



# THE FELLOW

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### Peer Review

*What Was I Supposed to Say?: Tips for Acing the Academic Job Interview*

Page 2

### Significantly Statistical Did You Know...

Page 3

### Peer Cites Sources & Tips

Page 4

The official peer-reviewed publication of Ph.D students at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Social Policy & Practice

## Looking Forward to Another Fast-Paced Semester!

It is hard to believe, but yet another semester is gone. Life in academia is certainly fast-paced, as we all notice daily. Participation in student life, such as DSSC, colloquium, and university activity, adds to the beehive-like environment. However, the PhD students all showed remarkable commitment to extracurricular activities through their participation in and contribution to the organized events. We appreciate your devotion.

We began last semester with two social outings – a welcome reception for our eight incoming students at a local restaurant in early September and a bowling party in early October. Both were well-attended and fun. Thanks to Brian Coleman for taking great pictures!

We had intriguing talks at our bi-monthly colloquia by two highly prominent individuals. In October, Dr. Hans-Uwe Otto, a professor at Bielefeld University in Germany, spoke about the role of social workers in the welfare state and on the challenges that Europeans are experiencing in shaping their welfare state policies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In December, Provost Ronald Daniels talked about his 2005 book, *Rethinking the Welfare State: Government by Voucher*,

which left participants with ideas about innovative ways to implement the responsibilities of the welfare state. Dean Gelles' remarks at the end of the talk about how it was an excellent opportunity to hear what the Provost does as an academic, beyond his administrative role, reflected the engaging nature of the talk. Thank you to Maayan Lawental Schori and Mary Zhou for organizing



Hyo Jung Lee shows off her bowling skills!



Samira, Joanna, and Stacey take a break from bowling for a quick photo!

those successful colloquia.

The third annual *Winter Essentials Drive* was another successful project. We continued the tradition of previous years by collecting multiple bags of clothes from the Penn/SP2 community and delivering them to New Visions, a day shelter in Camden, New Jersey. Thank you for all of your help and donations! A special thanks goes out to Casey Bohrman who organized this project.

Finally, we are in the process of developing extended webpages for the PhD students on the SP2 website. This is a great opportunity to showcase ourselves and our work, and it will make it easier for people within and outside of the Penn community to contact us. Thank you to Abhijit Visaria for his help with this project.

Last, but certainly not least, several of our colleagues are on the job market, so let's wish them good luck! We hope to celebrate their success soon.

*With warm wishes for an enjoyable new semester, Sungkyu Lee and Itay Greenspan, DSSC Co-Chairs*



Sungkyu, Jason, Kim, Kristie, and Manisha welcome the new students!

## PEER REVIEW

We all work hard writing papers for class, and many papers are worthy of more than just a letter grade. *The Fellow* provides an outlet to share unpublished manuscripts, essays, book reviews and editorials with colleagues in an effort to distribute ideas, spark debates, obtain feedback, encourage journal submissions, and support interdisciplinary collaborations. Full references are available upon request to the authors.

### What Was I Supposed to Say?: Tips for Acing the Academic Job Interview

During the past few months, several of our Ph.D students have moved closer to defending their dissertations, and, thus, they have entered the academic market in search of their dream jobs. Sooner or later, all of us will be following in their footsteps, and so we thought it fitting to ask some of our current representatives to share their insights about the interview process. We would like to thank *Julie Cederbaum, Melissa Dichter, Kerry Dunn, and Tae Kuen Kim* for rising up to the challenge. The following is a collection of their suggestions for making it through this overwhelming process. *Clip & Save!*

#### **The Search**

- \* Think about the kinds of jobs you might want and where (and if) you'd be willing to move. Also consider what kind of department you want to be in, and try not to get sucked into places where you'd be miserable just because they are prestigious or pay lots of money (unless prestige and money are what make you happy...).
- \* Think creatively - there might be jobs that are a good fit in places you might not have previously considered.
- \* Start looking for jobs in the summer and plan to start applying in the fall and interviewing in the winter; continue to search for jobs through the winter.
- \* Websites to search:
  - Society for Social Work Research ([www.sswr.org](http://www.sswr.org))
  - Council on Social Work Education ([www.cswe.org](http://www.cswe.org))
  - Chronicle of Higher Education - for academic jobs in many fields ([www.chronicle.com](http://www.chronicle.com))
- \* If you are interested in other disciplines, look at other organizations, e.g., American Society for Criminology, National Women's Studies Association.

