

Message from the Associate Chair:

Albert Jay Nock, an educational theorist and social critic from the turn of the century (that old century, 1900) pointed out 80 years ago that education is much more than instruction. Being instructed in facts is certainly important, but education is much more. An educated person understands the way the world works and his own behavior as part of that world. Educated people know not only facts, but how those facts were obtained. They question and evaluate. They use their knowledge to create solutions. And they use their language to effectively communicate their insight so others can benefit from their education. Benefiting others is especially important today since something is owed to those who pay for higher education through taxes.

Education is not just job training, although educated people — thinkers, problem solvers and communicators — often have successful careers. Psychology majors have a great deal to contribute in their working lives. They have learned what influences behavior and, more importantly, how to learn more about such influences. They know something about how we make decisions (that is, not usually rationally but rather emotionally) and how that propensity makes us susceptible to those who would influence us for good or evil. However, it is skepticism and analysis that is important and not simply a collection of facts. This education makes psychology majors valuable contributors in business and in communities regardless of the particular role they play to earn a living. These are among the Learning Objectives of the Ohio General Education Core, and the Department of Psychology at UT supports those goals.

The undergraduate program in psychology at UT is working toward improving the education of our students, as well as their instruction. We are emphasizing critical analysis and communication, in our Introductory course (PSY 1010) as well as our other courses because newcomers often have very superficial and even wrong ideas about human capacities and behavior. Students must be taught that it is OK to question what they read and be encouraged to do so. They must reflect on what they think they know and consider empirical evidence to the contrary. They must be encouraged to apply what they learn about behavior to their own lives, whether that involves educating others, managing their children, implementing these things in the workplace, or making their own behavior more effective. The psychology department is attempting to emphasize the seriousness of the discipline by requiring students to achieve at least a 2.5 GPA before declaring the psychology major. We also stress experiential learning opportunities such as research practica, wherein one gets hands-on experience designing studies to test hypotheses and collecting and analyzing real behavioral data. We want students to recognize the importance of thinking and education, and not simply instruction.

Education is something you do and not something you purchase.

Rickeye Heffner, Ph.D.
Associate Chair & Director of Undergraduate Education

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Grad Life: Stephanie Lane Fowler, M.A.

By Chandrima Bhattacharya, Graduate Student



Stephanie Lane Fowler

Congratulations to Stephanie Lane Fowler, a fifth-year doctoral student in our experimental psychology program, on her new position in the Cancer Prevention Fellowship program at the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md. Stephanie who works with Dr. Andrew Geers in his Toledo Social and Affect Lab, agreed to share with us her incredible journey in the field of academia, one comprising of

“The sky has never been the limit. We are our own limits. It’s then about breaking our personal limits and outgrowing ourselves to live our best lives.” - Anonymous

difficult choices and hours of hard work and determination that led her to where she is presently.

Early College Days

After graduating high school, Stephanie started her undergraduate career as a soccer player on a full athletic scholarship, but after two years of psychology courses realized that her heart laid in studying psychology. She had to reprioritize her life by walking away from college soccer so that she could focus on academics and ultimately a career in psychology. Since that moment, there has been no looking back. Stephanie earned her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology from the University of North Florida in 2006.

Grad Life: Stephanie Lane Fowler, M.A.

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Graduate Studies and Emergence of Research Interests

Stephanie began her graduate career at The University of Toledo earning a Master of Arts degree in Psychology in 2009. Like her taste in music, her research interests are eclectic; she was drawn to studying health psychology when she started reading about placebo effects. She was amazed by how people's beliefs can be powerful enough to change behavior and physiology. Consequently, she branched out to other aspects of expectancy effect research examining areas such as optimistic expectations and gender role expectations leading her to her specialty area in social psychology. She examines all of these factors within the context of health-compromising behavior, responses and receptivity to health threats, and pain perception.

Academic Achievements

Stephanie has received several accolades such as several peer-reviewed publications, conference talks and poster presentations, and honors and awards including from her recent accomplishment of a Junior Research Award in Tübingen, Germany, her Outstanding Poster Award at the UT-BGSU Research Symposium for Psychology, Psychiatry, and Behavioral Sciences in April 2012, and a travel grant from the Midwestern Psychological Association in May 2012. She has a passion for both conducting psychological research and teaching students about the research process. She has served as an instructor for undergraduate courses in Statistical Methods and Research Methods in Psychology. When asked what kind of student Stephanie is, her advisor Dr. Andrew Geers answered, "Stephanie is the ideal student. From the moment she stepped on the UT campus, it was clear to me that Stephanie would go far here. She is intellectually gifted and also possesses a strong passion for learning that keeps her going. Stephanie has worked tremendously hard at her research enterprise — as demonstrated in her publication record. Moreover, she has succeeded in all phases of the experimental psychology graduate program. For example, in addition to her research accomplishments, over the past several years Stephanie has taught three psychology classes and has become an outstanding teacher."

Stephanie Fowler: Up-Front and Un-Plugged

We got a chance to sit down with Stephanie to ask her some questions about her professional life and her life interests in general.

Q: Tell us more about your recent achievement of landing a post doc fellowship at the National Cancer Institute. How did you learn about the opportunity? And what have you learned about the program?

