Author's Bio Statement

University of North Carolina at Charlotte:

Psychology B.S.

Spanish B.A.

Anticipated Graduation:

December 2015

Research experiences, mentors, and supervisors:

My first research experience was in my Research Methods II class where I conducted a mixed methods study about establishing a daycare on campus. Here, I was taught the basics of research. I was able to collect quantitative data and learn how to run some SPSS analyses. I also learned how to code qualitative data. This was also my first experience presenting a poster and a PowerPoint of my findings and implications.

I completed an Honors Thesis under the supervision of Dr. Terry. This was an experimentally designed study where I personally developed the materials testing how attention grabbing information affects memory during learning. I created a poster and was able to present my research at three different conferences: the Undergraduate Research Conference on campus, the NCPA/NCPF Annual Conference at Chapel Hill, and the Central Carolinas Conference for Psychology at Belmont Abbey College.

I am engaged in two labs in the psychology department; Dr. Levens’ Emotion and Cognition Lab and Dr. Webb’s MINDBATCH Lab. In both of these labs I have gained experience: reading and critiquing academic articles, administrating experimental studies, organizing databases, scoring data, running SPSS analyses, coding images, managing excel sheets, and working with a team of researchers.

I also assist in neuropsychological assessment under the supervision of Dr. Demakis where I have learned how to administer several cognitive tests. Lastly, I am currently an intern for Discovery Place where I conduct observational research within the museum.

Academic honors/awards:

Completed an Honors Thesis Spring 2015 under the supervision of Dr. Terry

Departmental award at the UNCC Undergraduate Research Conference for Honors Thesis research

Honorable Mention for the Honors Award at the UNCC Undergraduate Research Conference for Honors Thesis research

Relevant affiliations:

Psi Chi

Future plans:

I intend to apply to Clinical Psychology PhD programs in North Carolina. I plan to pursue research in the topics of body image and emotion regulation. I am also interested in Neuropsychology. After successful completion of a PhD program I would love to become a professor and start my own lab where I can continue researching and be a mentor to students.

Q&A

How did you get involved in research?

It all started with my required Research Methods class where I conducted my first research study. This class was challenging given that we were required to plan a mixed methods study with a moderating variable. I learned a lot from this course and was inspired to continue researching.

Then, I enrolled in Honors Thesis with Dr. Terry. I had taken his Learning Psychology course and excelled. This motivated me to initiate research under the topic of memory and learning. Dr. Terry and I met and simply talked about interesting phenomena we had read over the semester and within one meeting I was able to come up with several ideas for my project.

During this same period of time I became a research assistant in two labs. Both labs were actively conducting research that I was able to participate in.

What led you to this topic?

For my Honors Thesis; I had been enrolled in Dr. Terry’s Learning Psychology course and excelled. I had stayed after class several times to discuss topics with the instructor, but when I learned about the Honors Thesis course option I brought it up to Dr. Terry and he agreed to supervise me.

We met to discuss different topics and ideas. During our conversation I mentioned two phenomena that we had learned about in class, seductive details and the isolation effect, which seemed significantly similar. He directed me to several articles and I realized that, despite the explicit similarity between the two effects, there had not been any research linking the two. This is how I came up with the idea for my Thesis: Linking Seductive Details and the Isolation Effect.

What has the process of working on this research/paper been like for you?

First, Dr. Terry was extremely helpful given his experience and resources surrounding the topic I chose for my research. He was always able to suggest another article, point me in the right direction, and teach me the methods for conducting experimental research. Having a mentor that was just as invested and interested in the project as I was definitely a benefit.

Overall I found the process to be very enjoyable. The literature review was not as tedious as I anticipated and I learned a lot from it. My favorite part of the whole process was coming up with the experiment itself. I found it gratifying to be presented with confounding variables and then figure out how to address it in the methodology. Also, being involved in the research labs was helpful because I was able to get differing perspectives and ideas from others when I would share my Thesis progress with them.

The final paper was easy to write since I had already spent so much time invested in the project. Making and presenting my poster was also entertaining. Being able to share my findings with others was very enjoyable and motivating for me to continue researching.

What advice would you offer to other undergraduates interested in conducting research and publishing their work?

I would advise them to make sure they choose a research topic that comes naturally to them, a topic which they can easily invest themselves in and enjoy. I would also advise them to be sure to collaborate with a professor whose research interests them, someone who would be able to provide valuable feedback and resources.

I would also say, don’t be intimidated! The whole process and list of things to do seems so pressuring, but in the end it was not tedious or terrifying at all. This whole project made me a better researcher and made me excited about continuing research. I believe that every undergraduate interested in conducting research should commit to a project like this.