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Banana Psych Newsletter | Winter 2015
ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Profs. Regina Langhout

I published two papers:


Nick Davidenko

I gave an invited talk about motion pareidolia at the 26th annual Bay Area Vision Research Day (BAVRD) conference at UC Berkeley.
BRUCE BRIDGEMAN

Bruce Bridgeman had a peer-reviewed talk accepted for the Visual Sciences Society meeting in May:

Increasing eye height makes slopes appear less steep

Several studies have shown that slopes of hills are greatly overestimated. We have recently demonstrated that the over-estimates increase logarithmically as the end point of the domain to be estimated increases – every doubling of the distance to the end point results in a constant increment in perceived slope. A theoretical analysis showed that a critical parameter is the angle $v$ between the observer’s line of sight and the slope of the hill, when the observer fixates the far point of the required domain. The theory predicts that increasing observers’ eye height above the surface of the hill will reduce the slope overestimates by increasing $v$. Here we test that theory by having observers stand on a 37 cm high box to increase their eye height. Observers estimated an outdoor slope in front of them in degrees, at ranges from 2 to 16 m. Estimates for various ranges defined by traffic cones again followed a logarithmic function ($r^2 = 0.997$), with lower estimates compared to other observers standing directly on the surface of the hill. Apparent slope increased more rapidly with distance than in a group standing on the hill’s surface, however, so that at larger distances slope estimates with and without increased eye height converged. As the length of the domain to be judged increases, enhanced eye height has a smaller and smaller effect on the angle $v$. A demand characteristic might induce observers to give different estimates for the four distances tested; an analysis of just the first estimate of each observer, however, showed that the distance vs apparent slope function remained logarithmic. We conclude that anticipated effort, perceived danger and other factors play only a minor role if any in slope estimates.
3 Accomplishments

Graduate Students

ANNIE DITTA
Published a paper in a special issue of The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology called "Thinking about the future can cause forgetting of the past"

ANJALI DUTT
I proposed my dissertation in late January and then spent much of February and March in Nicaragua collecting data -- the team completed over 300 quantitative surveys and 23 qualitative interviews.

ACACIA OVEROYE
First publication!

JULIA SOARES
I had a paper presented on my behalf at the Eastern Psychological Association annual meeting. An article that I helped author as an undergraduate was accepted for publication.

PAUL NELSON
Received his Ph.D. and is now a faculty member at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Congratulations, Paul!
This year I won the 1st place Dissertation Research Award for the Society for Community Research and Action (SCRA), Division 27 of APA.

Last spring I was awarded the Chancellor's Graduate Teaching Fellowship, and was a fellow this year.

This was the first cohort of Chancellor's teaching fellows at UCSC. Winning this fellowship meant that I was funded to teach a small seminar on a topic related to my dissertation. The course was offered this winter, and was entitled "Research in community organizing: Building power and wellbeing." Students were placed in 5 different organizations in which they engaged in community organizing work.

The objectives of the class were:

- Learn about community organizing, experientially, through a relational lens.
- Learn valuable research skills of field note writing and analysis.
- Map and analyze the different kinds of relationships within the community organizing setting.
- Engage with the emerging relational empowerment literature within the field of community psychology.
- Critically examine the positionality of the researcher/community organizer.

I had a wonderful small class with students majoring in psychology, sociology and feminist studies. Students wrote (auto)ethnographies about their participation in the community organizing setting. On March 10 and 12th, students presented their research to the class. The presentations were well done, and the audience (their peers) offered constructive critiques and suggestions so that the final papers could be even better. It was a fantastic experience for all of us!
Congratulations to Professor Shelly Grabe and social psychology graduate students Rose Grose and Anjali Dutt for receiving the 2015 Georgia Babladelis Award for their article, “Women’s Land Ownership and Relationship Power: A Mixed Methods Approach to Understanding Structural Inequities and Violence Against Women.”

This prestigious award recognizes the best paper published annually in Psychology of Women Quarterly. Shelly and her colleagues will be honored by the Society for the Psychology of Women (APA Division 35) at this summer’s APA convention.
Congratulations to Andrew Pilecki for being awarded the Fulbright Scholar Grant to pursue his research in Israel next year!

His research examines the way people distinguish social groups along a moral basis and how this influences their willingness to accept harm towards others.

Andrew’s faculty advisor is Phil Hammack.

Congratulations to Doug Bonett, director of the Center for Statistical Analysis in the Social Sciences, for being chosen as an Outstanding Reviewer in 2014 for the Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics (JES).

Doug will be honored at the upcoming American Educational Research Association meeting.

Congratulations to Spencer Charles Castro for being nominated for the National Science Foundation’s Graduate Research Fellowship Program!

Spencer’s research investigates how attention is divided in mobile multitasking. His faculty advisor is Travis Seymour.

Congratulations on this national achievement!
1. Would you please share your background with us (e.g., where you grew up, what inspired you to study psychology, etc)

I grew up in North Carolina and went to college in Atlanta. I wanted to be an English teacher when I went to college, but I switched to psychology at the end of my first year when I realized that research could change people’s lives in a way a single teacher couldn’t. From then on I knew I was headed to grad school. I always thought I would stay in the South, but a mentor told me about a great program in Michigan and off I went! I did my PhD at the University of Michigan and then did a post-doc at Michigan State University.