A: I learned about the fellowship from a national research organization called the Social and Personality Health Network (SPHN) that I have been involved in for the last four years. The Cancer Prevention and Control Fellowship duration is four years. For the first year of the program, fellows complete a masters degree in public health to accompany their Ph.D. or MD. For years 2-4, fellows work closely with the world's leading researchers on cancer prevention and control at the National Cancer Institute (NCI). I will have the opportunity to work on numerous cross-disciplinary research teams and help shape NCI's efforts to

understand how to reduce the modifiable lifestyle risk factors — such as physical inactivity and tobacco use — that increase the risk of cancer. During this time, I will also receive additional training covering the entire spectrum of cancer prevention and control behavior, in epidemiology, biostatistics, clinical services, public health, laboratory, nutritional, and social and behavioral sciences. Finally, there are several NCI sponsored professional development workshops that I will attend during my career covering the grant writing process, public speaking, and team science approaches.

Q: Being a research scientist and a research methods instructor, what would you suggest to your fellow students, who plan on embarking on a career in the field of research?

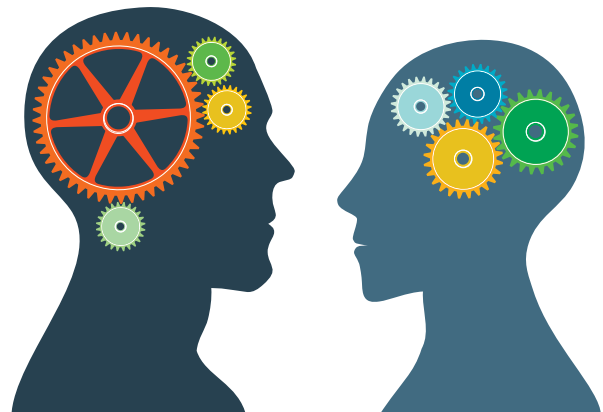
A: I would recommend being involved as much as possible in every stage of the research process including the generation of ideas and the literature review, followed by the development and execution of the research design, and importantly, with the statistical analyses and interpretation of the data. Additionally, I would recommend getting as much exposure to the field as possible by not only attending conferences, but also by presenting research findings at conferences via posters and talks. My personal view is that it is important to integrate multiple approaches and disciplines in our research endeavor. I feel that we may miss out on a lot if we are too narrow in our focus, so I recommend taking a broader approach and seeing how we can integrate different ways of conceptualizing our world into our research.

Q: When you are not busy with teaching or academic work, what do you like to do in your free time?

A: I like listening to music, especially live music. I'm a musician and play guitar, sing, and write music. I also love to play sports and be physically active. I am a spinning instructor at the UT Recreation Center and play indoor soccer. I also like walking through the snow, it's a great workout!

Q: If you can get away from all the hustle and bustle and take a break for a while, where would you long to go?

A: Domestically, I would travel to Alaska. The open wilderness is very appealing to me! Internationally, I would travel to Australia, Tasmania, and New Zealand. I've wanted to go there since I was a little girl! And hopefully I can take this trip when I graduate!

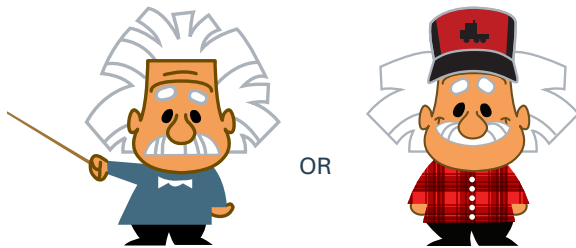


Mind Games: Incognito

By Heather Haught and Jill Brown, Graduate Students

What was that you said? You are into mind games? Do not worry, we get it. We are into them too. And, it gets better; we are willing to share one with you right now! We know you are excited, but there are some rules to this game which you must promise to uphold before we begin — namely, you must promise not to read ahead. Read what is written and answer the questions in that order. Otherwise, you will spoil the fun!

In the country of Cognito, everyone is either a truck driver or a professor.



In fact, 90 percent of the population of Cognito is composed of truckers, and 10 percent are professors.

Here are descriptions of ten people currently living in Cognito (Ha ha! We are all living incognito in a sense are we not? Any way...). After reading the descriptions of each person, take a few moments and determine whether you think that person is a trucker or a professor. We know, there is not much to go on, but we only have so much space.

Please meet Jerry. He has a rebel flag on his vehicle. He often curses and enjoys listening to rock music. Is Jerry a trucker or a professor?

Please meet Buck. Buck likes football, lives in the same town he was born in, and was divorced three times. Is he a trucker or a professor?

Please meet Harold. He smokes a pipe, enjoys reading, and is perpetually covered in chalk dust. Is Harold a trucker or a professor?

Please meet Vincent. Vincent wears glasses, is clumsy, and talks too much. Is Vincent a trucker or a professor?

Please meet Tom. He likes to wear his favorite oily baseball cap, uses a CB radio, and has a bushy red beard. Is Tom a trucker or a professor?

Please meet Jake. Jake loves jeans and wears them often. He has a thick southern accent and drinks half a pot of coffee each day. Is he a trucker or a professor?

Please meet Alfred. Alfred is balding. He wears a tweed jacket and uses big words. Is Alfred a trucker or a professor?

