

Psych News

The Official Newsletter of the Psych Collective

Spring 2010

3 Letters From the Editors

Atara Stemp

Sam Cooper

4 Spring 2010 Writers and Staff

Articles

6 School Psychology

Judy Rosen

6 The Yin and Yang Emotions of College

Bak K. Ko

8 The Importance of Research Experience
for the Upcoming Generation of Psychologists

Pamela Murillo

10 “Why Don’t You Just Tell Her How You Feel!”

One Student’s Informal Guide to Navigating the
Potential Rewards and Pitfalls of Emailing
Researchers at Graduate Programs

Timothy Hayes

14 Love of the Codependent

Stella Portnaya

16 Love of the Codependent Towards a More
Cohesive Form of Treatment: Treating
Teens with Comorbid Substance Abuse
Disorders

Grace Akinrinade

18 PKU

Donka Naydenova

18 Labotomy: A State of the Art
Approach to Treating Severe OCD?

Alexandra Koenig

20 Play... More Than Just Fun and Games

Angelica Briones

21 Modern Potential of Ancient Yogic Techniques

Elizaveta Lyukshina

22 The Beautiful World Beyond the Classroom

Kristy Larocca

Fun & Games

25 Psychology Big Wigs Crossword Puzzle

Atara Stemp

Lindsey Zahra

Advertisements & Opportunities

9 Spring 2010 “Psychology Convention” Special
Issue of Psych News

15 Write for Psych News

20 Charlotte W. Newcombe Scholarship:
Undergraduate Women 25 Years & Older!

23 Hollaback:
Excellent Research Opportunity!

26 The New York Needs You (NYNY)
Fellowship

26 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship for New
Americans

27 The Psychology Departmental Honors
Program

Letters From the Editors

As the Spring semester comes to a close and we present you with this issue of Psych News, I am acutely aware that due to my upcoming graduation in June, this will be the last time that I am able to contribute my efforts to this wonderful publication. Being a part of Psych News has been a very fulfilling experience that has underscored for me the importance of appreciating every human being for who they are, where they come from, and what they have to offer. I would like to thank my senior editor Sam, our treasurer Marlene, our graphics and layout designer, Israel, our faculty advisor, Professor Young, and all the Spring 2010 writers for helping to make this issue a staggering success! I deeply enjoyed collaborating with every one of you.

I also want to extend my sincerest gratitude to all the past and current writers, my fellow staff members, and especially the readers for making my experience as Editor-in-Chief one I will cherish and remember.

This semester, we were joined by some truly motivated and determined students, all eager to share their stories, passions, ideas, and advice with the Hunter community. The intriguing articles within cover a robust array of topics addressing issues such as spiritual and psychological health, clinical disorders, current developments and debates in the field, practical advice on networking and procuring the necessary experience to advance in your desired area, and ways of maintaining one's physical health.

Each article was a building block in a final product that has served to connect and unite the Hunter College student body. I am proud of the positive impact that this publication has had in providing useful information, food for thought and conversation, and a basis for community among writers and readers alike. I hope Psych News will continue to serve and strengthen the Hunter college community for many years to come.

Enjoy Reading!

Your Editor-in-Chief,
Atara Stemp

As the editing process for this issue marched on, I found myself pleased with a reversal of roles. After writing my own papers –psychology and other topics alike- for so long, I was on the other side of the table. I have to say, it was fascinating to delve into the views, thoughts, and theories found in my peers' writing, especially when I'd been previously restricted to my own. It's an enrichment process that I've found to be quite valuable.

Regarding the issue itself, I'm proud to say it makes for a fine read. From idea pitch to final draft all the writers have been great, and each brought a unique topic and view to the issue. So, thank you to our writers, it goes without saying that we couldn't have done it without you (and yet, I said it, proving that even editors make slip-ups). Additionally, I'd like to give a big thank you to my fellow staff, for making the transition to my role a smooth one. Finally, to the reader, a warm message of gratitude: you literally make it all worthwhile.

Enjoy!

Your Senior Editor,
Sam Cooper

Spring 2010 Writers and Staff



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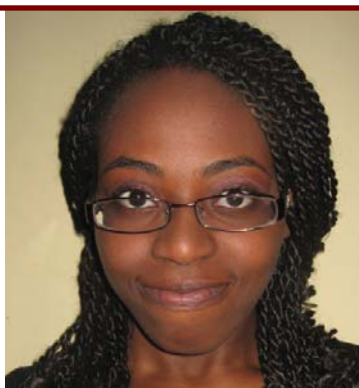
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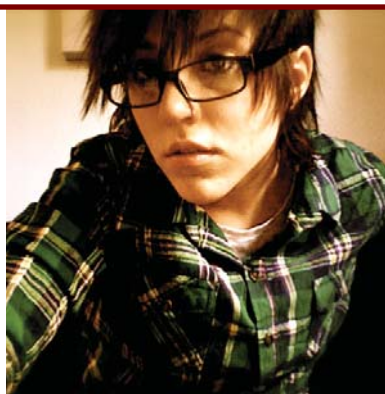
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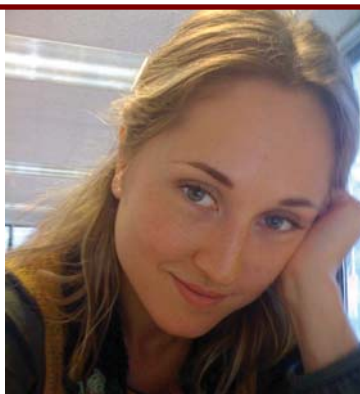
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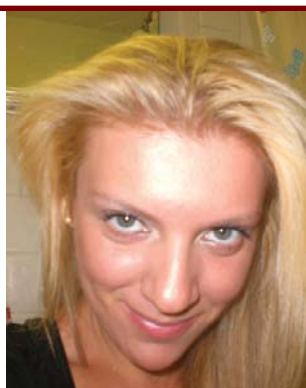
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Battle Over School Psychologist Title Over -- For Now

BY: JUDY ROSEN

When the APA's Council of Representatives set new guidelines for state licensure of psychologists in February, they voted overwhelmingly against a proposed revision that would have prevented non-doctoral school psychologists from using the word "psychologist" in their title.

Since 1977, the APA has stood firm on its policy that practitioners in all specialties must hold a doctoral degree to practice as a licensed psychologist, but school psychologists have always been exempt from that restriction.

The battle began in July, 2007, when the APA released a proposed revision to the Model Act for State Licensure (MLA) that no longer included the exemption. The reaction from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) was swift.

"Specifically, we worked with our members and our leadership to participate in the various

opportunities that APA provided for the public to comment on the proposed draft," Kathy Cowan, NASP's Director of Marketing and Communications, tells *Psych News*.

As of 2004, there were nearly 38,000 licensed school psychologists nationwide, 75 per cent of whom hold specialist-level degrees such as an Ed.S. Trained in both education and psychology, school psychologists practice mainly in the school setting.

Although the requirements vary from state to state, school psychologists are licensed by state education agencies to practice in schools and by state psychology boards for independent practice. NASP also awards the Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSPP) designation, which is recognized by 31 states.

Cowan said that for school psychologists, the proposed change to the MLA wasn't just a title issue, it was about practice.

"We did a line by line analysis of the MLA and identified a number of areas in practice where it

specifically said if you didn't have the title 'psychologist' you couldn't do the following things," Cowan said. "Well it pretty much covered everything that school psychologists do."

NASP members, their colleagues, national-level educational organizations, and both local and state boards of education sent more than 30,000 letters and comments to the APA's MLA Task Force asking them not to strike the exemption.

"In contrast to the benefits, which support a continuation of the exemption, it does not appear that withdrawal of the exemption would provide any benefits," National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel wrote in a January 26, 2009 letter to the APA. "In fact, such a withdrawal would likely harm students, families and schools by exacerbating

The Yin and Yang Emotions of College

BY: BAK K. KO

People often wonder whether it is worth going to college when they could just find a job anywhere. But upon realizing that college is often the link between having certain skills and attaining a good paying job, many choose to go to college. However, many students are confused about what course of study they should pursue until they've begun to take college level courses. It is often said that college is a place where students can "find themselves," but at the same time, it appears to be a place where numerous types of students can be found.

Two very common categories of

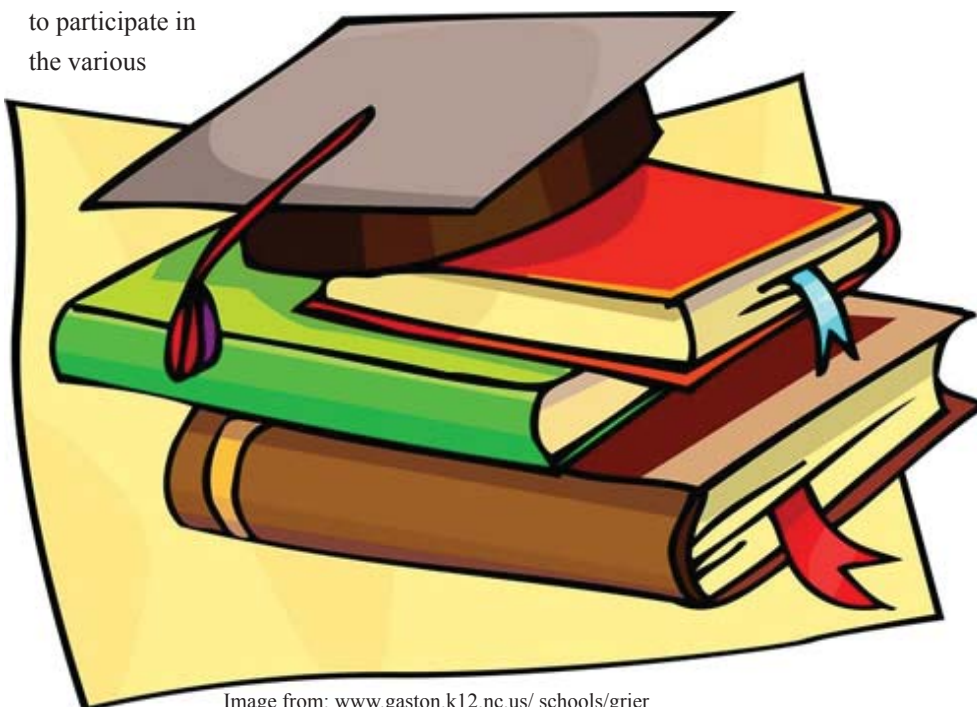


Image from: www.gaston.k12.nc.us/schools/grier

an already severe shortage of school psychologists particularly in a number of rural and urban districts.”

