HDP Spring 2015

DEAR STUDENTS, FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMS,

As we approach the end of the academic year, we want to use this last newsletter to celebrate the many accomplishments of HDP students and faculty. In addition to announcing our amazing graduates, we are happy to share HDP conference presentations, recent publications, and interviews with Professors Bailey & Kasari about translating research into policy and practice.

Thank you for all of your contributions to the division (and to this newsletter)! It has been a joy to put together this issue and we hope you enjoy it!

Best,
Anne & Kate
Congratulations to this year’s HDP graduates!

- **Shilpa Baweja**
  - Dissertation: Prospective associations between youth depressive symptoms & peer victimization: a developmental feedback mechanism
  - Advisor: Professor Sandra Graham

- **Patricia Carroll**
  - Dissertation: English Language Proficiency Classification, Reclassification, and Educational Programming Decisions for Language Minority Students: A Mixed Methods Study
  - Advisor: Professor Alison Bailey

- **John Tarek Danial**
  - Advisor: Professor Jeff Wood

- **David DeLiema**
  - Dissertation: The Interpersonal Organization of Failure and Knowledge in Mathematics Tutoring
  - Advisor: Professor Noel Enyedy

- **Talya Drescher**
  - Dissertation: Crossing the Special-General Education Divide at the Post-Secondary Level: Observations and Outcomes of Co-Teaching across Curricula
  - Advisor: Professor Sandra Graham

- **Debra Garcia**
  - Dissertation: From Screen to Green: The Effect of Screen Time and Setting on Pre-Adolescent Children’s Executive Function Skills
  - Advisor: Professor Jeff Wood

- **Hilary Gould**
  - Dissertation: Teaching to Play or Playing to Teach: An examination of play targets and generalization in two interventions for children with autism
  - Advisor: Professor Connie Kasari

- **Robyn Herrera**
  - Dissertation: Communication profiles of children with profound visual impairment and their caregivers
  - Advisor: Professor Connie Kasari

- **Steven Kenneth Kapp**
  - Dissertation: Social Justice and Autism: Links to Personality and Advocacy
  - Advisor: Professor Connie Kasari

- **Dalal Katsiaficas**
  - Dissertation: Social Responsibilities and Collective Contribution in the Lives of Immigrant-Origin College Students
  - Advisor: Professor Carola Suárez-Orozco

- **Jarod Kawasaki**
  - Dissertation: Examining teachers’ aims and classroom instruction around the science and engineering practices in the Next Generation Science Standards
  - Advisor: Professor William A. Sandoval

- **Janelle Lawson**
  - Dissertation: Evaluating Special Educators Using Observation Rubrics: Investigating the Reliability of School Administrator Ratings
  - Advisor: Professor Jeff Wood

- **Christopher Robert Osborn**
  - Dissertation: Increasing Playground Engagement in Special Education Students with Autism Utilizing an Aide-Mediated Social Skills Intervention
  - Advisor: Professor Connie Kasari

- **Anna Osipova**
  - Dissertation: Academic Language Self-Reflection and Coaching Training of Pre-service Special Education Teachers in the Context of Content Area Writing Instruction
  - Advisor: Professor Alison Bailey

- **Renee Polanco Lucero**
  - Advisor: Professor Connie Kasari

- **Sihan Xiao**
  - Dissertation: Children’s Use of Inscriptions in Argumentation about Socioscientific Issues
  - Advisor: Professor William A. Sandoval

- **Catherine Tsoa**
  - Dissertation: Predicting Infant/Toddler Social-Emotional Outcomes from Intrapersonal Caregivers Characteristics and Child Care Process Quality
  - Advisor: Professor Carollee Howes

- **Belinda Lynette Williams**
  - Dissertation: Propinquity as a Barrier to Friendship Development for Children with Autism
  - Advisor: Professor Connie Kasari

- **Jacqueline Wong**
  - Dissertation: Decision-making and evaluation of science causal claims: effects of goals on uses of evidence and explanatory mechanism
  - Advisor: Professor William A. Sandoval

- **Siena Whitham**
  - Dissertation: Speed-dating with autism: Initial romantic attraction among adults with autism spectrum disorder
  - Advisor: Professor Connie Kasari
RODRIGUEZ, V. C., GILLEN-O’NEEL, C., MISTRY, R. S., BROWN, C. S., CHOW, K. A., WHITE, E. S. (IN PRESS). NATIONAL AND RACIAL-ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION AMONG EARLY ADOLESCENTS: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AMERICAN? JOURNAL OF EARLY ADOLESCENCE.

