2019 Honors Convocation
Thesis Abstracts for AY 2018/19

Contents
Author: Katherine Adams .......................................................................................................... 3
Author: Rebecca Andranovich ................................................................................................... 3
Author: Megan Baker ................................................................................................................. 4
Author: Danielle Bass ................................................................................................................ 5
Author: Ariana Bengtson ........................................................................................................... 5
Author: Marta A. Brzostowska ............................................................................................... 6
Author: Sarah Carter .................................................................................................................. 6
Author: Madison Caruso .......................................................................................................... 7
Author: Paulina Cherkasov ...................................................................................................... 8
Author: Gina Connolly ............................................................................................................. 9
Author: Mia DiScipio ............................................................................................................... 9
Author: Rory P. Dougall .......................................................................................................... 10
Author: Donald Emanuel III .................................................................................................. 10
Author: Emory Hanby Farb .................................................................................................. 11
Author: Madison Feshler ....................................................................................................... 12
Author: Carley Fitzgerald ....................................................................................................... 13
Author: Haley Flax .................................................................................................................. 13
Author: Julia Honan ............................................................................................................... 14
Author: Leanna Jadus ............................................................................................................ 14
Author: Evangeline Jenkins .................................................................................................... 15
Author: Emma Knauerhase .................................................................................................... 16
Author: Megan-Leigh Larsen .................................................................................................. 16
Author: Brooke Lotto ............................................................................................................. 17
Author: Victoria Louis .......................................................................................................... 18
Author: Kaitlyn Lucas ............................................................................................................. 18
Author: Anna Laura W. McKowen ......................................................................................... 19
Author: Tessa McNaboe ...................................................................................................... 19
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Megan McNivens</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerica Olson</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lauren Picarelli</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marisol Rivera</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abby Rodrigue</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Sarrazin</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridget Sharnick</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni Sousa</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Spodnick</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine Stackhouse</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandra Takacs</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Torrisi</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haley Townsend</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachael Tyrrel</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emily A. Velidow</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Author: Katherine Adams

Title: USING VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCES TO ENHANCE CLINICAL LEARNING IN THE MEDICAL SETTING: OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS FOR THE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT

Thesis Advisor: Heather Warner

Department: Department of Communication Disorders and Honors College

Year: 2018

The Neuro Speech Program at Yale New Haven Hospital is a volunteer program developed as an opportunity for undergraduate students to gain experience within a medical setting. This program introduces volunteers to the expectations and demands of a medically-based speech-language pathologist (SLP) and provides an opportunity for the volunteer to interact with patients who have a variety of communication disorders. This study investigated the clinical learning outcomes of 17 Communication Disorders students from Southern Connecticut State University who volunteered for at least 20 hours with the Neuro Speech Program at Yale New Haven Hospital. Results from volunteer responses were compared to 17 students from Southern Connecticut State University who are at the same academic level within the Communication Disorders Department, serving as the non-volunteer control group. A mixed method approach of both qualitative and quantitative data, via pre- and post-assessment and report of tasks, was used to analyze participant responses. The study aimed to determine if this experience targeted clinical learning outcomes which include comfort, understanding, working knowledge and confidence interacting with patients and professionals in the medical setting. Analysis of pre- and post-assessment surveys found that volunteers gained: comfort assisting the SLP and other professionals, an understanding of the types of activities within the medical setting, and working knowledge of demands and expectations of a SLP.

Author: Rebecca Andranovich

Title: LET’S TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THREE MENTAL-HEALTH RELATED TEXTS FROM THE UNITED STATES FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Thesis Advisor: Valerie Andrushko

Department: Department of Anthropology and Honors College

Year: 2019
As of 2017, 1 in every 5 adults in the United States will experience symptoms of any mental illness in a given year, constituting approximately 46.6 million people. This population of American adults is at a heightened risk for comorbid diagnosis with substance abuse disorders or chronic physical conditions, as well as at risk for premature mortality. In this study, the most significant threads and themes surrounding mental health in the United States are identified and explored in depth, as well as looking at how these themes interact between the documents.

The thesis used critical discourse analysis on three texts published by the United States federal government centering around mental health: a step-by-step Wellness Guide from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, the 2017 Interdepartmental Serious Mental Illness Coordinating Committee’s report to Congress, and the 21st Century Cures Act of 2016. Through a critical exploration of these texts, this thesis has determined that our government’s current approach to mental health erroneously assigns responsibility onto the individual with a mental health condition, pays mere lip service to social determinants, and inadvertently (or overtly) contributes to its ongoing stigmatization. This approach denies the responsibility of the United States federal government towards protecting the vulnerable population of citizens with mental illness, causing real, detrimental effects on the lives of individuals and their families.

Future research may benefit from studying the evolution of federal publications related to mental health, as well as studying the intertextual relationship between these upstream, federal messages and information available more proximally (i.e., in local clinics, online self-help resources).

Author: Megan Baker
Title: RESHAPING THE AMERICAN ELECTORAL COLLEGE: IDENTIFYING WHAT CAUSES THE ADOPTION OF ELECTORAL REFORM LEGISLATION
Thesis Advisor: Jennifer R. Hopper
Department: Department of Political Science and Honors College
Year: 2018

This study explores what causes states to adopt electoral college reform, and how these factors/outcomes have changed over time. This research draws upon a mixture of secondary sources discussing what influenced Maine and Nebraska to enact the district system, as well as the primary sources of floor hearing discourses for when Connecticut and Washington D.C. decided to sign onto the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC). Upon examination of these documents, it becomes clear that the political party holding a majority in the state legislature when electoral reform is voted on, the prevalence of contested elections, and whether a state is considered to be “swing” or “safe” majorly affect if electoral reform will pass. With the finding of these factors, I gathered quantitative data to run a statistical analysis of the variables using SPSS software and see if my qualitative findings were reinforced numerically. Through the identification of what causes states to adopt electoral college reform and the transformation of
these motives and ways of changing the electoral college over time, this research highlights useful predicting patterns that extend beyond the scope of the district system and the NPVIC to other types of electoral reform efforts should they emerge.

