



CATEGORY ARCHIVES: GETTING SOME SPACE: USING SPATIAL LANGUAGE AND SPATIAL PLAY TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S SPATIAL SKILLS

End of Testing

Posted on **August 12, 2015** by **Patricia Hanna Donskoy**

August 12, 2015

In just a short 10 weeks my research team and I have completed an entire study! From baseline to training to post testing we have a total sample of 13 children which will be added to the sample from an Ithaca head start to give us a total of 24.

The last day of testing is always bittersweet. My team and I work with these children everyday. We interact with them, get to hear about their lives, and meet their parents. It is always a good day when the children you are working with are excited to see you and come and play. The enthusiasm to participate from both the children and the teachers really enhanced the experience of doing the study in this center.

It is hard to believe that after months of prepping, preparing tasks and organizing the study, to setting up parent information session and recruiting participants, to actually performing all the testing and training we are finally done! Throughout the summer we have been coding and are in the initial stages of analyzing the data. In the coming weeks we should be seeing the fruits of our labor and hopefully significant results!

This entire summer would not have been possible with out my amazing research team consisting of Tiffany, Angelica, and Emily. In the short weeks we've been in NYC we were not only able to perform the actual study, but also work on the data; a huge tasks for a 13 child sample with over 10 baseline and post testing measures and 5-6 days of training tasks! A huge thank you goes out to these amazing and hardworking girls who, through rain or shine, broken trains and crowded subways, were able to come out and participate in this study with me!

We can't wait to go back to school and share the results we hope to see!

Below is an image of the research team minus Emily (we will crop her in soon).



Posted in [Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills](#)

Second to Last Week of Testing?

Posted on **August 5, 2015** by **Patricia Hanna Donskoy**

August 5, 2015

We are making swift progress with our testing schedule and all but one child is on posttesting. Since our sample increased to 13 participants, 9 have only one more day of testing and then they are done with the entire study with us!

It is exciting to think about what my team and I have accomplished in just a few short weeks. Combined with the sample from Ithaca, we basically conducted and completed an entire study in less than a summer. There is still work to do though; from finishing up coding to reliabilities and transcriptions the work continues on this project.

Right now, I set the expected day of completion as next wednesday, August 12. It's great to see the light at the end of the tunnel, but as always, it will be bittersweet leaving all of the children and ABC Graham community I have interacted with this summer.

Hopefully, we could come back some time in the future!

Posted in **Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills**

IMAGE

Post Testing

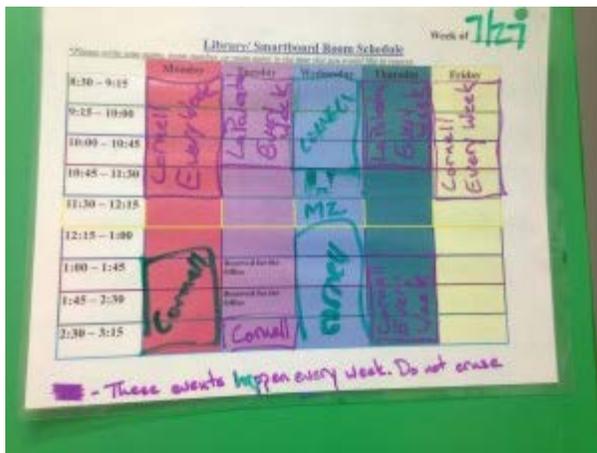
August 2, 2015

As the Summer is racing to an end so is our research! All but one child is now on to post testing. This consists of similar or the same measures used in baseline. Post testing is necessary to evaluate child performance and, hopefully, improvement after the training portion of the study.

Given that we have a substantial number of children and several post testing measures, this process takes around 3-4 days of testing for each child. Therefore, Ideally the data collection portion of our study should be coming to a close within the next two weeks!

Primary analysis of the data (that we have been coding along the way) shows interesting trends concerning gender, but more to come with more extensive analysis.

One of the most important things my team and I will miss about this summer is working with the teachers at the ABC Graham School. They have been so accommodating with their schedules and space resources in addition to their willingness to work with is us. Below is an image of the Cornell schedule incorporated into the school library schedule as a demonstration of how we've become part of the ABC Graham community.



August 3, 2015 by Patricia Hanna Donskoy

Posted in **Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills**

The Swing of Things

Posted on **July 23, 2015** by **Patricia Hanna Donskoy**

July 22, 2014

This week we are working towards working through all the training activities with all 12 of our participants. This weeks major event was the addition of one of our research assistance. Having another person on the team really enhances efficiency and prevents any one team member from being overwhelmed and failing to administer the tasks correctly or record correctly; all of which are necessary for a successful study.

At this point in time we are all learning and bonding with the children we are working with. We know them by name, their classroom, hear about their days and friends and families. It's hard not to get excited when the children are so excited to see you and come play!