While NASP was advocating from the outside, members of the APA’s Division 16, which covers school psychologists, were working from the inside. After the initial revision was proposed, Division 16’s executive committee surveyed its membership, all of whom are doctoral level psychologists, to solicit input before taking a formal position on the matter. Ninety percent of the responses from the Division membership were in support of keeping the exemption for non-doctoral school psychologists.

“They understood the consequences of the removal of this exemption,” Cowan said, crediting the work of individual APA members and Division 16. “I think that without

[them], and I’m guessing here because we won’t know, our efforts might not have been successful.”

After the vote, the APA released a statement confirming their commitment to the policy that the doctoral degree should be the minimum requirement to practice as a licensed psychologist. But, they also acknowledged the work of school psychologists “for their tireless efforts to promote student wellness and academic success.”

Despite February’s favorable vote, the issue of the use of the title psychologist might come up again in the future. “Our message to school psychologists is that this isn’t over,” said Cowan, “This is a reprieve and it is more important than ever that school psychologists are 1) practicing good practice and 2) are making sure that the

decision makers at the local and state level know who they are and understand that school psychologists have unique training.”

Although state and local government budget cuts are affecting schools, the outlook for the school psychology profession is still bright. U.S. News & World Report listed it as one of their “Best Careers of 2010,” noting that there should be strong growth in the field over the next ten years.

“(NASP) president Patti Harrison said at our convention in Chicago (in March) ... ‘this is a great profession and it’s as resilient as the resilience that we teach kids,’” Cowan said. “There is so much for school psychologists to do in what’s going on with schools today.” ■

students and of people in general are introverts and extroverts. These two main categories have the potential to produce two overarching types of students: happy and depressed. What causes these divisions in the college population? Some people associate these symptoms with social upbringings, while others say peer pressure is to blame. Psychological studies have tried to explain this dichotomy through empirical evidence, but there seems to be no definite answer. People are nurtured in different ways, resulting in an extraordinary amount of environmental factors that affect social behavior. Biologically, emotional reactions are a result of

hormonal release from the brain. The basic concept is this: When a person is in a situation, the brain determines which hormone to release in response to the situation. The hypothalamus then releases that hormone resulting in a specific behavioral reaction. This is the simplest explanation for all human behavior, including emotions.

Based on these facts and observations, it seems obvious that one would prefer to follow a path where goals can be accomplished and a sense of accomplishment can be gained. A survey was given to graduate students asking them to compare their undergraduate school life with their graduate school life. The general result

showed that students were very active in their undergraduate years in order to propel themselves to where they are today. Most did laboratory research and/or had authored publications. For them, these activities filled the majority of their undergraduate lives and they truly enjoyed them.

The findings of this poll were compared with findings of another poll given to undergraduates who were asked to assess their own progress in college. The results revealed that some had already set goals for themselves in high school, but many had no idea yet what they wanted to do with their lives. Nevertheless, all believed that education was important. Those students who did

not know what to pursue simply took general education requirements to start with and they decided on their career goals further down the line. This would often lead to an extra year or two in college. Those students who already knew what they wanted to do are reportedly currently focusing on doing well and are preparing to take graduate exams.

Finally, professors were asked how they felt about student progress based on their experiences. Their

general reaction was that active students are more towards the yang side of emotions and less active students veer more towards the yin side of emotions. Active students would participate more, interact, and sit up front in class, while the opposite holds true for the not-so active students. It is this distinction that contributes to professors' reactions and approaches to teaching happy and depressed students.

College is very often the turning point in a person's life. It is a time when some

students may overcome their introverted tendencies in order to discover new opportunities and benefits. However, not all students can do so. In my opinion, this is the driving purpose of student interaction and USG. Students have the ability to change their futures by taking action. Common actions include joining clubs, volunteering, counseling, and networking. Of course, students are not limited to these activities, but this type of involvement can often elicit encouragement and ultimate success. ■

The Importance of Research Experience for the Upcoming Generation of Psychologists

BY: PAMELA MURILLO

When I graduated high school, I already knew what career path I wanted to take. Psychology was the field that I was always interested in, although at that time I didn't have a clear understanding of what psychology really was. On my first day of college I was really excited to go to Psychology 100, but little did I know what that experience was going to be like. I entered the classroom full of excitement with great expectations, but to my surprise I was in a crowded auditorium with over 200 students. I was very disappointed, since I was used to small classrooms and more group interaction. I was not able to hear the professor well, and he spoke so fast about all these theories and psychology terms that I was just left completely puzzled. Because it was a lecture hall, there was no room for questions and there was little interaction with the professor. I learned so much background information that I thought Psychology 100 should be divided into two semesters; it was just too much for

me to handle in one semester.

Introductory courses usually contain large numbers of students, therefore professors very often run out of time and rarely speak to students about what it is like out in the field. As a senior graduating in the Spring of 2010, I look back and realize that I would have liked to learn about the importance of research experience in that crowded Psychology 100 class. Research experience is a fundamental part of psychology and psychology majors are often unclear about what it entails.

Research experience is an important part of psychology because it helps you learn about the different paths you can take in the field. It is a way to find out if psychology is what you really want to do in the future. Furthermore, it gives you the knowledge and understanding of how experiments are run in the real world. Research experience is very valuable when applying to graduate school; it helps you stand out from the rest of the competition and it gives you the ability to demonstrate that you know exactly what you want. It is essential to obtain

research experience as early as possible in your career. It not only helps you discover if psychology is right for you, but it helps raise the possibilities of getting into a very competitive and well known psychology graduate program.

But how can you begin to look for research experience? The first step is to contact your professors. Professors are the tools to success. They are there to help you, guide you, and lead you on your career paths. Many psychology professors at Hunter run research labs based on their areas of interest, so if you like a particular class and subject, contact that professor and ask them if you can volunteer in their lab. Positions in a lab are limited, and it may take a semester or two for you to get in, so try contacting professors at least a semester ahead of when you would like to volunteer. Second, speak to an advisor. There are wonderful and very helpful advisors in the psychology department (Room 610 Hunter North), so take advantage of the walk-in hours and speak to them about your interest in research experience; they will give you a list of all the labs at Hunter.

Third, speak to peers and friends. Some students in your classrooms may already be involved in research labs, and this might help you get involved as well. Last but not least, attend graduate school workshops. Graduate school workshops stress the importance of research before applying to graduate school, and often times they bring in professors who run research labs and are in search of volunteers. Take advantage of these meetings, start getting prepared, and remember that it is never too early to start volunteering.

Once you are accepted into a research lab, you agree to a commitment. Labs require a specific amount of hours to be completed by volunteers. It is often very difficult for students who have part-time or full-time jobs to commit to a specific number of hours in a lab. However, because research experience is so important, the sacrifice is worth it. Find a research lab with a flexible schedule that may allow you to keep your job



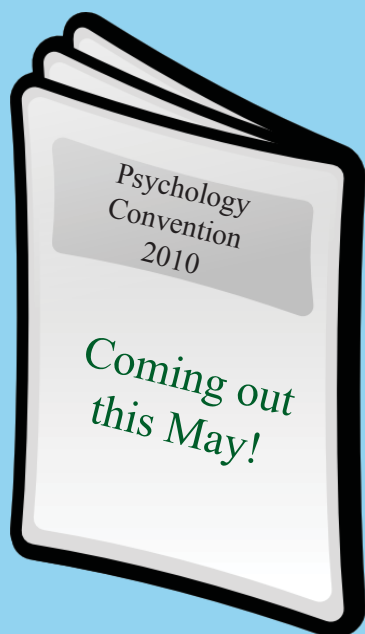
Image from: silvertonhospital.org

and volunteer at the same time. Speak to the professor or researcher and set up the times you can volunteer; they can be very flexible and understanding, so don't give up if you think your job

has a really crazy schedule. Consider the possibility of volunteering on the weekends as well. There are labs that offer this opportunity and it can be very convenient for those who have full-time jobs.

In conclusion, do not delay volunteering in a lab even if it's not the lab you really wanted to get into.

Get your "foot in the door" as soon as possible; every lab and bit of experience you obtain counts. Furthermore, all research experience is important and gives you background knowledge of the field. If you haven't had any prior research experience and you want to apply to graduate school, try to get into a lab that suits the graduate program you will apply to. This way the program you are applying to sees your particular field of interest. Remember that research experience is a very important part of becoming a psychologist. ■



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“Why Don’t You Just Tell Her How You Feel!”

One Student’s Informal Guide to Navigating the Potential Rewards and Pitfalls of Emailing Researchers at Graduate Programs

BY: TIMOTHY HAYES

This article is a reworking of a talk Tim gave this past Fall at a “Careers in the Helping Professions” panel with Dr. Lynne Kemen and Paula Wicklow.

