CHAIR’S CHAT

Desirable Difficulty

“Conditions that create challenges and slow the rate of apparent learning often optimize long-term retention and transfer.” (Bjork & Bjork, 2011, p. 56).

If you were at the Department of Psychological Science Annual Banquet in April (like all the cool people) you most likely remember exactly what I said during the State of the Department Address. But for our incoming freshmen and transfer students, here’s a very brief summary. First, I tried to identify both successes and challenges that the department encountered last year. Then I discussed the recommendation from the American Psychological Association that students take responsibility for their own learning (APA, 2011). In the interest of helping you get started on a successful academic year, I would like to follow up on those two ideas in this fabulous column.

There is a growing body of research (and we all love research!) on the concept of desirable difficulties. The quote above from Bjork and Bjork (2011) should give you a good idea of what desirable difficulty means. I bring this up because I would like you to take responsibility for your own success. How can you do that? Part of your strategy should be to challenge yourself by taking on desirable difficulties. It will be hard for you to do this and might even be unpleasant, but it will be harder and more unpleasant for you to find yourself unprepared for your career after leaving UCM.

Here are some specific examples of how you can benefit from desirable difficulty.

◊ When you study for exams, do you study for short-term recall so that you can pass the exam and move on? Or do you challenge yourself by using techniques like interleaving so that you can benefit from your learning years down the road? If you don’t know what interleaving is, ask me. It is wicked cool.

◊ I know that students talk to each other about how “that class is really hard” or “you don’t want to take that class with so-and-so.” I also know that the classes and instructors that students appreciate the most are often those that were a pain in the posterior. But students may not realize this until years after they have graduated.

◊ When you have options for class assignments, do you take the easy way out, or do you make choices based on what is most meaningful and important for your success? For example, how do you go about picking a topic for a term paper or a presentation?

◊ Do you challenge yourself with your reading choices, or do you opt for “light” reading and skip over the difficult parts of textbook chapters and articles?

◊ How do you use your free time as a college student? Do you follow up on what you have heard from faculty and upper level students (get involved in student organizations, research, and volunteer activities)? Or do you use your time for more familiar, less challenging activities?

I am not suggesting that you create needless difficulty for yourself. I am always in favor of making things no more complicated or difficult than they need to be. The trick is to figure out what difficulties that you need to confront to in order achieve your goals. Sometimes we do things not because we like to do them but because we like the consequences of doing them.

References


GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

The department currently has five graduate assistants (office hours are in parenthesis):

**Heather Ventura** - Physiological Psychology - Drs. Ament and Carter’s Physio classes. See Heather for questions about lab procedures and requirements - Lov 1011 (Office Hours: M 12-2; T 11-12) hev70920@ucmo.edu

**Angel Munoz** - Research Design & Analysis - Ms. Carmen Dotson and Individual Intelligence Testing - Dr. Suzan Schuetz. See Angel with your questions for stats & protocols. Lov 1005 (Office Hours: M 11-12; W 11-1; F 10-12) or axm63360@ucmo.edu Angel will also be conducting the Senior Exit Interviews.

**Angela Cox** - General Psychology - See Angela with any questions about the general psychology course - Lov 1011 (Office Hours: W 2:30-5; T 1:30-4) or anc69990@ucmo.edu

**Laura Reilly** - Research Design and Analysis and Research Coordinator - Dr. Carter. - Lov 1013 (Office Hours: T 12-2; W 1-3; R 12-1) ler97700@ucmo.edu

**Isaac Flint** - Research Design and Analysis - Students from Drs. Ament and Hwang’s classes should see Isaac about lab assignments and SPSS - Lov 1013 (Office Hours: MW 12:30-1 & 3-3:30; T 12-12:30 & 3-3:30; R 12-12:30; F 12:30-1 & 2-3) or irf44710@ucmo.edu

DEPARTMENT NEWS

In the Spring 2012 Psych Talk we listed the names of 14 students who were admitted to graduate or professional schools. Since then, an additional 12 students have been admitted to graduate programs. Their names are:

