery (or any other discovery) in the same way as the members of more recent generations. “One of the great upheavals since I came into psychology is sometimes called the cognitive revolution. I think it would be very interesting to note the social and conditions that brought that about. Behavioral psychology was dominant when I started, but there is far more cognitive research than there used to be. Scholars have written a great deal on the factors stimulating the upsurge in cognitive psychology, but I still would enjoy researching that area. I do not know if I could make any new worthwhile contribution, but I am sure that I would have fun reading the work of others.” Undoubtedly, it will be interesting to see what insight future generations provide about this transition as well.

Throughout the course of Dr. Beck’s career, he feels that psychology has become increasingly exciting as a discipline. “Each generation has an obligation to take this beautiful thing we call psychology, polish it, and pass it along in better condition than they received it,” he says, speaking slowly to choose the words to his conclusion carefully. “I think the challenges facing this generation are greater than those that were facing mine, but I am optimistic that in 2050 they will be able to pass along psychology in better shape than they received it.”

References


Hall “Skip” Beck received his PhD from the University of North Carolina–Greensboro in 1983, specializing in social psychology. He accepted a position in the Psychology Department at Appalachian State University in 1984 and is still happily at that university. For the past decade most of Dr. Beck’s research has focused upon improving student retention; he is a coodeveloper of the College Persistence Questionnaire. His other main area of inquiry is human-computer interaction, especially the use of automated devices to reduce fratricide in the military. The search for Little Albert began as a lark, but soon became a passion taking Dr. Beck and his students on a historical journey to John B. Watson’s infant laboratory.
We have all heard of Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus (Gray, 1992). However, the title of Dr. Janet Shibley Hyde’s (University of Wisconsin–Madison) 2014 MPA Distinguished Lecture is “Men Are From Earth, Women Are From Earth” because she has found that women and men are not as different as we have been told.

Making great strides against the differences model, which states that men and women are psychologically very different, Dr. Hyde introduced the gender similarities hypothesis in 2005. This hypothesis, first supported by a review of 46 meta-analyses, reveals that men and women are similar on most, but not all, psychological variables. In fact, of the 46 studies analyzed, 78% of the gender differences found were small or close to zero. The study went on to indicate that “overinflated claims of gender differences carry substantial costs in areas such as the workplace and relationships” (Hyde, 2005, p. 581).

Almost overnight, Dr. Hyde’s theory gained recognition from the media. On the day when she is kind enough to speak with us at Psi Chi, she still has materials before her from another interview that she completed only minutes earlier. For almost 10 years, she has tirelessly worked to conduct lectures, interviews, and have her research presented in undergraduate textbooks in order to spread the word about the ramifications to society if we go on believing that men and women are different in nearly every way.

Troubles Caused by Believing Gender Differences

“The danger,” Dr. Hyde cautions, “is not only from believing that men and women are different just because it is a false belief; thinking men and women are different when evidence shows otherwise causes a number of other problems.”

1. “For example, in education, we have stereotyped girls to be the ones who have low self-esteem so that we tend to ignore boys with low self-esteem. That’s not good for the boys or the broader society that they are in where school shootings are something we need to be more concerned about. Thus, our need to protect both genders is one example.”

2. “A second cost of believing gender differences is that women in the workplace want equal pay for equal work. That benefits our society as a whole, but if you claim that women are very different from men—if you claim that women think differently, have different abilities, and also have different ways of communicating, then it’s very difficult to argue that women deserve equal pay. Thus, this idea of gender differences plays into various kinds of workplace inequalities such as unequal pay.”

3. “A third example has to do with issues in psychotherapy and particularly couple’s therapy. For example, if a heterosexual couple and their therapist assume that relationship problems are due to gender miscommunication, then relationships become harder to fix due to this unbridgeable gulf. However, if we say ‘men and women are pretty similar, and we simply need to work on improving our communication,’ then that’s something we can do.”

As these examples show, “the assumptions of huge gender differences are just not functional.” If people intend to understand, equally value, and help each other, then they must also understand that strong communication is possible.

Progress and Prevention

“Over the last 20 or 30 years, women really have broken into a lot of fields. For example, when I got my PhD, only about 20% of the people with PhDs in psychology were women, and now that number is well over 50%. The same is true for biology, medical schools, and veterinary schools,” Dr. Hyde says, pausing to chuckle before she continues. “People used to say that women can’t do science, but it’s clear now that they can!”

However, not all fields have been as welcome to change as others. “Two that haven’t been so accepting are engineering
and physics, and there are many speculations about this.”

“Some people cling to the idea that women aren’t as good at math even though my research and the research of many others has clearly shown that this is not true.” Another reason engineering and physics disciplines have fewer women than men is because of how the disciplines portray themselves. “For example, people typically think engineering is about building cool robots and bridges. However, women on average—and I’m not saying there’s a huge difference here—but women on average are more interested in doing things that help people. On the other hand, if you think about it, building bridges does help people and so does a lot of bioengineering for individuals with disabilities. If there was more advertising to make people think about these disciplines in that light, then the percentage of women might go up. And, of course, a third explanation is that, when a discipline has a low representation of women, female undergraduate students are left thinking that they don’t belong.”

Many abilities in women and men are disregarded due to gender stereotypes. In particular, Dr. Hyde notes that we do not focus enough on men’s verbal abilities or especially women’s mathematical abilities.

So Are Women Good at Math?
Young women need look no further than Dr. Hyde’s success to find the answer to this question. “Because my undergraduate major was math, mathematics absolutely helped me. It was invaluable, and I wouldn’t be where I am today without it. Psychology requires a lot of statistical analyses, and learning that came very easy to me because of my math background. I wouldn’t have gotten into meta-analyses if I hadn’t been so comfortable and knowledgeable about math. I teach a graduate statistics class to this day. Mathematics certainly helped me in my specific research, and I think the gender similarities hypothesis has been my most beneficial project in terms of its impact on science. That paper seems to get people excited a lot,” she says, explaining that she continues to update her work.

“I try to do a good dissemination of this research so that a wide swath of people know about it, and I hope this causes students to consider careers that they wouldn’t have considered before. I also hope the research encourages parents and teachers not to stereotype students and to encourage them to do whatever they want.”

Unfortunately, this appears to be an unending journey because so much popular media already exists about gender differences. Nearly every sitcom shows mothers cooking dinner and messy men sitting on couches. Researchers still exaggerate the slight differences between men and women in a variety of studies if only because they are looking to include a new variable so that their research is more publishable. Many still believe sports are not for girls and pink is not for boys . . . Because of all this, Dr. Hyde still finds that the material on gender similarities comes as a revelation to many students despite all the acclaim for her work. “It’s not that they don’t believe it when I lay the data out, but it’s simply not what they expected. In that way, the gender similarities hypothesis gives many a new way to see the world.”