Last semester, Lynne Kemen graciously asked me to deliver a short talk on the topic of “emailing researchers at graduate programs” at a “Careers in the Social Services Panel” she and Paula Wicklow were organizing. I happened to mention this fact to a good friend of mine in the statistics tutoring office, and found myself met with an unsettlingly skeptical reaction. “Oh really?” she said disapprovingly, her nose wrinkling in disgust, “I would *never* write suck-up emails to researchers. That’s what those are, you know; they’re suck-up emails. I would never do that. All of the relevant information about you should be included in your personal statement.”

My friend’s reaction is neither uncommon nor unwarranted. Her comments touch on something that any potential graduate student must grapple with when contemplating whether or not to contact a researcher they admire: emailing researchers involves a certain amount of risk. Researchers are busy people who receive a large number of graduate applications for a very limited number of spots in their labs. Done well, an email to a researcher might pique their interest in your application, setting you apart from the rest. Done carelessly, an email could cause you to stand out negatively, marking you as an insufferable, disingenuous brownnoser.

As such, before talking about how to email researchers, I should first address the crucial question of whether or not you *should* email researchers in the first place. As I said, emailing a researcher is taking a risk, so why take that risk? In my opinion there are several good reasons to email researchers at your schools of interest. I would like to begin by addressing my friend’s argument that “all of the relevant information about you should be included in your personal statement.”

While this argument has some merit, there are at least two ways that it falls short. The first has to do with the nature of personal statements. Here’s the thing about personal statements: they have to cover a lot of ground, and they have to be *short*. While you should certainly include information in your personal statement pertaining to which researcher you would like to work with at a given school and why, you must also talk about your career goals, why you’re interested in graduate school in psychology, your various research experiences, and your honors thesis (if you’ve conducted one). You may also wish to talk about why you initially became interested in psychology. Discussing any of these things takes time and space in a personal statement that might be limited to as few as 500

or 600 words. By the time you get to the paragraph in your statement about why you’re interested in working in Dr. So-and-So’s lab, space will be

tight; usually a short paragraph or two will be all the space you’ll have left to address this important topic. As such, one strong benefit of emailing researchers before you apply is that even a short email will allow you to communicate your interest in that person’s work in greater detail than you will have space

for in your personal statement.

Even if you manage to find a clever way to include absolutely everything in your personal statement, however, there is a second and even more important benefit of contacting researchers by email. A personal statement is essentially a short monologue telling grad schools about yourself and your work. Contacting researchers via email, on the other hand, opens up a *dialogue* with that person. And in addition to letting them know about you, there are at least three important things you’ll want to know from them.

First, you’re going to want to know if they’re taking any grad students into their lab next year. If not, there’s no point in applying to work with that person. I’ve saved literally hundreds of dollars in application fees by asking this question. Second, you

“Done well, an email to a researcher might pique their interest in your application, setting you apart from the rest. Done carelessly, an email could cause you to stand out negatively, marking you as an insufferable, disingenuous brownnoser.”

are going to want to know what their current research focuses on; perhaps in more detail than might be listed on their lab webpage. This is a judgment call. Some researchers list their projects very thoroughly on their websites. Others are less thorough. Either way, if you are accepted into graduate school to work with researcher X, you are likely going to be an RA on his or her current projects. So it pays to know what those projects are ahead of time.

Third, and most important, you are going to want to see each researcher's reaction to you. A communication back from a researcher says a lot about what they're like as a person and how they treat others. People are often reluctant to email researchers because they're afraid of getting negative responses. While nobody *wants* a negative response, even a negative reaction is ultimately information about a researcher's interpersonal style: do you *really* want to work with someone who believes their academic credentials excuse them from having to treat others with basic respect and politeness? In the end, this is a judgment call that you must make for yourself. Only you know what your boundaries are. But personally, my answer to that question is "no."

So those are my thoughts on the topic of *why* to email researchers. That being said, some people's emails are met with a more positive reception than others. Discussing the merits of contacting researchers says little about *how* to craft a strong – rather than an off-putting – email. In the remainder of this article, I will give you my best advice on how to handle each of the three essential stages in the writing process: how to have the right *mindset*, how to *prepare*, and specific tips on

writing and communicating your genuine interest in a believable way.

Mindset

On the issue of having a good mindset when contacting researchers, two things should be said. First, emails themselves possess no special power to get your application accepted. All they can do is introduce you to a researcher and potential graduate advisor. Sure, a good email might pique a researcher's interest in your application, but the application itself still has to be strong. The most positive (and most common) response I got from the researchers I contacted was some version of, "That sounds great. It certainly does sound like we have some research interests in common. *I look forward to reading the rest of your application.*" So make sure that your whole application – grades, GREs, research experience, personal statement, letters of recommendation – is strong.

Second, many people worry about what to say in an email. While I will have some specific advice on this

subject at the end of this article, the best advice on mindset came from a friend of a friend, Johnny, who actually wasn't talking about contacting researchers at all; he was talking about meeting girls. I met Johnny at a time in my life when I was single and trying to learn how to initiate conversations with strangers in New York (I eventually succeeded; I met my girlfriend, Maggie, in a bookstore near Columbus Circle). While I was struggling to learn this particular social skill set, Johnny was a natural master at it. He talked to everyone everywhere – bars, coffee shops, book stores, Union Square, you name it. And everyone loved him, especially women. At one point, I decided to ask Johnny what his secret was. "Johnny," I asked him, "How do you *do* that? What kinds of questions are you asking these girls that get them to open up and talk to you like that?"

Johnny replied with what may be the most simple and eloquent piece of advice I have ever received (in order for this to make sense, by the way, I should mention that Johnny was a political science major at University of Michigan, with a strong interest in psychology). "Tim," he replied, "If you're asking people questions to try to get them to like you, you've already failed. That's approval-seeking. The purpose of a question is *not* to get people to like you. The purpose of a question is to elicit information you desire from another person." It was so simple and so obvious, and yet it never would have occurred to me in a thousand years.

From Johnny's comments, it is easy to extrapolate that, at least ideally, the purpose of a statement is also not to get people to like you; it's to *communicate* information – in this



Image from: www.buzzle.com

context information about *yourself* – to another person. So in emailing researchers, I would encourage you to keep this simple idea in mind, hard though it may be. The purpose of your email is not to get a researcher to like you, it is to communicate yourself and your interest in their research. That's it. You can't *make* anyone like you. You can only put yourself out there and *let* others come to their own decision.

So communicate, don't try to manipulate. In the case of contacting researchers, what you are communicating is genuine interest in their work. To do so requires work on the next phase of effective writing.

Preparation

Preparation is easily and unequivocally the most important part in this process. If you are fully prepared, writing a compelling email is like exhaling after taking a deep breath – it's a natural extension of what came before. Don't get me wrong, if you're like me you'll undoubtedly fuss over the minute details of the wording of every sentence of an email to your favorite researcher. But if you're prepared, the difficulty won't lie so much in *what* to say as in *how* to say it.

In applying to grad schools, strong grades, research experience, recommendations, and GRE scores are all prerequisites. What separates the best from the rest, though, is compatibility, or "goodness of fit." Researchers want a well-qualified applicant with genuine interest and relevant experience in their specific domain of interest. The first part of this requires you to "know thy self" and cultivate some specific areas of genuine research interest. How to do

so is beyond the scope of this article. Once you've narrowed your interests, however, the next phase is to identify researchers who are doing what you want to do. This can be accomplished in several ways: scouring the bibliographies of your favorite articles or the references in a textbook chapter on your particular research topic, typing a keyword search into PsychInfo via the Hunter Library website, looking at websites for PhD programs in areas you're interested in living in and seeing who teaches there and what their interests are, asking teachers, advisors, and friends with similar interests for recommendations, etc. A particular

favorite tactic of mine is to find

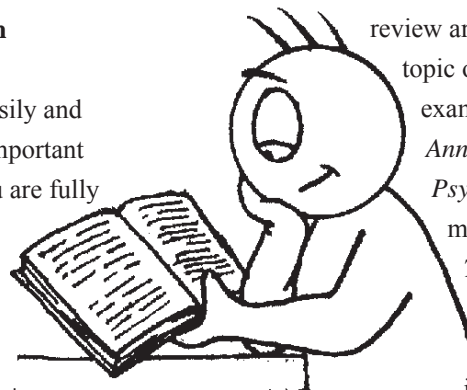


Image from: www.faculty.fordham.edu

review articles on a topic of interest – for example, from the *Annual Review of Psychology* or, in my discipline, *The Handbook of Social Psychology* in the Hunter

library – and reading up on the various researchers mentioned in the articles whose work catches my interest.

However you set out to find like-minded researchers, my best advice for preparation comes at the point in your progress when you have already assembled a list of researchers you want to contact. Once you have discovered researchers whose work sounds interesting, you should read some of their articles. That sounds obvious, but here's the part that people tend neglect: ***do more than the bare minimum – read several articles!*** I can't tell you how many times I've heard people talk about only reading each researcher's most recent article (and by "read" they often mean "skim

the abstract"). If you really want to separate your application from 99% of people who apply, do better than that. Look on each researcher's lab website and see what topics they're interested in and what they're known for. Usually a given researcher will list anywhere from 3 to 6 lines of research they are currently conducting. There are also often bibliographies (and sometimes PDFs) of the researcher's articles on their website. Once you've identified a researcher's areas of major interest, look up their articles and ***read at least a couple of articles on each of the researcher's topics of interest.*** Become as conversant in their research as you can.

