

## A Note From The Program Coordinator Dr. Brian French

This is the second Educational Psychology Program newsletter. The intent of the publication is to keep you up-to-date on the research in which we are engaged.

In our last edition we highlighted current students and introduced our faculty. This edition we have selected some of our recent alumni to highlight. We have asked them some targeted questions to give insight to where they are now and how their graduate experience assisted in their development. We hope you enjoy reading about their success. We also highlight work by a few of our excellent faculty members. Feel free to drop us a note if you have questions or just want to chat about our work or ask how you can help us grow!

### 2014 Program Highlights:

- 1) Our second methodology workshop focused on Latent Class Analysis and Latent Profile Analysis and was a great success- Thank you Dr. Bethany Bray for the PSU Methodology Center!
- 2) Faculty and students presented their work and built collaborations at several conferences. Notably, Bruce Austin won a travel award from the Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology and presented his work at the University of Maryland.
- 3) Faculty also had several new projects funded from sources such as the National Science Foun-

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ation, Oregon Department of Education, the American Education research Association, and Institute of Education Sciences. These projects involve topics from examining measures used in teacher evaluation systems across the nation, building local partnerships with education service districts, to continuing the educational technology conference at Washington State University.



*Ed Psych students and faculty, December 2014*

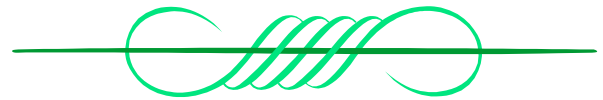
## *Program Statement*

*We apply advanced methodologies to answer applied and basic research questions in the context of complex educational environments. We develop leaders who possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to transform educational environments.*



## Recent Graduate Highlight

Rob Owens



### ***What is your current job?***

Research and evaluation specialist at the Idaho Supreme Court. My major responsibilities include evaluation of Idaho's problem-solving and specialty courts. I also provide data requested by judges, court coordinators, and other stakeholders. As a part of the Planning & Research Department, I do some research and data projects for the court system in general, including data requests from judges, media, university researchers, legislators, other state agencies, and members of the public.

### ***What research are you engaged in within your current position?***

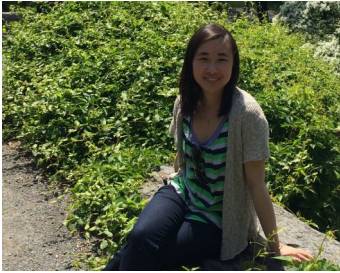
I recently finished a comprehensive evaluation of Idaho felony drug courts. Right now I am preparing data for a juvenile drug court (JDC) outcomes evaluation. Recent research has called into question the effectiveness of JDCs. The results of the evaluation will be a determining factor in the future of JDCs in Idaho. Idaho spends just over a quarter of a million dollars on treatment for juveniles in drug court and pays for drug testing, coordination, and judicial and court staff time. This is a high stakes evaluation. I will complete the evaluation in April 2015. I also work on many smaller projects week to week. For example, right now I am writing a summary report for some grant data for two child-protection drug courts and also comparing two reports from our case-management system that should contain the same information but do not appear to.

### ***What do you wish you had known before finishing your degree?***

I'm not sure there is one thing I wish I knew before finishing my degree, but I wish I was better at communicating technical information to a general-public audience. Creating reports that are useable, technically correct, consumable, and engaging for stakeholders has been one of my biggest challenges. I always hated when professors made me write abstracts for papers, because it was difficult for me. Now I wish I had to write an abstract and a press release-type document (for an audience unfamiliar with research) for every research paper in every class. I realize that communicating findings succinctly and in plain language may not be as important for all educational psychology graduates, but it is an important skill and it doesn't come easy. I would have liked more practice during my education.

### ***Any other comments about your graduate school experience related to your current position?***

I got this job because of my practical experience during my education. The opportunities for research and evaluation at the LPRC are invaluable. I was chosen over other candidates because I had the education and some real-world evaluation experience whereas other candidates had only the education. If you are not involved in some real research or evaluation talk to Mike, Brian, or Sola and get involved.



## *Recent Graduate Highlight*

**Mo Zhang**



### ***What is your current job?***

Associate research scientist in the Research and Development Division at Educational Testing Service (ETS).

My job is to conceptualize and conduct research studies related to the scoring of open-ended test questions. This research includes studying new methods for automatically scoring responses to, for example, essay questions, as well as doing studies to improve the validity of the scoring approaches used in ETS testing programs.

### ***What research are you engaged in within your current position?***

One study that I am currently leading involves evaluating how effectively we can identify responses that would be unlikely to be scored accurately through automatic means. A critical aspect of this study is making sure that the identification works equally well across population groups, like male vs. female and majority vs. minority groups, which is important for establishing the validity of the method.