Author: Danielle Bass

Title: PHOTOS IN MY MIND

Thesis Advisor: Rachel Furey

Department: Department of English

Year: 2019

This thesis seeks to explore how familial relationships and generational behaviors result in both positive and negative outcomes. There have been significant events throughout my life that have shaped me both for the better and in some cases for the worse. The stories within the thesis are not simply retold but accompanied by moments of self-reflection while examining culture norms. The shared experiences between my mother, grandmother, and myself form the overall narrative highlighting similarities between three generations of women. The chapters in my memoir fluctuate between stories of my past as well as the past of my mother and grandmother. The events are not in chronological order, rather they are placed next to stories that are similar to show generational patterns and learned behavior. The stories are told from my memory as well as things that I have discovered about my family history over the years through third parties. There are also three chapters that are dedicated to friends that have impacted my journey in some fashion. The themes explored in my memoir are the relationship of sex and power, looking at the negative impact that it has on a person and the people surrounding that person. There are also themes that explore cultural norms and how it may be used to silence a person and prohibit growth. Lastly, the evolution of learned behavior from one generation to the next is the narrative thread that ties all the themes within the story together.

Author: Ariana Bengtson

Title: A TUTOR’S INVESTIGATION INTO STUDENTS’ READING DIFFICULTIES

Thesis Advisor: Elizabeth Kalbfleisch

Department: Department of English and Honors College

Year: 2019

College students continue to struggle with reading comprehension well into their post-secondary years. Too often, their struggles with reading are considered secondary to their struggles with writing, or simply ignored by professors and university curriculums at large. This study investigates and synthesizes the literature on college-level reading pedagogy. Furthermore, this
study considers teaching methods that professors, administrators, and tutors can use to help students with reading comprehension form a college-aged tutor’s perspective. Further quantitative research is needed to fully assess the validity of the teaching methods explored in this field.

Author: Marta A. Brzostowska

Title: FINANCIAL LITERACY AMONG MILLENNIALS: A CUSTOMER DEVELOPMENT MODEL APPROACH TO FINANCIAL LITERACY

Thesis Advisor: Anthony S. Richardson

Department: Department of Management and Management Information Systems and Honors College

Year: 2018

Financial literacy can be defined as “how well one is able to make decisions regarding the use and management of money”. It is largely a result of our financial education, or what we have been taught thus far regarding finances, and takes a huge role in our financial capability, or how we manage our resources and make financial decisions including paying our bills, planning ahead, and investing in financial products to grow our wealth; it is linked to such things as borrowing, saving, and spending patterns. Without the proper education, and thus financial literacy, people cannot make the right choices and will end up in unmanageable debt, evicted from their homes, and living on the streets because they could not manage their money. This should be especially concerning to millennials – those born between approximately 1980 and 2000 – because they have the lowest financial literacy rates among any generation (Mottola, 2014). Through the use of the Customer Development Model, created by Steve Blank, this paper examines the current financial literacy levels of millennials, determines whether a significant customer base exists, and creates a business plan for a future application covering the topics on financial literacy tests, as well as other specs. The FINRA Foundation’s National Financial Capability test, along with 11 key demographic and market research questions, was administered electronically to study the financial literacy levels and any aspects that may affect these levels. The study yielded 105 responses from millennials.

Author: Sarah Carter

Title: EXAMINING THE VALIDITY OF LASSI-2 FOR PREDICTING COLLEGE READINESS

Thesis Advisor: Cheryl C. Durwin

Department: Department of Psychology and Honors College
The present study examined the relationship between the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI-2) and various demographic and outcome measures in college students. The LASSI is a self-report survey that measures study strategies, motivation, time management, information processing skills, attitude and anxiety, among other attributes. Students enrolled in an Introduction to Psychology course in the spring semester completed the LASSI-2 and a demographics survey containing both pre- and post- college entry academic characteristics, such as high school GPA, SAT/ACT, and number of advanced placement courses taken during high school. Results were consistent with previous research revealing that the LASSI-2 Motivation scale significantly correlated with self-reported college GPA. Regarding the hypothesis about differences between first-generation and non-first-generation students, results indicated that non-first-generation students had significantly higher scores on both the Self-Testing and Use of Support Techniques subscales of the LASSI-2. This is consistent with previous research suggesting that first-generation students tend to be less prepared for the adjustment to college and tend to lack some key skills necessary for academic success in the college environment. Regarding the last hypothesis concerned with LASSI-2 differences between students from wealthier and poorer high schools, there were no significant differences between students from wealthier and poorer high schools or from wealthier or poorer backgrounds no matter how socioeconomic status was defined. The results warrant future investigation into the validity of LASSI-2 as a tool for identifying college students at risk for low achievement.

Author: Madison Caruso

Title: AN ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION OF THE REALITIES OF MENTAL HEALTH

Thesis Advisor: Camille Serchuk

Department: Department of Art and Honors College

Year: 2018

My work is both an analysis of mental health disorders and a personal exploration of the disorders that are representative of myself and my family. I currently have diagnoses of ADD and Anxiety which are both represented in this show. However, of the nine disorders present, family members of mine suffer with eight of them. I have grown up around different extremes of these disorders and have had varying understandings of all of them. I am sure that my personal fascination with mental health disorders comes from a deeper desire to understand those closest to me, including myself.

My show has been influenced by artists like Yayoi Kusama, Mark Rothko, and Jean-Michel Basquiat. All of these artists, like many others, have struggled with one or more mental health disorders. Kusama has been creating works from a mental institution in Japan since 1977 and has been quoted many times explaining that if it weren’t for art she would have killed herself.
Rothko committed suicide in 1970 after struggling with alcohol and prescription drug addiction. Basquiat died of a heroin overdose at the early age of 27. All of these artists chose art to produce an abstracted view of their surroundings, helping those around them better understand their view of the world.

*An Artistic Representation of the Realities of Mental Health* uses a combination of both paintings and prints to bring more awareness to a topic that until recent years was considered taboo. Many people struggle with their perception of mental health and how it affects the individual. Filling an entire space with mental health information makes viewer unable to shy away from the discomfort people often feel towards the topic. The use of primary colors is an intentional nod to the belief that mental health disorders are an unavoidable part of life. Abstracted form is used to disguise serious information as a pleasurable viewing experience, therefore coercing the viewer in to interact with the works further.