This advice may seem daunting, but think of it this way: You are applying to grad school in psychology presumably because this is something you really want to do. You want to do this enough that you are willing to go to school for 5 or 6 years, write a master's thesis and a dissertation and live on a small stipend and possibly move to another state to do so. Presumably you are doing all of this because you are really interested in psychology and research. As such, reading articles should not be a chore, it should be something *interesting and fun*. This has two implications – one for mindset and one for awareness. First, as you do this, remember why you're doing it – because you love it. Take the time to enjoy it. Think of this as a great excuse to read stuff you enjoy and learn about your major areas of interest. Second, if you're not enjoying it despite the above advice, this tells you something about your interest level in this researcher and possibly your interest in grad school over all. Be aware of those reactions; they are valuable information.

Writing (Communication)

We've discussed the pros and cons of contacting researchers. We've talked about how to have a good mindset and how to prepare. If you've made it this far in the process, you should be proud of yourself – the hardest work is already done. Now we're ready to write.

At this point you should know your own research interests and what it is that interests you about each researcher. The task that remains is to communicate that genuine interest effectively without seeming like you're writing the kind of "suck-up emails" my friend so rightfully disdains.

Luckily, there are some tricks to writing in a way that conveys your sincerity in a believable way: being *specific* in your language, *justifying* your compliments by basing them on something concrete, and *personalizing* your language without getting too personal for a first-contact situation. I will discuss each of these things in turn.

First, specificity. The more vague your language is, the more it sounds like you're lying, "sucking-up," or, at the very least, haven't thought through what you're saying (for more on this, cf. Paul Ekman, *Telling Lies*). Think about it. If you're late for class and you tell your teacher, "oh sorry. It was, you know, the trains," it sounds like you're lying. But if you say, "Sorry Professor, the R train had a sick passenger and we were stuck at Whitehall street for *forty-five* minutes and the homeless guy across the train on the other bench kept mumbling to himself and he smelled like ..." well, you get the idea. The point is that the second version is more believable because it's more specific: who would take the time



Image from: www.blog.lib.umn.edu

to think up all those specific details? The same thing goes for emailing researchers. Talking about the specific details of someone's article is a better strategy than being too broad or vague.

The second issue is justification. This is where your email is kind of like an essay. If your thesis is "I like your research" you should support it with evidence. What about this person's work do you like, specifically? Instead of showering someone with empty compliments, it is a far more convincing strategy to show appreciation for something specific that they have done or written. So my second piece of advice is to support your thesis and justify your compliment with evidence.

The third and final issue is the most sensitive and the most easily confused: personalize your email,

"Avoid getting too personal too fast."

but don't get too personal for a first-contact situation.

In initiating contact with someone new, it is a very good idea to speak in the first person rather than the second person or omniscient voice. Saying, "your work on the

effect of valence framing on message elaboration is an important addition to the empirical literature on this timely topic" certainly meets the criteria of being a specific and well-justified compliment, but it's not at all personal – it says nothing about *you*. It is a much better approach, in my opinion, to personalize your compliment by saying not only why someone's research is important to the world in general, but what about their work is interesting to *you*. A much better version would be, "since I investigated normative framing in my honors thesis, I have a great appreciation for your research on the effect of valence framing on message elaboration." That sentence is far from overbearingly personal or maudlin, but it does communicate a little bit about why who you are and why this person's research caught your attention.

Finally, I'd like to include a quick word about the related issue of self-disclosure of personal stories. This is a controversial topic – should you include a personal anecdote in your email? My opinion is that telling a personal story can be okay *within reason*. You have to use common sense. A brief anecdote about why you became interested in psychology can be okay if it is relevant to your larger point and leads into why you're interested in a particular research topic. But avoid getting too personal too fast. The researcher whose lab you're applying to is not your parent or your therapist and there are boundaries. Avoid telling stories that imply pathology. This word of caution applies especially to those intending to pursue graduate study in clinical psychology. Many of the clinical researchers I've met have expressed how off-putting it is to get emails from students divulging too-personal information about their experience with their own (or a friend

or family member's) mental illness. This is not a hard and fast rule, and it is probably possible to tell such a story tactfully and with great effect, but to do so is a high-risk move. If you choose to proceed with this strategy, tread carefully. So my advice, again, is to personalize your email, but don't get too personal, too quickly.

In sum, the path to writing strong emails to researchers at graduate school consists of having the right mindset, conducting thorough preparation, and writing in a way that is specific, well-justified, and

personalized (but not too personal for a first encounter with a stranger). Follow these steps and I see no reason why you wouldn't be met with the kind of enthusiastic reception I have been lucky to get from my favorite researchers. Most importantly, remember why you're doing this: because you love psychology enough that you're going to spend years in school in order to work in the field. So have fun! I really enjoyed reading up on each of the researchers I contacted last fall. I learned a lot about my field, developed and fine-tuned my specific

research interests, and have had the privilege of introducing myself to some of my personal heroes. I would do it again in a heartbeat and I highly recommend this strategy to anybody who is seriously interested in pursuing graduate study in psychology. The path I'm recommending isn't easy, but it pays high dividends in the things you'll learn and the people you'll get to meet. Finally I hope this article was helpful and I wish you all the best of luck in your graduate applications! ■

Love of the Codependent

BY: STELLA PORTNAYA

Love is such a beautiful word, so often used and so often abused. The word love is like an umbrella which holds so many actions, feelings, and emotions. Love is passion, love is care, and love is a feeling like you are flying in the air. We can explain love as that internal drive to do things that bring happiness or to do things that you would never do.

At times, we hear about situations in which actions are followed by phrases such as "you know I love you, and no one will love you like I do." It is love which is not love but a failed illusion. It is a fog which covers the eyes of the individual we can call a codependent. It is a woman or a man whose partner is begging for forgiveness over and over. Incidents vary, some may find themselves in abusive relationships, others live or have lived with an addict of drugs and alcohol, and others just may crave attachment from unavailable individuals. But what is this feeling

of love that makes so many stay and suffer? Why do we stay in relationships holding on to the belief of love when there is nothing to love? Why do we try so hard in the name of love to excuse and fix the unfixable? Is it worth it to live a life of cruelty, loneliness, and isolation? Is it healthy to hold on to the illusion of who you want to see in a person? All of these questions are common in the mind of the codependent. The sad part is that a codependent often believes in changing and fixing, and once they succeed, in being happy.

There is no universal definition of codependency or how it happens. Although, if two codependent individuals discuss the issue, each will probably sense what the other one means. There are common

things they do, think, feel, and say. Jacqueline Williams in *Confessions of a Codependent* defines codependency as "a psychological condition or a relationship in which a person is controlled or manipulated by another who is affected with a pathological condition (such as an addiction to sex, alcohol, or drugs)." Personally I can acknowledge now that I was in a relationship with a man who I later learned had addictive problems. He

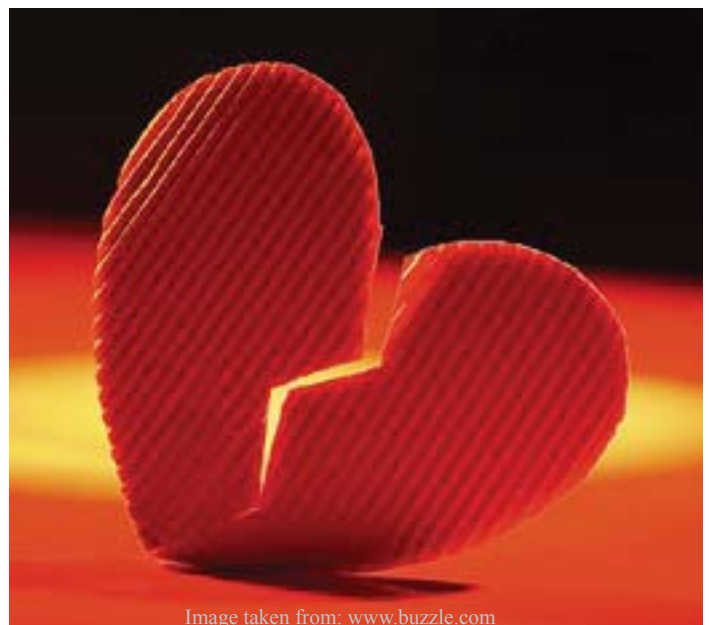


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made me feel that being near would let me control his behavior and help him change.

I did not realize the fact that no matter what you do, people do not change unless they want to. My codependence grew as a result of seeing the good side of my partner when I was around. I believed that standing by him in hard times would help him get on the right track. I have lived over a year trying to understand and control my partner, which he suggested I do. I would get very upset if I wasn't able to contact him. But he found ways of doing what he wanted and hurting me, always when least expected. Lies were covered by lies. But I still believed in him needing me, believed he loved me, and that he did not want to lose me. One thing was just not clear to me at the time, I started to become codependent. I believed I was ready to let him go, since I started to see my life falling apart in order to help him. My codependency did not become clear until he left me for another woman. Right now I realize I did some crazy things: I would stop and leave a class just to make sure he would meet me and go home. I would walk miles just to go and make sure he went to work. I would pick him up since he was always in trouble. I blamed

myself for not being there to prevent what he was doing. No matter what I did, nothing stopped him. He ended up doing whatever he wanted to do. He always promised me it would be the last time, and of course, it never really was.

Top things that stand out to me relating to codependency is obsessively thinking of the partner, wanting to be with, touch, talk and listen at every chance. We put the other person above us. Nothing else is as important. We want to be cared for and treasured by the other person and find ourselves always disappointed. We go to great lengths to get the partner to fulfill the big fantasy we have created in our minds. We get angry when the fantasy is not real, and usually try to leave the relationship or break away. It hurts to stay and it hurts to go. We begin a cycle within ourselves. We tell ourselves to try harder when the partner ignores us, abuses us, or cheats on us. Instead of leaving, and believing we deserve better, we often stick with what we know. It seems easier to try harder and put more energy into a relationship, but no matter how hard we try we fail over and over.

