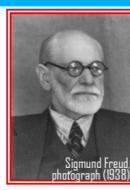


The Freudian Slip

CSB/SJU Psychology Department Newsletter



College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University



STUDENTS SHOW THEIR WORK AT NCUR

by: Elizabeth Hanzlik
—*The Spotlight Effect*

The National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) will take place at Ithaca College in New York, Thursday March 31 through Saturday April 2. This conference, held since 1987, focuses on promoting undergraduate research, scholarships, and creativity from students and faculty around the country. Areas of research range from the performing arts to biomedical, engineering, and the social sciences. Students and faculty have the opportunity to present their research at the conference, interact with others from around the nation, and learn more about possible employment or graduate school opportunities.

CSB/SJU is proudly sending a group of students to the conference from several different majors, with some of them being from our very own psychology department. Ellen Dehmer, Kaitlin Andreasen, Katie Kenefick, Megan Peterson, Katie Brown, and Kristina DeMuth will all be showing off their hard work at the event. I had

a chance to talk to a few of them about the research they will be presenting, and feelings they have towards the conference.

Katie Kenefick will be presenting her findings on the media's portrayal of women and how it effects self-esteem and body satisfaction. Katie is excited to meet other researchers from around the country and hear about the variety of topics they have been studying. She noted how much time and effort goes in to a project like this, but how rewarding the experience has been for her.

Megan's research consists of examining the qualities, other than intelligence, that are important for a medical doctor to obtain such as empathy and compassion. Her information is being collected through patient's ideas of what qualities they value in a doctor. The passion for her topic comes through her belief that these qualities are extremely important, but lacking in the medical field today.

Kaitlin decided to conduct a cross-cultural study, examining the effects of implicit hair color biases and ambivalent sexism. She

was able to collect data in Spain while she studied abroad last spring. Kaitlin is mostly excited to share the work she has been doing for two years now, and hear about other projects from around the nation.

Kristina has been studying the characteristics, severity, and possible treatment options of people with EDNOS (Eating Disorders Not Otherwise Specified). She is passionate about helping those with a disorder that is often seen as "less severe" by many insurance companies. The most enjoyable part about her research has been witnessing the large number of participants wanting to be a part of her study.

A piece of advice from all of these researchers: start early! The process of conducting your own project is exciting and rewarding, but takes more time and effort than one could imagine. Good luck to these St. Ben's seniors who will be representing our school at the national conference and to any other CSB/SJU researchers as well!

SOCIAL BIASES: ARE TOMMIES PEOPLE TOO?

by: Megan Peterson
—*Control Condition*

It's not uncommon to jump to conclusions. People often think they know more about something than they really do, and sometimes this can have bad effects. Sometimes people decide things about others without knowing all of the information. It's important to be aware of these tendencies and the possible effects they may have on other people.

We've all heard of stereotypes. Myers (2008) terms it as a "belief about the personal attributes of people." Stereotypes can be a positive thing, since they help us organize information into more general terms and reduce the need to remember immense amounts of information. However, the general connotation of "stereotypes" is a negative one, which isn't surprising considering the amount of negative stereotypes that are out there. We tend to lump people into categories and assign characteristics to the group as a whole.

Unfortunately, this leads us to forget about the individuality of the people in the group.

An example of a stereotype that we, as St. John's and St. Ben's affiliates, can relate to is the good ole' description of a St. Thomas student. The rivalry between CSB/SJU and St. Thomas has been a long tradition, and it is generally something that helps unite the people of our school. The rivalry between the two institutions is, for the most part, a typical reaction between competitors (although I'm sure it gets taken a bit too far sometimes, as well), but it is still a good example of a stereotype. We see a St. Thomas student as a snobby loser, in addition to other negative qualities we attribute to them. But many of us often forget that we have friends from high school who go to St. Thomas, and we usually do not include them in the mix of other St. Thomas students. Some of us even have friends from St. Thomas that attend the legendary Tommie-Johnnie football game with us. The

individuality we attribute to our friends is lost for others in the group when we stereotype them.

(Disclaimer: I am not saying that we should throw out the rivalry with St. Thomas, by any means. Who doesn't enjoy a little rivalry? But it is a good example of a stereotype.)

Another bias people often harbor occurs when we automatically attribute other people's failures to their personal disposition. This is known as the fundamental attribution error, which says that we tend to "underestimate situational influences and overestimate dispositional influences upon others' behavior" (Myers, 2008). Continuing to use the Tommie example, what would we say when asked why a Tommie lost the basketball game? We would say that it's because she was bad at playing basketball. What other reasons could there be? How about she was up until 3:00 that morning doing homework, she just recently got back into playing after spraining her ankle, or she had a lot on her mind about a big test

the next day? There are a lot of situational factors that can influence a person's behavior, but we tend to jump to concluding that dispositional factors are behind it. This error is something that everyone makes from time to time; it's definitely not uncommon. But we should realize the tendencies we have and try to keep an open mind about situations where we do not have all of the information.

We harbor quite a few social biases – stereotyping and the fundamental attribution error are only two of them. Some of them are part of normal social relationships, and they don't always lead to bad results. But it is important to be aware of the tendencies we have to think a certain way, and to use this awareness to help us keep an open mind.

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