**Author:** Paulina Cherkasov

**Title:** CORRUPTING THE SACRED: AN ANALYSIS OF MALE DESIRE AND FEMALE DISSENT IN MEASURE FOR MEASURE

**Thesis Advisor:** Steven Larocco

**Department:** Department of English

**Year:** 2018

William Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* is a play that revolves around sexual desire; at the center is Isabella, the young novitiate who paradoxically finds herself the object of male erotic fascination. This project looks to answer the question: what factors enable Shakespeare to feature a nun in the obligatory role of female sex object? Looking through the lens of feminist theory, as well as consulting previous analyses of the play and historical documents reveals an interesting phenomenon: from the early church’s conception, ascetic women were awarded a number of privileges that, in a traditional patriarchal society, are reserved for men. Thus, nuns are often seen as dissenters, refusing to adhere to gender roles and forsaking feminine duties (such as marriage and childbirth) in favor of scholarly work, business endeavors and uninterrupted piety in the convent. In light of this information, Isabella emerges as a direct threat to the patriarchal rule of her society; as she is an aspiring nun, the only way to re-integrate her into the patriarchal sphere is to have sex with her. If Isabella is deprived of her virginity, she will no longer have access to the privileges of the convent that would offer her partial autonomy, and thus bring her closer to usurping even a facet of male power; as a result, eroticizing Isabella functions as vehicle of patriarchal control, for through sleeping with Isabella, a man will be able to stifle his sexual anxiety. This interpretation allows for an in-depth exploration of Isabella’s motives, the play’s interpretation of male morality, and most importantly, imparts a profound message: the dangers of patriarchy are found not only in its overt oppression, but in its blurred lines of morality as well.
This paper presents a systematic review of existing literature about correctional officers and stress. While much is known, there is a lack of qualitative data. For the most part, this literature is quantitative, identifying numerical rates of stress and burnout without any richness or context. The voices of correctional officers are not heard, instead the literature presents numbers that are far removed from the daily lived experiences of these public servants. Several autobiographic books were identified for inclusion in this review in order to address this gap in the peer-reviewed literature.

Working as a correctional officer is a very stressful job. Given the lack of support that exists for this population from the general public, and social workers, there is a need to center the voices of these correctional officers. Perhaps by hearing more narratives about their lives, social workers and other helping professionals will be more willing to develop interventions and reach out to this vulnerable population.

This project explores the proposition that travel is writing, and writing is travel through a collection of texts inspired by my experience on Semester at Sea, a shipboard study abroad program that visits ten countries on four continents. My preparation for and reflection on this experience taught me that writing and travel are inextricably connected. This fact was reinforced by the completion of this project, which attempts to place my travel writing within the longstanding tradition of American travel literature. After comparing 19th- and 20th-century
travel writing to my own, I decided to focus on a few key concepts: anticipation, displacement, depersonalization, and reflection. The result is this draft of a larger book of stories and artifacts organized in order of my Semester at Sea voyage itinerary. This chronological itinerary mirrors the dynamics of travel experienced and written about for centuries. My hope is that readers come to see travel as synonymous with self-discovery. It is as much about circumnavigating the world as it is about circumnavigating the self.

Author: Rory P. Dougall

Title: CLOSETS ARE TOO SMALL FOR WHEELCHAIRS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF SCHOOLING AND COMING OUT

Thesis Advisor: Jemel Aguilar

Department: Department of Social Work and Honors College

Year: 2018

Contained in the following pages is a story made up of a series of snapshots of the life of a gay man with a disability. Like any story, there is an introduction, a climax, and an ending. Except in this case, the ending is only the beginning. My story starts out with my journey through childhood with doing therapy everyday and the headaches and pains of becoming stronger while also trying to figure out how I relate with my peers. The middle contains information regarding my adolescence and struggling with coping with being disabled while also trying to figure out who I was attracted to and why I was attracted to them. The ending depicts where I am now and where I hope to go in the future.

I am going to take you through my early years of life that was primarily focused on becoming stronger and more independent so that I can be successful in the future. I am going to take you through my adolescence which was riddled with confusion, shame, doubt, hopelessness, frustration, and isolation. I am going to take you through my college years associated with freedom, liberation, anger, and fear. Finally, I am going to tell you where I want to be in the future. I cannot promise a smooth journey but what I can promise you is a new way of viewing the construct of illness and how that relates to sexual identity development. I hope that by reading this, it will make you feel like you have more control over the problems facing society and encourage you to assist in the journey toward creating more free and just communities around the world.

Author: Donald Emanuel III

Title: PARTISAN RISK A REPUBLICAN STRATEGY TO POLITICALLY ENGAGE MILLENNIALS
The topics examined in Partisan Risk include political polarization, when and why the Republican Party shifted its platform, and civic education strategies that can be implemented to target and spark widespread political engagement amongst the large and complex Millennial generation. This project seeks to improve the Republican Party’s civic education programs, political messaging, and depolarization strategies, in order to increase Republican support amongst the Millennial generation. The research will utilize a primarily qualitative approach and expand upon the works written by prominent political scientists and sociologists such as, Robert Putnam, Cliff Zerkin, Geoffrey Kabbaservice, Theda Skocpol, and Andrew Perrin, who have all attempted to pinpoint these challenges. Millennials as of 2015 are the largest demographic of people alive in the United States today born between 1982-2000, which account for approximately 83.1 million people according to US Census Bureau estimates and as of December 31, 2018 will all be of legal age to vote (United States Census Bureau). If the Republican Party does not alter its strategy, then they risk losing Millennials who are, and will remain a critical voting block for the foreseeable future.

Author: Emory Hanby Farb

Title: ASSESSING THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES TOWARD HUMAN PAPILLOMAVIRUS VACCINATION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Thesis Advisor: Bernadette Madara

Department: Department of Nursing and Honors College

Year: 2019

The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection across the United States; with nearly half of new infections occurring in people ages 15-24, it is likely that many may be exposed to HPV during college (CDC, 2015). With no current treatment or cure for HPV infection, HPV vaccination serves as a primary preventative measure as one of the two preventative vaccinations to prevent cancer (Prevent Cancer Institute, 2017). Despite success rates and efficacy of this cutting-edge medial innovation, vaccination uptake against HPV remains low when compared with other recommended vaccines.

This study evaluated undergraduate student understanding of and view towards HPV infection and vaccination with further assessment of vaccination uptake and acceptance. The convenience sample of 53 undergraduates were surveyed using an online questionnaire in December 2018 and January 2019. The population studied was targeted with the incentive of appraising and
educating the “catch-up” culture, i.e., the population to which HPV vaccination is often offered for the last time (under age 26). Results showed an under-vaccinated population with a considerably higher percentage of females vaccinated (50%) compared to male students (17.4%).

In assessment of knowledge related to HPV, results revealed a mean knowledge score of 13.19 (±2.184) (73% accuracy), suggesting to the researcher that while less than half of the population has been vaccinated, the population is moderately informed. Perceived vulnerability towards HPV infection determined that while this is a moderately informed sample, students had a low perception of their susceptibility to contract HPV, prompting a cause for concern. The majority of unvaccinated students were in the early stages of decision-making related to vaccination uptake. This study serves to promote campus health centers to provide vaccination opportunities, health education and stress peer advocacy programs concerning the need for HPV vaccination.