Advice for Students
If students are interested in joining Dr. Hyde to study women’s or human sexuality courses, she recommends following the big fundamentals laid out before them. “They have to find a faculty member who focuses on one of these areas. They have to figure out how to meet the requirements of the department. They need research experience. And they need to do well on the GRE.”

The Future of Human Sexuality Studies and Women’s Studies
Dr. Hyde has been teaching her human sexuality course since 1975, but she still believes that women’s studies is a little further ahead because it hasn’t been as difficult to study in the American climate. In general, she would like to see more about cultural impact including how it affects human sexuality and how we express our sexuality. “Human sexuality studies are going to keep going because students are fascinated by them. We don’t have good coverage in the K through 12 schools today. And even if we did, students would still need to learn about the material at a university level.

“As for women’s studies—this is not going to go away either because we have continuing issues in gender bias. There has also been a shift to considering other gender possibilities, which opens the way for the study of transgender. Thus, there is much work to be done still in women’s and gender studies.”

Inspired by the second wave of the Women’s Movement, Dr. Hyde created her course on the psychology of women in 1973 because she found it stimulating and relevant. At the time, it was one of the first courses of its kind, “and students flocked to it. I was interested, and they were interested. It was a whole new area that had never been studied before and had really been ignored” (Sharp, 2009, p. 26). She has kept teaching this course—first at Bowling Green State University (OH), then at Denison University (OH), and now at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Throughout these years and places, she continues to surprise students and receive e-mails after media exposure about how meaningful her work has been to the lives of others. She also currently studies gender differences in depression for adolescents and the effectiveness of single-sex versus coed schooling structures, but she is always excited to explain her gender similarities hypothesis to everyone who will listen.

References

Janet Shibley Hyde, PhD, is the Helen Thompson Woolley Professor of Psychology and Gender and Women’s Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She earned her PhD in psychology from the University of California, Berkeley. She is perhaps best known for her meta-analyses of research on gender differences including mathematics performance (Science, 2008; Psychological Bulletin, 2010), sexuality (2010), self-esteem (1999), and temperament (2006). Based on these and other meta-analyses, she proposed the gender similarities hypothesis in 2005. Since 1990 she has been codirector of the Wisconsin Study of Families and Work. Dr. Hyde is the author of two undergraduate textbooks, Half the Human Experience: The Psychology of Women (8th ed., Cengage) and Understanding Human Sexuality (12th ed., McGraw-Hill). A fellow of the American Psychological Association and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, she has won numerous awards, including the Heritage Award from the Society for the Psychology of Women for her career contributions to research on the psychology of women and gender.
Lessons Learned From a Law School Graduate With a Psychology Degree

Natalie T. Lorenz, JD
Mathis, Marifian, & Richter, Ltd.

Deciding whether and how to continue your education is difficult. If you are considering becoming an attorney, know that your psychology degree will not go to waste.

Like many psychology undergraduates, I knew I would probably have to continue my education to use my degree but did not know what type of education to pursue. A professor advised that studying psychology is excellent preparation for law school, and after taking a legal internship, I knew it was right for me. As predicted, my degree was very helpful, but there were still speed bumps along the way. For that reason, I am handing down lessons I learned so psychology undergrads who are interested in law school can be prepared for what lies ahead.

Why Studying Psychology Prepared Me for Law School

Research and Writing

Many people think lawyers’ work is about pounding fists on podiums and arguing in court. I did too. I was surprised when I got to law school, and no fist-pounding was required. Television dramas show exactly that—drama. In reality, arguments made in courtrooms are planned well in advance, based on solid research, and accompanied by (hopefully) well-written briefs. Further, some lawyers rarely go to court and focus on transactional practice (e.g., drafting contracts). Those lawyers research extensively to draft documents so their clients can avoid litigation.

Fortunately, I had research and writing experience before law school because my psychology degree required me to conduct an original experiment. I looked at past studies and predicted my own results based on how my experiment was similar or different. My first law school writing assignment was surprisingly similar. The professor provided fictional facts, and I was to predict how a judge would rule based on similar facts from real past cases. I had done this before, only the experiments I researched were now cases, and the results were now rulings. My undergraduate experience was invaluable in understanding the purpose and design of that first law school writing assignment.

Backing up Arguments

In designing my undergraduate project, it was important to predict results based on conclusions drawn from other studies. In other words, predictions had to be supported. The same was true in law school. In making arguments for a certain result, I had to give reasons why those arguments were sound such as similarities between my case and past cases or support in a statute’s language. Arguing that a result was not fair was never enough.

If a law student makes a that’s not fair argument, professors will say, “The judge does not care what you think is fair. The judge cares about what the law says she should do. You have to convince the judge that the law favors your position.” The easiest way to do this is to remember to use the word because, followed by your reasoning. This is one of the first lessons law students learn, and you will have an advantage having experienced this lesson as a psychology undergrad.

Why Law School Was Still Difficult

Arguing Both Sides

In writing undergraduate papers, I always argued my position without contemplating that another stance was plausible. For example, for my research project, I argued that students who took pretests before a quiz would do better than students who merely read study materials beforehand. Although I backed up my hypothesis with conclusions drawn from similar experiments, I certainly did not argue that students who took pretests would do worse than control group students, or that the two groups would do equally well.

As such, when I began law school, the idea of arguing both for my propositions and against them did not come naturally. For that reason, I did not do so well on one of my first exercises. I did not anticipate both sides’ arguments and then determine a victor based on the strength of those arguments. I was confused and had no idea why I should write down why I might be wrong—wouldn’t that undercut my argument?
What I did not understand was that my professor did not care who I thought should win. My professor wanted me to apprise her of the relevant law and the strength of each side’s case. This was not a paper a judge would see; it was part of the research to be done before anyone set foot in court. It was exactly the type of assignment my future employer would give. Thus, although the argument I made may have been good, I did not provide my professor with the information she needed to draw her own conclusions about the case (e.g., whether to pursue litigation or settle with the opponent). She needed information about what the opponent might argue to make those decisions. A judge would be hearing both positions, and she needed to know what we would be up against.

Conciseness
The concise writing concept was another difficult aspect of law school. Unlike in college, where the goal was to hit minimum page limits, staying within maximum page limits was difficult in law school. I thought my first big assignment would be easy because it was restricted to only seven pages, but the page limit was not the blessing it seemed. I wondered how I could write everything the professor wanted with only seven pages.

