



# *enPSYCHlopedia*

*A Standard Deviation Above the Mean*

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Editor: Mary W. Godwin, M.A.

## **Research Done for the Wrong Reasons Is Still Research**

**By Michael P. Sullivan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology**

As psychology students at Belmont, you have all heard professors preach the virtues of the “Research Experience”. In fact, more than one time this year I have heard students encouraging their peers to gain “Research Experience”. Sometimes students have even tried to convince themselves of the virtues of “Research Experience”; I have heard them saying: “I want to do research next semester so that...” and “I know I should do research because...”. How these sentences have ended has varied from student to student but my being in a position to write this message is proof positive that it does not matter how such statements end.

I did research as a second-semester sophomore. I did it because I it was required of me to pass (the equivalent to Belmont’s) Research Methods I. For my first study I studied the effects of a single-sex environment on relationship quality. At the time, I thought it was a pretty complete study. I collected measures of closeness in existing dating relationships from students at my all-male school and a co-ed liberal arts school located about 30 minutes away. I found that it was a lot more work than I thought it would be. And in the end, I found out that my semester long-efforts to complete this intellectually challenging assignment (often not knowing what I was doing or why I was doing it) involving library research, measure development, statistical analysis, writing, rewriting, and countless hours of grunt-work was worth a big, fat B. All that effort – all the time – was worth a lousy B!

I would like to say that I was wise enough to recognize that the grade was not as important as the Research Experience I had gained. I was not. My goal had been to complete the research that was just another assignment in this class in a discipline that (as of yet) was not even my major! Nevertheless, I signed up for the second semester of the Research Methods sequence the following Fall. Again, I was required to do a research project. This time I worked with a partner. This time I collected data only through the Psychology department Participant Pool. This time I had a better understanding of what I was doing. I had a better grasp of concepts, such as: validity, confounds, and “*t*-test”. I was attentive to the comments and criticisms made of my previous project. I was attentive in class. I talked to my professor about research ideas. As a result, we completed a pretty decent study pitting the pressures of conformity to a peer against pressures to obey authority. This success was rewarding, not because of the “Research Experience”, rather it was redemption for my performance the previous semester (in all my classes)! Research was a means to an end.

However, unbeknownst to me, that semi-rewarding research project changed my course in life (which at that time was heading pretty much nowhere in particular). On the basis of my performance in that class, the professor, Dr. Andrea Chapdelaine, invited me to assist her on a research project when I returned to campus from a study abroad program. At the time, I weighed the costs and benefits as any student would. In making the balance sheet, the most obvious positives of taking an “Independent Study” course were the promise of an assured “A” and having “regular meetings” rather than an 8 a.m. class. Also, such a course was supposedly helpful if I would choose to pursue graduate or law school in the future. Additionally, I could not ignore her insistence that “we” (it was always “we”) would be able to present the research at a conference, which I more easily understood as saying “going to Boston for a weekend on the school’s dime”. In contrast, I could not think of enough drawbacks to keep me from signing on.

Admittedly, I began the Research Experience for the “wrong” reasons – again. But over the course of this project I gained more than I thought I ever would by doing research. I learned to enjoy finding my way through new theories (more times than not with a lot of help) and discovering that I can ask questions of the experts who write articles and books. I learned that there were things that professors did not know! More importantly, I learned that waiting for her to teach me was defeating the whole enterprise when, in fact, her goal was to learn WITH me as much as teach me how to learn for myself! I learned that the problems I had encountered when doing my prior projects remained but I was becoming better able to handle those situations. And, I gained greatly when I realized that even though she was a professor, she was still trying to perfect the research project. When I started to learn these lessons, among others, I started to truly value my Research Experience.