Author: Madison Feshler

Title: REDUCING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA IN COLLEGE STUDENTS: AN INDIRECT-CONTACT INTERVENTION

Thesis Advisor: Jessica Suckle-Nelson

Department: Department of Psychology and Honors College

Year: 2019

Mental illness is a common stigmatized condition (Stout, Villegas, & Jennings, 2004), and many people suffering from mental illnesses experience shame, exclusion, and negativity in response to their diagnosis (Thornicroft, Mehta, Clement, Evans-Lacko, Doherty, Rose, Koschorke, Shidhaye, O’Reilly, & Henderson, 2016). Previous, but limited, research shows that indirect-contact intervention can help to reduce mental health stigma; therefore, I looked at the effectiveness of an indirect-contact intervention on reducing mental health stigma in college students. Participants were PSY 100 students (n = 84) from Southern CT State University. Approximately two to four days after completing pre-test measures, participants watched one of two videos to which they were randomly assigned (i.e., the experimental or control video). They then filled out post-test measures. I used an independent samples t-test to compare pre- and post-test scores. Results indicated that the average change scores for those who watched the stigma video (M = 1.86, SD = 6.27) were statistically significantly higher than for those who watched the climate change video (M = -0.33, SD = 2.98), t(62.75) = 2.07, p = .04. The effect size (eta-squared = .05) indicated a moderate effect. These results indicated that the indirect-contact intervention (i.e., watching a video portraying the truths about mental illness) used in this research study was effective in reducing mental health stigma in college students. Limitations and future research directions are discussed.
Self-efficacy plays a large role in self-development and plays a major role in determining whether or not a person will succeed at a given task. Self-efficacy is also extremely pertinent in education since teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy are more likely to be enthusiastic about the subject and use more inquiry-based methods of teaching rather than traditional styles. Teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy are more effective and confident teachers in the classroom. Many students, teachers, and pre-service teachers have an aversion towards mathematics, so this study examined the mathematics teacher self-efficacy of pre-service elementary school teachers enrolled in a mathematics content course. Participants were given the Mathematics Teacher Efficacy Belief Instrument (MTBEI) at the beginning and the end of a mathematics content course to measure their mathematics teacher self-efficacy. The results of this study showed an overall statistically significant increase of mathematics teacher self-efficacy between the pre and the post-test surveys as well as a statistically significant increase in one of the survey’s subscales. Therefore, this mathematics content course improves mathematics teacher efficacy in pre-service elementary school teachers.

This study was aimed at better understanding the unique experience of the non-adopted white sibling of a transracial adoptee through a self-reflective analysis. The researcher has analyzed and reflected upon her personal challenges, journeys, relationships, and memories that have shaped her experience as a white young woman in today’s society. Through analytic autoethnography, the researcher captures her truth in her journey and relays a story that is often times left untold. It is hoped that this story will be read, heard, and considered when thinking
about the implications of transracial adoption, and their white family members’ perspectives on race, culture, and privilege. For social work practitioners, it is hoped that gaining a deeper understanding of the experience of a non-adopted white sibling of a transracial adoptee will provide new meaning and awareness, and help to enable a more effective and empathetic practice with clients such as these.

Author: Julia Honan

Title: THE EFFECT OF TEMPERATURE ON THE RATE OF PHOTOSYNTHESIS OF INTERTIDAL ASTRANGIA POCULATA (ELLIS AND SOLANDER 1786)

Thesis Advisor: Sean Grace

Department: Department of Biology and Honors College

Year: 2018

Astrangia poculata is a scleractinian coral with a far distribution in the Atlantic including the Long Island Sound and throughout the Southern New England coast. This coral, like its tropical relatives, feeds both heterotrophically capturing prey and autotrophically through a symbiotic relationship with the dinoflagellate zooxanthellae, which is present within the gastrodermal tissue of the coral. This coral, unlike its’ tropical relatives, can survive with and without zooxanthellae present and thus can exist in a ‘bleached’ state. This coral is also unique in that it experiences a dormant state called quiescence, during colder months characterized by polyps no longer responding to touch. This study examined the in situ photosynthetic yield of zooxanthellae present in brown and white colonies over the course of 10 months, including the time the corals were dormant. Results demonstrated that the photosynthetic yield from zooxanthellate colonies was consistently greater than the azooxanthellate colonies on every visit to the site. Results also demonstrated that the yield from summer months (July, August and September) was significantly greater than the yield from winter months (December and February) and that corals, when quiescent, continue to photosynthesize. These results conclude that Astrangia poculata continues to photosynthesize throughout quiescence and bleaching, and that there is a difference between the photosynthetic yield of zooxanthellate and azooxanthellate corals.

Author: Leanna Jadus

Title: NORTHEAST ACCOUNTING AND RECRUITING PRACTICES

Thesis Advisor: Carol Stewart

Department: Department of Management and Honors College

Year: 2018
Several studies indicate that soft skills are critical components deserving employers’ consideration during the hiring process. Many accounting students overlook the role soft skills play in the recruiting process. Perhaps, many students believe accounting hires do not need these soft skills because the main job functions of accountants have limited interaction with other employees. This paper explores the importance soft skills play when hiring accountants, which soft skills are valued more than other soft skills and expands on the potential reasoning behind the results.

Author: Evangeline Jenkins

Title: ASSESSING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXERCISE AND STRESS IN NURSING STUDENTS

Thesis Advisor: Bernadette Madara

Department: Department of Nursing and Honors College

Year: 2019

Stress is a normal response to change and life events. Stress affects all individuals to varying degrees and can be positive, such as eustress, or negative, such as distress (Chipas et al., 2012). Nursing students are constantly under various stressors such as maintaining high GPAs, long clinical hours, weekly exams, irregular meal times, clinical performance evaluation, finances, maintaining patient safety, dealing with pain and death, and upholding expectations from self and others. If these stressors are not managed properly, they can have an effect on the physical and psychological health of nursing students (Sang Dol, 2014). Studies have demonstrated the beneficial effects that physical activity has on health maintenance, longevity, well-being, health-related quality of life, and disease prevention (Blake, Mcgill, & Stanulewicz, 2017). This descriptive correlational study analyzed the effect of exercise on junior and senior undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students’ stress levels. The College Student Stress Scale created by PsycTESTS was used to measure how frequently students feel distressed or anxious or question their ability. The second research tool used was the Cognitive Behavioral Physical Activity Questionnaire created by PsycTESTS to measure physical activity levels in college students. An educational intervention entitled Exercise Changed this Neuroscientists Life and Now She Wants to Change Yours by Dr. Wendy Suzuki, was shown to the participants after they completed the survey. Statistical analysis comparing the responses from junior and senior level nursing students revealed that there was no significant difference in stress levels between nursing students who report regular exercise compared to nursing students who do not exercise on a regular basis. There were several limitations to this study including a small, convenient sample and lack of a posttest. This study should be replicated to include a large and more diverse sample. The addition of a posttest would be helpful in identifying nursing students’ willingness to exercise after the educational intervention.
Author: Emma Knauerhase
Title: A SPATIAL ANALYSIS OF HOSPICE CARE IN SOUTH AFRICA’S WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE
Thesis Advisor: C. Patrick Heidkamp
Department: Department of Environment, Geography, and Marine Sciences and Honors College
Year: 2018