Please meet Francis. Francis carries a laser pointer with him every day, listens to classical music, and is a terrible athlete. Is Francis a trucker or a professor?

Please meet William. William goes to the opera regularly, has visited 28 countries, and spends most of his time on a computer. Is William a trucker or a professor?

Please meet Hank. He has long hair, enjoys hunting, and his favorite jacket is flannel. Is Hank a trucker or a professor?

Now, that was painless! Take a moment and add up the number of truckers and the number of professors you came up with. How many truckers were there? How many professors?

Did you guess that nine out of 10 were truckers? If so, good for you! If not, do not feel bad most people do not. Notice that if you were only looking at the population values (90 percent of the population are truckers, 10 percent are professors) you would have guessed that most of the people were truck drivers.

A number of factors can affect how we go about making decisions, however. It is unusual for us to make a decision based completely on objective information; rather we often use information from our prior beliefs or experiences in order to make judgments. As a result, we use "rules of thumb," or heuristics, to help us. This particular heuristic is referred to as the *representativeness heuristic*. Such heuristics allow us to have an idea about how to weigh our options, even though they might sometimes lead us astray.

In this example, people generally weigh other pieces of information, like stereotypes and expectations, more heavily than the population statistic when deciding whether the person is a trucker or a professor.

Spring Speakers

If you would like more information on attending these free and public events, email psyconnect@utoledo.edu or call the department at 419.530.2717.

Thursday, Jan. 31, 2013, 4 p.m.,

Student Union Room 2582

Lee Jussim, Professor, Rutgers University

Expertise: Social perception and social reality

Talk Title: Social perception and social reality: Accuracy and multiculturalism

Thursday, April 4, 2013, 4 p.m.,

Student Union Room 3018

Joe Johnson, Associate Professor, Miami (Ohio) University

Expertise: Decision processes, computational modeling

Talk Title: Measuring covert processes to understand overt behaviors

Lab Gab: The Wellness Management and Recovery Lab

By: Brittany Tenbarge, Graduate Student

Wesley A. Bullock, Ph.D., and the Wellness Management and Recovery (WMR) lab at the University of Toledo currently provide research consultation services to the Wellness Management and Recovery Coordinating Center of Excellence (WMR CCOE), a training and technical assistance center created by the Ohio Department of Mental Health. The WMR CCOE seeks to promote recovery and improve the quality of clinical care for individuals living with serious mental illness (SMI) by accelerating the adoption of evidence-based and clinical best practices within Ohio's public mental health system. Dr. Bullock and the clinical psychology graduate students who work in the WMR lab at UT conduct research on the effectiveness of the WMR program and associated topics in public mental health and mental health recovery.

The WMR program is a holistic, recovery-focused, psycho-educational group therapy program that incorporates cognitive-behavioral and motivational interviewing techniques. These group therapy sessions are co-facilitated by a staff member of an agency and a peer specialist who is currently receiving mental health services. The peer-provider team approach used in WMR highlights the importance of collaboration in promoting mental health recovery and harnesses the power of peers in promoting the recovery process. Over the last seven years, the WMR lab has collected longitudinal outcome data on more than 1000 participants in the WMR program from over 20 community-based, hospital, and consumer-operated services sites in the state of Ohio.

The Wellness Management and Recovery lab was started by Dr. Wesley Bullock, whose expertise is in the area of recovery processes, SMI, and program evaluation. In 2012, Dr. Bullock and his lab were among several health professions at UT to be awarded grant funding through the Medicaid Technical Assistance and Policy Program (MEDTAPP) Healthcare Access Initiative (HCA). The MEDTAPP HCA grant supports the development and retention of healthcare practitioners to serve Ohio's Medicaid population using emerging healthcare delivery models and evidence-based practices. Lab members receiving MEDTAPP grant-supported fellowships have had the opportunity to provide direct clinical services to Medicaid-eligible, underserved

populations. The lab has also participated in unique interprofessional learning and research activities related to serving underserved populations, including didactic and experiential learning components within the UT Interprofessional Immersive Simulation Center (IISC) alongside faculty and students from departments of medicine, nursing, and psychiatry. The MEDTAPP curriculum promotes the development of interprofessional team building and communication, the provision of person-centered integrated health care, and WMR for individuals living with SMI.

The Graduate Students

Generally speaking, graduate students in the WMR lab share clinical and research interests in recovery from SMI and evaluation of treatment programs for individuals living with SMI. Current WMR lab member are also investigating the following specialized areas: trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in individuals living with SMI (Alisha Lee, M.A.); the use of integrated healthcare and Motivational Interviewing to reduce comorbid physical health conditions in individuals living with SMI (Brittany Tenbarge, M.A.); the development and evaluation of stigma reduction interventions and the use of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy in the treatment of psychosis (David Medved, B.S.); and culturally-competent translation of mental health recovery measures into Spanish and evidence-based treatments for young adults with Bipolar Disorder (Kristin Walstad, B.A.)

Future Directions

With regard to future research directions, the WMR lab is currently pursuing projects examining whether changes in cognitions or emotion regulation better predict decreases in PTSD symptoms among WMR participants. The WMR lab is also evaluating the effectiveness of adding brief Motivational Interviewing to Behavioral Health Home services for individuals with SMI. Lastly, the lab is developing a Spanish translation of the Mental Health Recovery Measure and building a theory of internalized stigma grounded in the experience of individuals living with SMI.

