Dr. Jamilia Blake, Director
Volume 1, Issue 2, Spring 2011

PRA Lab Meeting: Monday, April 4th
9-11am

April 2011

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ABOUT DR. BLAKE

Dr. Blake is an Assistant Professor in the School Psychology program in the Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A&M University. She is the Director of the Peer Relations and Adjustment Lab. Dr. Blake 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 peer-directed aggression, bullying, and victimization in socially marginalized youth.
Current Projects & Progress

We’ve been busy this semester and making friends along the way. Here’s an update on our current projects...

Projects Nearing Completion

Peer Relations as Moderators of Success (PRAMS). The purpose of PRAMS is to understand how children’s behavior, social status, and interactions with peers influence their social and emotional adjustment as well as their academic success in school. We have completed data collection for the PRAMS study and are currently in the process of entering the last wave of data. We currently have data from 704 students, 316 parents, and 39 teachers. We expect that PRAMS data will be ready for analyses by August 1st. This study was a huge undertaking and Dr. Blake is very grateful to all the funding agencies that supported this project. We hope that multiple presentations and manuscripts will be developed from this study.

Professional Practices Related to Bullying (PPRB). The purpose of the PPRB study was to examine the professional practices school psychologists and school counselors used to address bullying in their schools. An online survey was distributed nationally to practicing school psychologists and school counselors across the country in the spring and fall of 2010. A total of 602 practitioners completed the survey. Data from the PPRB has been featured in two poster presentations at regional and national conferences: TASP (Vaughn-Jensen, Gamez, & Blake, 2010) and NASP (Blake, McLean, Gamez, & Darenbourg, 2011) and is currently being used to support two manuscripts co-authored by Dr. Blake and current and former members of the PRA Lab: Courtney Banks, Emily Lund, Brenda Gamez, and Heidi Ewing. These manuscripts, which will be submitted this spring, examine the assessment and intervention strategies school-based mental health professionals used to address bullying, respectively. A summary of the results of this project will be available on the PRA lab website (pralab.tamu.edu) this summer. Special thanks to Alicia Darenbourg and Lauren (Lu) McLean for their assistance in the early stages of the study.

Professional Psychology Recruitment and Retention Study. The objective of the Professional Psychology Recruitment and Retention study was to identify which strategies professional psychology programs implement to increase the cultural and linguistic diversity of their graduate student population. Approximately 69 School Psychology programs from across the United States participated in this study (42% return rate). Preliminary results for the study were presented nationally at NASP during the Trainers of School Psychology preconference (Smith, Blake, & Graves, 2010) and were well received by attendees. This project was directed by Leann Smith, an undergraduate RA in the PRA Lab, with assistance from Dr. Blake and Dr. Scott Graves. Data from this project will serve as the basis of her undergraduate thesis and will support a series of manuscripts on this important line of research.

Victimization in Children with Disabilities. Using a national longitudinal data set of children in special education, we collaborated with Dr. Michael Benz and explored the factors that predicted children with disabilities’ risk for being victimized. Preliminary findings suggest that prior history of victimization or chronic victimization was most predictive of risk for victimization as well as being identified as having Emotional Disturbance. Findings from this study will be submitted for publication this spring and presented at APA in August 2011. Dr. Blake served as the lead for this project but was assisted by the following PRA Lab members who made important contributions to this work: Emily Lund and Eun Sook Kim.

Special thanks to all the PRA Lab members, past and present, that assisted in the aforementioned research studies.

Meet Our Friends:

Faculty Collaborators

Dr. Benz is the director of the Center for Disability and Development at TAMU. Dr. Benz is a Professor in the Special Education program whose research includes adolescents at-risk for community and school failure; secondary education; and transition services for youth in secondary education.

Dr. E. Lisako McKyer is the director of the Child Adolescent Research Health Laboratory (CARHL) and is an Assistant Professor in the Health Education program at TAMU. Dr. McKyer’s research examines familial, physical, and social-emotional influences (peers) on children’s health status and health behaviors, specifically child nutrition and obesity. Although we currently do not have any research projects with Dr. McKyer, given our shared interests, PRA and CARHL members have collaborated on various community service activities in the past and anticipate continuing to do so in the future.

Dr. Graves, not pictured, is an Assistant Professor at Bowling Green State University. His research interests surround the development of behavior problems in African American children in early childhood, the development of high academic achievement in African American children, and the diversification of the School Psychology profession. Dr. Graves has been an important contributor to the Recruitment and Retention
New & Emerging Projects for 2011

**Bullying in Out-of-School Time Programs.** Our lab is collaborating with Dr. Corliss Outley to understand whether or not bullying occurs in youth development programs such as afterschool programs, Girls Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H etc. While considerable research focuses on bullying in the schools, it is quite possible that bullying occurs in other settings. Interestingly, very few studies have examined whether bullying occurs in youth development programs or studied the training and competency of youth development staff in addressing bullying behavior. Given the limited research on bullying in out-of-school time programs, Drs. Blake and Outley are surveying out-of-school time staff and directors in the state of Texas to determine the frequency in which they observe bullying behavior occurring in their programs and the type of training staff report receiving in relation to bullying.

