

# Freudian Slip

## Meet the

### Newsletter Staff:

- Alicia Reif, Editor/  
Writer
- Michelle Flicker,  
Writer
- Natalie Thompson,  
Writer
- Emily Trapp, Writer
- Amy Vannurden,  
Writer

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Research Methods- The Real World	2
Discrimination	2
Fighting Procrastination	3

## New Faculty Member: Rebecca Pohlig By Michelle Flicker

Let's put our hands together and welcome our new faculty member Rebecca Pohlig! She is thrilled to be joining the CSB/SJU Psychology Department this coming Fall semester of 2007. Professor Pohlig will be teaching two sections of Intro Psych (PSYC 111) and one section of Developmental (PSYC 360) Fall semester, 2007. During the Spring semester of 2008 Professor Pohlig will be teaching two sections of Abnormal Psychology (PSYC 381) as well as one section of Clinical & Counseling (PSYC 370). When asked to describe her teaching style in three words, she responded with "interactive, student-based, focused."

Professor Pohlig will move back to Minnesota this summer but is currently finishing a one-year full time clinical internship, which she explained as being a requirement for a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, at the University of Colorado at Denver Health Sciences Center. She is originally from Alexandria, MN and went to Hamline University in St. Paul, MN for her undergraduate degree. She attended graduate school in Tuscaloosa, Alabama at the University of Alabama.

Having experience volunteering with children with special needs as a teenager, Professor Pohlig is involved in the field of autism and developmental disabilities. During an interview she explained a little bit about



her research in this area, "My research examines social cognition in people with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). I am looking forward to having students involved in the more basic research as well as beginning a line of research focused on applying knowledge of social cognitive deficits in ASD to the development of intervention strategies and techniques. I'm hoping this will lead to opportunities for students to be involved in treatment outcome studies, which will provide both clinical and research experience for them. Additionally, I'm

interested in getting involved in research on depression in people with ASD and how it compares to depression in the general population." So if you are interested in research experience in this area it may be beneficial to take a few of Professor Pohlig's courses or set up a meeting with her to discuss her research once she is on campus.

A lot of students at CSB/SJU may have a lot in common with Professor Pohlig as she called herself a "big fan" of the television shows *Grey's Anatomy* and *Law and Order: SVU*. When she was asked to share a funny fact about herself she explained said that after living in Alabama for five years, she now refers to any kind of pop or soda as "a coke" and regularly uses the term "y'all". She also shared some interesting information that would make for a great class: "I have three nieces and one nephew that I absolutely adore! Folks in my Developmental Psych class next year may be lucky enough to meet them for demonstrations of some of Piaget's tasks!" Professor Pohlig said that she is very excited to meet everyone in the Fall and we are equally, if not more, excited to meet her!

## Research Methods-The Real World

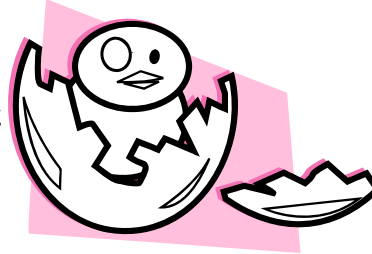
By Emily Trapp

**“So research methods is a required course, but what type of value does it have in the real world? Why would we spend time creating experiments that we were not even going to be able to finish?”**

So research methods is a required course, but what type of value does it have in the real world? Why would we spend time creating experiments that we were not even going to be able to finish? Or why would we spend the time to have a poster presentation that no one but our own classmates would attend? Don't get me wrong, I actually really enjoyed the course and it was really fun to have complete free reign in determining what I wanted to write an experiment regarding, but in many ways it seemed like the course really did not have any real life pertinence. That was until recently when I attended the 14<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Society for Research on Identity Formation, or SRIF.

As I stepped in the doors of George Washington University in Ashburn, Virginia, which is just outside of Washington D.C., I had no idea what to expect. The atmosphere was full of excitement, there were people from all over the world, including the Netherlands, Israel, and Portugal, as well as the across the United States. I was truly amazed at how many people from completely different cultures and backgrounds had congregated together to discuss the one major thing they had in common, research on identity. Most of the people attending the conference were doctorate students and published researchers, so at first I felt a little nervous, because my background in the subject was limited to the courses I had taken at CSB/SJU, but I was surprised at how warm people were and how excited they were to share what they were studying with me.