Recommended Reading in Psychology

Book Review by: John Van Dusen, Graduate Student

The first sentence of Dr. Martin Seligman's new book, "Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being," reads, "This book will help you flourish." With these words, Dr. Seligman both intrigues the reader, and establishes that he has some explaining to do: "What does he mean by 'flourish' ... and how is this just not another self-help book?" While Dr. Seligman's prose certainly tends toward the dramatic, "Flourish" is actually a layperson-friendly introduction to the empirical work and philosophy behind the modern positive psychology movement spearheaded by Dr. Seligman and other prominent psychologists in the late 1990's.

So what is positive psychology? As Dr. Seligman describes it, positive psychology is the scientific pursuit of well-being or "what makes life worth living," a long-overdue

complement to psychology's traditional focus on disorder. Well-being theory evolved from authentic happiness theory, the initial target of the positive psychology movement and the subject of Dr. Seligman's 2002 book "Authentic Happiness." Happiness is a term that usually calls to mind a pleasant hedonic state, or mood. However, positive affect alone makes a poor definition of happiness, and ultimately represents just one aspect of well-being. Dr. Seligman now pushes for a broader definition of well-being, and expands his theory to include everything that people choose "for its own sake." He breaks well-being into five elements, using the mnemonic PERMA: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Each of these elements can be broken down into operationalized components, and together they

form the core of well-being theory.

Positive emotion is simply happiness theory repackaged as a single component of well-being. Engagement incorporates flow, a state of immersion in a challenging, absorbing activity. Relationships represent the positive connections we make with others. Meaning is the sense of belonging to or participating in something greater than oneself.

And finally, Accomplishment is the drive for mastery or success as its own reward (as opposed to success for social acceptance or material gain).

After defining well-being, Dr. Seligman introduces the reader to several positive psychology exercises, short interventions designed to identify and build on strengths, and to promote well-being. Support for positive psychology exercises is preliminary but very promising, and Dr. Seligman approaches them with enthusiasm. Dr. Seligman also launches a thought-provoking critique of contemporary psychological and pharmacological treatments for disorder, and argues that a focus on only palliative treatments neglects the strong heritability of psychopathology, as well as the recurrence of many forms of psychopathology sooner or later after the termination of a therapy or pharmacological treatment.

Dr. Seligman then moves into a descriptive account of the strides taken by positive psychology in the past decade. He outlines the creation of his master's degree in applied positive psychology program, as well as the successes of the Penn Resiliency Program, a curriculum designed to teach well-being to schoolchildren. The Penn Resiliency Program has proven effective in reducing and preventing symptoms of depression and anxiety, reducing hopelessness and reducing conduct problems in a variety of school settings, although results have shown considerable variation.

Dr. Seligman also examines contemporary intelligence theory in the context of positive psychology. He elaborates

on how self-discipline, though unrelated to cognitive ability, can alter the relationship between intelligence and achievement. This talk of self-discipline segues into a discussion of resilience in the context of Comprehensive Soldier Fitness, a U.S. Army research program co-designed by Dr. Seligman to investigate and promote resilience in troops. Dr. Seligman touches on facilitating post-traumatic growth as an alternative approach to treating post-traumatic stress disorder amongst veterans.

Finally, Dr. Seligman explores biological factors associated with optimism. He outlines how research on optimism and pessimism has indicated distinct medical advantages to optimism: protection from cardiovascular disease, reduced susceptibility to the common cold, and possibly even reduced risk for cancer. These relationships have not been fully explained, but mediating factors between optimism and health may include increased performance of health-enhancing behaviors, increased social support, and stronger immune systems. Dr. Seligman concludes "Flourish" with a short discussion of the political and economic ramifications of a focus on well-being.

Dr. Seligman put a face on the positive psychology movement. His "call to action" as president of the APA spurred the efforts of hundreds of researchers and other professionals. Thanks in part to his contributions, positive psychology has moved beyond any one person's goals and definitions, including Dr. Seligman's. However, "Flourish" provides an engaging introduction to positive psychology, particularly for an undergraduate or layperson interested in happiness and well-being. "Flourish" combines the empirical support of a scientific text with restraint from jargon and the readability of a popular bestseller. It comes highly recommended.

Seligman, M.E.P. (2011). Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being. New York: Free Press.

Community Minded: The Great Lakes Collaborative for Autism (GLCA)

By: Travis W. Conratt, Graduate Student

The Great Lakes Collaborative for Autism (GLCA) is a community partnership of more than fifteen northwest Ohio organizations, including The University of Toledo (UT), that have come together to raise awareness for autism and provide the highest standard of programs, care, support, and education for children with autism and their families in the area. I was recently invited by the director of the GLCA, Catina Harding, to tour their new facilities on the ProMedica Toledo Hospital campus, which incorporates many programs, services, and community partners at one central location. During my visit, I was able to speak with Catina about the GLCA, their new programs and initiatives, their community partnership with The University of Toledo, and their fundraising partnership with the Glass City Marathon that takes place on the UT campus every April.

