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02. Family Science

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Abstracts from the 2013 Oklahoma Research Day
Held at the University of Central Oklahoma

02. Education and Professional Studies

02. Family Science

02.02.01 How Play Affects the Brain!

Jennifer Turner,
University of Central Oklahoma

The brain is the most complex organ in the human body. It is comprised of over 100 billion neurons which generate mechanisms that stimulate the brain development through play. What functions of the brain does Play affect and why is it an integral part of the process of growth? Throughout this presentation we will discover the early Play Theorists Philosophies' and how they can be incorporated in brain development.

02.02.02 Factors That Deter Young Adults From Pursuing Higher Education

Maria Perry, Lori Beasley,
University of Central Oklahoma

The underrepresented groups that continue to rise in immediate college enrollment are minorities; disproportionately that of Hispanic and Black high school students. The researcher conducted voice recorded interviews in a Midwestern state with eight Inner-City high school graduates, ages 18 - 25 who chose to enter the work force or the military instead of immediate college enrollment. All participants were asked 12 questions pertaining to their high school experience, the level of college preparedness they received from educators and family members, and their views on the importance they placed on pursuing higher education for them specifically. This study yields valuable information on the thought process, opinions and perspectives behind participant's decision on higher education. The qualitative study examined the relationship between minimal to no college preparedness from schools, as well as minimal to no involvement from parents and the negative lasting affects it had on this predominantly lower socio-economic status (SES) study sample. Results showed that the lack of socialization that these participants received during their high school years from family and educators had a definite and discouraging correlation between immediate enrollment and circumventing college. In conclusion, this study highly indicated a need for more college preparedness and intervention with disadvantage students at the high school level.
02.02.03 Matching Service Learning Opportunities to Diverse Student Populations

Glee Bertram,
University of Central Oklahoma

Service-learning is identified as an effective way to help students understand aging adults. One of my main goals as an instructor is to help students see older adults as people much like themselves with possibly a few more challenges. Once students realize this, they are much more willing to explore this area of development and how the aging process works. My students are very diverse. Some are traditional students but the majority have families, work, and carry a full course load. Also, most are commuter students ranging in age from 18 to 74. We also have many international students and an ethnically diverse population. Our university is near the metro and attracts many single parents who are receiving financial aid trying to improve their lifestyle for them and their child/children. Because of this diversity, the service-learning opportunities need to be done in a variety of ways. The purpose of this study was to compare methods of facilitating service learning projects and how to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Methods included open-ended interviews with older adults and reflection papers provided as part of student assessment for class work. Students preferred having options in when and where to fulfill their service learning hours to best fit their schedules and interests.

02.02.04 Communication Perceptions Related to Life-Threatening Illness in a Relationship: A Q Methodology Study

Jeanetta Sims, Jalea Shuff,
University of Central Oklahoma

This study examines the prevailing viewpoints related to participants' perceptions of how communication would unfold if their relational partner was diagnosed with a severe, life-threatening illness. Using Q methodology, 59 participants performed Q Sorts, which were then analyzed using PQ Method. Principle components analysis yielded three factors on which 42 of the sorts loaded and 56% of the variance was explained. The three factors distilled from Q Sorts were interpreted as Factor 1: Communicative and Inclusive; Factor 2: Secretive and Withholding; and Factor 3: Communicative and Exclusive. Each of the three prevailing viewpoints offers insights on how participants expect to communicate if their relational partner is diagnosed with a severe life-threatening illness. Implications for marriage and family counseling are discussed.
02.02.05  Epigenetic Analysis Quantifying Behavior Health Medical Services of Oklahoma

Summer Loveless,

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The purpose of this investigation is to identify the overall economic impact of behavioral, mental, and medical health services (specifically those provided by Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists LMFTs), Licensed Professional Counselors (LPCs), and Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADCs) in the state of Oklahoma. Behavioral health medical services can encompass education, addiction, injury rehabilitation, stroke recovery and mental health. Evidence shows that behavioral health medical services increase academic performance, public safety, individual wellness and family strengths for the identified patient. The services provided by a LMFT encompass the treatment of the family as a unit in conjunction with the identified patient. LPCs and LADCs typically focus on the treatment of the individual, often leaving genetic propensities and relational influences unaddressed. To treat the individual is to prevent or protect the specific individual from further psychological, physical and or cognitive damage. However, without a familial/systemic treatment approach psychosocial and psycho pathologies continuums can be maintained as they are transmitted through family relationships. If these factors are not carefully assessed, important information can be missed with potentially heavy implications for treatment success. This investigation explores the current state of mental health treatment in Oklahoma and identifies economic implications of ignoring a more systemic approach.

02.02.06  Group Differences in Relationship Education Programming Preferences

Holly Shockley, Brandon Burr, Jalea Shuff,

University of Central Oklahoma

Couple relationship education (CRE) is generally a preventative measure designed to teach relationship skills to couples and individuals. Although CRE has been active for many years, very little is known about public opinion of CRE services, and recruitment challenges to CRE programs persist. Current literature on best practices in CRE emphasizes the importance of tailoring program content, as well as program advertising and marketing efforts to fit with the needs and desires of the target audience. Some research suggests that individual and demographic characteristics may influence attitudes about attending CRE. Thus, investigating marketing and advertising techniques designed for specific audiences may lead to enhanced practice and increased program attendance. The objective of this study was to examine attitudinal differences in potential CRE program titles, venue preference, and disagreement in attending patterns in men vs. women, married vs. unmarried, highly religious vs. non-religious, and lower-income vs. higher-income in a sample of 198 individuals. A series of T-tests were used to detect significant differences by group using SPSS version 18.0. The main study hypothesis was that significant differences would be detected by group. Results showed some differences were detected by gender, religiosity, and marital status. No differences were detected by income level. Discussion will be provided for those who work with couples and families based on study results.