As I started researching this topic of codependency, I was overwhelmed at how much literature

there is about the subject. Some call it addiction, some call it codependency, some call it drama, some link it to childhood, and others link it to low self-esteem. What I came across is that one codependent is different from another. There is no concrete way to identify codependency. It is still unclear when you can realize that you are going beyond that normal threshold of attachment and desire to help those you love. When is it that your thinking pattern is off and you become obsessive, addictive, controlling, and miserable? Once I started reading, I realized that while some things were true in my case, others did not apply. We still need to recognize that all characteristics do not fit all situations. There are ways to heal and empower, and resources such as therapists, support groups, and spiritual healing among others are available. There are books written by amazing authors, such as Melody Beattie, which can empower any codependent. Within life, anyone can find themselves in a codependent relationship at one time or another. Some are fortunate to learn early and some may continue to live a life full of drama. Understanding and learning may save and empower you. ■

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Towards a More Cohesive Form of Treatment:

Treating Teens with Comorbid Substance Abuse Disorders

BY: GRACE AKINRINADE

Co-morbidity refers to a condition in which two or more diseases occur simultaneously in a person. When it comes to treating adolescents with co-morbid substance abuse issues, government services and clinicians alike run into the same problem: How does one treat all of the various disorders that could possibly affect this population? Clinicians with diverse backgrounds treat patients differently and then address either only their mental illness(es) or substance abuse issues. Psychiatrists are trained to administer drugs, psychologists and social workers deal with the social, emotional, and environmental impact these teens deal with, parole officers and courts address the teen's judicial issues, and foster care and Administration for Children's Services address unstable home issues. The problem is further compounded by differences between teen males and females in co-morbid drug abuse. Males are more likely to experience conduct disorder, whereas females are more likely to experience affective disorders such as depression. While these various methods are convenient for those treating the teen, there is increasing evidence that points to the idea of a more holistic method of treating an adolescent with co-morbid substance abuse issues.

Although it is difficult to specifically pinpoint causes of substance abuse in teens,

researchers have identified many risk factors that could potentially lead to future substance use and abuse. Some of the risk factors include biological or genetic predispositions. Neurological damage during childhood development might play a role for these teens. Environmental influences, including peer pressure, family use or tolerance, and resilience all seem to play important roles as well. Studies have found that there is a relationship between adolescents being treated in substance abuse programs and "difficult temperament" type as a child. Those with a prior diagnosis of mood and anxiety disorders are approximately two times as likely to abuse drugs. Studying drug abuse during adolescence is a worthwhile expenditure because adolescence is a developmental stage in which much psychosocial and biological change occurs at once, and exposure to drugs could predict future use. Environmental factors, such as

childhood trauma or abuse, and lack of extracurricular activities also can play a role. Conversely, drug use could lead to or facilitate other disorders, conditions, and issues. Teens who abuse drugs tend to fare worse in school, develop antisocial skills, and experience loss in memory. As a result, teens with these issues enter adulthood with developmental and behavioral problems.

Drugs prescribed to this population sometimes are effective in treating one aspect of their issues. In one study, adolescents with Conduct Disorder, ADHD, and substance abuse disorder were recruited and assigned to either a placebo or pemoline. It was found that pemoline worked to decrease ADHD but not substance use in adolescents. The drug is still thought to be an effective treatment in low-risk substance-abuse settings, however, the jury is still out as to whether it can help both issues.

As a result of these findings, researchers are just now coming to the realization that treatment of co-morbidity perhaps requires a more comprehensive approach in treatment. It has been proposed that specific types of treatment should and could be offered for smaller subsets of people, such as those with conduct disorder and a history of substance abuse. But this line of research still has a long way to go. ■

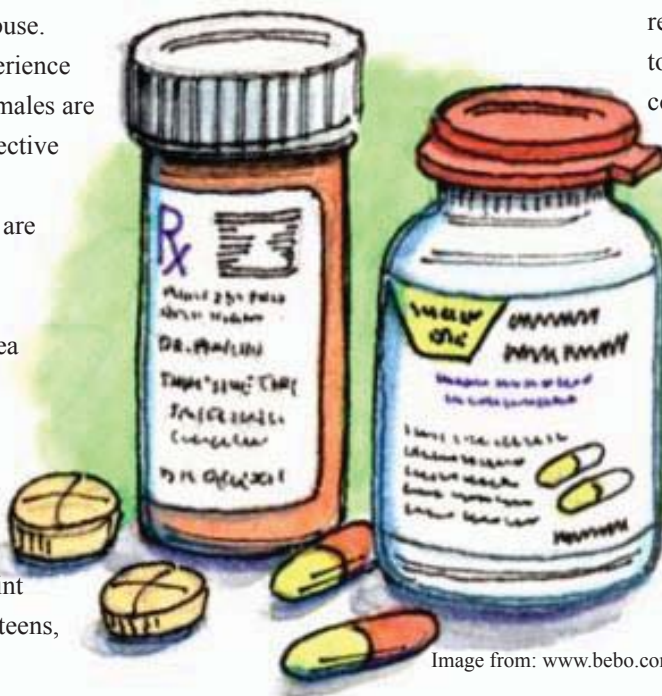


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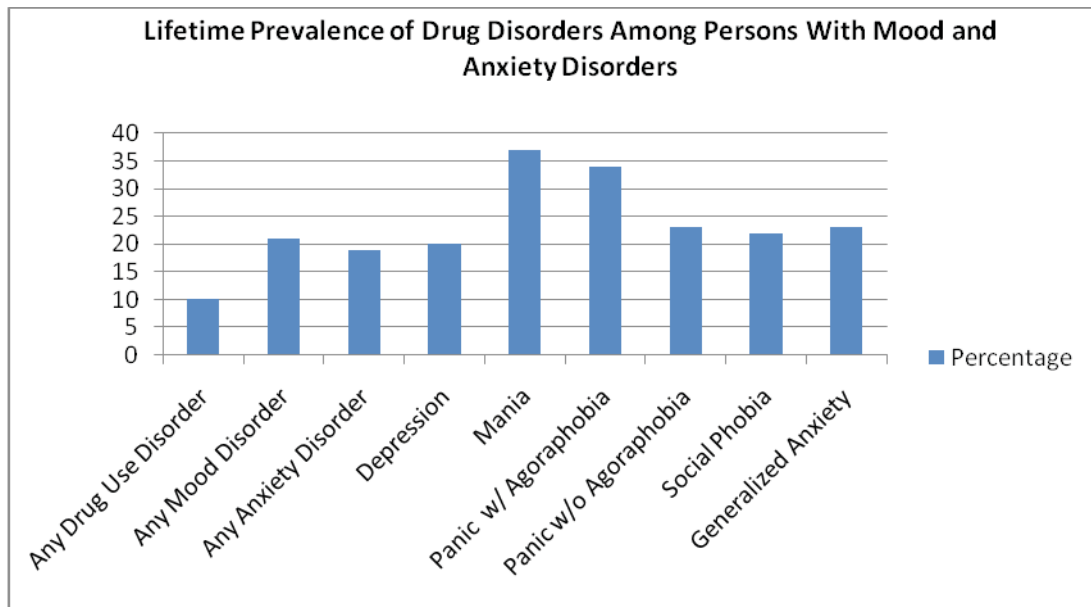


Figure 1. Lifetime Prevalence of Drug Disorders Among Persons with Mood and Anxiety Disorders.

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PKU

BY: DONKA NAYDENOVA

PKU is a genetic disorder that is transmitted by the autosomal recessive gene. Those who have PKU cannot break down phenylalanine to Tyrosine because the enzyme phenylalanine hydroxylase is deficient. If Phenylalanine cannot be broken down, it accumulates in the blood and it can cause mental retardation. However, because of a heightened awareness about the disorder, a method of testing for PKU was developed a long time ago. As soon as a baby is born, he/she is tested for the genetic disorder, and if he/she shows signs of having the disorder, he/she is put on a special diet that prohibits the consumption of

foods rich in phenylalanine. Patients also given a special formula containing all the vitamins, minerals and protein they will need in order to develop normally. Thanks to several researchers, those with PKU can lead relatively normal lives if they adhere to the diet regulations.

However, phenylalanine can be hard to manage. There are certain dietary challenges that an individual with PKU faces. One must accurately manage his/her phenylalanine intake and follow the assigned diet. Those who do not strictly maintain their diet can develop problems and may suffer brain damage. It is still debatable, but some say that those who do not follow their diet strictly could even develop serious

mental disorders such as ADD/ADHD or depression.

ADD/ADHD is characterized by symptoms of inattention, impulsivity, and/or hyperactivity. There are several subtypes of ADD/ADHD: Primarily Inattentive type (those who only have attention deficits), Primarily Hyperactive/Impulsive (those who only experience hyperactivity/impulsivity) and the Combined type (those who have both inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity). Individuals who do not follow the PKU diet strictly do experience symptoms of ADD/ADHD such as inattention, disorganization, and impulsivity. Studies have shown that both ADD/ADHD and PKU individuals are inconsistent in their

Labotomy: A State of the Art

Approach to Treating Severe OCD?

BY: ALEXANDRA KOENIG

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a prevalent disorder within our society. Approximately 2.3% of all Americans currently suffer from OCD. It is a chronic illness that is defined as an anxiety disorder, which is characterized by thoughts, feelings, ideas, sensations, obsessions, and or behaviors that makes a person feel driven to perform certain behaviors. The person is usually painfully aware that his or her behavior is excessive and unreasonable. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is associated with periods of severe symptoms that are often followed by periods of improvement. These obsessions and compulsions cause major stress and interfere

with a person's everyday life. The standard treatment for OCD involves a combination of medication and psychotherapy. Therapy is often used to provide patients with effective ways to reduce their stress and anxiety, as well as to resolve their inner conflicts. However, unfortunately an estimated five to fifteen percent of all people with OCD are beyond the reach of such conventional treatments.

