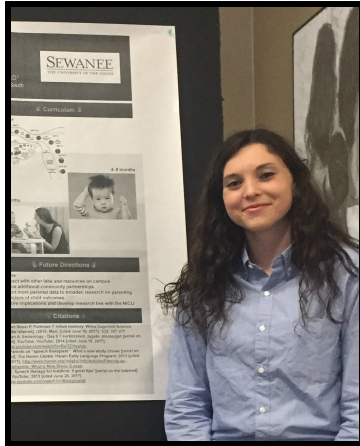


**Summer Internship Report 2017**

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Hometown: Woodbury, Tennessee



**Yale Child Study Center  
New Haven, Connecticut**

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

I was placed with Yale's new professor from Princeton, Dr. Turk-Browne, in his cognitive psychology lab. I aided his graduate students in coding the eye gaze of infants in the fMRI scanner; however, my specific project was to develop the advertising and curriculum for the Yale Baby School. The Yale Baby School began as a recruitment initiative idea between the Child Study Center; Department of Psychology; Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences; Pediatrics; Haskins Laboratories; and Yale-New Haven Hospital. The principal investigators noticed the problem of the overwhelming amount of research staff going into the clinics and hospitals to recruit women before and after delivery. This recruitment style is a problem because it is not only burdening parents at a already big transition in their lives, but also it drives down the interest rate in research since parents do not want to listen to each and every investigator's presentation of their labs project. Therefore, the collaborators banded together to create an efficient, centralized system with their common interests in pregnancy, child development, and parenting. However, the collaborators did not just want to use this as a recruitment initiative. Yale has a relationship with the New Haven community, and to build on that, the collaborators decided to take this opportunity to work with the medical staff and families, build lasting relationships, provide a support system, and educate parents about their child while developing scientifically supported interventions.

**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 my internship, I accomplished developing sample flyers, websites, and invitations for the Yale Baby School. Furthermore, I spent the majority of the internship creating the actual curriculum for the parents. The curriculum is for the duration of the first trimester to six years of age, contains 14

classes, covers over 40 topics, gives 1 to 3 hours of material a week with some off weeks, provides different material types to support different learning styles, and ranges from blogs with life hacks and activities to past and present scientific research to crash courses about psychology to developmental milestones. The curriculum consumed the majority of my time since I started with only the idea of a class for parents, but it strengthened my ability to find the desired information over topics through the use of databases and other online resources, to think creatively and critically from perspectives other than my own, to empathize with people of backgrounds while developing aid contact lists, to work in a self-motivated environment where I was my own boss the majority of the time, to act as a business woman by handling the advertising and preparing presentations for collaborator meetings, and to manage my time wisely. Through all of this, I was able to take a concept and help it blossom into an actual school program to be used for parents in the New Haven area that enroll in Yale Baby School.

**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?**

The collaborators for Yale Baby School had been focused on getting all of the paperwork in place for the research to be allowed and neglected the actual community aspect of the program. Therefore, I used the work ethic I have enhanced during my time at Sewanee to bring the program up to speed. I especially relied on the skills I learned in Molecular Methods to read all of the scientific papers efficiently, and my writing skills I gained from various science classes and my English class to begin writing the compilations and summaries.

**In what way were your teamwork skills strengthened?**

I typically work in a more submissive role within a team structure. However, during my time in the Turk-Browne Lab, I worked in more of an executive position. The Yale Baby School curriculum was left up to me, and when peers were later added to the project, I had to assign tasks and be available to answer questions while also working alongside them on different sections of the program. It definitely built my confidence through the practice of delegation and helped establish my belief of being a serving leader. The experience also gave me the opportunity to be a part of a tiered structure. While I was delegating to those who joined the Yale Baby School project, I also took orders from others and sometimes even the same person who was receiving tasks from me on different projects within the Yale Baby School or projects outside of it altogether, such as the work coding infant gaze in the fMRI scanner.

**How did your internship affect your career plans?**

Working for Dr. Turk-Browne and in collaboration with other Yale faculty opened my eyes to the behind the scenes work within research. Though I am enjoying my time continuing to work in the lab and finish the final touches on certain sections of the curriculum, I have realized through this experience that I would prefer to do more of the clinical side of science and medicine. I believe a higher percentage of time spent in the clinic as opposed to a higher percentage of time doing research is the best fit for my personality and where I would like my career to take me.

**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?**

The internship structure provided the interns with intern group meetings Monday through Wednesday at the end of the work day and on Friday at lunch. During these meetings, specifically the Wednesday ones, we were able to discuss relevant and even controversial topics within the scientific,

medical, and political worlds. We related these to our own perspectives and beliefs and then came together to brainstorm a potential solution, taking into consideration the different approaches and barriers we each presented based on our own experiences. I think the most memorable piece that I learned from this experience is the keen differences and similarities between the different regions of the United States. This knowledge was further added to by just exploring and immersing myself in the New Haven community and somewhere besides the rural South. Initially, I shied away from conversation, but as the time passed, I realized that not speaking at all did nothing to promote the conversations. Therefore, my first step towards conversation was actually speaking, then asking questions, and then letting my curiosity get the best of me. Dr. Mayes taught us how to frame questions and answers based on the demographic group that we would be talking to, such as my communication with parents, parent support groups, academics, and medical staff. Each group brings with them their own form of language that just has to be learned in order to communicate what you are actually trying to tell them, and from each of them, I was able to learn their key concerns and reasons for their concerns. Through our conversations, I was able to learn more empathy and to walk in their shoes while hearing their narrative.

### **Words of advice for future interns (housing, transportation, etc.)?**

If you are an intern for Yale, these are the following things you need to know: 1) Use Craigslist to find your sublet and make sure to check out the area to be certain it is in a good part of town 2) Your apartment does not have to be in East Rock for it to be safe 3) Walking is a valid and fun mode of transportation, just do not do it later at night 4) The work will not be even; it is professor-dependent 5) Just because you are not being paid for overtime does not mean you should not work it 6) Shadow someone, anyone; you will not regret it 7) Get active in research and participate in studies, not only is it extra cash, but some of them can actually be fun 8) Go to the lectures you can make; it is respectful, and the conversation is always interesting 9) Make plans on the weekends if you do not have work to do; New York, Boston, and the beach in West Haven are not that far away, and the train is not bad 10) Manage your time well and do the things you want to do; I would suggest making a bucket list before you go and also getting recommendations from the people you work with.

### **Words of thanks to your internship funding donors:**

I want to personally thank you for the opportunity to have this summer full of difficult, creative, and intriguing work. It definitely gave me the view of another layer of conducting research. The company I was able to keep and the experiences I was able to have could never have a price placed on them. I grew my friendships, made new networking connections, and learned so much from the people that I worked alongside and about myself. The conversations during the internship will always be in the back of my mind and guide my word choice and perspective. I cannot begin to express my gratitude for your aid and encouragement during this process of growth, but I hope to continue to use the skills I have learned to pay your generosity forward to current and future communities in which I am a part.