Jennifer Seeley        PhD - KU
Cassi Franklin        PhD - KU
Milton Dawkins        PhD - Jackson State Univ.
Lauren Hunt          MS   - UMKC
Nicole Capps         EdS - Abilene Christian Univ.
Anna Dickherber      MS - Ohio State
Tamarah Dixon        MS - Ohio State
Robert Bedell         MS - UCM (CSPA)
Isaac Flint           MS - UCM (PSY)
Linda Berletic       MS - UCM (PSY)
Laura Reilly         MS - UCM (PSY)
Heather Ventura       MS - UCM (PSY)

Recent Theses Completed

**Sarah Burton** - *Empowerment: A Qualitative Exploration of Individual Definitions Between Sexes*
Thesis Chair: Dr. Schuetz

**Milton Dawkins** - *Do Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Men differ Among Heterosexual Collegiate Student-athletes and Student Non-athletes?*
Thesis Chair: Dr. Stark

**Carmen Dotson** - *An Examination of the Relationship Between Personality and Cooking*
Thesis Chair: Dr. Kreiner

**Jennifer Seeley** - *Handedness as a Predictor of Startle Response Reflexes Elicited During Unanticipated Driving Events*
Thesis Chair: Dr. Ryan

Congratulations to...

⇒ Jennifer Seeley received the Outstanding Graduate Student Award from the College of Health, Science and Technology.
⇒ Dr. David Kreiner for getting advisor of the year 2011-2012.
⇒ Matthew Honeycutt and Lauren Hunt were listed in the Who’s Who Award at UCM.
⇒ Anna Callicotte, Rebecca Conrad Brown, Laura Diaz, Anna Dickherber, Tamarah Dixon, Amanda Holloway, Matthew Honeycutt, Lauren Hunt, Lindsay Lettow, Carly Mitchell, Hope Nordyke, Sarah Ramlal, and Jennifer Seeley received 2012 Student Leadership Awards from the Office of Student Affairs.
⇒ Jennifer Seeley for receiving the Reid Hemphill Outstanding Graduate Award, the top award a graduate student can receive at UCM.
Psychology Club

Psychology Club had a successful and active 2011-2012 year. Any student who is interested in psychology is welcome to join Psychology Club. Psychology Club meets every other week on Monday at noon and lunch is usually provided by students. Membership dues are $5 per semester or $10 per academic year. Feel free to come to the first meeting and learn more about the organization. You are welcome to join at any time throughout the school year.

In 2011-2012, members participated in trips to undergraduate conferences such as Great Plains—March 2012 in Maryville, MO, Missouri Undergraduate Psychology Conference (MUPC) held each November. Some students presented and others got to see first hand how to present research.

In addition to the conference trips, they host a lot of fund-raising activities, such as the T-Shirt Sale, Pie-A-PSYCHOlogy professor/student, Cupid’s Ball Dance, and Letters to Soldiers. The students were very active!

They also had an Ugly Sweater Party, participated in UCM’s spirit week by painting a window in the Elliot Union, Spring BBQ, and Sandwiches for Sustainability (in conjunction with Psi Chi).

The UCM psychology students have the opportunity to present their research at the Missouri Undergraduate Psychology Convention (MUPC) and Great Plains Students’ Psychology Convention. This is a great chance for students to earn awards. Psychology Club has provided support for students to these conferences by the hard work and efforts put forth by the members during the fund-raising events. They hope to continue to support the Psychology students who want to present their research at future conferences.

If you have any questions about Psychology Club, feel free to contact Dr. Carter (krcarter@ucmo.edu). Officers for 2012–13 are: President - Hailie Leahy; Vice-president - Rebecca Burandt, Treasurer- Holley Holter; Secretary - Rebecca Conrad Brown; Historians - Jacob Norwood & Amanda Voss.

Psi Chi

Psi Chi is the International Honor Society in Psychology. The UCM chapter of Psi Chi provides many opportunities for academic and professional development. Our chapter has been involved in a variety of service activities such as fundraising for local charities, sponsoring guest speakers, and offering workshops as well as individual tutoring for students in Psychology courses. Members of our chapter have presented at regional (Midwestern Psychological Association) and national (American Psychological Association) Psi Chi meetings. Our continued success depends on having members who are motivated and energetic.

Psi Chi members are eligible for a number of grants and awards. Students who are inducted pay dues only once and remain members for life. For more information on the benefits available to Psi Chi members, see www.psichi.org. We will notify students who meet the eligibility requirements early in the fall semester and invite them to join. There will also be an opportunity to be inducted in the spring semester. Check your student email account!

