Recent News

485 & 491 Supervision Meetings:
October 6th, October 20th–11:00am

SPSS Workshop
10am-12pm rm. 718

PRA Lab Meeting (714)
10am-12pm

ABOUT DR. BLAKE

Dr. Jamilia Blake is the Director of the Peer Relations and Adjustment Lab and Principal Investigator for the "Peer Relations as Moderators of Success" study. She earned her doctoral degree at the University of Georgia in School Psychology. She is a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) and is certified in School Crisis Response. Her research interests surround children’s peer relations. Specifically, she is interested in peer-directed aggression in ethnic minority populations and females, and the relation between peer-directed aggression and children’s psychological/social adjustment, and academic achievement.
Current Projects & Progress

A few things we’ve been working on...

The Peer Relations as Moderators of Success Study:
The purpose of the Peer Relations as Moderators of Success study is to understand how children’s relationships with peers can influence their success in school. The primary objective of this study is to understand the degree to which children’s social and psychological adjustment and academic engagement is influenced by their interactions with peers.

Professional Practices Related to Bullying:
This study seeks to identify professional practices related to bullying by conducting a national survey of school psychologists and counselors who are currently working in schools.

Recruitment and Retention:
The lack of diversity amongst professional school psychologist is an issue that has been present for over ten years. Many articles have been published that offer assistance in the form of strategies that psychology programs can use to entice more culturally and linguistically diverse students to apply and complete their graduate work. The Professional Psychology Recruitment and Retention study we are conducting seeks to discover whether or not the strategies recommended by the various articles have been implemented and if programs are actively working towards creating a more culturally and linguistically diverse student population within their program.

Take it from the PRO’S:

Q: What advice would you offer someone interested in or currently involved with the school psychology program?

A: “I’d say to not be afraid to follow your heart. I was so tied up on dreams that I had as a child that I didn’t realize that as I grew up, so did my aspirations. Dreams change and we must be willing to evaluate ourselves enough to pinpoint what it is that you really want to do. Also, find a mentor who’s doing what you want to do. I know that without the help of the mentors I have here at TAMU, I wouldn’t be the person I am right now. And finally, don’t be afraid to try new challenges. It may be a little unnerving and frustrating at first, but, there’s always a new lesson to be learned from difficult tasks.” –Leann Smith, Senior

A: “Becoming involved with research projects is a great idea! Doing research might seem intimidating at first, but I would encourage you to become involved with a research project, anyway. All of the professors I have worked with have been very nice, research projects look impressive on a vita, presenting research at conferences are neat experiences, and being involved with research is a good way to learn.” –Jessica Vaughan, Second Year Doctoral Student

Grad Lab Spotlight

Courtney Swisher Banks, the PRA Lab’s Project Manager, is a graduate student from Austin, TX. As an undergrad, she studied at Baylor University majoring in Psychology with a minor in Religion. After graduating in May 2005 with a bachelor’s degree, she returned to the Austin area and taught a special education resource class at a middle school for 2 years. In May of ’06, Courtney was accepted into the Specialist in School Psychology Program at Texas A&M Commerce and graduated in August 2010. While studying at Commerce she worked in Royce City, TX teaching a special education resource class there for grades 2-5 and eventually became a counselor for the school district. The following year, she also completed an internship in school psychology there. Courtney’s ultimate goal is to become a professor at a university. Courtney’s research interests include home and school collaboration among African American families to promote social competence in children and adolescents. She is also interested in types of aggression in peer relations among adolescents. Courtney is a major contributor to the peer relations and adjustment lab and has been doing a fantastic job with keeping everyone and everything organized.
Research Awards

Bandura Graduate Award
Apps Due: Feb 1
Open to: All psychology graduate students who are Psi Chi members and graduate student affiliates of the Association for Psychological Science (APS)
Prize: (1) travel expenses to attend the APS National Convention to receive the award, (2) a three-year membership in APS, including subscriptions to all APS journals, and (3) two engraved plaques, one for the winner and one for the winner's psychology department as a permanent honor to the winner.

Society Convention Research Awards
Apps Due: Dec 1
Open to: All Psi Chi members (undergraduate and graduate)
Cash awards: $300 for undergraduates and $500 for graduates are presented to students
Awarded for: submitting the best research for Psi Chi sessions at the APA and APS national conventions

Newman Graduate Award
Apps Due: Feb 1
Open to: All psychology graduate students
Prize: (1) travel expenses to attend the APA/Psi Chi National Convention to receive the award, (2) a three-year subscription to an APA journal of the winner's choice, and (3) two engraved plaques, one for the winner and one for the winner's psychology department as a permanent honor to the winner.

