

Students lead psychology research groups



She Blinded Me WITH SCIENCE

By Becky Smith

When one thinks of hypnosis, images of swinging pocket watches and “You are getting sleepy” often run through one’s head, but here at Truman State, psychology students are trying to see if hypnosis could be used as an effective psychological tool.

Psychology professor Salvatore Costa has four research groups this semester, two dealing with hypnosis and two with clinical psychology research. One group, lead by junior Connor Madden and senior Abby Nehrkorn, focuses on how hypnosis could be helpful for students in a few situations.

“We are doing two hypnosis experiments,” Madden said. “The fear of public speaking and hypnosis’s effect on that and also word recall with hypnosis.”

The research team currently is conducting two different research projects and collected their initial results last week. The public

speaking study had 92 participants, and the word recall study had about 150.

One of the projects the team is working on is the effect of binaural beats on word recall and short-term memory. Binaural beats, sounds with equal frequencies listened to through speakers or headphones, have been shown to have the same relaxing effects as hypnosis.

During this study, once being exposed to binaural beats, a participant is asked to recall words from a previously viewed word list.

Senior Andrew Zeiler, who works for Costa as a hypnotist, said binaural beats are the process of playing a single tone repetitively in each headphone. These auditory oscillations are meant to relax the listener.

Madden said the effect of hypnosis on those with a fear of public speaking is an extension of a previous project.

Binaural Beats

Binaural beats “dramatically” affect the production of three hormones directly related to **longevity of life and overall well-being**

Source: Research by Dr. Vincent Giampapa, MD, Former President of American Board of Anti-Aging Medicine, New England Journal of Medicine

Cortisol is found in the adrenal glands and impacts learning and memory, as too much of it is harmful and causes stress.

DHEA is used as a “source ingredient” for virtually every “good hormone” the body needs, and helps our immune system.

Melatonin is the chemical produced during deep, natural sleep. Having lots of DHEA and melatonin is beneficial.

In a separate binaural beat research study using Holosync branded binaural beats:

Source: <http://www.binauralbeatsgeek.com/binaural-beat-research.html>

Cortisol levels decreased by an average of **46%**

DHEA increased by an average of **43%**

Melatonin increased by an average of **98%**

“Last year on Costa’s team we did a stress-related experiment, on how hypnosis could reduce stress,” Madden said. “This semester we are doing ... how hypnosis can possibly reduce the fear of public speaking.”

During the study, the idea of a speech is introduced to the participants as a stressor. The team then employs hypnosis techniques and measures the results via self-reporting.

One method used to hypnotize individuals is through the reading of a hypnosis script, which relaxes the participant and makes them more open to suggestion.

Zeiler said there are several steps

to properly hypnotizing someone, which include induction, introducing the focus topic, solidifying the concept and bringing the person out of the hypnotic state.

The group’s research and results will be disseminated in a variety of ways. The group will present posters at the Midwestern Psychological Association conference during May, at the Student Research Conference and at the Psi Chi Research Conference.

“We go to the Midwestern Psychological Association in Chicago every May,” Madden said. “We have been accepted to do poster presentations for both of these projects. We have

a time slot to have our poster up and people can come ask us questions.”

Madden said beyond these presentation opportunities, the group hopes to get their studies published in an academic journal this year.

The research group members explained student research opportunities are a great way to prepare for graduate school and it gives student researchers a glimpse of what their future as researchers could hold.

“I thought [student research] would be a really interesting way to help out and learn a little bit more about what I could do,” Zeiler said.

Linguistic lecturer presents new perspective

BY SUJASH PURNA
Staff Reporter

Languages change throughout time. So does one of its components — the dialect of their spoken form. Christopher Strelluf, Missouri Linguist and lecturer of linguistics at Truman State, presented his research about “The Dialect of Kansas City” Feb. 25 in the SUB conference room.

A native of Kansas City, Strelluf said it was interesting to learn about the community and see how Kansas City has changed and is still changing. Strelluf said language is one of the fundamental ways to show what we are. To keep up with the pace of the changes of the community, language is also changing, he said.

Strelluf said he thinks people already consider their language to be without accents.

“[The] exciting thing is most people will come to this speech, already having an idea that, especially because of coming from the Midwest, they do not have an accent and that their language is normal,” Strelluf said.

Strelluf said he thinks students who came to the speech realized language is evolving because of the changing socio-economic backgrounds of the speakers of the language.

He said there are Truman students from different parts of Missouri, so students have different accents.

“These cities are pretty close together,” Strelluf said. “Yet the language differs from one area to another. For example, I imagine some say ‘pop’ and some say ‘soda’ for the same carbonated water.”

Strelluf said his research is in the analysis phase. “What I present will be sort of an overview, what the language is, and why it is changing and what are the socio-economic aspects that influence, and will probably help me to put them in a book in the future.”

Gregory Richter, Linguistics and German professor at Truman, said he thinks Strelluf’s presentation gave students an interesting perspective about language.

Originally from California, Richter said he hasn’t stopped noticing differences between his accent and various Midwestern accents.

Richter said he thinks language dialects differ from one another, and it is an interesting topic — especially in English grammars.

“Speakers from Kirksville pronounce door with two syllables,” Richter said. “Speakers from St. Louis have their special pronunciation of ‘forty-four’, and speakers from Kansas City often pronounce ‘candy’ with a palatalized consonant at the beginning of the word.”

In linguistics, palatalization is the process of creating a consonant sound with the tongue in a position in the mouth near the soft palate or the roof of the mouth.

“Americans believe that some Americans have accents and some don’t,” Strelluf said. “Popular belief is that Midwesterners do not have an accent. But truth is, everybody has an accent.”

“Strelluf’s research focuses on white, native Kansas City speech,” said Suzanne Hogan, Kansas City University Radio Producer. “The research focuses on a group born between 1955 and 1975, and another born in the ‘90s.”

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