Faculty co-advisors for Psi Chi are Dr. Schuetz and Dr. Kreiner. Officers of the UCM chapter for the 2012-2013 school year are Rebecca Conrad Brown (President), Andrew Leonard (Vice President), Kirstie Bash (Secretary), Michael Compton (Treasurer), and Amanda Voss (Historian).
NEW FACULTY PROFILE: Dr. Hyeyeon (Ellie) Hwang

Dr. Hyeyeon (Ellie) Hwang graduated with her Ph.D. in Social Psychology from New Mexico State University in 2012. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in 2000 from Chung-Ang University, Seoul, Korea and she received a Master of Arts in Industrial and Organizational Psychology from Western Michigan University in 2007.

Dr. Hwang has taught Personality Psychology, Research Methods, Advanced Research Seminar, and Psychology of Women. She enjoys working with students in a fun but challenging learning environment so that students can find their own paths in psychology throughout their learning experiences. She plans to teach Social Psychology, General Psychology, Research Design and Analysis I & II, and Social Bases of Behavior. She is also interested in teaching courses such as Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Conservation Psychology, and Systems of Psychology.

As an applied social psychologist, Dr. Hwang’s primary research goal is to identify, develop, and test new approaches and theories to solve a variety of societal problems, including sustainability, education, health, and inequality and related conflict. She particularly focuses on understanding psychological motivation for and barriers to conservation behavior by examining the effects of several approaches, including self-priming, attitude, education, and different emotional reactions to environmental problems and conservation issues. Her main goal in this research area is to develop the theoretical foundation with which to understand human behavior concerning conservation and to build an efficient strategy to promote pro-social behavior. In addition, she is also interested in topics such as self-priming related to explicit social behavior and cognition; negative social emotion (e.g., embarrassment, jealousy, fear, and social anxiety) and its effect on social cognition and interpersonal behavior; social behavior in the workplace (e.g., competition, cooperation, and helping); and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Alumni Update: Laura Glass Umfleet

Laura Glass Umfleet graduated from UCM in 2006 with her B.S. and in 2008 with her M.S., both degrees in Psychology. While at UCM, she was involved in the Psychology Club, Psi Chi, PsychTalk Newsletter, and numerous research projects. Under the mentorship of Dr. Joseph Ryan, Laura has produced over 20 peer-reviewed publications and 40+ conference presentations. She has also collaborated on numerous research projects with other department faculty such as Drs. David Kreiner and Kim Stark. She plans to continue her publishing and presenting of research for years to come.

Laura recently received her doctorate in Clinical Psychology (emphasis in Neuropsychology) from Roosevelt University in Chicago, IL. During the 2011-2012 academic year, she was an intern at one of the top Clinical Neuropsychology internship training sites, University of Florida in Gainesville. Currently, she is a post doctoral resident in Neuropsychology at the Medical College of Wisconsin. She spends her free time with her husband and regularly enjoys watching South Park.

Seniors

Graduation: Apply for graduation once you have completed 90 credit hours.

Capstone Course: PSY 4110, Systems of Psychology is required to graduate.

ACAT:

Registration deadline: 10/31/12

Date Tues. 11/6/12 or Thur. 11/8/12

Time: 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

Location: Wood 311

Where do I register? Log on: MyCentral, Select tab "Student Services", Scroll: "Testing Services Registration Calendar" Admissions: Bring a valid photo ID.

Graduation Interviews: Information will be provided in your capstone course. If you have questions, please contact: Dr. Kreiner Lov. 1111, kreiner@ucmo.edu.
PSYCHOLOGY BANQUET

The 2012 Psychology Banquet was held on April 17th at the White Rose Pavilion. Over 60 students, faculty, alumni, emeriti faculty and guests attended. Each year, the Psychology Club, UCM chapter of Psi Chi, and the Department sponsor the banquet in order to honor psychology students and faculty for accomplishments made during the academic year. The ceremony also includes a State of the Department address, given by the department chair, Dr. David Kreiner.

This year, the award for Outstanding Psychology Alumni was given to Dr. Christopher Vowels who received two Bachelor of Art degrees in Psychology and Biology from UCM in 2001. Dr. Vowels completed his masters (2006) and doctorate (2008) at Kansas State University in Cognitive/Human Factors program.