Regional Research Awards
App Deadlines Vary (check website)
Open to: All Psi Chi members (undergraduate and graduate)
Cash award: $300
Awarded for: best research papers to Psi Chi sessions at regional conventions.

Research Grants

FBI NCAVC Internship Grants
Apps Due: Feb 1 & June 1
Open to: All undergraduate and graduate Psi Chi members
For: conducting research at the FBI National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crimes (NCAVC)
Award: Two grants up to $7,000 will be awarded annually for the 14-week unpaid position

Graduate Research Grants
App Deadline: Nov 1 & Feb 1
Open to: All graduate Psi Chi members
Awarded for: members to defray the cost of conducting a research project
Award: up to $1,500 for each project

Undergraduate Research Grants
App deadline: Nov 1 & Feb 1
Open to: All undergraduate Psi Chi members are eligible to apply for these undergraduate research grants
Awarded for: members to defray the cost of conducting a research project
Award: up to $1,500 for each project

Fellowships

Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs
Type: Predoctoral Fellowship
App Deadline: Nov. 1
Benefits: Annual stipend $20,000
http://national-academies.org/fellowships

Ford Foundation Fellowship Programs
Type: Dissertation Fellowship
App Deadline: Nov. 8
Benefits: One-year stipend $21,000
http://national-academies.org/fellowships
Accomplishments & Student Research

Alicia Darensbourg successfully defended her dissertation on “External Influences and Child Mechanisms Affecting Achievement.” Alicia is the first student from the lab to defend her dissertation. We are so proud of you!

Student Research

- Alicia Darensbourg just had her second publication accepted—the “Overrepresentation of African American students in exclusionary discipline: The role of School Psychologists in dismantling the school-to-prison pipeline” in the Journal of African American Male Education. Please congratulate her on her first first-authored publication as this is a huge accomplishment.

- Jessica Vaughan’s poster on “School-Based Mental Health Professionals’ Strategies for Identifying and Assessing Student Bullying and Victimization” was accepted to TASP.

- Courtney, Brenda, and Alicia’s poster presentations were accepted to NASP. Courtney will be presenting her thesis “Self-Concept and Theory of Mind of Adolescents with Asperger Syndrome,” and Brenda and Alicia will be presenting on data from the professional practices related to bullying study “School Professionals' Assessment and Intervention Strategies for Bullying and Victimization.”

- Leann was accepted into the Undergrad Scholars Program. She will be writing her undergrad thesis on the Recruitment and Retention Study.

Undergrad Lab Spotlight

Leann Smith is a senior mathematics major with a psychology minor from Galveston, TX. This is her second semester working in the PRA Lab and her current duties consist mostly of leading the Recruitment and Retention Study that investigates Professional (school, clinical, and counseling) Psychology programs’ recruitment and retention strategies for culturally and linguistically diverse students. This study calls for tons of research, as a good amount of her time in the lab consists of reading articles and other published work on this topic. It also requires communication with various institutions’ directors and program coordinators of psychology programs. Leann’s main interest in the realm of psychology is focused on adolescents and the way that their various environments impact their ability to learn and positively interact with their peers. In addition to being a part of the Peer Relations and Adjustments lab, she also has duties in the Student Life Studies office as a student worker and serves a leadership position in the African American Student Leadership Institute (AASLI) and Maximizing Educational Development through Academic and Leadership Skills (MEDALS) programs. She thoroughly enjoys being actively involved with Texas A&M and will be leaving with a heavy heart this coming spring. She is currently in the process of applying to different graduate schools, and plans to earn a PhD in School Psychology, work as a school psychologist, and eventually, become a professor at a university. We are so proud of Leann and all of her efforts here in the PRA Lab.

NASP CONVENTION 2011

February 22-25, 2011
Hilton San Francisco
San Francisco, CA
Do you have something to share?

Email Rebeca Sanchez at: rebecasanchez17@tamu.edu with your news, current studies, upcoming events or accomplishments to be added to the next lab newsletter!

Upcoming Events & Deadlines

American Psychological Association (APA)

119th Annual Covention
Washington, D.C., August 4-7, 2011
Proposal Deadline: Dec. 1, 2010

National Association of School Psychologists (NASP)

February 22-25, 2011
Hilton San Francisco
San Francisco, CA
Proposal Deadline has passed

February 21-25, 2012
Philadelphia Marriott/Loews Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA

Southwestern Educational Research Association (SERA)

2011 Annual Meeting
Feb 2 - Feb 5, 2011
The Menger Hotel
San Antonio, TX
Proposal Deadline has passed

Society for Research on Child Development (SRCD)

Biennial Meeting
8:00am, Thursday, March 31-6:10pm Saturday, April, 2, 2011
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Proposal Deadline has passed

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