But even aside from these life-altering lessons, undertaking this single research project has paid off in every way cited by professors (and students) heralding the value of the “Research Experience”. Based on the positive experiences I had my senior year of college, I chose to apply to graduate school in social psychology. As a direct result of the specific statistical skills I learned on the specific project we did, I was admitted and recruited by the graduate school I eventually attended. As part of my Independent Study requirements, I submitted the paper to the Guilford Award program sponsored by Psi Chi and walked away with a couple hundred dollars in prize money! Over the next few years, I found time to refine and rewrite this research conducted as an undergraduate and

recently it was published in *Social Behavior and Personality* (Dec. 2001, Vol. 29). Oh yeah, I did make that trip to Boston to present at the Eastern Psychological Association meeting, hung out with friends who lived in the area, had a blast, and spent (maybe) \$20.

I was lucky to stumble into these experiences through Psychology. I can attest that these opportunities are available for those who want to pursue Research Experience. Since trading the role of student for that of professor I have started to champion the self-challenging and process-learning benefits to research and have encouraged students to pursue them. However, I am not above bribing students with promises of graduate school admittance, presentations and publications, and/or exotic trips (4 of 6 students whom I helped to present research in Miami in 2000 are currently in graduate programs). Those rewards are out there, but we (the faculty) all hope that everyone who gains their Research Experience at Belmont will find more than these prizes. In the end, it does not matter why you start research, it is more important that you do research.

## **PURS 2001**

By Ashley Lovell  
Vice President, Psychology Club/Psi Chi

On November 28, 2001, the Psychology Undergraduate Research Symposium was held in the Multimedia Hall of the Lila D. Bunch Library. The morning began with the arrival of the AP Psychology Class from Franklin High School, laying the ground for a new tradition in regards to PURS. These students were given a t-shirt commemorating the event, as well as a packet of information on the Psychology Department. Dr. McAlexander, the new Provost at Belmont, opened the event by welcoming all students and guests. Dr. Steve Davis, our guest speaker and friend from Emporia University, followed with the keynote address, summarizing his current research on academic dishonesty.

We had a variety of research presenters, ranging from Research Methods II students, to Cognitive Psychology students, to independent study projects, to the honors thesis by Skyla Carnahan. (*See list of presenters and their research topics.*)

After PURS concluded, Belmont Psychology students accompanied the AP students to lunch in the cafeteria. The morning was a great opportunity for Belmont students to present their work and Franklin High School students to see a different side of psychology firsthand. To view pictures of this event, please visit the Belmont University Psychology Department website at [www.belmont.edu/psychology](http://www.belmont.edu/psychology)

## **STUDENT RESEARCH**

This fall the following students participated in the Psychology Undergraduate Research Symposium (PURS)

- Bethany Flowers, “The Ideal Female Image and Body Satisfaction in Women: The Role of Attention”



**PURS, Fall 2001**

- Kasey Hamilton, Marsha Zurawicki and Chris Van Atta, “Proactive Inhibition on Long Term Working Memory”
- Kelly Voss, Danielle Taylor and Staci Roberts, “Effects of Mood on Eyewitness Identification”
- Kelly Voss, “Stereotype Threat: Math Performance and Math Self-Efficacy”
- Skyla Carnahan, “The Relationship Between Relaxation, Perceived Stress, Anxiety, Type A Behavior, and Salivary Immunoglobulin A” (This was Skyla’s Honors Thesis)
- Melissa Giorgi, Greg Sullivan and Brooke Berrie, “The Emotional Stroop Task and Math Anxiety: Preliminary Investigation”
- Brook Berrie, “Time Since Parental Divorce and Self-Esteem in Adult Children”

- Erin Reed and Sarah Osborne, “Body Object Perception”
- Kate Ranganath, “Do You Get What You Expect? The Role of Expectation on Mood State.

**December 2001 Graduates:**

**Psychology:**

Katy Blasingame  
 Skyla Carnahan (Psychobiology – Honors Program)  
 Farrah Catt  
 Alyssa Ellis  
 Alissa Flory  
 Marcy Mitchell  
 Terri Patterson  
 Alma (Abby) Tarpley  
 Mary Wood  
 February Wyse

**Liberal Studies (Psychology Emphasis):**

Noelle McIntyre  
 Susan Mott

**Psi Chi Inductees – Spring 2002**

Spring induction for Psi Chi was held on February 20 at the home of Dr. Giordano. The following students were inducted.