As homage to their adult son with autism and generosity to the community, the GLCA was started in 2004 by Bob and Suzy Tyner through their Tyner foundation. The Tyner's did not want other families in the area to struggle with having their children diagnosed and receiving support as they had years earlier trying to find answers on their son's condition. At the time, they envisioned the GLCA being a comprehensive center where children could be diagnosed, receive care, and be enrolled in special education programs. Also, parents could find support, information, and guidance.

Today, the Tyners' original vision is becoming somewhat of a reality. The cooperation and partnership of community organizations (e.g., ProMedica, Mercy, The University of Toledo, BGSU) have led to the creation of the Toledo Regional Autism Network (TRAN). TRAN

allows partners to pool together knowledge, resources, and facilities needed to offer the wide range of excellent programs and services to children with autism and their families. In other words, TRAN is made possible because as Catina said, "the organizations are working together to solve a community issue."

During my visit, I was able to see new programs and initiatives offered at the ProMedica site. For instance, they installed an early learning program for young children with autism based on an empirically supported model developed by the Cleveland Clinic. Jacqueline Deaton, a recent UT psychology graduate, was working in the early learning program that day. Also, a unique aspect at the site was the Self Reliance Center, which is an afterschool program for teens and young adults (ages 12 to 22). As part of this program,

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Community Minded: The Great Lakes Collaborative for Autism (GLCA)

Continued from Page 5.

the individuals are given opportunities to practice social skills and transitional skills for independent living and employment.

On our own campus, the newly established The University of Toledo Center for Excellence in Autism, aims to provide a broad range of services and support research initiatives that meet the diverse needs of those with autism spectrum disorder and their families. In particular, their services focus on needs for adolescents and adults with autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, they are supporting efforts for early detection and emphasizing training and education for current and future professionals in the field. Beyond the Center for Excellence in Autism, Dr. Alexia Metz of the occupational therapy department at UT, along with Special Kids Therapy, recently received the Auto Dealers United for Kids grant to create a state-of-the-art sensory learning room at the ProMedica building.

The GLCA has also been able to grow and assist with establishing premier support, services, and facilities thanks in large part to recognition, donations, and community fundraising events. One of the GLCA's largest fundraising ventures is the Glass City Marathon and will take place on Sunday, April 28, 2013 on the UT Main Campus. Marathon participants have helped raise over \$75,000 for the GLCA since 2010. And as the marathon has grown, so too has the yearly contribution. This year, the GLCA has the goal of raising more than \$50,000! Regarding the donations and charitable support, Catina put it best, "Everything we raise goes right into the community. You see it; every dollar."

Last year, I learned about the GLCA through participating in the Glass City Marathon and raising donations. The race, while exhausting, was a lot of fun. I urge others to become involved as there are race lengths for everyone

and always a need for cheering runners to the finish line. To learn more please visit www.glasscitymarathon.org. Together we can help the marathon runners and the GLCA "conquer the impossible!"

As Catina has watched the GLCA grow from her early fundraising efforts, she is astonished at how far they have come. More importantly, she says, "It's really pretty special to see how far our families have come just given the right support and the right programs." Working together as a community has enabled northwest Ohio to have the very best support and programs for children with autism and their families.

If you would like to learn more about autism and the Great Lakes Autism Collaborative, please visit their website at greatlakesautism.org.

Ask a Psychologist: How can I help a loved one with mental illness?

By: Melissa Jensen, Graduate Student

It is often difficult to know how to respond and be supportive when a loved one is in treatment for a mental illness. While the reality is that there is often little you can do or say to "fix" anything, there are things that can be done to be appropriately supportive. Here are 10 tips:

1. Educate yourself about the illness. Often times, lack of information can lead to misconceptions that can get in the way of effectively helping a loved one. Studies suggest that clients who have a family member that is educated about the illness and involved in the treatment process have a more enjoyable family atmosphere and display a reduction in symptoms, hospitalization days, and relapses.

2. Set realistic expectations. Mental illnesses do not have linear progressions, and neither should our expectations. When loved ones are in recovery, it is important to encourage them to make appropriate expectations for themselves and for us to set our expectations appropriately.

3. Find social support. Try not to allow stigma to keep you from reaching out to gain more strength and knowledge. Consider a program through the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI).

4. Be open to working with your loved one's treatment team. Although this is not always possible, if your loved one is willing to have your involvement, you and your loved one may benefit from understanding how your relationship with them can be helpful or problematic.

5. Do not try to take control. Treat your loved ones with respect no matter how strongly their symptoms are manifesting. One of the hardest parts for someone with a mental illness is feeling like they have lost

control of their lives, so it is important to allow your loved ones as much control with as little stigma as possible. However, remember to ...

6. Set appropriate limits. For example, if they are your dependent, you may consider continuing to offer financial support, provided they adhere to their treatment plans.

7. Retain equality. In line with continued respect for your loved one, refrain from ascribing them the "sick role" in your family or allowing them to be more aggressive or rude than you would tolerate in others.

8. Remember that feeling shame or guilt is a normal reaction.

Family members often assume that they should have or could have done something different. However, there is no one cause of any mental illness and the "best" answer is often difficult to determine in the moment.

9. Take care of yourself. The old cliché about putting on your oxygen mask before helping others rings true here as well. By paying attention to your wellness, you will have fuller mental capacities to offer to your loved ones.