It is important for palliative and hospice care facilities to strategically place these facilities in under- or unserved areas. There is a need to determine which populations have access to hospice care services and those who do not based on income and location. By illuminating geographic and income disparities for people and hospice care facilities, studies have found spatial disparities in hospice access. Researchers have concluded that there must be greater access to and more affordable methods for utilizing hospice facilities, especially for those who do not live within a specified area served by a facility. This study will examine the geographic distribution of hospice and palliative care facilities in relation to functional age, household income and distribution of the population by population group to determine the disparities of access in the Western Cape of South Africa.

Author: Megan-Leigh Larsen
Title: “I’M NOT TRYING TO BE LIKE PICASSO”: USING CTI TO STUDY HOW INDIVIDUALS EXPRESS CONFIDENCE IN THEIR IDENTITY AS ARTISTS
Thesis Advisor: Sara Baker
Department: Department of Communication, Media, and Screen Studies and Honors College
Year: 2018

Identity is present in everything that people do and so intricately inherent to who a person is and how a person operates. A person’s identity is complex and not readily understood. The Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) is used to study how individuals express confidence in their identity as artists. Interpersonal communication is how individuals participate in society and share experiences. Confidence is a key part of an individual’s identity and this theory serves as part of a framework for examining different aspects of an individual’s identity. This qualitative study aims at better understanding an artist’s identity. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 artists to discover experiences of the artist and their confidence level. Participants were asked to complete a survey to measure their confidence level during the
interview. The stories told by the participants of this study are used to understand their identity. The cases of participants’ stories are organized by the overarching themes found. Three major themes were found in this study. The first is (1) early expressions of artistic identity. Artists often had an early encounter with art and began to be interested in creating their own. The second theme found is that (2) anyone can be an artist. This simple statement shows the opinion of participants in this study when defining who an artist is. The third and final major theme found is (3) artists communicating confidence. Artists noted that interacting with others played a crucial role in communicating about their art and creating more art. The findings and research presented in this study contribute to important insight into how artists communicate. These artists’ stories provide insight into a significant population of the workforce who claim artist as their profession.

Author: Brooke Lotto
Title: THE PREVALENCE OF UNCONDITIONED ANXIETY AND ETHANOL CONSUMPTION IN THE OFFSPRING SIRES EXPOSED TO BINGE-LEVELS OF ETHANOL

Thesis Advisor: Michael Nizhnikov
Department: Department of Psychology and Honors College
Year: 2019

Numerous publications have described the consequences of consumption of alcohol during pregnancy, while little research has been conducted investigating the implications of alcohol consumption prior to pregnancy by both the mother and father. While alcohol preference and abuse are influenced by genetic factors, it is proposed that alcoholism may also cause transgenerational inheritance of cognitive defects. With the prevalence of alcoholism today, as well as anxiety, this research project proposes to determine if a possible correlation exists between paternal binge ethanol exposure and the prevalence and severity of unconditioned anxiety in offspring in a rodent model. Sires were exposed to binge-levels of ethanol and were bred with unexposed dams. The offspring were then tested for ethanol preference and anxiety prevalence. Ethanol consumption was measured by percent body weight gain from exposure through cannulation. Anxiety was measured by a light-dark box test, measuring time spent in the light chamber and half body protrusions into the light chamber. Significant differences were found with an increase in alcohol preference in those born to sires exposed to alcohol compared to water and control animals. Significant decreases in anxiety in those born to sires exposed to alcohol compared to water or controls were also found. The results were analyzed using an ANOVA, with significant findings examined through a post hoc analysis. Overall, these are novel findings contributing to the growing field of determining the effects of paternal binge ethanol exposure prior to copulation.
The purpose of this research study is to explore the experiences of African American teachers who have taught for over four years in a public school in a medium size city in New England. In particular, this qualitative study responds to a gap in the literature on Black teachers by seeking to understand the key factors that influence their retention and allow them to continue in the field of education. The research questions that guide this study include the following: What are the different experiences of African American teachers? What are the barriers that African American teachers face? What are the supports that African American teachers have? Finally, how does their relationship with children influence their retention? Findings suggest Black teachers face many barriers within the field such as racism towards themselves and the racism that they believe students of color face in a broken educational system, but there are factors such as a strong sense of community and influential mentors or leaders in their life that African American teachers can attribute to their retention.

Land, air, and water pollution issues that have been drastically increasing over the past half of a century. Much of this pollution is related to the production, utilization, and disposal of single-use products. American consumers often purchase disposable items despite their environmental impacts because of the convenience that they offer. Reusable products typically have a higher price tag and require slightly more effort to reuse, but their increased use could have a significant impact on decreasing the number of disposable items that are produced and thrown away each year.
This study analyzes the costs of ten common disposable items and their reusable counterparts in order to discover if the environmentally friendly items that are initially more expensive are cheaper for a consumer over the course of one year of use. In this study, six of the ten reusable items that were tested had savings of more than 50% when compared to their disposable counterparts and the difference between the total costs of disposable and reusable items resulted in a savings of $1,646.60 or 90.60%.

Author: Anna Laura W. McKowen

Title: AN EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION ON THE BENEFITS OF YOGA NIDRA FOR VETERANS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY

Thesis Advisor: Patricia Kahlbaugh

Department: Department of Psychology

Year: 2018

The present study aims to assess the benefits of Yoga Nidra (YN) in veterans and college students. Previous studies have found significant improvements to various degrees for those receiving YN, but few use stringent experimental design and almost no studies utilized a control group. For this study, participants were randomly assigned to either a 4-week YN program or a wait-list control group. Repeated measure ANOVAs indicated improvements on overall health and coping self-efficacy for the YN group. Additionally, participants in the YN group experienced more pleasant, less negative, and more relaxed feelings post-session with an increase in overall mood. The results on qualitative measures supported quantitative measures and also revealed novel findings on the potential mechanisms of YN. This research study is one of the only randomized, wait-list-control trials of Yoga Nidra and suggests that YN would be beneficial for college students, those suffering from mental health problems, as well as veterans.