The answer was simply to be concise, but learning to do so did not come easy. In particular, I practiced writing in an active, rather than passive, voice. For example, instead of writing, “The defendant was stopped by police,” I learned to write, “Police stopped the defendant,” turning six words into four. It surprised me to see how much I could pack into seven pages after proofreading for wordiness. However, learning to be concise takes time, and I still struggle with it. Had I worked on this in college, I might have better writing to hand.

For example, the first opinion I read in law school described a complaint as well-pledged. I thought the judge was indicating that the plaintiff wrote well in the document that initiated the lawsuit. Not so. A well-pledged complaint is one that “sufficiently sets forth a claim for relief” (Garner, 2009, p. 324). When a professor asked what a well-pledged complaint was in class, I was embarrassed in front of everyone for not having looked up the word in a legal dictionary beforehand. Therefore, you will need to look up words you do not know as well as words you think might have a different meaning to lawyers than laypeople.

What You Can Do Now to Prepare

Improve Your Writing Skills
Both in law school and afterward, writing will be a large chunk of your work. Your professors will expect you to know the basics, and they do not want to teach grammar or conciseness. Taking an undergrad research and writing class will help you in this area. After conducting an independent experiment, you will be able to draw parallels between the research and writing you do for the study and the assignments you do in law school.

Learn to Think Critically
As an undergrad, I would sometimes get inklings that something in a story did not make sense, but I never asked questions, simply accepting what was said as true. In law school, I learned to question conclusions and the reasoning used to reach them by forcing myself to argue both sides of an issue. What seemed like strained arguments at first could be quite valuable, either because they were worthwhile arguments themselves or because they aided in brainstorming new ones.

Finally, to think critically, you have to know what your opponent is saying. As such, if you do not understand a term, look it up. You will need to know words not in your vocabulary at this time to make your point in a legal setting.

Jargon
Another law school speed bump was the use of jargon. Lawyers and judges have a knack for making things sound complex. This difficulty is especially pronounced at the beginning of law school, when legal concepts are so new. Even worse, you may have heard some terms before, but they could mean something different when used in a legal setting. These words and phrases are called terms of art.

A friend of mine completed such an internship and decided that she did not want to pursue law. She decided that she was better suited for a social work position because she wanted to counsel clients. Attorneys do this, but it is only a piece of the whole job, and she was not interested in other aspects such as research. Thankfully, she did not go through three years of law school only to find that she did not enjoy the work for which she had prepared.

Interning is also an excellent way to network and make contacts. Be sure you intern somewhere that you would consider working in the future so that your contacts can put in a good word when the time comes for job-hunting.

Deciding whether and how to continue your education is difficult. If you are considering becoming an attorney, know that your psychology degree will not go to waste. Your experience in research, writing, and reasoning will prove very helpful. However, law school may still present difficulties such as arguing both sides, conciseness, and the use of jargon. You can better prepare yourself for those speed bumps by taking a research and writing class, practicing critical thinking, and completing an internship. Doing these things will prepare you for the challenges that law school brings and help you to excel in your studies.

Reference

Natalie T. Lorenz graduated in May 2012 from Southern Illinois University–Carbondale School of Law. She was valedictorian of her class and received numerous accolades including membership on the Southern Illinois University’s Dean’s List and the Law Journal Board of Editors, eight CALI Excellence for the Future Awards for highest class grades, and the Lowell H. Jacobson Scholarship for academic performance and public service. Before attending law school, she graduated summa cum laude December 2008 from Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, MO, where she majored in psychology. After receiving her juris doctorate, she joined Mathis, Marfinan, & Richter, Ltd. in Belleville, IL, as a new associate. Ms. Lorenz is licensed to practice in Illinois and Missouri, and focuses her practice in the litigation department at her firm. She currently resides in Columbia, IL.

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Chapter Activities

With over 1,000 chapters, Psi Chi members can make a significant impact on their communities. Let us know what your chapter has been doing and share your fund-raiser ideas with others. See submission information listed below.

Submission deadlines*
Fall: June 15
Winter: October 15
Spring: December 15
Summer: February 15

* Reports received (postmarked) after the deadline will appear in the next issue of Eye on Psi Chi.

Submission specifications

• Only activities that have already occurred and are submitted in paragraph form will be published.
• Do not send future plans, calendars, or summarized lists.
• Limit reports to 250 words. If you wish to report more extensively on a special activity, series of programs, etc., contact the Central Office at psychiweekly@pschi.org.
• Write your report in the third person rather than the first person (e.g., “the chapter sponsored” vs. “we sponsored”).
• Include full names, degrees, and titles of speakers/leaders, their institutions, and their topics.
• Report chapter events such as discussions, lectures, meetings, socials, fund-raising events, conventions, field trips, and honors received by students, faculty members, and/or the chapter.
• Report attempted solutions to chapter problems—those that were effective and those not so effective.
• Color photos are welcomed; the number of photos per chapter is limited to two per issue. Include accurate, typed captions. Photos may be mailed (include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for returned photos) or e-mailed to psychiweekly@pschi.org. For digital photos, e-mail only high-quality resolution images (100 KB) using a 5- or higher megapixel camera. Do not send digital printouts from a photo quality printer.
• Photographs and chapter reports submitted to Eye on Psi Chi may be featured on our website (www.pschi.org).

ABBREVIATIONS:
ACHS Association of College Honor Societies
APA American Psychological Association
APS Association for Psychological Science
EPA Eastern Psychological Association
MPSA Midwestern Psychological Association
NEPA New England Psychological Association
RMPA Rocky Mountain Psychological Association
SEPA Southeastern Psychological Association
SWPA Southwestern Psychological Association
WPA Western Psychological Association

East

Adelphi University (NY)
The chapter continued the semester with monthly meetings to discuss a variety of different fund-raising activities and charity events for the upcoming spring semester. On October 30, the chapter welcomed Dr. John Fox, a translational researcher from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, who presented his research on the basic neurophysiology of schizophrenia and autism. During the last meeting of the semester, Michael Buls, a fourth-year PhD student at Adelphi University, spoke with chapter members about his undergraduate psychology major, and the process of applying to graduate school. Mr. Buls gave invaluable advice and answered any questions from members who were interested and/or were in the process of applying to graduate school.