10. Convey hope and appreciate courage. There is a lot of hope to be had when a loved one is in treatment, even for severe mental illness. We learn more everyday about ways to make recovery possible. At the same time, we must continue to appreciate how much courage it takes to continue with treatment, as the road is often long and frustrating. Make sure your loved ones know that you see their courage.

Adapted from: Tartakovsky, M. (2011). 15 ways to support a loved one. Retrieved from <http://psychcentral.com/lib/2011/15-ways-to-support-a-loved-one-with-serious-mental-illness/all/1/>

Profiles

By Eric Prichard, Graduate Student



Dr. Steve Christman

If you hang around the laboratories at The University of Toledo's psychology department long enough, you are certain to hear the word "handedness" bounced around. In no lab is this, more true than that of Dr. Steve Christman. Two decades after discovering that the degree to which people use their dominant and non-dominant hands (as opposed to merely classifying people as left or right handers) predicted instrument preference among musicians, he has applied the "degree of handedness" paradigm to topics ranging from memory to music preferences. For example, people who use their non-dominant hand for at least some tasks tend to have better episodic memory. As well as, people who tend to use one hand for everything tend to have less eclectic tastes in music. Thanks to his work, degree of handedness is gaining acceptance among the scientific mainstream as a potentially important and informative individual differences variable. But who is Toledo's handedness guru, this rock and roll psychologist, who colors the halls of a northern Ohio university with a touch of Berkley?

A 1982 graduate of the University of Michigan, Dr. Christman went on to obtain his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkley in 1988. From there he did a post-doc under Fred Kitterle and Joe Hellige at the University of Toledo. In 1989, UT made him a permanent faculty member. Throughout his years in college, graduate school, and early Toledo years, he played in numerous bands including The Dogmatics (1979-1980), Red Stripe (1980-1981), The Insex (1981-1982), The Optimystics (1983-1988), and Buddha's Playground (1989-1993).

Since starting at Toledo, Dr. Christman moved from the study of perceptual hemispheric asymmetries to the study of handedness and its potential link with interhemispheric communication. In his own words, "As most everyone in the department knows by now, I am on a mission to spread the 'gospel of handedness', trying to convince the field (and the world!) that handedness is an incredibly important and robust dimension of individual difference (far more important than sex, according to our data). We have missed out on its importance because of a mistaken focus on left versus right handedness, instead of my lab's focus on inconsistent/mixed versus consistent/strong handedness. We have found systematic handedness differences in such disparate domains as memory retrieval, belief updating, cognitive flexibility, risk perception, body image, stereotyping, musical performance, and sleep architecture."

He is currently working with long-time faculty collaborators J.D. Jasper (The University of Toledo) and Ruth Propper (Montclair State University) on several new topics of interest, among which include handedness differences in memory performance, the potential of bilateral eye movements to affect interhemispheric processing, and the possibility of using tympanic membrane temperature as a proxy measure for hemispheric activation. When asked what research directions he might like to take in the future,

he replied "I would love to someday have the opportunity to study brain asymmetry in dolphins. Maybe I could study fin-edness in marine mammals..."

Outside of the university (and, frankly, inside as well) Dr. Christman is a curling enthusiast and spirited Tigers fan. He currently resides with his wife Lori. They have two children: Rayna, a senior at the University of Wisconsin, and Sam, a senior at Sylvania Southview High School.

I recently had a chance to ask him a few questions and he was gracious enough to provide some answers.

Q: You are a musician and you have written a lot of songs in your lifetime. Of the songs you have written, do you have any favorites? If so, what are they about?

A: I've written over 400 songs so far. Generally, my favorite song is the most recent one I've written. However, over the years, a few songs of mine have stood up to the test of time (i.e., I haven't forgotten them yet) and bear mention:

"Less Hair, More Brains": one of my more psychologically-minded songs, featuring the following chorus:

remember that a human

is just a fancy ape

with less hair, more brains

and a slightly different shape

"Ten Years On": a song that started out being about the Civil War but ended up being about Woodstock and Sid Vicious. Sample angst-y verse:

Woodstock died at the hands of a motorcycle gang

And its ghost collapsed under the sound of the funeral bells that rang

And now Sid Vicious lies dead on the floor of a lonely tenement

Different days and different deaths but still the same lament

"Life's A Gas (And It's Gonna Pass)": not only the very first song I ever wrote back in 10th grade, but has a verse that features the word "antidisestablishmentarianism"!

And finally, here is a verse from one of the more recent songs I've written:

This living is hard, this living is sweet

Out in the yard, we're growing good things to eat

And sometimes in the night, when we sometimes fight

I don't care. I don't care

Cuz I have seen the light

And I know that it's always there.

Continued on Page 8.

Profiles

Continued from Page 7.

Q: Speaking of music, are there any bands that are a must-listen for readers?

A: My all-time favorite bands are (i) The Residents (an extremely weird band out of San Francisco that does not make music, but rather makes music about music), and (ii) New Grass Revival (a band that was too country to be played on rock stations and too rock to be played on country stations; I named my son after the band's leader and mandolinist, Sam Bush).

My current favorite bands are (i) The Books, whose music features an astounding array of samples of obscure sounds and speech and whose lyrics touch on such topics as color-grapheme synaesthesia, the twelfth root of 2 (the band's favorite irrational number), and the lemon of pink, and (ii) The Kropotkins, a delta blues-punk band whose leader, Dave Silver, is also a Professor of Neuroscience at Columbia University.