**Educational Administrators’ Perspectives on Bullying.** Within the past decade, research on bullying has grown tenfold thus increasing our understanding not only regarding the nature of bullying, but also the negative outcomes associated with bullying behavior. Although a number of investigations have examined various school professionals’ perspectives on bullying, the literature on educational administrators’ perspectives on school bullying is fairly silent. However, this is interesting given that educational administrators are charged with interpreting state bullying legislature (i.e., discipline policies and identification of bullying), disciplining students for engaging in bullying behavior, and in some cases approving the school-based anti-bullying programs that will be used in their schools (Blake, 2010). In an effort to understand school principals’ and assistant principals’ perspectives on bullying, Dr. Blake and members of the lab are collaborating with Dr. Gwen Webb Hasan to conduct a national study of educational administrators’ professional practices related to bullying.

**Early Development of Relational Aggression.** Considerable research indicates that girls are more likely to engage in relational aggression than physical aggression. Given that gender differences in relational aggression are evidenced as early as 3 years of age, some researchers hypothesize that relational aggression is the primary means in which girls aggress, while boys primarily engage in physical aggression. Unfortunately, limited research has controlled for other gender-linked behaviors or characteristics that might explain gender differences in childhood aggression such as gender socialization practices and biological factors. Thus, in collaboration with Dr. Gerianne Alexander, this fall we will be examining whether gender differences in relational aggression persist among preschool children after controlling for other gender-linked behaviors.

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**Meet More of Our Friends:**

**Dr. Outley** is an Assistant Professor in the Youth Development program at TAMU. She conducts research on youth with a particular interest in ethnic identity; how built and physical environmental influences youth development; and the role of children’s interpersonal relationships with parents and peers in influencing youth development. She frequently does community participatory based research (CPBR) with youth using focus groups, community mapping, and documentary photography.

**Dr. Webb Hasan** is an Associate Professor in the Public Administration program at TAMU. Dr. Hasan has been an educator for over 35 years and is recognized nationally for her expertise in public school administration, disproportionate special education, and multicultural education, among other critical areas in education.

**Dr. Alexander** is an Associate Professor in the Clinical Psychology program at TAMU and the director of the Brain and Gender Research Lab. Her research examines the influence of biological factors on sex differences in children and animals.
Lab Spotlight

Emily Lund is a first-year graduate student from Salt Lake City, Utah and attended the University of Montana as an undergraduate. She is primarily interested in peer relationships, disabilities and attitudes toward disabilities. In 2009, Emily’s work involving violence and disability was published. She has received a scholarship from the American Association on Health and Disability and in February of this year, she received an award at the Rehabilitation Psychology Conference. Emily is currently working on the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study (SEELS) which examines peer victimization of children with disabilities. Emily is simultaneously writing a systematic literature review of bullying interventions for children with disabilities and assisting with the Professional Practices Related to Bullying (PPRB) study which is composed of an online survey that is distributed to school psychology professionals. As of now, she is not sure of her future plans but is focused on continuing research and possibly entering the clinical field following graduation.

Accomplishments & Student Research

Awards
♦ Emily Lund receives award at the Rehabilitation Psychology Conference

Fellowship Applicants
♦ We are proud of these team members for submitting applications to the Ford Fellowship, a very competitive and highly respected funding agency: Leann Smith, Courtney Banks, and Brenda Gamez. Good luck ladies, we hope you are awarded a fellowship!

Research Presentations involving PRA Lab Members
(Student authors highlighted in bold):

Lab Spotlight

Jessica Vaughn Jensen is originally from Minnesota and is now a 2nd year graduate student within the program. She got her bachelor’s degree at North Dakota State University and her master’s at Minnesota State University. Jessica’s current research includes the PPRB project, which she presented at NASP, and two papers she has presented at SERA. Her main interests include the extent to which nonverbal victimization impacts youth psychological adjustment and her future plans are to either work for a school district as a school psychologist or teach at a
We would like to dedicate this newsletter to our friend and co-worker

Nicolis “Nico” T. Williams

November 13, 1990 - February 11, 2011

Nico, a 20 year old junior economics major from Sugarland, TX, was an exceptionally hard worker here in the PRA Lab for the few weeks that he worked with us. Though we knew him for only a short time, he contributed greatly to our progress on current studies and was a very prominent leader elsewhere on campus as well as in the lab. Nico expressed a strong love of Texas A&M and was very involved with various leadership organizations connecting with many Aggies along the way. He was diligently committed to his school work and friends and was an inspiration to many who knew him as a Fish Camp counselor, member of FLIP, and volunteer driver for Carpool. In addition to these organizations, Nico was also actively involved with his church in the Houston area. We will dearly miss his bright smile here in 704j, but Nico’s Aggie spirit will remain with us in our memories for years to come.
Mark your Calendars:
Upcoming Events & Deadlines

American Psychological Association (APA)
119th Annual Convention
Washington, D.C., August 4-7, 2011
Proposal Deadline has passed

National Association of School Psychologists
February 21-25, 2012 Philadelphia, PA
Proposal Submission Deadline: June 2011

Society for Research on Child Development (SRCD)
Biennial Meeting
March 31- April 2, 2011
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Proposal Deadline has passed

Society for Research in Adolescence
2012 Biennial Meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
March 8-10, 2012
Proposal Submission Deadline: Summer 2011

American Educational Research Association
Friday, April 13– Tuesday, April 17
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Proposal Submission Deadline: Summer 2010

American Psychological Association
2012 Annual Convention in Orlando, FL
August 2-5, 2012
Proposal Submission Deadline: December 2011

Student Affiliates of School Psychology
2011 SASP Mini-Convention
To be held during the 119th annual APA Convention
August 4-7, 2011 in Washington, D.C.
Proposal Submission Deadline: May 1, 2011 by 11:59pm

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!

PRA Lab Newsletter
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