Charleston Southern University (SC)
The chapter focused on careers and graduate schools offered for psychology majors. The director of admissions from Wesleyan College came to speak about their master’s program in social work and counseling. A military social worker shared what working for the military as a civilian was like. The CEO of Carolina Youth Development gave helpful tips about succeeding in a career. A sport psychologist also spoke and held a new faculty panel. Faculty members spoke about obtaining admissions to graduate school and succeeding on the GRE. Undergraduate psychology majors gave presentations on their internships. Service projects that the chapter participated in included many projects with Eagle Harbor Boys’ Ranch. Members also helped with the Carolina Green Fair, Habitat for Humanity, and Palmetto House Food Drive. The chapter participated in Operation Christmas Child and donated 84 boxes and supplies that could help other organizations fill boxes too. Members participated in Walk for Life, a flapjack fund-raiser for the Ark (a home for Alzheimer’s patients) and collected baby bottles filled with spare change for the Low Country Pregnancy Center. Members also traveled and participated in Academic Day, which was held at the University of Southern Carolina, and they received fourth place in the competition. The chapter inducted nine new members this fall semester and looks forward to growing and participating in service projects in the spring.

Franklin Pierce University (NH)Chapters

This fall, the chapter inducted 18 members. Along with collaborations with Psychology Club, students participated in numerous community service and scholarly activities. In October, students raised money from a bake sale and donated all proceeds to the Iona Counseling Center. In November, they sponsored a GRE event for students around campus and worked together to donate food items to families in need during the Thanksgiving Holiday. The chapter is currently in the process of recruiting students for participation in upcoming research activities including a student-led presentation of academic work. Finally, in December, students hosted a week-long activity calendar centered around education of stress and anxiety as the college wraps up the term. The new chapter officers included Heather Tabachnick (president), Lurissa Drapkin (vice-president), Jessica Cabrera (secretary), Emily Salmany (treasurer), and Meghan O’Keefe (ambassador/social media vice). The chapter looks forward to another great year ahead and the induction of new members in the spring!

Lehman College (NY)The chapter held its first ever Meet the Psychology Faculty on November 21 immediately before the chapter’s induction ceremony. Chapter members, students with psychology as their major or minor, and students just thinking about psychology were invited to this opportunity to informally interact with members of the psychology department. The chapter and the department hope to make this a regular event. After the social, the chapter inducted 12 members. Jose Magdaleno (vice-president for student affairs), and Robert Whittaker (associate provost) spoke at the ceremony to welcome new members and to congratulate the chapter on receiving its second Eastern Region Chapter Award. The chapter raised $209 to support CoCommunity service officers Maria Popoteur and Danielle Prince who walked with the Lehman College team at the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk. Maria Popoteur also presented a research poster at NEPA. Chapter President Madelyn Gil was elected chair of the Lehman College Student Legislative Assembly.

Temple University (PA)

Each year, a chapter in the Philadelphia area hosts Psi Chi Research Day, a conference designed to offer students an opportunity to develop presentation skills and network with aspiring researchers in the field. This year, the chapter was a success, and to host the ninth iteration of the event. Over 30 students presented research, and a dozen students acted as judges on presentation skills, poster design, and methodology.

Held the afternoon of March 26, Research Day began with opening remarks by Brooks Butler (president) and the Keynote Address by Dr. Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek. Dr. Hirsh-Pasek spoke about her opportunities on early learning and how current apps, games, and screens were not designed in a way that is conducive to children learning. The poster session followed. At the end of the conference, the officers of the host chapter announced winners and awarded trophies for best presenters of the day (Gender based on the scores from the judges. Danielle Zambrano took third place, Skye Beckley received second place, and Richmond Carlton won first place. The event was a success, and the chapter felt blessed to be the host. The following chapters in Pennsylvania had students in attendance: Chestnut Hill College, Ursinus College, Eastern University, Arcadia University, St. Joseph’s University, Drexel University, University of the Sciences, and Temple University.

Midwest

Augustana College (IL)

Throughout the school year, chapter leaders Psychology Club approximately twice per month. This gave students, both in the psychology department and in other majors, the opportunity to explore topics related to psychology that are not covered in their courses. The chapter also participated in two community activities: the Out of the Darkness Walk to raise suicide awareness and prevention, and the NAMI Walk to raise awareness of mental illness.

Prior to the walks, officers attempted to raise money for both causes and then gathered students to walk and show their support. The chapter also hosted a special Psychology Club presentation on forgiveness given by Dr. Jessica...
Schultiz, one of Augustana’s professors. She focused primarily on the meaning of forgiveness, the motivations behind forgiveness, and the benefits of forgiving.

**Bradley University (IL)**

The chapter launched the semester with new officers and a group of Psychology Club team leaders. The first event of the semester was Pizzapalooza where students met peers and faculty. The first movie night was held during the second week of October when the chapter played Silver Linings Playbook.

To boost academics, the chapter hosted a peer advising night where they helped undergraduates plan their schedules. The chapter brought Dr. Tommy Whittler, associate professor from DePaul University (IL), who spoke about the impact of a model’s race on advertising. During homecoming weekend, the chapter hosted a psychology alumni discussion with Kathleen Graffam, the vice-president at JP Morgan Chase, Honorable Joe Billy McFady, United States District Judge, and a few other psychology alumni. Psi Chi’s main fund-raiser for the semester was Subway Night where they received a percentage of the sales.

**Concordia University Chicago (IL)**

The chapter continued to support excellence in psychology by inducting 13 new members during the 2013–14 academic year. Chapter members and officers held weekly meetings to discuss current research in the field, how to prepare oneself for graduate school, and career opportunities. The chapter hosted over 190 presenters at the 10th annual Doorway to the Mind research conference. Members of the chapter participated in a local NAMI walk, raising more than $300 for the organization. The chapter continued promoting mental health by hosting three mental health screenings and a “Healthy Relationship” seminar.

**Loras College (IA)**

The chapter sponsored “The Amazing Hi-Lows: A Bipolar Musical” which was written and directed by a faculty member in the psychology department. Not only was the chapter able to raise awareness of a disorder not commonly talked about, but they also collected a free-will offering for NAMI. Throughout the year, the chapter brought many speakers onto campus including experts in mental health, a licensed school psychologist, and a woman with prosopagnosia. Additionally, the chapter fund-raised and was able to help 14 students attend and present at MPA in May. Although all of these events have been fantastic service and leadership opportunities for the chapter, the biggest accomplishment was cosponsoring Brain Games: Neuronal Fun for All Ages on Monday, March 10. The chapter teamed up with the Neuroscience Club to create an interactive opportunity for members of the community to play games while learning about the amazing capabilities of the brain. Over 150 people attended, including 50 elementary school students and 10 home school association families to participate in about 16 activities ranging from optical illusions to holding a cadaver brain and running an obstacle course with inverted goggles on to utilizing problem solving skills and stretching their memories.