Author: Tessa McNaboe

Title: INVESTIGATING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN EMOTION REGULATION DURING GENDER-Stereotyped Elementary School Subjects

Thesis Advisor: Cheryl Durwin

Department: Department of Psychology and Honors College

Year: 2019
This study investigated the gender differences in emotions in gender-stereotyped subjects (mathematics and English Language Arts, i.e., reading/writing) during lessons and before a test. It is documented that girls have more negative views of their ability in math (which is considered a stereotypically male domain) but not in English. Girls may show more negative mood before a math test compared to boys because of stereotype threat (a cognitive assumption that boys are better at math). The goals of this study were to examine whether there are gender differences in mood in these subjects and to examine whether classroom context (testing v. non-testing) differentially affects gender differences in mood. Using the RULER mood meter method (a four-color grid developed at Yale to identify one’s combine energy and pleasantness levels) and using two survey items that separately evaluated energy and pleasantness levels, students’ moods were assessed in both conditions. Results indicated that there were no significant gender differences in mood before the gender-stereotyped subject and no significant differences in mood between test and instruction conditions. However, exploratory findings point to the importance of classroom climate on students’ mood identification, emotion regulation, and performance in gender stereotyped subjects.

Author: Megan McNivens
Title: THE EFFECT OF PATERNAL ETHANOL EXPOSURE ON ETHANOL INTAKE, ANXIETY AND MOTIVATION IN OFFSPRING OF MALE SPRAGUE DAWLEY RATS

Thesis Advisor: Michael Nizhnikov
Department: Department of Psychology and Honors College
Year: 2019

Paternal ethanol exposure prior to breeding is associated behavioral, cognitive and physiological abnormalities in offspring of Sprague Dawley rats. Past research on offspring of ethanol pre-treated fathers suggests that the failure to perform on a T-maze apparatus may result from the effect paternal ethanol exposure has on the offspring’s anxiety and motivation. The present study assessed the ethanol intake, anxiety and motivation in male and female rats that were offspring of alcohol-exposed fathers. Adult male rats were exposed to alcohol or vehicle (16.8% v/v EtOH solution, volume of administrations: 0.015 ml/g; dose: 2.0 g/kg; twice daily for 2 days followed by a rest day, for a total of eight alcohol or water exposure days) or were left untreated and then mated with non-manipulated females. The offspring were assessed for alcohol intake, via intraoral infusion, followed by behavioral assessment via elevated plus-maze (EPM) or modified T-maze. The results indicated that paternal ethanol exposure, prior to breeding, resulted in offspring that consumed significantly more ethanol than water or untreated controls. Furthermore, no significant differences were observed in the number of head/front paw protrusions from the closed arm of EPM and amount of time (in seconds) spent in the open arm of the EPM were observed in all paternal conditions. Not only that, but there was a significant difference in the control compared to the water and ethanol paternal conditions on the average highest barrier reached and the percentage of large barriers crossed on the modified T-maze
apparatus. The present results add to a growing body of literature suggesting that paternal pre-conception alcohol exposure can have harmful effects on the offspring.

Author: Jerica Olson

Title: CREATING EMOTIONAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY FOR STUDENTS IN SECONDARY ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Thesis Advisor: Laura Bower-Phipps

Department: Department of English and Honors College

Year: 2018

This autoethnography explores my experiences with safety and a lack of safety in school and in the classroom, as well as how these experiences shaped my beliefs as a pre-service educator. I begin by examining literature that studies emotional, intellectual, and psychological safety for students in school and in the classroom. I separate this literature into two separate categories: “Research on Safety of All Students” and “Research on Safety of Marginalized Groups of Students.” Then, I define “safety” in school and in the classroom based upon the research I have reviewed. I continue by arguing for why autoethnography is the most appropriate form of research for me to utilize. Next, I give readers historical context about my life so that readers can better understand why autoethnography was the most appropriate form of research for me to use, as my experiences are simultaneously unique and relatable. I then reflect on my experiences in school by analyzing four journals that I wrote from fourth grade through eighth grade. I also examine my professional writing throughout my time in college as a pre-service educator in order to determine how my notions of emotional, intellectual, and psychological safety influence the teacher I plan to become. Ultimately, my findings will shape my practices as an educator. My goal is that this project will shape the practices of other educators who are wanting to create an emotionally, intellectually, and psychologically safe classroom environment for students as well.

Author: Lauren Picarelli

Title: ASSESSING THE KNOWLEDGE OF NURSING STUDENTS ABOUT SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS AND SEXUAL ASSAULT WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SURVEY TOOL

Thesis Advisor: Bernadette Madara

Department: Department of Nursing and Honors College

Year: 2019
The initial knowledge that both undergraduate and accelerated career entry nursing students possess about the role of a Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner (SANE), and the importance of collecting evidence for a rape kit was examined. The survey tool, “Nursing Forensic Science Knowledge Exam” developed by Drake, Langford, and Young (2016) was utilized to test the knowledge of nursing students about sexual assault and wounds sustained during sexual violence. For the purpose of this thesis, the original 50 question examination was abbreviated to 19 questions after consultation with the tool’s authors and distributed to both undergraduate junior nursing students and accelerated career entry nursing students. Statistical analyses including box plots and standardized t-tests were used to evaluate differences in groups based upon gender and junior vs. ACE level in the program. T-test analyses found that the scores were relatively similar across both genders and both program types. Although there was no statistically significant difference between gender and level in the program it was apparent that students did not have a strong knowledge base of SANE as demonstrated by the survey scores. Out of a possible score of 100%, the highest score attained as the final exam grade was under a 50%. The scores ranged from 10%-48%. The results of this study indicate that nursing students need theoretical content related to trauma care and the role of a hospital based sexual assault nurse examiner.