This mixed methods study explored early adolescents’ emerging American identities by investigating their national American identification, and meanings attached to being American. Participants included 102 youth (51% female; ages 10-12, M = 11.45, SD = .70) from diverse racial-ethnic backgrounds. Consistent with previous research, youth associated Americans with positive trait-stereotypes, symbols (e.g., American flag), nativity status, and particular racial-ethnic groups (e.g., White). Youth who self-identified as American (n = 51; i.e., used American or hyphenated American label) frequently asserted that being American was defined by their birthplace and residence in the U.S. Additionally, being American was a salient part of self-identification for many early adolescents in our sample. Results suggest that early adolescence is an optimal developmental period to examine the emergence of an American identity, and further validates the benefits of using quantitative and qualitative methods in the study of youths’ national and racial-ethnic identification.


During the middle school transition, adolescents are often faced with physical and school contextual changes that may impact how they perceive that first transitional year. The present study examined how pubertal timing (onset of menarche) was associated with Latinas' school connectedness during the first year in middle school and whether that relationship was moderated by perceived school ethnic composition and body mass index (BMI) (i.e., a reliable indicator of body fat calculated from participants' age, height, and weight). Sixth-grade Latinas (N = 609) at the beginning and end of the first year of middle school indicated whether menarche had begun. From this question, girls were classified as early maturers (started menarche before 6th grade), changers (started during 6th grade) or later maturers (had not started by the end of 6th grade). Changers who attended schools where they perceived fewer same-ethnic peers and they deviated from the Latina BMI mean of that school in the direction of lower BMI (i.e., toward being underweight), reported more school connectedness than early and later-maturing Latinas. These findings underscored the importance of finding one’s niche and fitting in for girls who are maturing during a period of both rapid physical change and a school transition.
2015 CONFERENCES

Throughout the year, HDP students and faculty presented at numerous conferences around the country. Here are just a few of the presentations and posters that HDP scholars produced in 2015:

UCLA Research and Inquiry Conference: Los Angeles, CA, May 28
- Organized by Kate Riedell, Noreen Webb, and Karen Hunter-Quartz
- Influences of Argument Instruction on Children’s Use of Evidence in Socioscientific Issues, Sihan Xiao
- A Mixed Methods Study of Multivariate Data Use in One California School District: Impact of Combination Models on English Learner Reclassification in Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade, Patricia Carroll
- Parental Beliefs on the Efficacy of Struggle and the Effects of Homework Helping Behaviors, Salvador Vasquez & Gerardo Ramirez
- Testing the Self-Directed and Passionate Learner Model with Immigrant-Origin Community College Students, Janet Cerda & Minas Michikyan

International Meeting for Autism Research: Salt Lake City, UT, May 13-16
- Factors Associated with the Utilization of Services for Children with Autism in Saudi Arabia, Faisal Alnemary, Hesham Al-Dahlaan, & Fahad Alnemary
- Distinct Language Improvements of Minimally Verbal Children with ASD inside and Outside Episodes of Engagement As Response to Treatment, Alison Holbrook, Jessica Hopkins, & Connie Kasari
- Sensory Processing Sensitivities and Personality in Adults with and without ASD, Ben Schwartzman, Steven Kapp, & Jeff Wood
American Educational Research Association: Chicago, IL, April 16-20

- Elementary Students Justifying Explanations and Reasoning With Evidence in Academic Tasks and Nonacademic Routines, Alison Bailey, Sandy Chang, Anne Blackstock-Bernstein, Eve Ryan, & Despina Pitsoulakis
- Ethnic Identity and Intergroup Attitudes Among Korean American Adolescents, Hye-Young Yun & Sandra Graham
- Language Policy, Accountability, and English Language Learner Students, Session chair: Carola Suárez-Orozco