**Morningside College (IA)**

The chapter celebrated its 75th anniversary this year! Chapter-sponsored events included student presentations at two undergraduate research conferences,

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**Notes:**

- Drury University (MO) officers (listed left to right) Ashley Marmouget (president), Shelby Hatz (vice-president), Rachel Swadley (secretary), and Casey Vaclavik (treasurer).
- New Drury University (MO) members (left to right) Jessica Brennan, Paulina Doran, Ashley Ellingsworth, Hugo Sanchez, Randy Snodgrass, Rachel Swadley, Casey Vaclavik, and Charles Woods.
organizing and hosting a panel about life after college, serving in the local community, and organizing a food drive for the local food pantry. The chapter finished the year with a party to celebrate their history as the 34th Psi Chi chapter in the United States.

The Ohio State University Newark
Teaming up with Psychology Club, chapter members helped raise over $400 by selling chocolate-covered pretzels. The money was donated to a local animal shelter. In addition, a penny-drive fundraiser collected over $150 for the local food bank just in time for the holidays. Members led a campus toy drive to benefit the Toys for Tots program. Lastly, nine members submitted their research to be presented at MPA 2014.

University of Michigan-Flint
The chapter held projects that positively impacted the surrounding community. First, members held a graduate school seminar hosted by Maggie Golembiewski (academic adviser). This seminar provided all attending students with useful information regarding where to start when searching for a graduate school, the application process, personal statements, and interviewing. The chapter also took part in a service project at a local homeless shelter for men, My Brother’s Keeper. Members provided this shelter assistance by taking inventory on donations, organizing, and cleaning. Lastly, chapter members organized a project to provide the foster children of Whaley Children’s Center Christmas drawstring bags filled with donated items such as hygiene necessities, school supplies, winter accessories, and toys. The chapter provided the center with these bags in time for the children to have a special Christmas gift.

University of Central Missouri
For the fall semester, the chapter held a clean-up for the Adopt-a-Highway program, established a student mentorship program, held an induction ceremony which included a New Member Award, collected items for a local animal shelter, participated in a community project, and sponsored a curriculum vitae workshop. The Adopt-a-Highway program was a chance for the chapter to help clean local highways and get members involved in the community. The chapter was assigned a specific mile of a Missouri Highway and collected seven bags of trash on the first outing. The chapter also established a student mentorship program within the department. This gave upper level students a chance to help out and teach newer students about the department and help them with research ideas. Members also held their first induction of the academic year where they gave out their New Member Award, which was designed to help offset the cost of membership. The chapter was also involved with the local Veteran’s Home, sponsoring their fund-raising walk to help improve their quality of life, and members helped decorate their facility for the holidays along with sponsoring the Angel Tree, an event where a person or organization purchases gifts for children whose parents are unable to provide one for them this season. Members also collected toys for a local animal shelter to provide a means of entertainment and distraction to animals that receive less interaction than normal. They participated in the university’s homecoming community project, which is an outreach event where organizations’ members volunteer their time. Finally, the chapter sponsored a curriculum vitae workshop where students worked with
career services staff and faculty to help create and fine-tune their vitae.

**The University of Findlay (OH)**

During October, the chapter assisted Psy-Key Club in carrying out Mental Health Awareness Night on campus. Members participated in a candlelight vigil to remember those who are gone and those who are still battling mental health problems. Following the vigil, three speakers talked about their own personal experiences from the perspective of a clinician, a family member, and someone who is currently battling a mental illness.

The chapter also created a GRE Jeopardy series, which was available for all students to participate in as a fun alternative to studying with the opportunity to win prizes. There were three sessions and the winner of each session advanced to a final round of GRE Jeopardy for a chance to be named the GRE Champion. Participants had to answer questions about vocabulary and math. The winner of this year’s GRE Jeopardy was Eman Khwaja.

The week prior to Thanksgiving break, the chapter conducted a two-day bake sale in the Alumni Memorial Union where students and faculty members could purchase homemade baked goods. The bake sale was successful, and the money raised was distributed for members to purchase chapter apparel.

In January, members volunteered at the annual Mobile Food Drive at the University of Findlay. Many people in the Findlay community were served with the help of chapter members as well as other students and organizations. Much of the officers’ and chapter members’ efforts thus far have been devoted to further planning for the upcoming semester including fund-raising and induction ceremonies that will take place later in February.

**Rocky Mountain**

**Metropolitan State University of Denver (CO)**

The chapter began the fall semester with a few structured officer meetings to help elucidate chapter goals, delegate responsibility for efficient performance throughout the semester, and develop and engender a cohesive officer group because the chapter had over 50% new officers. The initial meetings proved to be very beneficial in creating a motivated and cohesive officer team.

One challenge the chapter faced was to expand the continuing high school outreach program by visiting multiple schools within one semester. The chapter succeeded in visiting six psychology classes at a total of two high schools. Unfortunately, this event did not go as planned because of some communication breakdown between officers and prospective high school teachers that reduced the number of talks.

The chapter continued to collaborate with University of Colorado, Denver’s (UCD) chapter and promoted each respective chapter’s events. For example, the members attended and promoted UCD’s talk on graduate school preparation by Dr. Kevin Masters.

Before the end of the semester, members participated in a multistudent club coat drive for a local nonprofit organization that serves adults with major mental illness. Additionally, the chapter proudly inducted 58 members with over 50 relatives and faculty in attendance. Finally, chapter members designed and proposed a Psi Chi chapter activities exchange workshop for RMPA 2014.
**Southeast**

**Charleston Southern University (SC)**
The chapter dedicated many of its meetings to getting members thinking about careers and graduate school programs. Guest speakers this semester included Jim Ward from the USC MSW Program, Sara Brady from the psychology department, Tamarra Alexander from the Early Autism Project and Warden McFadden from Lieber Corrections in Charleston. The chapter also had an alumni panel that ended up being a huge success! Members look forward to ending the semester with student internship presentations. The chapter participated in numerous service projects. This semester, they hosted a baby shower for the Low Country Pregnancy Center. The chapter helped campus ministries every Thursday night in cleaning up the cafeteria. The chapter has been collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House, promoted and sponsored the annual Valentine's Day drive for My Sister's House, and made Valentine's Day cards for the members of the Life Care Center nursing home. Members teamed up with Rotaract and Rotary to reach out to different areas in the community. The chapter helped the counseling center host Body Image week, have a lasagna night, and have the annual Easter Drive for the boys at Eagle Harbor Boys Ranch. Applications have been turned in and the chapter looks forward to the annual induction on April 11.