Patients with rare and extreme forms of OCD often resort to a life of recluse and avoid contact with others. Such patients have reported the inability to bring themselves to do everyday things, such as brushing their teeth or leaving their homes. In such cases, an intense fear of germs is common, which often results in compulsive cleaning



"Changed my mind."

rituals that can sometimes take up to an entire day to perform. Patients have reported showering for upwards of seven hours a day and repeated, excessive hand washing. Traditional treatment is often proven unsuccessful in these types of cases.

Fortunately, there is new promise for such extreme cases. The

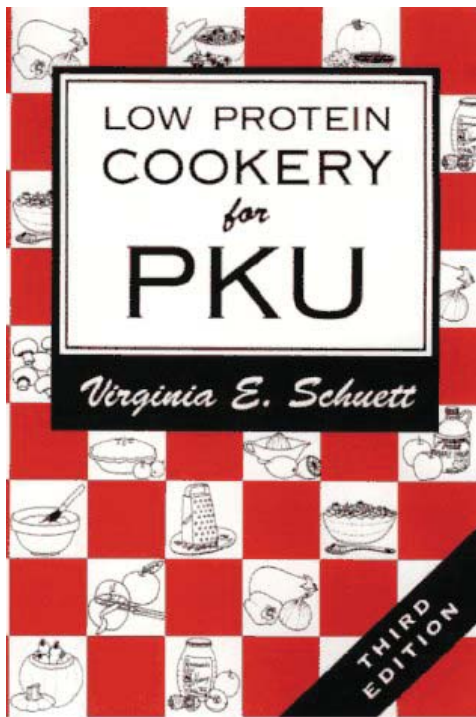


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response times (sometimes responding too quickly or too slowly) and have a hard time concentrating and processing information.

Further, it has been suggested that those with PKU may develop depression. Research in the past has shown a relationship between blood phenylalanine levels and the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin. It was discovered that high levels of phenylalanine in the blood can lead to low levels of dopamine and serotonin, which may result in depression. However, the DSM clearly states that any medical condition must be ruled out before the diagnosis of a mental disorder such as depression and ADD/ADHD can be given. In cases of ADD/ADHD, research has pointed out

that the symptoms that seem to mimic ADD/ADHD (inability to concentrate and hyperactivity) are the result of high phenylalanine levels. Therefore, before a PKU individual is diagnosed with ADD/ADHD, elevated phenylalanine levels must be ruled out.

In conclusion, PKU is a genetic disorder that may result in brain damage if treatment is not followed. However, it is unclear whether individuals with PKU can develop ADD/ADHD or depression from noncompliance with the diet. The DSM states that any medical condition must be ruled out before the diagnosis of a mental disorder, therefore high phenylalanine levels must not be the cause of the mental disorder. ■

FDA recently approved a surgical treatment for certain severe cases of OCD. Only a few thousand people within the U.S. are impaired enough to meet the FDA's strict guidelines. Doctors recently perfected an old surgical technique, known as the lobotomy, by creating a more precise and sophisticated procedure. This modern procedure is called a cingulotomy and is similar to the lobotomy of the 1940's and 1950's in that it also operates directly on the brain. So far, about five hundred people have had the surgery to treat their severe anxiety disorders, and the demand for

the procedure remains high.

During a cingulotomy, doctors drill a hole in the skull while high-resolution imaging technology guides them. Physicians use the imaging technology to pinpoint and destroy the pinch of tissue that lies along a circuit within each hemisphere that connects to the deep emotional centers of the brain and the frontal cortex. They then thread wires through an area called the anterior cingulate. This is where conscious planning occurs and it appears to be hyperactive in people with severe OCD. Imaging studies have proven that the cingulotomy quiets the activity

in this area of the brain. This surgery has proven to be successful over sixty percent of the time, however, initially, many patients do not show any signs of improvement because the brain can take anywhere from one month to a year to fully adjust to the procedure. Despite the surgery's success and its approval by the FDA, many neuroscientists remain hesitant because they fear that doctors still do not know enough about the circuits of the brain that they are tampering with. The hope is that over time, we will learn more about the procedure and that it will become accessible to many more patients in need. ■

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Play... More Than Just Fun and Games

BY: ANGELICA BRIONES

As one thinks back to his or her childhood, many of the memories encountered are those during times of play. Whether playing outside with many other children, or playing make believe games indoors, this is what children do. But what exactly is play? Play is a diverse behavior that is viewed as indispensable to the development of children. Play allows children to learn in their own fun ways and to discover new things. It encourages socialization by teaching them to interact with others. As we can see, play is more than just having fun; it helps children grow into confident, mature and independent adults.

There are many reasons why play is such an important part of a child's life. Play is critical to the development of children because it contributes to their cognitive, social, physical, and emotional well being. Play is essential for healthy brain development. Diverse play is also beneficial for children because it encourages the use of creativity, social interactions, and the expansion of the imagination. Through play, young children learn about the world and the people around them. While playing, children start to explore and do things the way they wish, which teaches them important lessons and increases their confidence in themselves for the future. When playing, children practice decision making skills, and take on mature leadership roles.

Along with peer play, parent-child play interactions have many benefits. When parents play with their children, they gain insight into their child's world. Play interactions encourage children to express his/



Image from: www.caftherapy.net

her feelings, thoughts, emotions and even frustrations. This insight can help parents communicate effectively with their children. Given the benefits of play for all children, it is important to learn

how play is affected in children with autism.

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects a child's ability to socially interact, communicate, play, relate and learn. Due to the characteristics of this disorder, children with autism have difficulties playing like typical developing children. Some may not give any sign that they want to play with other children, preferring to play by themselves, and others may be interested in other children, but lack the social skills to initiate interactions. A child with autism engages in play, but it is more isolated, repetitive and sensory-based than that of typically developing

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children. For example, children with autism may spin the wheels of a toy car for an extended period of time, peer at objects with a tilted head, or feel the textures of objects. Because diverse play is imperative for the development of children, play therapy is then incorporated as a method used to help children with autism discover their feelings and environments, and interact with their parents, siblings and peers. This also allows parents to take a dynamic role in their child's life

“Play-based therapy methods can help children with autism learn important social and communicative skills through play.”

by facilitating better interaction and understanding.

Play therapy has many advantages for children with autism.

It is a magnificent tool for helping children move past autism's self absorption into real, shared interaction. Play-based therapy methods can help children with autism learn important social and communicative skills through play. The interactions may lead to increases in joint attention, imitation, and abilities to initiate and maintain interactions. Home-based play therapy

allows parents to play an active role in helping their child develop shared back-and-forth communication. And hopefully it is enjoyable for both the parent and the child. Since play is an important process in many aspects of a child's life, all intervention methods will serve to benefit the child by incorporating play into their daily tasks.

The goal of play therapy is to make play a rewarding time for children with autism and their parents. It yields outcomes for children with autism that typical developing children receive just by playing and socializing on a daily basis and that no child should miss out on. ■

Modern Potential of Ancient Yogic Techniques

BY: ELIZAVETA LYUKSHINA

Feeling out of sync with the world? Before you decide to get an appointment with a psychotherapist, try yoga! Yoga is still commonly perceived solely as a set of physical exercises composed of postures (asanas) practiced to increase one's flexibility and muscle strength. However, if we go back to the ancient yogic literature, we find that the physical aspect is only a part of a more complex and potentially more fulfilling practice, each element of which enhances others. One such component of the yogic system that is frequently and undeservingly overlooked by casual yoga practitioners is pranayama, which refers to breathing exercises. There are other aspects, such as meditation and yogic philosophy, but this article will focus on asanas and pranayama.

Ancient yogic scripture

suggests that breathing techniques can affect one's mind-body state in a number of ways depending on the chosen technique. For example, some will enhance one's state of calmness, while others will increase one's energy and productivity. In order for the practice to be most effective however, it is important to know exactly how to combine asanas with pranayama. Thus, it can take some time to find the right yoga studio that offers a comprehensive approach to yoga, and in which skilled instructors are able to introduce you to yogic approaches to enhancing your physical and emotional state. If you do find the right instructor, the effects of yoga classes can be truly transformative.

Here are some examples of psychological research conducted during the last decade that even those who are skeptical about yoga may

find convincing. One recent study of yogic practice composed of postures and pranayama was conducted by Richard Brown, a psychiatry professor at Columbia University. The study links yogic practice with a reduction in sympathetic dominance, which in turn is linked to such psychological factors as emotional reactivity and regulation, as well as empathic response and attachment. Brown suggests that since breathing is managed both voluntarily and involuntarily, one can develop a certain control over one's autonomic system, which is responsible for our physical reaction to environmental stressors. Therefore, experienced yogis likely maintain far more frequent control of their own emotional state than most of the rest of us.

In a study of the hormonal effects of yoga, Indian neuroscientists B. Ganghar and N. Janakiramaiah

noted a decrease in cortisol, a hormone involved in sensations of stress and worry, and an increase in prolactin, a hormone responsible for reduction of stress and social bonding. Thus, we might predict that by employing yogic techniques such as asanas and pranayama we can develop better social skills or at least feel more at ease living in urban environments, which are typically hectic and impersonal.