Author: Marisol Rivera

Title: A TEACHER’S SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT ON LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Thesis Advisor: Angela López-Velásquez

Department: Department of Curriculum and Learning and Honors College

Year: 2018

The effectiveness of a teacher largely impacts students and how successful they are in the classroom. While a key factor in teacher performance and student success, teacher effectiveness is a complex and multidimensional concept. This study explores the self-perceptions of effectiveness of a bilingual teacher, working in a dual-language program setting, and her journey as she set out to improve her instructional delivery in her classroom. The study is part of a larger investigation that focused on teachers who completed a teacher preparation program at Southern Connecticut State University and their self-perceptions of their effectiveness and impact on their students. The larger study used action research (Kemmis, 2009) as a framework to enable the participants to reflect, determine, and improve aspects of their teaching. Data methods include a self-assessment of teacher effectiveness, a reflective journal, teacher-designed materials, students’ work, transcripts of three audio-recorded meetings with researchers and participants, and an interview. Findings indicate that the bilingual teacher considered herself as an overall effective teacher but that she also had the mindset of needing consistent growth. For her to increase her effectiveness in a specific practice, she had to gain deep insight of her needs and to experiment multiple times with new practices before she could fully understand what she needed.
Author: Abby Rodrigue

Title: A BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF WITNESSING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AMONG CHILDREN

Thesis Advisor: Kyle O’Brien

Department: Department of Social Work

Year: 2019

Domestic violence is a coercive and life-threatening crime that is much more prevalent in communities than society is aware of. In recent years, there has been an increased focus on understanding children witnesses to domestic violence, often referred to as “invisible victims.” Varying in definition across state statues, the term child witness includes biological or non-biological children who are exposed to domestic violence in their homes. The witnessing of domestic violence can include visual, auditory, or inferred exposure in cases where the child witnesses the aftermath of a dispute, such as bruises or damaged property. Using the biopsychosocial model, this thesis seeks to understand the multidimensional impact domestic violence has on early childhood development. This systematic literature review examines and synthesizes the existing literature to determine the impact on development. This study found a significant increase of biological, psychological, and social-cultural delays after children were exposed to various types of domestic violence. The research identifies potential gaps in the literature, directions for further research, and elucidates implications for the social work practice.

Author: Philip Sarrazin

Title: GOOGLE EARTH ANALYSIS OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE 2010 FIFA WORLD CUP IN CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Thesis Advisor: C. Patrick Heidkamp

Department: Department of the Environment, Geography and Marine Sciences

Year: 2019

In 2010 South Africa hosted the FIFA World Cup and as a result many areas of the city of Cape Town underwent massive redevelopment including the construction of the new Cape Town Stadium in Green Point and housing projects like the Breaking New Ground Strategy and its pilot N2 Gateway Project in Langa and Symphony Row in Delft. Both the construction of Cape Town Stadium in the Green Point neighborhood and the new housing developments along the N2
Gateway in Langa and Symphony Row in Delft have had major impacts on the city and its FIFA World Cup Legacy. These impacts include new public enhancements to Green Point and the relocations of people in Langa and Delft so that new housing could be built. The overall research project aims to analyze the impacts of these infrastructure developments and their legacy using methods such as mapping and field observation. This paper outlines the results of research conducted through 2018 and 2019 and included a trip to Cape Town, South Africa in January of 2019 to conduct field work.

Author: Bridget Sharnick

Title: THE SEQUENCE, GENOME ASSEMBLY, ANNOTATION AND BIOINFORMATICS ANALYSIS OF MICROBACTERIUM NEMATOPHILUM

Thesis Advisor: Nicholas Edgington

Department: Department of Biology and Honors College

Year: 2019

The bacterium Microbacterium nematophilum is a common pathogen of the nematode Caenorhabditis elegans. As C. elegans is a model organism, the mechanisms of infection by this Microbacterium of great interest. The purpose of this thesis study was to learn more about the bacterium and its mechanisms of infection by purifying the genomic DNA, and then sequencing, assembling, and annotating the genome. In doing so, the relationship between M. nematophilum and other Microbacterial species will be better understood as well. I also investigate the sequence of the putative plasmid (pMNI) located in M. nematophilum, and the DNA elements that facilitate the plasmid’s replication, maintenance, and segregation during cell division. Regarding C. elegans, I examined if the genome contains genes that have facilitated its adaptation to being a C. elegans pathogen and the function of those genes.

The major advancements taking place in the field of genomics today are made possible by the recent evolution in DNA sequencing technology that is made available to researchers. The method that will be used to sequence the genome in this study is using a sequencing device called the MinION from Oxford Nanopore, UK. This device has broken down many barriers in the field of genomics. Emerging equipment like the MinION, as well as rising bioinformatics software, allow researchers to sequence, assemble, and annotate genomes from virtually anywhere and have lead to a drastic upsurge in the amount of genome announcements being published.

Author: Toni Sousa

Title: LYING BY OMISSION: INFORMATION NONDISCLOSURE BY WITNESSES AND SUSPECTS
Investigators have historically been trained that innocent suspects are essentially the same as a witness, and that signs of deception are indicative of guilt. Research and court cases have demonstrated that these assumptions are often not correct (Colwell, Memon, James-Kangal, Cole, & Wirsing, 2018). The current project will assess statements gathered from a previous research project regarding a mock theft. Witnesses, Innocent Suspects, and Thieves each engaged in a series of behaviors that could increase the suspicion of the investigative interviewer. A content analysis will compare the information omitted by each group. It is hypothesized that: 1. Suspects will omit more information than Witnesses, 2. Those pieces of information that were rated as being more suspicious will be omitted more often, 3. Those who omit information will appear more guilty than those who do not, and 4. Innocent Suspects who omit information will appear as Guilty as the Thieves. Discussion will include the relationship between omissions and the perceived suspicion associated with each piece of information.

Author: Mary Spodnick

Title: PRENATAL EXPOSURE TO A CANNABINOID AGONIST DURING CRITICAL PERIODS OF NEURAL DEVELOPMENT

Due to increased instances of cannabis use among pregnant women (Brown et al., 2016) and evidence suggesting neuroteratogenic effects of the drug (Campolongo et al., 2011), it is vital to public health that we further examine the potential adverse effects of cannabis use during pregnancy on offspring. WIN 55,212-2, a synthetic CB1/2R agonist, has been used previously to model the neurological effects of cannabis use, acting as a substitute for delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) (Mereu et al., 2003; Bernard et al., 2005; Vargish et al., 2017). Our study examines the effects of prenatal exposure to WIN 55,212-2 on neurological and behavioral development, with a focus on the hippocampus and hippocampal-dependent tasks of Sprague-Dawley rat offspring. Pregnant dams were either administered subcutaneous injections of the substance during early development (GD 0-6) late development (GD 15-21), or vehicle at both periods. The offspring of each group was subjected to a number of assessments, including body weight, gross brain weight, hippocampal weight, a voluntary alcohol intake test, a light/dark chamber test, and a Morris water maze task. The results of this study will provide insight into the
effects of activating the endocannabinoid system during prenatal development, which will lead us to a more informed picture of the risks of using cannabis while pregnant.