**Davidson College (NC)**
The chapter conducted its annual mentorship program, which has involved over 25 mentor-mentee pairs. This was followed by Everything You Always Wanted to Know About the Psychology Major, But Were Too Afraid to Ask information session, which was attended by over 40 prospective psychology majors. The chapter also inducted 11 members. In the spring, 13 new members were inducted into the chapter. Members also helped serve in the annual Mental Health Awareness Week hosted by the health clinic on campus in February. This quarter ended with 13 more new members and a service project at the local elementary school to teach groups of classes about ways to manage stress and anxiety.

**Stetson University (FL)**
The chapter held a variety of events to promote awareness of mental health disorders during the 2013–14 academic year. During Mental Health Awareness week in October, members distributed literature on anxiety disorders and mood disorders, and asked passersby to place stickers under any specific disorder that they or someone they knew suffered from as a means to visually compare the prevalence rates of these disorders among students and people they know. Several chapter members partnered with Beta Beta Beta, the biology honor society, to promote Brain Awareness Week by volunteering at the Science Saturday event, Brain Facts: Learn With Neuroscientists held at the Gillespie Museum on campus. Throughout the year, members also volunteered their services as tutors for students in psychology classes. Of note, five members took a road trip in March to present their senior research projects at SEPA, and nine members presented their research at the local Stetson Showcase conference. In April, members baked treats to...
raise money for Jay’s Hope Fund, a fundrun through the Stewart-Marchman Act Foundation to assist those with mental illnesses. A highlight of this 3-day awareness event was the showing of a documentary on living with schizophrenia followed by a conversation with a psychology professor who spoke about her experiences growing up with a family member with schizophrenia as well as discussing the biological underpinnings of the disorder.

The main social/educational events of the year were the two movie (+ treats) nights at which Girl, Interrupted (fall) and Mary and Max (spring) were shown. As always, the highlight of the year was the induction ceremony held in February, at which a record number of 40 students were inducted. The Greek cuisine was certainly a big hit! New chapter T-shirts, designed by a member, ended the year with style!

University of Louisville (KY)
The chapter conducted a semiannual community and campus-wide GRE workshop and practice exam, and raised over 1,211 pounds of nonperishable food for the area Dare to Care food bank. Members hosted a Suicide Prevention Workshop for faculty, staff, and students from the psychological and brain sciences department. The workshop was conducted by a graduate student and included the best resources and strategies for handling a suicide situation, general methods of reaching out, and lightened the stigma associated with suicide. This event was seen as a step of growth for the chapter in their mission to further educate future professionals in the field of psychology.

The chapter celebrated its 65th anniversary! For this momentous occasion, members hosted a celebration with cake in the department of psychological and brain sciences. Department faculty, staff, undergraduate, and graduate students were sent invitations to participate. While enjoying cake and punch, undergraduate students were encouraged to interact with and ask questions to faculty and graduate student attendees regarding graduate school preparation and application processes. What better way to celebrate 65 years of Psi Chi at the University of Louisville than to include student development with cake and punch!

University of Mary Washington (VA)
There was a great turnout for the chapter’s first all-member meeting of the semester despite postponements due to inclement weather. Members and officers discussed potential speakers for the upcoming career forum, as well as plans for the induction ceremony in February. Members were encouraged to apply for travel scholarships if planning to travel to any psychology conferences in the near future. The chapter began preparations for the 28th annual Psi Chi Symposium in the spring, and members have generously volunteered to serve on one of the many committees that make the event a success. The chapter’s PowerCard fund-raiser started at the beginning of the semester and has been a huge success so far. Members have already sold over 100 cards! Most of the money from this fund-raiser will go to the travel scholarship fund. At the beginning of February, the officers tagged 11 new students who were eligible for membership this semester. They were recognized during one of their psychology classes and presented with a small gift.

The Psi Chi officers also worked together to submit two award applications for the Ruth Hubbard Cousins Award and the Florence L. Denkmann Faculty Advisor Award. Finally, the chapter was excited to order official Psi Chi t-shirts, which will make excellent gifts for speakers at future events.

The spring semester began with an all-member meeting to rehearse for the upcoming induction ceremony. On March 20, current members inducted 11 new psychology majors. Dr. Laura Wilson began the induction with a remarkable speech entitled “Cognitive Restructuring” about reframing thoughts pertaining to the various career paths available in psychology. A reception followed the ceremony with cake and punch for all. The next event of the semester was the Career Forum where a panel of guest in psychology-related careers answered questions from psychology students. This year, the chapter had representatives from research assistant positions, human resources, disability resources, and the nonprofit sector. Additionally, the chapter hosted its sixth annual potluck dinner for members and faculty to enjoy a meal together. It was a great opportunity to socialize in a casual atmosphere with plenty of great food.

The final event of the semester was the 29th annual Psi Chi research symposium, a two-day event where students presented their research through posters or formal presentations. There was a great turnout of both psychology and nonpsychology students for both days to hear about the interesting research that students conducted this year. Everyone enjoyed the keynote address from Dr. James Morris on “Characterizing Individual Variability in Neural Circuitry Underlying Social Perception.” At the awards ceremony, the officers were excited to present faculty advisor, Dr. Mindy Ercull, with the Florence L. Denkmann faculty advisor award. It was a great way to wrap up a fantastic semester.

Vanderbilt University (TN)
On April 2, 2014, the chapter hosted a graduate school panel for all psychology majors. The panel consisted of Drs. Bethany Rittle Johnson, David Zald, and René Marois, as well as current graduate students in the psychology department. About 20 students attended the panel to ask questions about applying to graduate school, writing a personal statement, and how to best prepare themselves for future graduate study in psychology. Also this spring, the chapter was excited to have one of its members participate in SEPA in Nashville (TN). Undergraduate member Jennifer Ragan presented research she has been working on as a part of her psychology honors thesis, and she was able to share her experience with the chapter to help other members prepare for future convention presentations.

West Virginia University
The chapter has been busy with a plethora of events for its members as well as the Psychology Club. Meetings this year have included speakers such as Colleen Harshbarger, director of the Office of Wellness and Health Promotion, who opened students’ eyes to the many health-related resources. Another meeting featured a presentation by Rachel Stoiko, a PhD student, who gave an enlightening presentation on careers in psychology. In addition to informative meetings, Psi Chi and Psychology Club members took part in colorful social events. As part of the Holding Every Life Precious Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Awareness Program, chapter members spent an evening distressing by painting wine glasses and watching movies. Members also had a bowling night in the student union. Between events, the chapter sought time to give back. Five officers and Dr. Dan McNeil (faculty advisor) presented about chapter activities to the University’s Eberly College of Arts and Sciences Visiting Committee including alumni and other professionals and community leaders who provide advice and support to the college. Additionally, members cooked dinner monthly for the West Virginia Family Grief Center, a local organization for bereaved children and families. The chapter is currently preparing to host the upcoming Tri-State Undergraduate Psychology Research Conference, which is sponsored in part by a grant from Psi Chi.