#### **Preparing the Application Materials**

- \* Update your CV as often as necessary.
- \* It's good to have some teaching, publications, and presentations by the time you go on the job market.
- \* Write your research and teaching philosophies/plans; even if schools don't require it for the application, it's helpful to know for yourself so that you're prepared if/when it comes up in conversation.
- \* Make sure you personalize each cover letter, showing them you are interested in their school specifically, not just in getting a job somewhere.
- \* Make sure you have someone proofread everything you send out. Have others (colleagues, professors, family, friends) review your application materials (cover letters, CV, etc.) before you send them out.

#### **Seeking Advice**

- \* When you find a school or position you are interested in, talk to people in the field and the institution.

- \* Seek advice and support from those who have gone before you.
- \* Rely on the wisdom of our faculty - SP2 faculty is an invaluable resource throughout the entire process.
- \* Discuss everything with your advisor, director, and mentor.
- \* Remember to also form your own opinions; don't just accept others' opinions as your own.

#### **Networking & Practicing**

- \* Plan to attend relevant conferences.
- \* Find out who knows who and what information people can give you.
- \* Read up on the faculty and their work of the schools to which you apply.
- \* Practice talking about your work, interests, and plans.
- \* Attend others' job talks and mock job talks.
- \* Practice acting like a professional, not like a student.

#### **The Job Talk**

- \* It's easier said than done, but rest the day before the interview. No more looking at notes, slides etc. This only increases stress. You know your stuff.
- \* Once you get your itinerary, go to the school's website and print out bios. Tape them into a book by time of meeting. This allows you to take a look at who you are meeting with before each meeting happens and requires no reliance on your memory.
- \* Build in your own breaks. Use the bathroom after every meeting (you may need to with all that water you are drinking anyway), take 3 minutes, and take a deep breath.
- \* Be prepared to answer questions you don't think are relevant at this point (i.e. what salary are you looking for?; what about the [city] do you like most?).
- \* *Ask! Ask! Ask!* For those who will share with you at your institution, ask about salary and other job package items. Further, ask a junior faculty during your visit with whom you built some rapport about the salary range for new faculty, start up packages, etc. This information will vary by school but it is crucial information to have going in.
- \* Don't try to answer all questions - some questions are out of our knowledge.
- \* Honesty is the best policy. If you face questions you cannot answer, just say something like: "that's a very important issue, but I have not fully thought about it. I will get back to you after I think further about it."
- \* Never argue with interviewers. Sometimes interviewers' opinions regarding a certain topic can be different from yours. Remember that this is a job interview and not an academic discussion. Remember - you only have 30-40 minutes.
- \* If you are an international student, be Americanized. During campus visits, you will usually have at least three meals with faculty. That means we have to be familiar with diverse dialogue topics such as sports, foods, hobbies, and family life. International students need additional homework on these matters.
- \* Be yourself, whatever that is. A good fit is out there!

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## Introduction to Hierarchical Linear Modeling: Part 2

Part one of this series dealt with the need for HLM and the unique nature of multilevel data structure. Understanding how HLM operates requires an appreciation of three major concepts: *intra-class correlation*, *random effects*, and *cross-level interactions*. Thus, this section briefly introduces these concepts. As this column is not a statistics textbook, I'd like to avoid any mathematical equations.

**Intra-class correlation (ICC):** Intra-class correlation is a measure of the degree of dependence of individuals in the data. Individuals who share common experiences, due to their closeness in space and/or time, tend to be more similar. Thus, intra-class correlation sometimes refers to a measure of group homogeneity. Generally, the highest degree of dependency can be found between the two observations produced by each member of a married couple, called dyadic data, or a number of students in the same class, called hierarchically-nested data. The non-independence problem in multilevel data is directly related to intra-class correlation because high intra-class correlation results in a biased error variance in conventional linear regression models, overestimating the relationship between variables. Hence, it is important to acknowledge the degree of intra-class correlation in multilevel data.

With hierarchically-nested data, intra-class correlation can be defined as the proportion of the between-group variance to the sum of the between-group and the within-group variance in the dependent variables. For example, client satisfaction may vary between clients within the same agency. At the same time, the average client satisfaction of a given agency may vary across different agencies. Thus, the variance of client satisfaction is the composition of the individual-level variance and the organizational-level variance. The former refers to the within-group variance and the latter refers to the between-group variance. A higher intra-class correlation indicates that much variation in the dependent variable is due to the features of organizations rather than the characteristics of individuals, and warns of the spuriousness of significant variables in conventional regression models. It is recommended that researchers should consider using HLM if intra-class correlation is .25 or greater.