Society for Research in Child Development: Philadelphia, PA, March 19-21

- Middle School Student’s Experiences with Racial/Ethnic Discrimination as they Navigate the Neighborhood and School Contexts, Feliz Quinones & Sandra Graham
- The development of executive function and academic skills in the context of poverty: New perspectives on an old question, Session chairs: Jennie Grammer & Kelly Purtell

HDP students also presented at the following academic conferences, among others:

We sat down with Professors Bailey & Kasari to learn more about how they translate their work into policy & practice.

Q: How does your research impact policy or practice?

AB: My last two external grants have both had a policy and practice component "built in." In one research project for which I was co-PI, I served as the research partner to one of the five participating states and worked with the state’s assessment director and English Language Learner (ELL) coordinators to improve their state’s Home Language Survey (HLS) that all families complete when first enrolling their children in K-12 public schools. That meant the policy implications were a main focus from the start.

A more recent project (DLLP) has as its third and final phase a deliberate attempt to take the research instruments we have developed to study children’s language development trajectories and adapt these to become teacher tools for using a language progression in their own instructional practices. To do this effectively, I collaborated with colleagues in the teacher professional development arena. We just heard that we will likely receive a fifth year of funding to test the efficacy of these new empirically-derived language learning progressions as used by teachers. There has been a deliberate and seamless connection between basic research findings and instructional practice in this instance.

Q: What challenges have you faced with this work?

AB: The challenges with the DLLP project have been to always remain aware of what features of language would be salient to educators and what "grain size" of analysis would be most useful and doable for elementary teachers to use.

Q: What have been the rewards of this work?

AB: Perhaps the most rewarding (and immediately impactful) research-to-practice effort to date was the recent research my
graduate students and I conducted with focus groups of Southern California parents. This research came about because of the earlier research with Home Language Surveys. I have remained part of state and national level initiatives that have been discussing revamping the HLS for the past 2 years, and California Department of Education (CDE) asked if I would help create and research the feasibility of a new HLS for our state.

Q: How did your graduate students become involved?

AB: CDE explicitly asked if I thought my graduate students would want to volunteer. That got a resounding "Yes!" from my Language and Literacy RAC! So under the auspices of WestEd (our state’s Regional Comprehensive Center funded by the Federal Government to support states and local education agencies), we recruited and conducted focus groups with parents from diverse language backgrounds to determine various concepts related to children’s exposure to English and other languages at the start of schooling. This was a unique opportunity for many members of my RAC to be involved in so applied a project. The results of the focus groups meant we could refine the choice and wording of the proposed new HLS questions. WestEd colleagues and I are now piloting these questions with a larger number of school districts to see if the questions can better predict which students should be screened for English proficiency.

Q: What will the impact of this work be?

AB: Ultimately, the changes to the current HLS are intended to lead to a more efficient process and, we all hope, a more accurate prediction of which students will most benefit from receiving English language support services. The fact that we could help the state with this "barely-funded" mandate, work with parents and district personnel first-hand, and improve educational practices was tremendously rewarding. It also built a new network of valuable contacts with local communities for my students wanting to secure their own education research sites in the future.
Q: How does your research impact policy or practice?

CK: My team engages in multiple research projects that have practice and/or policy implications. The extent to which these studies actually affect policy/practice varies. For example, nearly all of my research projects are situated in public school settings or in the homes of children. Few studies are conducted in the laboratory.

I study children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and am particularly interested in children who have limited access to current services designed specially for children with ASD. Because there is a significant health disparity in terms of access to specialized services (White children receive diagnoses of ASD on average by age 4, African American and Latino children by age 8 or 9 years), we work in public schools because this is the context in which one can find children who have limited access to services. We work in Title 1 and under-resourced schools, particularly in LAUSD.