Within a few minutes of entering the conference I was approached by a woman who was a researcher and professor at a university in Texas. As she began speaking



with me I quickly learned what it is like to converse with people who are immersed in the academic field of psychology. Though this woman was extremely bright and potentially could have spoken to me in a language completely over my head, she showed great interest in me and wanted me to understand what she was investigating. From this very first encounter I learned I should be confident and unafraid of sharing what my interests are, with an open mind to learning new things.

After the initial social hour the conference moved into presentations on papers, just like we were required to do in our research methods course. Many of the studies that were selected to be presented were extremely interesting and very pertinent to our global world. Most of the presenters went through the main topics of a standard APA paper from the introduction through to the discussion of the research. I clearly remember in research methods being told that the time restrictions were tightly held, and at the conference I found just that; even when a person had barely started describing the results of his or her study, once reaching the time limit of 15 minutes the presenter was cutoff. Though at first it seemed somewhat rude, as an attendee of the event it definitely makes sense if there are still several presenters to listen to.

Next there was a poster presentation, which had the same set up as our

research methods class, but with having the room filled with experts on the poster topics, the atmosphere was quite different. As I read the posters the authors frequently asked me what I thought about their research and it seemed that they were expecting difficult questions challenging their work. This criticizing of colleagues work was actually pretty typical at the conference. At first I was surprised, because it almost struck me as being mean, but soon I began to realize it was not as it appeared on the surface. Many of the comments that different presenters and attendees of the conference were making, had the intention of making the author aware of the flaws in his or her work, or to think about the topic at hand in a different manner, or even ways of expanding what was found in regards to the research at present. It seemed apparent that not only did the authors of the work welcome the challenges, but expected them.

Upon leaving the conference I now have a greater understanding of just how important it is to share your work amongst experts in the field. Whether it was in small breakout groups or at the lunch table, there were countless opportunities to get feedback and learn more about the specialized field in psychology. At the conclusion of the event I realized just what an experience it was and that I had learned so much from such amazing researchers. As I walked out the doors of the conference I was surprised as the professor next to me turned and said, “See you next year!” Whether I actually see him or not, I now know just how important academic conferences are and why what I learned in research methods plays such an imperative role in the advancement of psychology.

Remember to thank the Earth on Earth Day!



# Discrimination Still Runs Rampant in US

By Natalie Thompson

Many people are under the mistaken belief that discrimination is no longer a problem in the United States. However, discrimination has far from disappeared from our culture. Discrimination comes in many forms. It can be racial, sexual, cultural, etc. These forms of discrimination can occur anywhere, including in school or work settings. Discrimination occurs at CSB/SJU too. In fact, it occurs in every higher educational institution in this country. Discrimination has been studied a lot over the past 30 years and it is important for everyone, including young people attending higher education institutions, to know how discrimination can cause many problems.

Discrimination has many negative effects, especially employment problems. Barry M. Goldman, Barbara A. Gutek, Jordan H. Stein, and Kyle Lewis review the research on employment discrimination in organizations. They found that discrimination can result in differences in pay, job status, and job type between discriminated groups and groups that are not discriminated against (2006, p. 802-3). There are many people who suggest that just the act of perceiving discrimination or prejudice can negatively affect the psychological and physical health of its targets.

Many people might be surprised at the types of physical problems people who feel discriminated against will develop. They can have high blood pressure and heart disease. This makes sense as discrimination may be one type

of serious stressor. Stress negatively affects your health in many ways. One longitudinal study found that women who perceived that they were subject to discrimination between 1977 and 1982 had a 50% greater chance of having some type of physical limitation than women who did not report experiencing discrimination (Goldman et al., 2006, p. 803). It is interesting to note that whether the women actually were discriminated against was not brought up. Only what they



thought was discussed. Therefore, they might have perceived something, like getting fired, as an act of discrimination, but they could have been fired for something else, such as not performing their job duties. This provides evidence that psychological factors can play a big role in the negative effects of discrimination on a person's health.

Additionally, social comparisons can negatively affect someone's physical and psychological health. For example, if women compare how much they make to how much men make, they may feel depressed

and stressed. In contrast, if women compare how much they make to how much other women make, they are likely to feel a lot more satisfied (Goldman et al., 2006, p. 803). Obviously, this is because men generally make more than women. From the research, it is clear that discrimination negatively affects people's physical and psychological health.