**Random effects:** The essence of HLM is its special treatment of non-independence resulting from high intra-class correlation in multilevel data. HLM corrects for intra-class correlation by adding random-effects as an additional error term or source of variance. Since conventional regression models, such as ordinary least square (OLS) or weighted least square (WLS) regression only have an individual error term, it is impossible to determine whether error variation results from the within-group variance or the between-group variance. Instead, conventional regression estimates merely assume that all error variations are attributed to the individual level, regardless of their true source. On the other hand, HLM contains an individual-level error term, an organizational-level error term, and an individual-organizational interaction

error term as the random effects in a single regression equation, respectively. Thus, unlike conventional regression models consisting of fixed effects and individual error terms, HLM has random effects that are tied to individual- and organizational-level units, as well as fixed effects. Because HLM has both fixed and random effects in a single prediction equation, it is sometimes called the *mixed-effect model*. Even though the random effects do not have substantive meaning when interpreting the results per se, specifying these effects in the model adjusts underestimated standard errors triggered by intra-class correlation.

**Cross-level interactions:** Cross-level interactions are defined as interactions between variables measured at different levels in hierarchically structured data. This concept was first introduced by Cronbach and Webb (1975) and has been used in various disciplines, including education, management, and sociology. For example, researchers examining the relationship between client satisfaction and income among social service agency users may hypothesize that the client satisfaction-income relationship will be stronger among for-profit and meritocratic-oriented agencies than among nonprofit and egalitarian-oriented agencies. By testing whether or not the influence of income on client satisfaction differs according to the type of agency, the researchers can confirm this hypothesis. When defining clients as the micro-level and the agencies to which clients belong as the macro-level, a micro-macro level interaction results and is known, more specifically, as a cross-level interaction. In this case, income is the micro-level variable and the type of agency is the macro-level variable.

In traditional regression models, researchers can employ a simple interaction term between income and the type of agency to examine the interaction effect. However, while traditional regression models specify interaction terms as fixed-effects, HLM specifies them as both fixed and random effects in order to correct intra-class correlation, constructing cross-level interaction terms. If a cross-level interaction is statistically significant, it means that the effect of income on client satisfaction varies according to the type of agency (e.g., whereas income is positively related to client satisfaction in for-profit and meritocratic-oriented agencies, it is not positively related to client satisfaction in nonprofit and egalitarian-oriented agencies).

This concludes the two-part series on HLM. Hopefully, for those of you who are unfamiliar with HLM, it has shed some light on this valuable statistical method.

*\* Tae Kuen Kim is a Ph.D. candidate & author of "Applied regression: Data analysis for social science."*



## Did You Know...

*The Vitale Digital Media Lab, part of the David B. Weigle Information Commons located in Van Pelt Library, is a great resource for students and faculty. The Lab offers a variety of services such as low-cost printing for professional conference posters, free assistance creating web sites and producing audio and video projects, rentable video cameras, and much more. Faculty can also schedule training sessions for their classes. Please see <http://wic.library.upenn.edu/lab/>*

**Publications**

Rhodes, K. V., **Bisgaier, J.**, Becker, N., Padowitz, N., Vashi, A., & McNutt, L. A. (in press). Emergency care of urban women with sexually transmitted infections: Time to address deficiencies. *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*.

**Cullen, S. W.**, & Marcus, S. C. (2008). Suicide in inpatient settings: Are our hospitals safe enough? *Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*, 34, 472-473.

**Dichter, M. E.**, & Rhodes, K. V. (in press). Reports of police calls for service as a risk indicator for intimate partner violence. *Academic Emergency Medicine*.

**Dichter, M. E.**, & Cnaan, R. A. (in press). The benefits of learning social welfare: Lessons from student perspectives. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*.

Cnaan, R. A., & **Dichter, M. E.** (2008). Thoughts on the use of knowledge in social work practice. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18, 278-284.

Cnaan, R. A., **Dichter, M. E.**, & Draine, J. (Eds.). (2008). *A century of social work and social welfare at Penn: Developments in theory, research, and thought*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

**Kim, T. K.** (in press). Globalization and state-supported welfare: A test of the curvilinear hypothesis in OECD countries. *International Social Work*, 52.

Wong, Y. L. I., & **Lee, S.** (in press). Supported housing. In V. Vandiver (Ed.), *Best practices in mental health: A pocket guide*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Shin, S. H., & **Lee, S.** (in press). Racial and ethnic variations in caregiver social support for children involved with child welfare. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*.