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Southwest
Austin College (TX)
This was a rebuilding year for the chapter, with a new faculty advisor and new officers taking over in an attempt to revitalize the program on a campus where many organizations compete for the attention of excellent students. Although there were some false starts, by the end of the year the chapter had made considerable progress in building momentum for the future. Members held an official induction ceremony, hosted faculty panels on a variety of topics (e.g., getting involved in undergraduate research opportunities on campus, getting into graduate school, careers in psychology), and hosted an internship fair where local nonprofits came to campus to recruit student volunteers and interns for summer positions. In terms of research, two members presented posters at SWPA in San Antonio, and four members presented research at the Austin College Student Scholarship Conference.

Loyola University New Orleans (LA)
This past fall, the chapter once again partnered with Discovery Toys to raise funds for toys, books, and games for the children at a local facility. This year, the recipients were the children of the University’s on-campus Whelan Child Care Center. At the end of the semester, four new members were inducted. Senior Jasmine Brewer has made waves on the basketball court, as well as in the classroom, being one of ten student athletes nationwide in the 2014 AllState Women’s Basketball All America Selections. "Good Works Team."

Sam Houston State University (TX)
The chapter participated in three community service events in the fall and held a drive for a local women’s/children’s shelter. First, the chapter helped Dan Phillips construct a foundation for a house with Phoenix Commotion. This organization provides low-income housing made out of renewable materials.

Then, the chapter assisted Bill Kleiber in helping released parolees and discharges from the state prison fill out paperwork for free cell phones with Restorative Justice Ministries. This organization helps those who have been released from prison attain resources to improve their lives.

The chapter spent time at Bayes Achievement Center, doing arts and crafts with the students and engaging them in a spirited game of kickball. Bayes Achievement Center is a school for students with emotional, behavioral, and learning difficulties. Finally, the chapter held a drive for Safe House, collecting...
Chapter Activities

Temple University (PA)

Psi Chi Research Day at Temple University (PA) winners (listed left to right) Danielle Zambrano, third place; Richmond Carlton, first place; and Skye Beckley, second place.

Rogers State University (OK)

Rogers State University’s (OK) SGA Representatives Kendra Fiedler and Katie Hathaway.

Stetson University (FL)

Stetson University (FL) members help attendees create their own egg helmets as part of Egghead, a fun activity designed to demonstrate the importance of wearing a bicycle helmet.

A record number of new Stetson University (FL) members are inducted in 2014.

Temple University (PA)

The Greek cuisine at the Stetson University (FL) induction ceremony this year is a new and welcome treat!

University of Victoria (Canada)

Southeastern Louisiana University

The chapter proudly welcomed many new members at its fall induction on November 14, 2013. At each monthly meeting, many insightful guest speakers were invited to speak to the chapter about a variety of different issues and topics in psychology including tips for getting into graduate school, stress responses, and Alzheimer’s disease. Chapter officers discovered that it was helpful to hold business meetings immediately after guest speaker presentations. This kept members engaged in the guest speaker and the business meeting, and allowed members to attend either one portion of the meetings or both if extracurricular activities interfered.

Members participated in many traditional fund-raisers and service projects throughout the semester. Every October, the chapter participates in Trick or Treat for UNICEF where active members collect spare change throughout the month to raise money for the UNICEF organization. Another popular project members participated in was collecting and donating food cans to the local parish food bank called The Tangi Food Pantry. Chapter officers met at the end of the fall semester to prepare duties and activities for the upcoming spring semester.

University del Valle de Guatemala

For the past five years, the department of psychology has held the International Survivors of Suicide (ISOS) Day, coordinated by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). On November 23, 2013, the chapter and psychology department organized the ISOS Day on the university campus. Three mental health professionals, Dr. María del Pilar Grazioso (faculty advisor), Mónica de Dios (counselor) and Ana María Cáceres (clinical psychologist), donated their time and participated as panelists for the event. Among the 25 attendees were family members of people who have tried to commit suicide, suicide survivors, mental health professionals, and students. The event started with the ASFP program where several people who have lost a loved one to suicide shared their stories. The suicide survivors’ testimonies created a very personal and supporting environment among the attendees. After the program, Ana Maria Cáceres led a therapeutic group activity where the attendees opened up and worked through every emotion that resulted from watching the program. Afterward, the attendees had the opportunity of asking the panelists questions regarding suicide and coping. The main goal of the event was to foster a supportive community for suicide survivors and to inform the community about this important subject. In Guatemala, talking about suicide is still considered taboo. Therefore, the chapter is fully committed to breaking boundaries and providing the community with the most important and current resources regarding this topic.

On February 4, the first chapter in Latin America organized an academic conference titled Animal-Assisted...
Interventions. It was given by Lucía Montes, a clinical psychologist and member of Bocalán Guatemala, an association that implements aid programs for people with disabilities by using dogs as part of their therapeutic process. Bocalán seeks to achieve the autonomy, independence, and inclusion of people with different capacities, providing services that include animal-assisted therapy (AAT), animal-assisted activities, animal-assisted education, assistance dogs, and professional instruction. About 60 people including students, teachers, and professionals from several fields attended the conference. AAT is not a technique, nor an alternative therapy, but a useful intervention tool for treating multiple problems such as autism, physical disabilities, and Down syndrome. AAT helps patients develop social, emotional, cognitive, and motor skills. After attending the conference and hearing the attendees’ comments, it became clear that animals are an interest topic for many people and a valuable resource for psychological disciplines. This activity expanded everyone’s view on how animals can help therapeutic processes become more effective.

As stated by Bocalán’s team, “a dog’s presence decontextualizes the therapy . . . it disappears when the play starts” (Montes, 2014).