A recent study conducted by Morton Kissen, a professor of psychoanalysis at Adelphi University has shown that yoga is capable of enhancing positive self-esteem by directing one's attentions towards bodily awareness and self-acceptance. This effect possibly explains why yoga can also be effectively applied for treatment of mood disorders, which are frequently characterized by negative self-image. Richard Brown's studies, noted earlier, have also shown that

in treatment of clinically depressed patients, different forms of yoga can be as helpful as some common antidepressants and even close in effect to electroconvulsive therapy, with the obvious benefit of not having negative side effects.

To illustrate the effects revealed by these research studies, I will use an example from a recent project I conducted as an assignment for Hunter's Experimental Psychology course. My group mates and I asked yoga practitioners – a total of 44 research participants practicing for varying lengths of time – about the reasons they practice yoga and potential psychological effects that they attribute to their practice. The sensation reported most frequently was calm and clarity, which practitioners note as significantly elevated by the end of their yoga classes. For example, people noted: "When people in my life do or

say things that are at odds with what I would prefer, it bothers me less," or "I feel more calm, stable and harmonic," and that "yoga brings me a sense of feeling together."

Another popular category of emotional effect was increased acceptance of one's body, mind, and environment (e.g., "I like myself and my life more," "I feel better about my body.") Among other popular responses were feelings of empathy (e.g., "I am more loving and caring to myself and to others," "I relate better to others"), presence (e.g., "I feel more in the moment, not worrying about past or future"), and productivity (e.g., "it makes me focus better," "I am a better problem solver.") Thus, throughout data collection, we heard many reports that confirmed the results of the studies mentioned before. But there is no reason to take my word for it; try it yourself! [1] ■

The Beautiful World Beyond the Classroom

BY: KRISTY LARocca

"We are being taught to be knowledgeable. We are not taught to be innocent; we are not taught how to feel the wonder of existence. We are told the names of the flowers, but we are not taught how to dance around the flowers. We are told the names of the mountains, but we are not taught how to commune with the trees, how to be in tune with existence."

Above is a quote by the spiritual philosopher and guru, Osho, in regard to his thoughts about the education system. I am moved by this insight and the idea of a deeper kind of intelligence beyond knowledge



Image from: www.technorati.com

alone. The problem is, nowhere in the school curriculum, from kindergarten through college, are we taught how to "feel the wonder of existence." Indeed, a certain degree of wisdom will inevitably arise within individuals

through life experience alone. There is a technique, however, that can enhance this inner wisdom, as well as provide many other positive science-supported effects, and it is called meditation.

Therefore, I believe that an integration

(continued on page 24)

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[1] I wish to thank New Field Yoga Studio, specifically Tatyana Neufeld for her help in finding yoga practitioners willing to share their experiences and make this article possible. Additionally I would like to thank Sviatoslav Kendall and Soweto Edwards for allowing me to use the data from our research project.

Hollaback Excellent Research Opportunity!

Hollaback is a movement dedicated to ending street harassment and assault using mobile technology. Started in 2005 as a blog Hollaback (HollabackNYC.com) quickly grew to eight cities with over 10,000 readers worldwide. This summer, we are launching a new website and iPhone app that will allow us to track and map where street harassment happens.

We are seeking two interns this summer (mid-May through August) to work 15-20 hours per week. This internship does not pay, but it is an incredible opportunity to spend your summer making earth-shaking change with an up and coming organization.

Responsibilities:

- Updating the website, including reviewing submissions and posting them to the website/map
- Representing Hollaback at events
- Following the news, writing media pitches, and drafting press releases
- Setting up workshops and speaking engagements at local NYC colleges
- Filming and/or helping film Hollaback PSAs
- Researching, writing, and copy editing grant proposals
- Coordinating Hollaback events, including street performances and fundraisers
- Writing guest posts on the Hollaback blog
- Any other duties, as assigned by your supervisor

Requirements:

- Must be detail-oriented and self-motivated
- Must live in NYC, be willing to work from home, and be able to meet in person once a week
- Must be passionate about street harassment, willing to Hollaback, and willing to speak with others about this project
- Must have access to a computer and know how to use it

This position will be supervised by Hollaback's founder and executive director, Emily May. Please send your resume and cover letter (describing why you are passionate about ending street harassment) to hollabacknyc@gmail.com **before May 15th.**

of meditation-based training into the educational system would benefit humanity and society alike.

From a young age, we are trained to be goal-oriented individuals, always looking toward the future and striving for something greater, no matter how much we have already accomplished and obtained. We are in constant competition with everyone around us, all seeking the same basic things. This continuous conditioning prepares us for a lifetime of operating primarily on a “doing” level, allowing ourselves to be consumed by excessive knowledge, worries, ruminations, and stress. Of course, there are multiple factors that contribute to the development of these thinking patterns, including family, culture, the media, and other variables. Schooling, however, being that it is mandatory and a major part of our young lives has an enormous impact on our psyches. At no point in our school careers are we taught the importance of sitting

still once in a while and just “being.” We are not encouraged to look inside ourselves for the answers that textbooks just

won’t give us, or how to full-heartedly accept our successes as well as our failures, and how to find happiness in the present moment, just exactly as we are.

Truthfully, I just cannot help but feel sorry that so many people are missing out on a much simpler, more fulfilling way of life. Don’t get me wrong, I believe that an education is a powerful and beautiful thing. I have had many invigorating experiences in the classroom with some very bright teachers and professors. However,

throughout my 18-years of experience with the system, I have found the process to be excessively and unnecessarily stressful. From what I gather observing my peers along the way, I know I am not the only one who has struggled under the paralyzing pressure. It does not take heavy research to find evidence supporting the inverse relationship between happiness and high levels of stress. It is the over-emphasized focus on deadlines, grades, and so on that has a way of dulling the senses and weakening the spirit.

Alright, we get it. Science relies strictly on clear cut evidence, where as spirituality and meditation may rely more on the mystery of the unknown. It is no wonder then that throughout our school careers, we are exposed to innumerable amounts of external configurations; scientific theories, math equations, philosophical issues, and such. The interesting thing is that some things are better left unknown. Let’s face it, there are

some questions out there that no amount of obtainable knowledge could ever provide answers for, and others for which having a complete

intellectual understanding of is not enough. It is there, within these mysterious wonders of the universe that gives rise to the beauty of it all. This is where the incorporation of meditation comes into play; to pick up where the limitations of knowledge leave off.

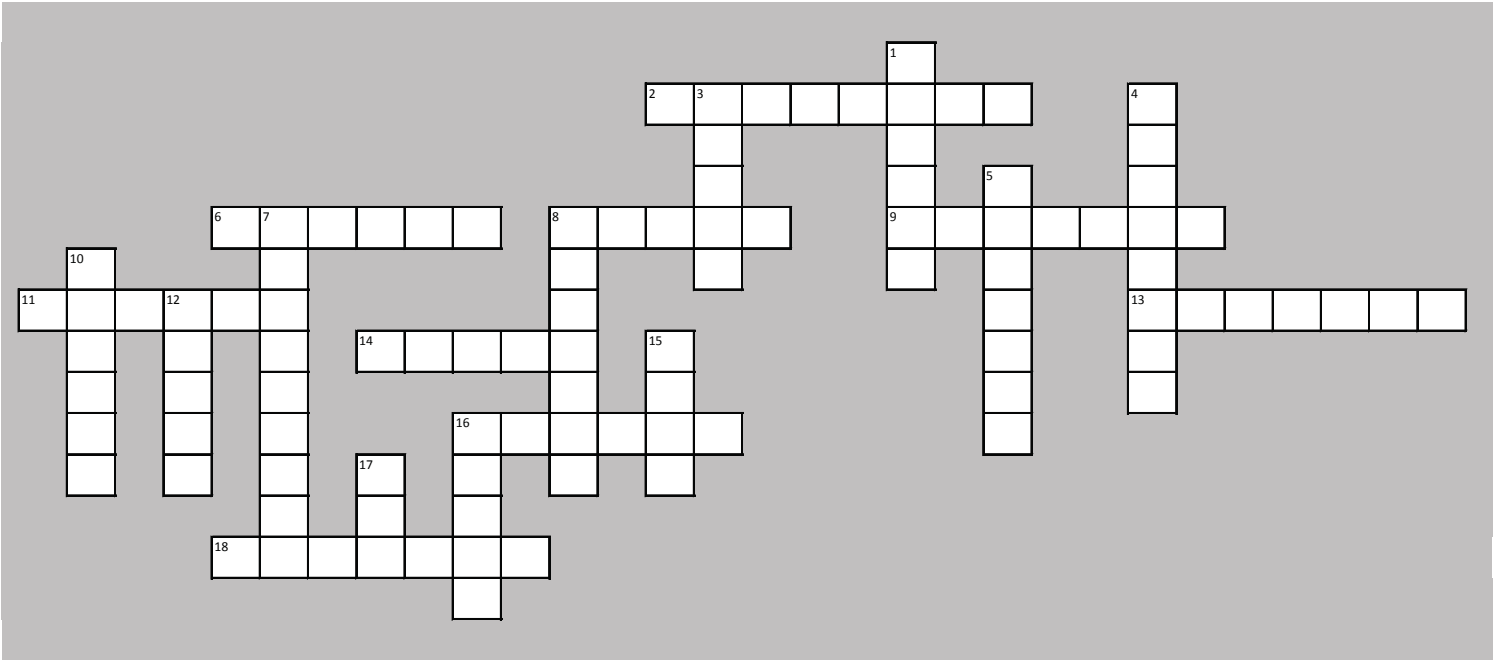
Until recently, meditation has been primarily associated with spiritual and religious practices. These days, many non-religious people train in meditation for many various reasons, primarily to calm the mind and to obtain a deeper understanding

of themselves and the world. A great deal of research shows that the two major techniques of meditation, concentration and mindfulness, can have powerful effects on cognitive and emotional functioning, as well as the physical structure of the brain. The use of meditation has been shown to benefit the treatment of many various physiological issues, as well as the promotion of overall health and wellbeing. That being said, why is there no exposure in the current school curriculum emphasizing these techniques? The benefits of exercising are clearly documented and so students are required to attend gym class, but what about Meditation 101? Is the all around well being of humanity not more significant than memorizing textbook definitions and stressing out about?

