Summer Internship Report 2017

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Yale Child Study Center
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(Olivia is third from the right)

Provide an overview of the organization/research project and a summary of your responsibilities, tasks, and/or projects.

As an intern with the Yale Child Study Center and Haskins Laboratories, I was given the opportunity to participate and assist with a few of the current studies being conducted at Haskins Laboratories. As a lab that studies language, much of what we did involved electroencephalography (EEG), which records electrical activity in the brain. I learned a lot about how to perform, process, and read EEG data, and what that means for our language processing and abilities. One of the main projects I worked on studied audiovisual speech processing in those with autism spectrum disorders. I was able to perform this study with pilot participants as well as process, interpret, and present the data.

During your internship, what did you accomplish or how did you make a difference? In what ways did you grow in your professional and technical skills?

During this internship, I was given the opportunity to research, gather and interpret data, and create and present a poster presentation all on my own. While I had assistance from my mentors, I loved getting to work on this project from start to finish, feel like I did most of the work, and know that I worked hard for a successful finished product. I have worked on research projects at Sewanee in the past, but always as an assistant or a secondary researcher. I loved being able to handle things on my own and really see what I could do!

Describe a problem that you helped to solve at your internship. What skills or knowledge from your education at Sewanee helped you address the problem?

While working on the project mentioned above, I was constantly hitting bumps in the road. Whether it was which data processing program to use or in which format to present that data, I had to figure a lot of things out as I went along. While I learned a lot about research methods at Sewanee, I found that the troubleshooting skills and ability to find what I need on my own, are what really helped me
succeed. Sewanee teaches us to be self sufficient and how to search and dig for what we need or want on our own, which helps us learn even more!

**In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?**
Throughout this internship I performed many EEG recordings, all of which take a team of researchers to perform. I learned how to communicate properly and constructively. In one instance, I was teaching a new intern how to perform the recordings. He was having a hard time understanding so I had him work with me, instead of watching me. Because of this, he was able to better understand what we were doing and that, because we used teamwork, we could both keep getting better at it.

**How did your internship affect your career plans?**
While I really enjoyed learning all about the many different sides of the psychological research field, I realized that I do not want to go into research. I think that I would be more successful in a hands on, clinical environment, where I can work directly with patients and treatment participants.

**In what ways did your internship cause you to encounter people of different backgrounds from your own? What steps did you take to communicate effectively with such persons? What did you learn from such persons' perspectives?**
One of the things I loved about this internship program was that all of the students who participated came from different backgrounds. I made new friends and learned so much about other people's lives that are different from mine. Because of this, I learned that the best way to communicate effectively with someone who is different from you is through compassion and understanding. By doing this I was able to more effectively listen to what others had to say and learn from it!

**Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:**
I have been wanting to participate in this internship program since I was a senior in high school and found out about it. I can't thank you enough for helping me do that! This was a great experience that I am so grateful for. Thank you for helping me to continue to learn and grow in my academic and professional career!

**Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?**
Get your housing early!!! And it is helpful if at least one person you are living with has a car!