



### Teaching Practicum: A New Perspective of Psychology by Brianna Ricci

Do you remember the Teaching Intern from your Introductory Psychology lab? Have you ever wanted to share your knowledge of psychology with other college students? Then maybe being a Psychology Teaching Intern is right for you! Each student enrolled in Psychology Teaching Practicum will teach two 70-minute introductory psychology labs per cycle. The labs will be comprised of 12-13 students who are concurrently enrolled in Introductory Psychology lecture. Applications for Teaching practicum are due on Friday, February 27th, 2009. For more information on the application process please contact Zach Schmitt ([zschmitt@csbsju.edu](mailto:zschmitt@csbsju.edu))

We talked to two students, both of whom were TIs in Fall 2008, to see what they thought about being a TI and what they could share with others who may be considering applying for this class.

#### Meet the TIs:

Collette Fischer, Psychology major, Communication and Spanish minor, senior at CSB.

Martin Christianson, Psychology major, senior at SJU.

#### Was Teaching Practicum a positive experience? Why or why not?

**Collette:** Teaching practicum was a very positive experience. Yes, it was challenging, but it was a good challenge. Working with professors, other Teaching Interns, and lab students gave me a lot of insight into the teaching side of the academic world. This experience made me appreciate the field of psychology so much more and it really helped me to put my future goals in perspective. It left me even more curious about psychology than I ever was before.

**Martin:** Definitely positive. It really explored a new path for me. I've always had a fascination with being a teacher so this was a firsthand experience for me, and I loved it! Also, our group of TIs became really close and we had a nice bond together. It was unlike any other class I've had at CSB/SJU.

#### How is Teaching Practicum different from other undergraduate psychology classes?

**Collette:** People always say that you learn the most when you have to teach something. I think that teaching practicum is a great example of this sentiment. Most of the stuff that I taught in the Lab was stuff I had heard before, but having to explain it to others made me understand it on a much deeper level.

**Martin:** There is a lot more responsibility on your shoulders. You are now preparing for and teaching your very own classes. Of course there is oversight from your teachers, but most of the decisions are made solely by you. It really pushes your boundaries more than any other class will. Also, instead of just absorbing information in a lecture style, you are now interacting with students and trying to present information in your own way. It deepens your knowledge of the subjects at hand.

#### What would you say is the most important thing you learned from the Teaching Practicum experience?

**Collette:** The most important thing I learned was the interconnectedness of the different areas within psychology. The Teaching Practicum was like an intense and eye-opening review of psychology. I guess you would have to sign up to be a Teaching Intern to really understand what I'm talking about.

**Martin:** Be yourself and be prepared. "Be yourself" means that in the classroom, it's important to maintain your own style of teaching that is fluid with your personality. Trying to emulate someone who you are not can often backfire. Being prepared is huge as well because you need to know the information inside and out. Intro students often have a lot of questions so you need to be ready for it.

#### Would you recommend Teaching Practicum to other Psychology majors? Do you have any advice for future Teaching Interns?

**Collette:** Yes. I would definitely recommend it. I would encourage people not to let a fear of public speaking keep them from being a Teaching Intern. It's really not scary at all – it's actually quite fun!

**Martin:** Definitely I would recommend it. It was easily one of the most fulfilling experiences of my college career. I have a few points of advice for future TIs:

- 1.) Prepare/manage time – Being a TI is significantly more work than most classes, but it's not an impossible amount as long as you manage time and prepare efficiently.
- 2.) Be yourself in the classroom – as explained above, finding the way that works best for you to get the material across is going to be the best way to do it
- 3.) Expect the unexpected – anything can happen in the classroom and you will need to deal with it. Just keep a cool head....nothing catastrophic is going to happen.

**Does being a TI sound like something you would enjoy? Next year's psychology seniors are welcome to apply. The application deadline for the Fall 2009-2010 Teaching Practicum class is Monday, February 27th. For more information on Teaching Practicum please contact Zach Schmitt ([zschmitt@csbsju.edu](mailto:zschmitt@csbsju.edu)).**

### CSB/SJU Psychology Professors Awarded at 31<sup>st</sup> Annual National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology Conference By Katie Garrey

Recently at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual National Institute on the Teaching of Psychology (NITOP) conference, which was held in St. Pete Beach, Florida on January 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>, two professors from CSB/SJU were awarded for the research they presented there. Professor Bob Kachelski, who conducted his research with Professor Rodger Narloch, was awarded the *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Award* from the Society for the Teaching of Psychology. Their research was entitled "How Do Students' Beliefs about Learning Relate to the Teaching Methods and Classroom Activities They Perceive as Effective?" It is an ongoing study of college students' beliefs about learning and how these beliefs are related to a variety of other measures. For the poster they presented, they focused on the ways students' beliefs were related to their ratings of how effective various teaching methods and classroom activities were in helping them to learn.

Professor Pam Bacon was also awarded for her research at

the NITOP conference. She received the *Frank Costin Memorial Award for Excellence* for her research entitled "The More You Know: Reviewing Concepts Using Student-Created Public Service Announcements." Professor Bacon assigns this project in her Social Psychology course to illustrate important concepts covered in the class. Professor Bacon decided to present her research because the NITOP conference is focused on teaching, and people were interested in understanding new ways to help students learn.

At most conferences, presenters have a choice between an oral presentation and a poster presentation. Both professors from CSB/SJU chose to present a poster. A lot of work goes into creating the poster because there is limited space to summarize one's research project. At the conference, each presenter is assigned a specific time and location. During that time, presenters stand by their posters and explain their research to other people attending the conference. These awards are an

honor to Professor Kachelski's, Professor Narloch's, and Professor Bacon's careers. Research projects typically take years to complete, since they include a literature review, design, data collection, and data analysis. The whole process is very time-consuming, but once the results are determined, much of the poster preparation focuses on the appearance of the poster and summarizing the project clearly. It is very fulfilling to receive an award for all this hard work.

For the near future, the professors are quite excited about the next major conference, which will be held at CSB/SJU this year. The Minnesota Undergraduate Psychology Conference (MUPC) will be on campus on April 18<sup>th</sup>. College students from all over the state will be here presenting their research. Professor Kachelski, Professor Narloch, Professor Bacon and others will be working with students from CSB/SJU to prepare their oral and poster presentations for MUPC. They will also continue to work on their own research projects.

### News/Events

by Hannah Nelson

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#### MUPC Update

The Minnesota Undergraduate Psychology Conference will be hosted by The College of St. Benedict and St. John's University this year. The conference will take place on the CSB campus on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and will feature positive psychologist Laura King as the keynote speaker.

The MUPC subcommittee is currently working on the MUPC website and confirming the logistical outline of the conference. Keep checking the MUPC update for further information as it becomes available.

#### Studying abroad?

Students studying abroad in Australia or in Cork, Ireland can register for psychology courses. Stop by the Education Abroad Office for an information sheet listing the courses that are offered and approved.

#### Teaching Practicum

Psychology Teaching Practicum applications are due February 27th. For more information on how to apply please email Zach Schmitt ([zschmitt@csbsju.edu](mailto:zschmitt@csbsju.edu)).