Some studies focus on how to best improve inclusion for children with ASD in the general education classroom; others focus on improving social and communication outcomes in the children themselves. Our studies directly teach teachers, teaching assistants and parents strategies for improving outcomes among children. We test whether these approaches work using both teacher/parent and student outcomes. We always have follow up assessments once the study has ended, so we have some sense of how well the interventions maintain or generalize to other contexts or other students.

Q: How did this research come about? Do you have a policy/practice application in mind when beginning a research project?

CK: Often through community connections and grant funding. Our work is situated in implementation science—we study the ways in which evidence-based practices are disseminated into real world settings, and we are very interested in sustainability. So in general, yes, we have community implementation in mind! We are hoping to make a significant difference in the lives of those we work with, and we hope that we can make real improvements in practice.

Q: What was the process like?

CK: Time consuming :-) In our new work that utilizes a community partnered, participatory research approach, time is needed to develop relationships, to establish partnerships and to design and engage in research initiatives together. This approach is not for the faint of heart...you must get into the community, and meet with people, and...
really try to understand the issues from their perspective. As researchers, we probably do far too little of this.

For some time now, we have had a productive partnership with the LAUSD leadership on special needs services, and have conducted many studies in schools. We also are partnering with Healthy African American Families in South Central Los Angeles. We bring together many community and academic groups to raise awareness of autism in the community and to initiate research and service projects.

It is important to highlight the key difference between community-based research and community-partnered research. Often we base our research in the community—the researcher carries out the research in a community setting. However, in community-partnered research, community and academic partners are equal, meaning they collaborate on the design, execution, interpretation and dissemination of the study together. Community-partnered research has a greater chance of being owned and sustained in the community. We are actively engaging in this approach in nearly all of our new studies.

Q: What challenges do you face in applying your research to policy/practice?

CK: So in all cases we face implementation challenges. These include interventions that need to be adapted to the context in which we want to implement them, partnering with key individuals, and then encountering resistance to change on the part of everyone, to name a few challenges! But that is the beauty of the models we adopt for research; community-partnered research makes you address these issues head on, and the goal is to have something that is effective in a real-world setting.

Q: What advice do you have for students who are interested in doing research that can directly impact policy/practice?

CK: Many of our HDP students come into graduate school from practice settings. They have experiences that are influencing their interests in research, and I think they can begin to apply those interests right away in research, but one step at a time. For example, it is very difficult for a student to carry out independent intervention work. The studies I do take many years to complete. We see fairly large numbers of target children (plus teachers, parents, peers) over many hours, weeks, months, and we collect lots of different types of measures. Our research primarily focuses on randomized trials that involve mixed methods (both quantitative and qualitative data). It would be very difficult for a student to do a study like this independently. My own studies take a village to complete! Included in this village are graduate students who gain critical experiences, and who can carve out an area of their own from these larger studies. So for students who want to influence practice and/or policy I recommend they align themselves with research groups conducting these types of studies. Luckily many of our HDP colleagues are concerned with practice/policy, so there are options!
ALUMNI CONNECTIONS

Dear HDP Alums,

Earlier this year, we were able to highlight the current work of a few alumni, and we would like to use future HDP newsletters as a way to keep in touch and learn about the great work you are doing. Please contact us at katherinemg@ucla.edu or annebb@ucla.edu to send updates on what you’ve been up to since leaving Moore Hall.

We look forward to hearing from you and sharing your experiences with the rest of the HDP community!

Best Wishes,
Anne & Kate

FACULTY AWARDS & HONORS

We would like to congratulate Professor Sandra Graham on receiving American Psychological Association’s E. L. Thorndike Career Award for Distinguished Contributions to Educational Psychology, as well as Professor Rashmita Mistry & Professor Jeffrey Wood on becoming full professors!

MEET NEXT YEAR’S HDP STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Hello,

We are so excited to serve as your HDP representatives for the 2015-2016 school year! We are looking forward to getting to know you all better next year through some of our social events. Let us know if you have any event ideas — feel free to stop us in the hallway :) Hope you have a great summer and see you all next fall!

Best,
Bryan, Feliz, & Chrissie