### ***What do you wish you had known before finishing your degree?***

I wish I had spent more time and effort in presenting my graduate-school work at professional conferences and in learning how to effectively write up research studies for dissemination. These competencies are important for all young researchers to develop but especially for international students whose primary language is not

English. I am finding that improvement in presenting and writing comes with continuous practice. Also, it only became apparent to me after working at ETS that collaborating with colleagues in the same and in different fields can significantly expand one's knowledge base and create opportunities for more interesting work.

### ***Any other comments about your graduate school experience related to your current position?***

I would advise the current cohort of graduate students to spend time chatting with professors and classmates from different disciplines, exposing themselves to opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration, and finding the topics that they are most passionate about. Immerse themselves in those topics through taking courses and reading books, because that knowledge and those skills will come in handy later on.





## *Recent Graduate Highlight*

**Noah Schroeder**

### ***What is your current job?***

I am an Assistant Professor of Educational Technology and Instructional Design. I teach face-to-face classes in educational technology, as well as online classes in the Instructional Design for Online Learning program. I am also in the process of designing 5 new classes.

### ***What research are you engaged in within your current position?***

I am still working in my area of interest, pedagogical agents (virtual characters for learning). I am also still working on a couple meta-analyses. I have met a few great colleagues here and am beginning to collaborate with them on educational research in their subject domains. In addition, I'm finally starting to put a team together to try and create our own educational video game.

### ***What do you wish you had known before finishing your degree?***

Semesters seem to pass much more quickly as a faculty member than they do as a graduate student!

### ***Any other comments about your graduate school experience related to your current position?***

Try and meet others in your field who you can work with while you're a graduate student. In addition, try and set up a plan of what research you'll conduct and when you'll have it written up

and submitted before starting your new job. It really helps to keep you on track when you get involved with other commitments of a faculty member (such as service on committees).



## *Faculty Highlight*

**Jenny LeBeau**

*Research Associate*

### *Highlights for Dr. LeBeau for 2014:*

Dr. LeBeau is the evaluator for a five-year project with the Grand Coulee Dam School District as part of their \$1.3M 21st Century Community Learning Center grant through the U.S. Department of Education. This project is focused on creating before and after school services to enhance student success, with a focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).



## Faculty Highlight

**Chad Gotch**  
*Research Associate*



### *Highlights for Dr. Gotch for 2014:*

I have worked with a group of environmental educators to develop a set of tests to measure energy literacy in adolescents and adults. These tests will be useful for tracking the effectiveness of programs designed to educate people about the trade-offs between different energy resources, especially within the emerging context of bio-energy alternatives.

I continued my work with Andy Cavagnetto and other faculty in the College of Education to build capacity for teaching science in grades K-8 in the Clarkston and Pomeroy school districts in southeastern Washington.

I looked into the role of student test scores in parent-teacher conferences by connecting with teachers around the state, and was able to present early findings from the study at the Northwest Association of Teacher Educators conference in June.

I also successfully completed a study of teacher assessment literacy measures with Brian French. This study was published in *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, which is the most widely-read journal in the field of educational measurement.



*Some of our Ed Psych students and faculty, December 2014*



## Faculty Highlight

**Olusola Adesope**

*Assistant Professor*



### Highlights for Dr. Adesope for 2014:

- ◆ Presented the "Outstanding Early Career Researcher Award" for American Educational Research Association's Technology, Instruction, Cognition and Learning Special Interest Group in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- ◆ Presented the Washington State University's College of Education "Excellence in Research" award.
- ◆ Principal Investigator on a \$35,000 grant funded by the American Educational Research Association to host a conference on Maximizing the Affordances of contemporary Technologies in Education (MATE).
- ◆ Co-Principal Investigator on a \$714,706 National Science Foundation grant entitled "Affordable Desktop Learning Modules (DLMs) to Facilitate Transformation of Undergraduate Engineering Classes."
- ◆ Became a member of the editorial board of the *Review of Educational Research*, the premier journal of the American Educational Research Association with an impact factor of 5.0.
- ◆ Presented a review of pedagogical agents' persona, motivation, and cognitive load implications for learners."
- ◆ Published a paper in *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology* titled "Efficacy beliefs, job satisfaction, stress and their influences on retention of English-medium content teachers in the Dominican Republic."
- ◆ Published a paper in the *Internet and Higher Education* titled "Externally-facilitated regulation scaffolding and role assignment to develop cognitive presence in asynchronous online discussions".
- ◆ Published a book chapter titled "Examining teacher practices and classroom environment" using data from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS).

### Publications (and work) with graduate students:

- ◆ Published a paper in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* titled "Intelligent tutoring systems and learning outcomes: A meta-analytic survey."
- ◆ Published a paper in the *Journal of Research on Technology in Education* titled "A systemat-