**Mekonnen, R.**, Rubin, D., & Noonan, K. (in press). Achieving better health care outcomes for children in foster care. *Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 56(2).

Sapir, Y., Goldblat, H., Lawental, E., **Schori, M.**, & Lansberg, S. (2008). "We see you, so we know how you feel" – drug abuse treatment in a women only setting: The client's perspective. In H. Mell, M. Hovav & M. Golan (Eds.), *Addiction, violence and sexual offense: Mandatory treatment* (pp. 139-165). Jerusalem: Carmel Print.

Sorenson, S. B., & **Thomas, K. A.** (in press). Views of intimate partner violence in same- and opposite-sex relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

**Presentations**

**Cullen, S. W.**, **Matejkowski, J. C.**, & Solomon, P. (2008, October) Examining the relationship between maternal mental health and parenting practices. National Association for Social Work - Pennsylvania Annual Conference, King of Prussia, PA.

**Frasso, R.**, & Sands, B. (2008, November). Evaluation: From the inside out. Paper presented at the Council on Social Work Education Conference, Philadelphia, PA

Sinha, J., **Greenspan, I.**, & Handy, F. (2008, November). Immigrants and civil society: Does membership in an ethnic congregation enhance or curtail civic participation? Presented at the 37th Annual Conference of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), Philadelphia, PA.

**Kim, T. K.** (2008, November). Globalization: Is it welfare crisis or opportunity? Paper presented at the 54th Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), Philadelphia, PA.

**Klusaritz, H. A.** (2008, October). The role of geography in access to Medicaid primary care: A spatial examination of access in Philadelphia County, 136th American Public Health Association Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA.

**Lee, S.** (2008, October). Disparities in having a usual source of care among non-citizen individuals in the U.S. Paper presented at the 136th annual American Public Health Association (APHA) meeting, San Diego, CA.

**Matejkowski, J. C.**, **Cullen, S. W.**, & Caplan, J. M. (2008, November). Severe mental illness and parole release dispositions: Preliminary results. Poster presented at the American Society for Criminology annual conference, St. Louis, MO.

**Funding/Jobs/Awards**

**Rosie Frasso** became Certified in Public Health (CPH) and has accepted an adjunct faculty position at Drexel University's School of Public Health.

**Kristie Thomas** was awarded a two-year \$25,000 Doctoral Dissertation Research Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

**THE GRADUATE STUDENT CENTER**

The Graduate Student Center (GSC), located on campus at 3615 Locust Walk, "was established in 2001 to meet the unique needs of graduate and professional students at Penn." You can stop in for free coffee and tea, check your email, or reserve a study room or meeting space. In addition, GSC hosts:

**\* Navigating the Dissertation:** workshops, resources, and dissertation groups to help doctoral students be successful in the dissertation process. The Dissertation Boot Camp is a two-week writers' retreat in "an environment where you can focus solely on writing your dissertation." Cost is \$20.00. Next scheduled: January 9-23 2009. [www.gsc.upenn.edu/navdiss/bootcamp.php](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/navdiss/bootcamp.php)

**\* Grant Advice:** a one-on-one matching program that connects grad students who are currently applying for grants with Grant Advisors. Cost: Free! [www.gsc.upenn.edu/navgrant/advisee.php#advisee](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/navgrant/advisee.php#advisee)

**\* Students with Children Program:** events and resources for grad students with kids. The first Saturday of each month the Graduate Student Center hosts the "Grad Parents Brunch & Play Date Series." Penn grad students are encouraged to "bring their kids to the Center for food, crafts, and fun!" [www.gsc.upenn.edu/kids/](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/kids/)

**\* Cultural & Recreational Activities:** The Grad Center offers a variety of activities for grad students who want to get to know Penn and the surrounding areas. For example, on February 20, 2009 from 3:00-4:00, there will be a free guided group tour of the Egyptian galleries at the Penn Museum. [www.gsc.upenn.edu/activities/rec.php](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/activities/rec.php)

**\* Films and Broadcasts:** Every Thursday, the Grad Student Center shows movies that are free and open to all grad students. The Grad Center also shows selected sporting events, political debates, and various other broadcasts. Watch the Presidential Inauguration of U.S. President-elect Barack Obama on the Grad Center's big screen Tuesday, January 20, 2009, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM Common Room. [www.gsc.upenn.edu/activities/films.php](http://www.gsc.upenn.edu/activities/films.php)

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