By altering some aspects of the educational system I believe that society will ultimately shift its focus as well. Modifications such as providing exposure to meditational practice and shifting the emphasis from tedious assignments toward embracing the present and experiencing life to the fullest would be greatly beneficial. As humanity becomes increasingly in tune with the wonder of existence, the society built upon competition and greed will naturally diminish and a community based more around compassion, acceptance, and unity will begin to emerge. ■

“By altering some aspects of the educational system I believe that society will ultimately shift its focus as well.”

PSYCHOLOGY BIG WIGS



ACROSS

- 2. PARENTING STYLES, Ex. AUTHORITARIAN, AUTHORITATIVE, & PERMISSIVE
- 6. CLASSICAL CONDITIONING
- 8. IQ=MENTAL AGE/CHRONOLOGICAL AGE x 100
- 9. LIFETIME SPAN OF DEVELOPMENTAL CRISES, Ex. TRUST vs. MISTRUST
- 11. NATURAL SELECTION; SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST
- 13. OPERANT CONDITIONING; BEHAVIORISM
- 14. PSYCHOANALYSIS; FREE ASSOCIATION; OEDIPAL COMPLEX
- 16. ANIMAL IMPRINTING
- 18. TRANSFORMATIONAL GRAMMER; LANGUAGE ACQUISITION DEVICE

DOWN

- 1. 4 STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT: SENSORIMOTOR, PREOPERATIONAL, CONCRETE OPERATIONAL, & FORMAL OPERATIONAL
- 3. INFERIORITY COMPLEX
- 4. ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT
- 5. OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY
- 7. STRANGE SITUATION; ATTACHMENT STYLES, Ex. SECURE
- 8. OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING; THE "BOBO DOLL"
- 10. EXPERIMENTS WITH RHESUS MONKEYS
- 12. FIRST PSYCHOLOGY LAB IN LEIPZIG, GERMANY
- 15. COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS; ARCHETYPES
- 16. TABULA RASA
- 17. ANDROGYNY

** LOOK OUT FOR AN ANSWER KEY IN THE UPCOMING "PSYCHOLOGY CONVENTION" ISSUE OF PSYCH NEWS**

The New York Needs You (NYNY) Fellowship Program

The New York Needs You (NYNY) Fellowship Program, an innovative two-year career development and leadership program, is accepting applications for its inaugural June 2010 program!

NYNY will provide 50 ambitious, first-generation college students with intensive mentoring and support necessary to realize their full potential.

Core features of the program include:

- Biweekly Saturday Workshops that will foster development of relationships with over 200 highly accomplished NYNY mentor-coaches and community business leaders.
- Curricula that focus on life-planning, development of critical skills, public speaking, personal finance, written communication, relations management and interviewing.
- A stipend of \$1,250 per year (up to \$2,500 for the two year commitment)
- Opportunities to apply skills learned through leading projects such as career workshops that will help improve success rates for their peers.

To learn more about this unique opportunity and to access an online application, visit www.newyorkneedsyou.org.

To discuss this opportunity further and to start the application process, please contact Theoni Angelopoulos at Theoni.Angelopoulos@hunter.cuny.edu.

Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans

Are you a new American who plans on being enrolled in a graduate or professional program in Fall 2011?

The Paul and Daisy Fellowship is highly competitive and awards 30 two-year fellowships of up to \$35,000 per year to accomplished new Americans to achieve leadership in their chosen fields.

A New American is an individual who is a holder of a Green Card, or has been naturalized as a U.S. citizen, or is the child of at least one naturalized parent.

Applicants must be exceptional students who have demonstrated creativity, originality and initiative, who have engaged in an activity that requires drive and sustained effort and who show a commitment to the values expressed in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights.

They are particularly eager for applicants in the humanities, fine and performing arts, and business.

Deadline: November 1, 2010

It is not too early to prepare your application!

Further information and the application are available at the Soros website: www.pdsoros.org

Questions? Contact Myrna Fader, mfader@hunter.cuny.edu

The Psychology Departmental Honors Program



The Hunter College Department of Psychology invites all undergraduate majors to consider the completion of a Psychology Departmental Honors thesis project.

WHAT IT INVOLVES:

This project involves working with a faculty mentor to develop and conduct a psychology-oriented research project addressing an area of interest to the student. Students often work with a faculty member they have already taken a course from, who mentioned an area of psychology that they wanted to explore further. Students may also review the list of faculty research interests, available on the Psychology department's web site, or available from the undergraduate Psychology advisor in 611HN, to identify faculty who conduct research in an area relevant to the student's interests. Research projects must involve an empirical study involving the collection and statistical analysis of data OR a theoretical paper that involves the integration and critical evaluation of ideas. Examples of current and past projects conducted by Departmental Honors students

include: Intentional vs. incidental learning, The influence of the news media on adolescents, Studying the symptoms of schizophrenia, The acquisition of temporal ordering skills in children of teenage mothers, The effect of emotion on perceptions of safer-sex advertisements, and The influence of oxy-tocin on the aggressive behaviors of rats.

The first step in planning for the Honors project is to contact full-time Psychology faculty members (via e-mail, using addresses obtained from the Psych Department's webpage at <http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/psych/>) in areas of Psychology the student finds interesting, and see if they are willing to work with the student as their Honors Project advisor. Often, it is to your advantage to select a research area close to that for which you are considering graduate school (this will allow you a first-hand opportunity to learn if this is truly the area you wish to pursue for a career.). Once you find a faculty member willing to be your sponsor, pick-up an "Independent Study" sign-up form in the Psych office (611HN)—Fill out your part in the "Psych 396" portion of this form, and bring it to your faculty sponsor and ask him/her to sign

it—this represents the contract between you and your sponsor for doing the Honors project. Bring this signed form back to the Psych Office (to one of the office administrators in the back of 611HN) so that an access code can be entered allowing you to then register for Psych 396 online. This same procedure is used again to register for Psych 398—the second semester of Psych Honors..

Students who participate in the Psychology Departmental Honors program must register for Psych 396 (3 cr.) during their first semester of research and Psych 398 (3 cr.) during the second semester of research. In rare circumstances, students may be able to complete the Honors thesis in one semester, but this is worked out between them and their research mentor. Psych 396/398 requires that students attend a weekly seminar, during which tips for research and career matters are discussed, as well as brief student research presentations are made. If a student has a scheduling conflict that prevents him/her from attending the seminar, however, alternative arrangements can be made.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF COMPLETING A PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENTAL HONORS PROJECT?

Students who complete this project will receive special mention in the Commencement bulletin when they graduate, as well as receiving an indication of “Graduated with Departmental Honors” on their permanent record and transcript. In addition, many employers and, especially, graduate programs look very favorably on students who have completed independent research projects, as this indicates a high degree of motivation, interest, and

responsibility on the part of the student, (i.e., it may help give you an edge when applying to grad school).

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

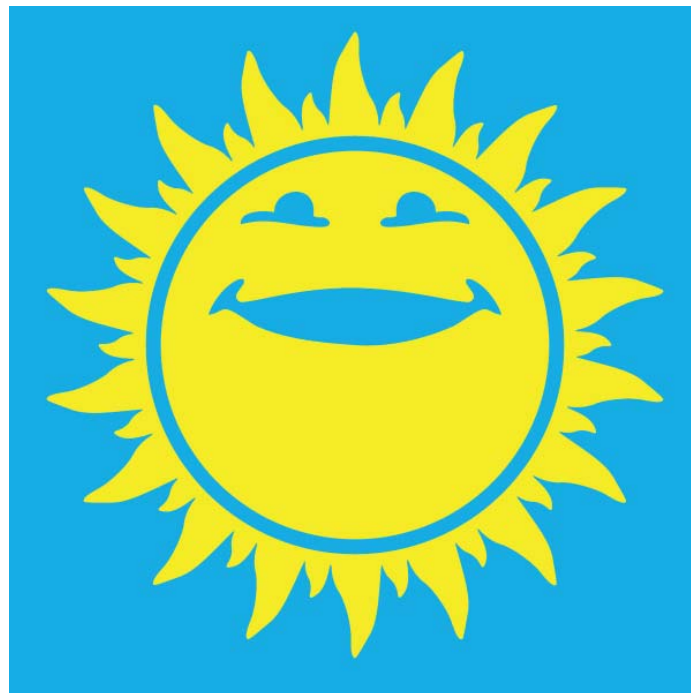
Students eligible for Psychology Departmental Honors must have a minimum overall GPA of 3.0 and a minimum GPA of 3.5 in all Psychology courses taken at Hunter College. Students must have completed Psych 248 (Statistics) and Psych 249/250 (Experimental Psychology). The Honors thesis is usually completed during the student’s final 2 semesters at Hunter College, and, thus, may be started during either the Fall

or the Spring semester.

NOTE: In addition to Honors research, *all* interested students (regardless of GPA) are eligible to conduct research for credit through Psych 395 once they have completed Psych 249/250 (Experimental Psychology).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact Prof. Jason Young, coordinator of the Psychology Departmental Honors program, by e-mail (for fastest response) at jason.young@hunter.cuny.edu, or by phone at (212) 772-5566. ■



Best wishes for an enjoyable and successful summer from the Psych Collective!!