Q: When did you first get a hunch that degree of handedness is more important than direction of handedness?

A: My very first handedness study back in the early 1990s looked at hand preference in musicians as a function of the type of instrument they play. Specifically, I hypothesized that keyboard players would be more likely to be right-handed, based on the fact that right-handers have smaller corpus callosa, which should allow for greater independence between left-hand versus right-hand performance. When I first looked at the data, the descriptive statistics indicated that keyboard players were indeed more right-handed, but the inferential statistics were a wash. I went back to the raw data and noticed that my sample of 170 musicians had only three perfectly left-handed people, and ALL three played keyboards. I thought to myself, "maybe it's not left versus right, but rather strongly-handed versus mixed-handed." I recoded the data to reflect degree, not direction, of handedness, and now the statistics were highly significant.

Q: Would you rather go curling with Albert Einstein or jam with Jimi Hendrix?

A: Curling with Al, definitely. First of all, I am pretty sure I could beat Einstein at curling (and it would be an honor to buy him a beer after the game and talk about relativity), while my guitar chops would pale in comparison to Jimi's. Also, my musical style tends more towards acoustic/folky stuff, so I'm not sure my style would gel well with Hendrix.

Q: You just died and went to Heaven. God is starting a baseball league and you have been named general manager of one of the teams. Via a lottery system, it is determined that you get the first pick in the Afterlife League's draft. You can pick any historical baseball great who has shed their mortal coil. Who do you choose and why?

A: I would select Mark Fidrych (AKA "The Bird"), who had a brief but meteoric stint as a pitcher for the Detroit Tigers in the late 1970s. I've never seen a baseball player who was more fun to watch, what with his constant talking to the ball, talking

to himself, endlessly manicuring the mound, tossing perfectly good baseballs back to the umpire because he insisted the ball had too many "hits" left in it, aiming the ball like a dart, and generally strutting around the mound like a manic bird. My team might not win a lot of games, but we'd have a roaring good time!

Q: If you had to go back in time, redo your life, but pick a profession other than experimental psychologist, what would you become?

A: In high school, I briefly struggled between going to college to pursue science versus going to New York City to try to become the "next Bob Dylan". Although I've never regretted choosing science, if I had to go back in time and redo my life, perhaps I'd take a stab at being a musician. Either that, or I would go into another one of my enduring passions, theoretical cosmology (over the past decade, I've developed a "spinning four-dimensional hyper-onion-bagel" theory of everything that shows how gravity is simply motion through the fourth dimension of space-time and helps explain such mysteries as dark matter, the hyperinflationary period, and faster-than-light travel).

Psych Talk: News about our Students, Faculty and Alumni

Sean Walsh, Graduate Student

Recent Honors and Awards

- Congratulations to Dr. Laura Seligman, associate professor, for being awarded board certification in Cognitive & Behavioral Psychology through the American Board of Professional Psychology (ABPP). Board certification through the ABPP provides both peer and public recognition of demonstrated competence in this area as well as an opportunity for professional development and identification within a specialty area. Dr. Seligman is the first faculty in the history of our department to be awarded ABPP status.
- Jill Brown, an experimental psychology graduate student working with Dr. Andy Geers, was recently given two awards for her paper submission to the Society of Behavioral Medicine annual conference. Jill's submission was given the Citation Abstract award, a conference-wide award given for a high level of originality and scientific merit, as well as the Meritorious Student Submission Award which is to the highest caliber poster and paper submitted for the conference. Her paper focused on the effect that choice has on the quality of sleep with patients and, more specifically, whether the number of treatments offered to a patient is an important component in treatment efficacy. These two awards will be given out at the annual meeting of the Society of Behavioral Medicine in March 2013.

- Travis Conratt, an experimental psychology graduate student working with Dr. Kamala London, was recently awarded a grant to fund his doctoral dissertation research on the role of memory and emotion in forensic interviewing with children. The grant was awarded by the American Psychology and Law Society.
- Erin Swedish, a clinical psychology graduate student working with Dr. Laura Seligman, has been selected to complete a prestigious summer internship with the American Psychological Association (APA) in Washington, D.C. Erin will be working in the Practice Directorate, where she will be helping to promote the practice of psychology and the availability and accessibility of psychological services. Erin's research focuses on anxiety disorders in youth and specifically on how to make sure children with anxiety disorders have access to evidence based treatments.