University of Central Arkansas
In addition to receiving the Ruth Hubbard Cousins Award in 2013, chapter members received a Psi Chi regional research competition award (Jon Nolan) at SWPA, a Psi Chi SuperLab grant (Kevin Phelps), a Psi Chi Thelma Hunt research grant (Danielle Umland), a Psi Chi Undergraduate Research Grant (Mary Catherine Rogers), SWPA Research Awards (Racheal Meagher, Jared Hogan, & Tiffany Wierzbicki), three Student Undergraduate Research Fellowships (SURF) hosted by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (Paula Simons, Taylor Black, & Cory Cobb), and the chapter’s faculty sponsor received the Florence L. Denmark Faculty Advisor award in August, 2013. These outcomes were directly related to increased emphasis on engagement in research. For the last three years, the chapter has hosted the Arkansas Symposium for Psychology Students, which is a conference dedicated solely to the presentation of student research and is planned entirely by students. More than a dozen universities and over 200 students participated April 20, 2013. There have also been other goals which have occupied both resources and time over the last academic year. Members addressed these goals by (a) purchasing monitors to be mounted on the walls in the entryways of the department, which allowed them to advertise events and information important to students, and (b) recruiting faculty to become active research mentors and, if needed, members of Psi Chi.

Rogers State University (OK)
The chapter was proud to start the year with the announcement of Tonya Christian as the 2013 Newman Civic Fellowship Award recipient. The Newman Civic Fellows program was established by the Oklahoma Campus Compact for student civic learning and engagement. The award was designed to recognize college students who have demonstrated an investment in finding solutions for challenges facing communities throughout the country through service, research, and advocacy.
Chapter Activities

To earn this award, Tonya served as a volunteer for Rogers County Youth Services for two years while actively engaged in research on teen problems and challenges including self-care, life skills, unemployment, and problem resolution. She developed an extensive teen life-skills curriculum for the shelter’s rehabilitation group sessions, and she provided life-skills program training for agency staff.

The chapter was involved in a number of events including the October Oklahoma Blood Institute drive, National Depression Screening Day, and the school’s Mental Wealth Day. In November, members participated in the fall Destination RSU event where high school seniors, juniors, and their families came to find out what college life at RSU is all about including meetings with faculty and student organizations. Finally, members kicked off 2014 with their involvement in the inaugural Involvement Fair, which highlights student organizations that demonstrate an active role in campus and community involvement. This included a recruitment fair where members spoke about recent accomplishments on campus, at research conferences, and future plans for the current semester.

West

Eastern Washington University
The chapter collected winter clothing and blankets from December through February. These items were donated to Union Mission Gospel for homeless youth and adults around the Spokane, Washington area.

Pacific University (OR)
The semester started with a retreat to introduce new officers, discuss goals, and go over scheduled events for the upcoming year. To sustain and decentralize efforts, five committees and leaders were created (i.e., campus/community service, membership/induction, scholarship/speaker, newsletter/publicity, and entertainment/social). The chapter was involved in the school’s annual Club Fair in September, hosted a week-long event for mental health awareness in October, represented the psychology department during Sophomore MajorFest, and wrapped up the semester selling voodoo donuts and psychology department T-shirts in order to help fund travel for Psi Chi and Psychology Club students to regional and national conventions to be held in and around Portland in the spring (e.g., SPSSI, WPA, Division 45). The chapter hosted two speakers, Aubrey Elsersrood from Youth Villages and recent graduate Christopher Mikulic (class of 2013), to discuss employment possibilities in social service organizations for students graduating with a BA/BS in psychology. Dawn Salgado (faculty advisor) and Samantha Cruz (2014 alumni member), were awarded one of two Mamie Phipps Clark Research Grant Awards for their project entitled, “Making College Campuses into Diverse Learning Communities: Associations Between Diversity Programming, Student Involvement, and Campus Climate.”

The semester concluded with DeStress Day activities including mindfulness activities, DIY stress balls, and the annual Psi Chi-sponsored Tacky Sweater Holiday Party, featuring psychology Pictionary, food, and prizes. It was good way to relieve stress before finals and spend time together before classes ended. The party concluded with
dessert and a vote for the 2014 Tackiest Sweater, which was awarded to Kariann Penttila (president) for the second year in a row.

The chapter was involved in the spring Club Fair in January, which it used as an opportunity to inform and recruit new psychology majors and minors to apply for membership in time for the upcoming induction ceremony in late February. Officers were also present to answer student questions at the Pacesetters event when graduating high school seniors with exceptional academic records came to campus to compete in an annual scholarship competition. The chapter also invited Peter Vik, director of the clinical psychology PhD program, and Shawn Davis, director of the new masters in applied psychological science program, to discuss applying to graduate school and deciding whether to pursue a masters, PsyD, or PhD.

**University of Nevada, Las Vegas**

The chapter hosted a meeting to give the members a chance to experience two different fields of psychology. In the Best of Both Worlds presentation, the chapter invited guest speakers Drs. Colleen Parks and Michelle Paul to give a presentation on the various aspects of their careers. Dr. Parks is an experimental psychologist focusing on the cognitive processes that underlie the encoding, storage, and retrieval of information—basically the processes that underlie memory. Dr. Paul is a clinical psychologist, associate director of clinical training, and also directs The PRACTICE, a community mental health training clinic. The topics that Dr. Park and Dr. Paul covered included their undergraduate careers, how they applied to graduate school, their graduate school careers, what they did after graduate school, and what their current endeavors are. The lecture was followed by a Q&A where members were able to address questions and concerns about what it is really like to be a psychologist.

**Whittworth University (WA)**

From March 10 to 14, the university put on its first ever Mental Health Awareness Week. This was an initiative led by undergraduate Chris Engelmann and staffed by a group of about 10 students. This event was sponsored by the chapter partnered with Restoring Hope. The goal of this week was to raise awareness about mental health within the community and erase the stigma surrounding mental health. In order to achieve this, the week featured informational pamphlets and a slide show, a panel of speakers, roaming dorm discussions, a showing of Temple Grandin, and a concert. The belief was that education about mental health is the best way to gain awareness within a college community and the best combatant to stigmatization. In addition to building awareness about mental health, the event raised money for Excelsior Youth Center, a local mental health organization. This was done by raffle tickets and T-shirts that were sold throughout the week. Donations were provided by several local businesses, and over $500 was raised to be given to Excelsior. The hope was to build off this success while learning from the challenges encountered this year and to continue Mental Health Awareness Week in future years. The idea was well received by the campus, suggesting that people care about mental health and proving hope for the future.

**Universidad del Valle de Guatemala**

At the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala Chapter, a group of attendees learned about animal-assisted activity with Eco, the dog. Universidad del Valle de Guatemala members participate in a therapeutic group activity. Universidad del Valle de Guatemala’s Survivors of Suicide Day speakers include Ana María Cáceres, Mónica de Dios, and Dr. María del Pilar Grazioso.
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