Kari Basden	Heather Dano
Jennifer Jones	Kate Kelsey
Kate Ranganath	Meghan Webb

**Staci’s Cheese Ball:  
 (the hit of Fall Psi Chi Induction)**

2 – 8 oz. Packages of cream cheese  
 ¼ - c. choppes green pepper  
 1 – t. choppes onion (fine)  
 1 – small can crushed pineapple (drained)  
 1 – t. onion salt  
 1 – t. celery salt  
 1 – t. garlic salt

**Our Alumni –**

**Helen Kathleen Brown Housman, ’75** passed away in November of 2001 at the age of 79 (25 days short of her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Mrs. Housman received her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology from Belmont at the age of 53.

**Juanita E. Gamache ’95** is a program specialist with the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County. Her job involves monitoring at risk youths. She is in her second year of working toward a Master’s in Counseling at Trevecca Nazarene University (LPC licensure).

**Wendy Rodgers Harrison, ’96** graduated in December from MTSU with a Master’s in I/O Psychology. She is working in Risk Management in the Human Resources department for a company in Nashville that staffs malls all across the country with cleaning and security services.

**Emily Johnston Harcastle, ’96** is attending Columbia University working on both a MSW and an MBA.

**Carla Strassle, ’96** has recently accepted a faculty position With York College in York, Pennsylvania. She will be Joining their faculty in the fall.

**Lisa Elkins Morris, ’98** is teaching second grade at Father Ryan High School in Nashville where she also coaches volleyball. In addition she is working on her Master’s in Education.

**Shannon Martin, '98** is a literature teacher in grades 6-8 at Woodland Elementary School in Cannon County. He is currently working on a Master's in Counseling from Trevecca Nazarene University (LPC licensure).

**Cindy Lynn Johnson, '99** is employed by Stage 2 Ministries as a singer songwriter. Her debut CD "Beyond the Obvious" was featured in CCM's January Indie Spotlight Magazine. She is living in North Carolina but traveling and singing and "loving it". To learn more about her activities visit <http://www.cindyjohnson.org/>.

**Jacquelyn Pennings, '01** is beginning her graduate studies at Francis Marion University working toward a Master's in Clinical Psychology.

**Rose Brummett, '01** is working full-time at Vanderbilt with VIPPS (The Vanderbilt Institute for Public Policy Studies). She is also working at CERM (Center for Evaluation Research and Methodology) doing Meta-Analysis with Dr. Lipsey.

### **Psi Chi Receives Two Gifts**

Walter and Krystyna Zurawicki, parents of Marsha Zurawicki (senior and treasurer of Psi Chi) have given the Belmont University chapter of Psi Chi a gift of \$200.00.

Dr. Steve Davis who installed the Belmont University Chapter of Psi Chi ten years ago has donated his \$300 honorarium for speaking at PURS this year to our Psi Chi Chapter.

### **Dean's List – Psychology Majors – Fall 2001**

Kari Basden  
Logan Denson  
Beth Griffin  
Rebekah Harrison  
Stefanie Kibler  
Heena Patel  
Erin Reed  
Greg Sullivan

Brooke Berrie  
Bethany Flowers  
Anna Gross  
Christi Beth Johnston  
Ashley Lovell  
Mary Margaret Phillips  
Augusto Ricciardi  
Luther Tanley

Katy Blasingame  
Melissa Giorgi  
Isaac Harper  
Jennifer Jones  
Marilyn McAllister  
Kate Rangentah  
Ashley Stelzer  
Marsha Zurawicki

### **Lily's Garden**

By Melissa Giorgi  
Secretary, Psychology Club/Psi Chi

While most students were still sleeping on a Saturday morning, a group of Psi Chi/Psychology club members and professors were working hard to build a playground for children of all abilities. For two hours, students mixed concrete, dug holes, and bolted screws in a massive volunteer effort to build Lily's Garden.

The playground, located at 24<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Blackmore across from Vanderbilt, was built in October by contractors and over 200 volunteers from the community who wished to take a few hours out of their day to make a little girl's dream come true. The playground's namesake, 3-year-old Lily Shaw, has a neuromuscular disease and uses an electric wheelchair to maneuver around. With the playground's opening in December 2001, Lily can now chase her brothers up and down accessible ramps and swing on swings equipped to hold wheelchairs.