2. What area of psychology do you study?

I consider myself an educational/developmental/social psychologist.

3. Would you briefly describe your current line of research?

My research looks at how perceptions of school climate relate to adolescent’s development and motivation. I’m interested in finding out how people make sense of what goes on in their schools and how that translates into their attitudes about the world, themselves, and school. I’m hoping my research can help schools to truly

(continued on page 8)
Question 3 continued: embrace diversity and have the best outcomes for everyone. Right now I'm working on three projects: an interdisciplinary literature review of school racial climate, interviews with college students about their high school climates, and a study testing an app to report microaggressions on campus.

4. How did you become interested in this topic?

My experiences in high school made me very interested in figuring out how people manage racial issues. I went to a "diverse" school that was very segregated, and I was the only Black person in the entire Advanced Placement track. That affected me personally, but the more I learned, the more I saw it as a systemic problem that I could do something about.

5. What attracted you to UCSC? What have you enjoyed most about the department so far?

This department's focus on culture and social justice is so unique. Not to mention that all the people are amazing! So far I've enjoyed getting to know everyone and getting my research going. It feels great to be surrounded by so many brilliant and supportive people.

6. Do you have any hobbies or interests that you would like to share with us?

Sewing is one of my favorite hobbies.

7. If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be? Why?

Bacon, egg, and cheese biscuits. Biscuits are perfect for any meal!
1. Would you please share your background with us (e.g., where you grew up, what inspired you to study psychology, etc)

I grew up on the countryside in eastern Norway, about two hours north of Oslo. I did my undergraduate studies in engineering, philosophy, and psychology at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, except for a year as an exchange student in Paris. Then I did some graduate studies in philosophy and psychology at the University of Oslo before I went to Berkeley to do my Ph.D.

I've been interested in morality since I was pretty young. I remember having a few experiences that made me wonder why people - myself included! - sometimes failed to do the morally right thing and also what could make us change our minds about what we ought to do. At first, I thought these questions were just philosophical questions. At some point in college I started seeing them as empirical questions too, and that’s what first led me to study psychology.

2. What area of psychology do you study?
I do research on early moral development.

3. Would you briefly describe your current line of research?
Right now, we are studying why (most) kids begin to help others around the second year of life and why (most) kids come to realize that they shouldn’t harm others. Those two lines of research are obviously separate but they converge insofar as they both pertain to children’s developing concerns with the wellbeing of others.
4. How did you become interested in this topic?  
(See my answer above.)

5. What attracted you to UCSC? What have you enjoyed most about the department so far?  
I can think of at least two things that stood out to me. One is that the department overall seemed committed to study issues that matter to people’s everyday lives. The other is that there seemed to be a great deal of respect for choosing whatever research methods were best suited to answer the questions you are interested in. I think what I have enjoyed the most about the department so far is the people - students, staff, and faculty. It is a true privilege to be surrounded by so many bright, interesting, and friendly people.

6. Do you have any hobbies or interests that you would like to share with us?  
Unfortunately, I don’t have an interesting hobby to tell you about. But I do like running along West Cliff Drive at sunset or in the woods around campus on a warm day.

7. If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be? Why?  
It would probably have to be Pizza Margherita. The combination of cheese, tomato sauce, and dough offers a lot of possibilities. Just the rising of the dough is pretty fascinating.

Welcome to the Department!
If you could start a journal about anything, what would it be called?

SIKE!: The Journal of Irreplicable Results

The Journal of Studies That Totally Should Have Worked

ScOoops!: A Journal for When You Have A Really Idea But Someone Did it 10 Years Ago

Journal of Odd Perceptual Phenomena (JOPP)

The Cute Things My Dog Does

The Limits of Human Performance
If you could start a journal about anything, what would it be called?

The Limits of Human Performance

You Do It Cooler
Uncle Bob's Journal of Failed RIF Experiments

JOKES: Journal of Killer Experiments

Journal of my wonderful research (appears infrequently)

Journal of Social Cognitive Neuroscience

Thanks for participating!
Each publication on a CV is rife with stories that are seldom seen. Here is a story about my first publication, or bean, as we sometimes call them. This bean sprouted as I was deciding to switch graduate programs and start over.

It was 1975. I was in my second year of graduate school, sweltering in the torrid heat of Tempe, Arizona. Bob Cialdini, a mentor with boundless energy and enthusiasm, asked me to supervise a raft of undergraduate telephone marketers. Our mission was to conduct a field experiment to test what motivates people to claim affiliation with successful others, or to ‘bask in reflected glory’ (BIRG). As expected, when their football team was victorious, residents of this sports-crazy town said “we won” and when their team lost, they distanced themself from failure, saying “they won”.

While executing this study, I learned that I was fascinated by how people use words to do things, even if it’s only a few words. Also, I learned that I was in the distinct minority in being curious about those who didn’t fit the norm, in this case, the deviants who didn’t BIRG. When I voiced my interest in understanding the outliers, the consensus seemed to be that individual differences were the noise, not the signal. I decided that psychology was not for me, and was on the verge of dropping out.

And then one day I was walking down the hall and ran into a visiting professor from Berkeley. And that is another story.