While attending graduate school Dr. Vowels served as a Consortium Research Fellow at the U.S. Army Research Institute (ARI) for Behavioral and Social Science at the Fort Leavenworth Research Unit. He is currently a Senior Research Psychologist with the ARI Fort Hood Research Unit located in Fort Hood, Texas.

The Psychology Banquet is a great way for students to mingle with faculty, emeriti, and students outside of the classroom. Start making your plans now for the upcoming 2013 banquet!

2011 PSYCHOLOGY BANQUET AWARDS

Outstanding Faculty and Students
- Outstanding Undergraduate Student
  Matthew Honeycutt
- Outstanding Graduate Student
  Jennifer Seeley
- Outstanding Undergraduate Professor
  Dr. Steve Schuetz
- Outstanding Graduate Professor
  Dr. Joseph Ryan

Jerome M. Sattler Awards
- Best Research Project Completed as Part of Undergraduate Psychology Course
  Matthew Honeycutt

Reid Hemphill Outstanding University’s Graduate Student Award
- Jennifer Seeley

Jeff Brown Leadership Awards
- Matthew Honeycutt
- Rebecca Conrad Brown

Department Tuition Awards
- Sophomore Tuition Awards
  Chase Tryon
  Stacia Pottorff
- Junior Tuition Award
  Rebecca Burandt
  Hailie Leahy
  Michael Compton
- Senior Tuition Awards
  Katharina Oesch
  Alysha Darnell
  Jessica Shannon

Arthur John Ter Keurst Scholarship
Kirstie Bash

Robert N. Higgins Scholarship
Rebecca Conrad Brown

Joseph J. Ryan Scholarship
Angel Munoz

CHST Outstanding Graduate Student
Jennifer Seeley
The 24th Association for Psychological Science (APS) Annual Conference was held May 24th - 27th, 2012 in Chicago, IL. Psychology was represented by two faculty and five student presenters.

Next year’s Annual 25th APS Conference will be May 23-26, 2013 held in Washington D.C. Check out the APS website at: http://www.psychologicalscience.org/ to get more information about becoming a member of APS and about what you need to do to present at future conferences.

The 120th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (APA) was August 2nd - 5th, 2012 in Orlando, FL. The department was represented by three faculty and four student presenters.

Next year’s 121st Annual Convention will be held in Honolulu, Hawaii on July 31- August 4, 2013. You can get more information from the APA website: http://www.apa.org/convention/index.aspx

If you are interested in presenting at either APS or APA make sure you talk with a faculty member who shares the same research interest with you and get started working on research!


2012 APA Poster Presentations


MISSOURI UNDERGRADUATE PSYCHOLOGY CONFERENCE

Missouri Undergraduate Psychology Conference (MUPC) is a great way for any student who has conducted research to present. This is a great way to gain experience and knowledge about how to present at a conference as well as strengthen your application for graduate school. Talk to a faculty member about submitting your research. She or he will be very helpful in assisting you in preparing a submission.

(Note: you must have a faculty member's approval before submitting to any conference)

The keynote speaker for 2012 will be Dr. Bobby Mather. Dr. Mather's is currently at the University of Central Oklahoma and his research field is social cognition. Psi Chi will also have a speaker from Fulton State Hospital who will talk about research in a residential psychiatric hospital.

Students will be able to register online around early September.

THE GREAT PLAINS STUDENTS’ PSYCHOLOGY CONVENTION

The 2012 Great Plains Conference was held on March 9th and 10th at Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, MO. Faculty sponsors who attended: Drs. David Kreiner, Steve Schuetz, Neena Gopalan, and Ken Carter.

The upcoming 2013 conference will be held on March 15-16, 2013, Creighton University. Students are encouraged to discuss potential presentations with faculty members and begin making plans to present as soon as possible!

(Note: you must have a faculty member's approval before submitting for any conference)

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<td>Bad for me, bad for my planet: A qualitative exploration of individual choices to consume fast food. (Sponsored by Steven Schuetz)</td>
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Faculty and Student Presentations


**Kreiner, D.S.** (2012, May). *Careers for psychology majors*. Symposium conducted at the annual meeting of the Midwestern Psychological Association, Chicago, IL.


Faculty and/or Faculty/Student Publications