There are some interesting statistics cited in the article. Of all the people filing discrimination charges under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, 48% were black and 25% were white. The others were filed by people of other races or by people who did not specify their race. However, under the ADA (the Americans with Disabilities Act), only 20% were filed by blacks, but 54% were filed by whites. Under the EPA (the Equal Pay Act), 22% of the charges were filed by blacks and 52% were filed by whites. Under the ADEA (Age Discrimination in Employment Act), 20% were filed by blacks and 50% were filled by whites. Seventy-eight percent of discrimination lawsuits were filed by blacks and only 8% were filed by whites. One final surprising statistic is that both whites and blacks have almost the same chance of having their claims dismissed because of having no reasonable cause: Blacks had their charges dismissed 68.8% of the time, whereas whites had them dismissed 68.9% of the time (Goldman et al., 2006, p. 788-91).

In conclusion, it is a mistaken belief that discrimination no longer exists. Discrimination is wide spread, and it has many

forms. It is possible to discriminate against someone without meaning to or without having malicious intent. However, even this type of discrimination is detrimental to both the physical and mental health of individuals. Therefore, it is important for people to be careful with their words when it comes to people who are different than them in some way. Differences should not be a source of conflict. They should be embraced and explored.

**“Discrimination comes in many forms. It can be racial, sexual, cultural, etc.... Discrimination occurs at CSB/SJU too.”**

## CSB/SJU

College of St. Benedict  
37 S. College Ave.  
St. Joseph, MN 56374  
(320)363-5139

St. John's University  
Collegetown, MN 56321  
(320)363-3195



## WHAT?! THE GRE IS NOT CHANGING???

Yes, you heard that right. The much anticipated changes that were to be made by September, 2007 have been postponed indefinitely. Major changes in the content, method of administration, and subject matter were to take place this fall but the creators of the Graduate Record Exam, or GRE for short, at ETS decided that the changes would not be for the better, as originally thought. The influencing factor was the belief that potential test takers would not have the availability to the test that test takers now enjoy with many testing dates and sites. Although there is a continuing inclination to implement the content changes in the future, as of right now, the publishers as well as the institutions that are using the current GRE scores are happy with the way the test provides a relatively accurate prediction of success in graduate school. The new GRE would have a new scale for scores in which the old, or current, version of the test would be incomparable.

So, if you were holding out for the new test, sorry. But if you were scrambling to study and take the test before September you can rest a little easier. Remember, test anxiety is an important influencing factor in test taking so, breathe, relax, and study hard. The GRE is no cake-walk. Take this from someone who knows!

## Fighting Procrastination

By Amy Vannurden

Having a hard time convincing yourself to get your homework done now that the summer is near and the weather is nice? Do you find yourself pulling too many all-nighters and still not getting everything done? A popular method used in psychology to combat habits such as these is called operant conditioning. Operant conditioning is a rewards and punishments system that can be used to either increase or decrease a certain behavior. Your parents probably used operant conditioning on you when you were younger and you didn't even notice. Remember the times Mom said, "if you clean your room, you can have a \_\_\_\_\_?" That is a type of operant conditioning called positive reinforcement. Mom gave you that one thing you wanted in order to increase your behavior of cleaning your room.

There are actually four types of operant conditioning. Two of these types are designed to increase your behavior and two to decrease your behavior by either adding or subtracting a stimulus. This chart might help you keep them clearer:

	<i>Addition of a Stimulus</i>	<i>Subtraction of a Stimulus</i>
<i>Increase Behavior</i>	Positive Reinforcement	Negative Reinforcement
<i>Decrease Behavior</i>	Positive Punishment	Negative Punishment

An important thing to keep in mind is that when you use positive reinforcement or negative punishment, the stimulus is desirable, but when you use negative reinforcement or positive punishment, the stimulus is undesirable.

You have might used operant conditioning on yourself before and not noticed. In order to combat your procrastination, however, you can consciously implement one of these operant conditioning techniques. For example, if you want to increase the amount of times you study for a class each week, you could reward yourself with fifteen minutes of an outdoor activity whenever you study for an hour. This would be the addition of a desirable stimulus, and it would increase your behavior, meaning that you would be positively reinforcing yourself! If you want to stop yourself from watching so much

television when you should be studying, you could use negative punishment. Every time you watched television when you should be studying, you could take away some of the time you normally allot to relaxing at the end of the day. By taking away this positive stimulus, you will, in theory, decrease your television watching when you should be doing your homework.

Though it is possible that these techniques won't help as much as you hope, the key is to stay motivated to continue trying. Additionally, taking away or adding the stimulus must depend on your doing or not doing a behavior, so don't chose something as a reward that you normally do all the time and don't reward yourself if you haven't done the behavior! If you follow these simple rules, you might get more sleep this spring and start the summer healthier and happier!