Author: Christine Stackhouse

Title: WOMEN’S RIGHTS IMPACT ON ADVERTISEMENTS IN THE U.S. & FRANCE

Thesis Advisor: Yue Liu

Department: Department of Marketing and Honors College

Year: 2019

This research paper will analyze the portrayal of women in advertisements in the United States and France from the 1950s to the 21st century. It will discuss how the progression of women’s rights in both countries has influenced their portrayal in print advertisements. The paper will then assess the impact that the portrayal of women has on consumer behavior, including attitudes towards advertisements by comparing and contrasting U.S. and French brands. Finally, the overarching goal of the paper is to make a claim as to how effective/ineffective the use of women in advertisements is. The paper will then end in a discussion of recommendations for advertising in both countries.

Author: Alexandra Takacs

Title: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF A 21ST CENTURY CIVICS CURRICULUM

Thesis Advisor: Elizabeth Kalbfleisch

Department: Department of English and Honors College

Year: 2019

Civic education is an education in “self-government”, a term that specifically encourages citizens to be proactive in their government. The rudimentary memorization of the political and military history at all levels of government and fitting into the mold that the school thought best fit a “good citizen” model were the only teaching practices of this early civic education. However, researchers have found a stagnant political effectiveness throughout the years, and it is likely due to civic education and civic educators using outdated teaching methods and content. Very recently, there has been a call to reform civic education, so I have developed a detailed unit plan for a high school civic education class on how to teach the Second Amendment and gun control that uses news articles and social media as updated content. In my curriculum, I use in-class activities and readings to probe discussions, debates, and civic engagement. Social media is a
necessary tool for delivering civic content because it is easily accessible, and students can explore the content on a platform with which they are familiar. My curriculum provides an answer to the civic education reform call by using reliable and current readings, effective teaching methods, and a likable delivery method via social media.

Author: Matthew Torrisi
Title: AN ANALYSIS OF ITALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION REFORMS: THEIR AIMS AND OUTCOMES
Thesis Advisor: Erin Larkin
Department: Department of World Languages and Literatures and Honors College
Year: 2018

This paper will examine the plethora of government-initiated reforms to higher education institutions that Italy has seen in recent years and their impact on the Italian higher education system and Italian students. The analysis starts with the beginning of the reform period in 1989 and extends to student movements and protests occurring at the present day. This paper aims to analyze in what ways some of these reforms are flawed and the impact they have had on the Italian system of higher education, as well as how they are or are not related to the issues students face today. Many issues that these reforms hoped to alleviate still remain prevalent in Italian society, and some entirely new issues in the realm of education have arisen in recent years. Furthermore, this paper will examine how the plight of the Italian student has been helped, hurt, or neglected by the government reforms, as well as how students are expressing their views towards education and the government’s reform policies, whether it be through protests, demonstrations, or other forms of expression. Finally, the overarching goal of the paper is to make a claim as to what general aspects of the reforms are rendering them ineffective or causing them to be met with dissatisfaction from students, and, to make some recommendations as to what changes should be made at the federal level to alleviate some of the large-scale issues with the Italian higher education system.

Author: Haley Townsend
Title: ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTING A NUTRITIONAL INTERVENTION ON NURSING STUDENT KNOWLEDGE REGARDING NUTRITION
Thesis Advisor: Bernadette Madara
Department: Department of Nursing and Honors College
Year: 2019
Nutrition is an integral part of human existence. During the college years, increased freedom, crunched time spans, and more decision-making capabilities serve as a crucial time when dietary habits are established (Schwartz & Richardson, 2015). Appropriate distribution and understanding of nutritional information is needed amongst this vulnerable population. College students have a particularly high susceptibility for receiving inadequate and possibly inappropriate nutritional intake. The purpose of this study was to assess nursing students’ knowledge pertaining to the nutritional content of selected food items and to determine if providing an educational intervention of displaying accurate nutritional content of the selected food items would influence participants’ future food purchasing intentions. This quasi-experimental pre and post-test design explored the current baseline nutritional knowledge of undergraduate baccalaureate junior and senior nursing students. Nutritional knowledge and future purchasing intentions were both measured using the *Caloric Knowledge and Food Purchasing Intention Survey* tool developed by Dr. Victoria Zigmont (2015). Overall, students’ nutritional knowledge was low regarding nutritional content. An odds ratio test determined a participant was about 50% likely to change his/her purchasing intentions having been exposed to the educational intervention of displaying accurate nutritional information for the selected food items. However, the majority of students in this study indicated that they were unlikely to change their future purchasing decisions.

Author: Rachael Tyrrel

Title: TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES: PRE-SERVICE AND PRACTICING EDUCATOR KNOWLEDGE

Thesis Advisor: Judith Terpstra

Department: Department of Special Education and Honors College

Year: 2018

This study examined the knowledge preservice and in-service educators in the State of Connecticut had regarding Traumatic Brain Injuries (TBIs). A lack of educator knowledge could prevent educators from effectively modifying curriculum and accommodating students as they are reintegrated into school following a TBI. The method of this study revisited previous studies with an electronically-delivered, eighteen-question survey. Respondent demographics collected included: number of years teaching, highest level of education, and training around TBI. This study assessed the knowledge level of 110 preservice and in-service educators in Connecticut in order to identify opportunities to improve the education process for students with traumatic brain injuries. Respondents performed best on the question items pertaining to general TBI knowledge, but scored lowest on the memory loss section. In general, respondents from each group endorsed several misconceptions about TBIs. However, there were no significant differences amongst respondent groups in terms of knowledge regarding TBIs.
The current study investigates the roles of social support and interdependence in relationship satisfaction among different affectual orientations. A link to an anonymous online survey was distributed to organizations and departments of the Southern Connecticut State University community, as well as on social media. Of the 77 respondents, 39 were heterosexual, 14 bisexual, 11 gay, 5 lesbian, 6 pansexual, and 2 asexual. The survey included the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS), the Gay and Lesbian Relationship Satisfaction Scale (GLRSS) with a social support subscale, and the Situational Interdependence Scale (SIS). Results found that although social support was reported to be high for all groups, it was statistically significantly lower for non-traditional LGBT individuals (asexuals, bisexuals, demisexuals, and pansexuals as compared to both heterosexuals and homosexuals (gays and lesbians). Further, a correlation was found between social support and relationship satisfaction, such that as one has more social supports, one will be likely to report greater relationship satisfaction, regardless of affectual orientation.