Recent Faculty and Student Publications

- Researchers Dr. Rickye Heffner, Gimseong Koay, and Dr. Henry Heffner recently published their fourth study in a series on hearing in American leaf-nosed bats, this one on the Common Vampire Bat. Vampire bats are unusual in many ways, including the fact that they feed off the blood of mammals that are more than four orders of magnitude larger than themselves. In this study the authors find that vampire bats have better low-frequency hearing than any other bat so far tested, although, it remains poor compared to the majority of mammals. Their results provide further support for the explanation of selective pressure on high frequency hearing that this research team first proposed in 1969. This work, funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, was published in the journal *Hearing Research*.
- Heather Rasinski, an experimental psychology doctoral student working in the social psychology lab of Dr. Andy Geers, had a first-authored research paper accepted in the journal *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. This is a prominent empirical journal that is ranked 10th in citations out of the 60 plus journals in the area of social psychology. Heather's article reports findings that the majority of people are unlikely to speak out against someone who made a prejudicial comment despite the belief that they would do so prior to being placed in this situation. She also found that failing to confront someone who made a prejudicial comment can actually lead individuals to be less concerned about challenging prejudice in the future.
- Tracey Biehn and Ateka Contractor, doctoral students in the clinical psychology program, recently published a research paper in the *Journal of Affective Disorders*. The study examined the relationship between the underlying symptom dimensions of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and dimensions of major depressive disorder (MDD) in order to better understand why these two disorders frequently co-occur. Tracey and Ateka used data collected from Ohio National Guard soldiers with a history of overseas deployment. Results indicated that PTSD was primarily linked to depression due to depression's somatic items, suggesting that high comorbidity rates between PTSD and depression are driven by the association between depression's somatic factor with PTSD's factors. These results shed light on the nature of the high comorbidity between PTSD and MDD. Tracey and Ateka are graduate advisees of Dr. Jon Elhai.

UT Psychology Department in the News

- Dr. Jeanne Brockmyer, Distinguished University Professor, Emeritus, was ABC TV Toledo Channel 13's Roundtable guest on December 30, 2012. She was interviewed by host Jeff Smith on several topics related to violence in the United States culture. Dr. Brockmyer spoke about her research on violent video games, her involvement with an amicus brief to the Supreme Court, and graduate student Evan McBroom's research on Internet addiction.
- Dr. Jason Levine, Assistant Professor, and Erin Swedish and Jessica Gahr, graduate students, were interviewed by WTOL TV Toledo Channel 11 on February 7, 2013. They spoke about effective behavioral treatment for tic disorders offered through the University of Toledo Psychology Clinic. They also demonstrated interventions which have been empirically supported to treat tic disorder and spoke about the process of therapy for these disorders. You can watch the interview on YouTube at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKDtShC_AAq

Upcoming Events

- The 20th Annual Symposium on Research in Psychiatry, Psychology and Behavioral Science will be held on Thursday, April 11, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Mulford Library Café on The University of Toledo Health Science Campus. This event is a collaboration between Bowling Green State University Department of Psychology, The University of Toledo Departments of Psychology and Psychiatry, and the University of Michigan-Dearborn Department of Psychology. The goal is to provide an opportunity for faculty members and graduate students at each respective program to showcase their current research projects. Many faculty members and students from UT will have posters that will also be presented at other regional or national conferences.

Alumni News

- Kimberly Burkhart, Ph.D., a former clinical psychology graduate student working with Dr. Jeanne Brockmyer, was recently appointed to lead an Ohio Psychological Association task force on bullying. The task force will directly address questions such as, "What does the research literature indicate is the best way to address the problem of bullying?" Kimberly is currently on a Clinical Child Psychology Fellowship at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus.

The Lighter Side: Fun with Words – The Palindrome

By: Eric Prichard

A palindrome is a word, phrase, or number that has the exact same sequence of units forward and backward. Radar is an example of a palindromic word, and "rise to vote, sir" was a palindromic phrase that was featured in an episode of The Simpsons. One thing to keep in mind is that punctuation, capitalization, and spacing is oftentimes ignored. Below is a small sampling from dozens of palindromes that have been penned over the last 30 years by our very own Dr. Stephen Christman – professor of cognitive psychology. Enjoy!

Nightlife man on no-name filth gin.

Is Pepsi Pepsi?

Decides pro, can I also stab a bat? So slain, a corpse diced.

Wo, stone bigots use Jesus to gibe, not sow.

Able noses avoid art radio vases on Elba.

Guns erase, so remit. Forever of now won forever of time roses are snug.

Did it? No. Will it still? I won't. I did.

No sin, even if sad. Do not sob, Boston, odd as fine venison.

No. It can. It is. I stack cats. Is it inaction?

Tops never even step on live foes. A case of evil: no pets, never even Spot.

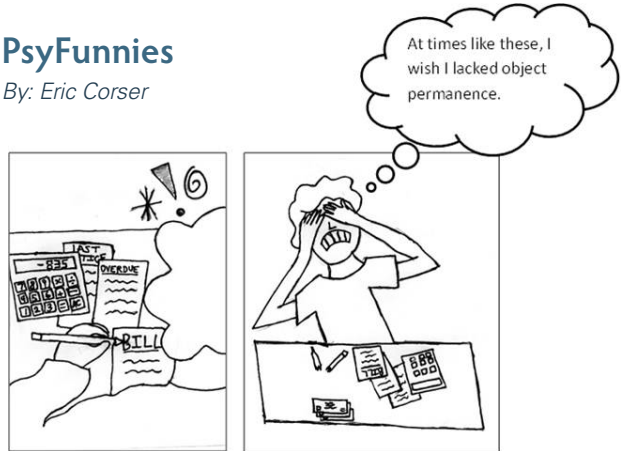
Stop nine. My vita aimed academia at ivy men in pots.

Hey, a war opus motto: bottoms up or away, eh?

Ha! By Rome, my deer gas pans emit, for at last I said, "Ah, so many dynamos had I," as its altar of time snaps a greedy memory. Bah!

PsyFunnies

By: Eric Corser



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