Psi Chi took the early morning, 8-10 shift. Kelly Voss, Marsha Zurawicki, and Ashley Lovell spent the morning digging holes for the wheelchair ramp. Susan Mott, Mary Godwin, and Melissa Giorgi helped assemble an accessible teeter-totter. Mike Sullivan, Linda Jones, and Lonnie Yandell lent their efforts by mixing concrete and moving materials to the contractors.

Lily's Garden is for children (and adults of all ages) and is the only playground of its kind in middle Tennessee.



Psychology Department at Lily's Garden

## **Psi Chi/Psychology Club 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

By Ashley Lovell  
Vice President, Psychology Club/Psi Chi

Ten years ago, Dr. Steve Davis established the Belmont University Psi Chi Chapter and the Psychology Club. Dr. Davis was able to visit us for the celebration of the tenth anniversary of these two societies, delivering the keynote address at PURS and a short introduction to the celebration of the anniversary celebration. This event was held in the Grand Salon of the Belmont Mansion on November 28, 2001, where current students and faculty, as well as alumni, gathered together over food and gifts.

This celebration also included the induction ceremony for the new Psi Chi members. Beth Griffin, a senior psychology major, and Dr. Linda Jones, an assistant professor and co-advisor of Psi Chi and the Psychology Club, signed their names into the Psi Chi registry and were welcomed as fellow members by the current officers of Psi Chi. This year's officers include Kelly Voss (President), Ashley Lovell (Vice-president), Melissa Giorgi (Secretary), Marsha Zurawicki (Treasurer), and Staci Roberts (Reporter), Stefanie Kibler (Historian, not present), and Luther Tanley (SGA Liason).

We were very pleased with the attendance of Belmont students past and present, and felt the event was a time of new beginnings as well as reflection on ten great years for Psi Chi and the Psychology Club. Special thanks to Dr. Steve Davis, whose presence and continued contributions are greatly enjoyed and appreciated.



**Psi Chi Induction  
Grand Salon, Belmont Mansion**

### **Events in Spring 2002**

- February 20 – Psi Chi Induction, home of Dr. Peter Giordano
- March 21-24 – Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) will meet in Orlando, Florida. Eight of our majors have sent abstracts for the poster presentations. Two students, Stefanie Kibler and Kelly Voss have already had their paper accepted.
- April 12-13 – Belmont's Psychology department will be hosting teaching workshop for high school teachers of Advanced Placement Psychology. It is sponsored by the Teaching of Psychology for Secondary Schools (TOPSS) a part of APA. High school teachers from around this area will be attending.
- April 20 – Belmont will once again host the Middle Tennessee Psychological Association (MTPA) annual spring meeting. Keynote speaker will be Dr. David Myers of Hope College. Dr. Myers introductory textbook is the best selling textbook in the nation, and he has authored a number of other textbooks. This meeting attracts both undergraduate and graduate

researchers from schools in this area, including MTSU, Austin Peay, David Lipscomb, Trevecca and others. For more information or to register for the conference, check the Belmont Psychology web site: <http://www.belmont.edu/psychology>.

### **Lonnie Yandell Day**

By Staci Roberts  
Reporter, Psychology Club/Psi Chi

Friday, February 15 was designated as Lonnie Yandell Day at Belmont by the Psychology Department. The Belmont University Chapter of Psi Chi presented Dr. Yandell with a Certificate of Appreciation on that day “in honor and recognition of tireless, ongoing, and immeasurable contributions to undergraduate psychology research”.

Students in the psychology department organized a surprise party in celebration of this award as a way to express their appreciation for the unique way in which Dr. Yandell extends learning beyond the classroom. He has certainly made an impact in the personal and professional lives of his students! Psychology faculty and staff members, students, and his family (wife Judy and daughters Maggie and Sarah), participated in this special event. Thank you and Congratulations Dr. Yandell.



**Dr. Yandell Receiving Plaque**