On a more challenging note, we have been having technical difficulties accessing the server. This comes as a struggle considering we need to upload our recorded videos to code them, as well as, clear the SD card to record more. We did find avenues around this however, and with minor adjustments and flexibility on our part and we are back on track with our coding schedule by using an external hard drive.

All in all, a very productive week so far!

Posted in **Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills**

Training Season

Posted on **July 17, 2015** by **Patricia Hanna Donskoy**

July 16th, 2015

We have finished baseline measure testing and have graduated to the major leagues; training. Training is probably the most engaging and enjoyable part of the entire study processes. For our study we include tasks such as legos, magnets, origami, connect the dots, ispy, and much more.

We aren't just enjoying ourselves and reliving our childhoods by using these fun toys and activities, we are working hard to provide an educational experience for the children that they will enjoy, and possibly not even know they are learning because all of the fun they are having!

Through providing exposure to all of these training tasks, a group of children is engaged in constructive play while another group is participating in non-constructive play, but both groups get equal exposure when it comes to the spatial language we provide. This include shape names, spatial relations, and spatial verbs. Standardizing our administration of these tasks amongst researchers in NYC and our team in Ithaca has also been a topic of discussion this week.

Today, we also had the opportunity to video conference with the Ithaca team and further standardize what each team does so the study is as identical in NYC as it is done in Ithaca; something imperative for the children to be used in the same data and considered part of the same study.

Overall, the week has been very productive so far and we are pushing forward to finish training and start our post tests!



- Me administering a magnet design training task with one of our participants

Posted in [Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills](#)

Testing Begins

Posted on **July 8, 2015** by **Patricia Hanna Donskoy**

July 7-8, 2015

This week my research team and I finally started working with the children at the ABC Graham center in Harlem, NY. This weeks focus is starting and completing baseline testing, which is composed of several tasks and puzzle measures to evaluate the children and these same measures will be administered at the end of training to, hopefully, see improvement in performance.

The first day of testing was as hectic as any first day on the job. It was the first day of summer session for the center as well and all of the children were settling in to their new classrooms. As testing progressed and we were moving through our list of children, I came to talk on of the children out for the short (15 min) play session and when I arrived she was suffering a bout of separation anxiety from her mother. Her teachers could not really calm her down, and they were trying for what they said was around 10 minutes. She timidly agreed to go with me since one of the teachers said she would be able to leave the room. When she saw the puzzles she brightened up! She actually wanted to keep playing even though we went through all of the tasks we had planned for her that day and more. She went back to class in an excited and good mood, no longer thinking about how much she missed her mother.

Although having children participate in this study has a lot of educational benefits for them, this day we (my team and I) learned that we might actually be doing more for these kids than we even know, albeit small.

Overall, testing went well, but getting to know the children and see how excited they are to play with the educational toys and puzzles we have for them is an added bonus I never really considered until now.

Posted in **Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills**

About to start testing!

Posted on **June 28, 2015** by **Patricia Hanna Donskoy**

June 28th, 2015

As prep work is drawing to a close we have also recruited enough participants to start testing. The best part of doing research with pre-school children is actually interacting with them! There are several obstacles however. For instance, we have had to delay testing a week to give the preschoolers time to transition from one classroom to the next and participate in moving up ceremonies. We want them to be completely settled in their new classrooms before we start pulling them out for testing to avoid making any of the children feel uncomfortable.

During the prep processes we have also made even more changes to the initial planning of the study. Working on designing a study can lead in many directions as time progresses and for this project, this comes with an addition of puzzle tasks. These tasks will hopefully be useful in exploring development of spatial abilities with constructive play. Although this might seem easy, every part and every piece of the puzzle (pun intended) for the study must be considered. Therefore, the puzzle tasks have had to be reworked, added on to, scripted, and pilot tested.

Testing begins soon and we hope that the children will be as excited to work with us as we are as excited!

Posted in [Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills](#)

Week 3

Posted on **June 19, 2015** by [Patricia Hanna Donskoy](#)

June 19, 2015

Week three we had another recruitment meeting at the ABC Graham School. More and more parents are interested in having their children participate in the study! This is our second time giving a parent presentation and there are certain adjustments that come with this task. Primarily, we have to convey our research motives, objectives, and approach in a manner that is both informative, but also effective and easy to understand.

I think that is one of the biggest challenges for me as a researcher currently. Communication is key in all areas especially when you are working with parents and children. Knowledge would be useless if it couldn't be used and conveyed. Therefore, learning to do this with any type of material and early on is a useful skill I am already developing early in the project.

Posted in [Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills](#)

Recruitment, Recruitment, Recruitment!

Posted on **June 12, 2015** by [Patricia Hanna Donskoy](#)

June 11, 2015

Recruitment, Recruitment, Recruitment! This week my team and I went to several preschools to educate parents, educators, and the centers about our study and what we plan to do this summer.

Like any study involving human subjects, recruitment is key if not the most important part. Recruitment also provides an invaluable opportunity for us as researchers to engage with the community we will be working with.

During our visit we meet several parents and were able to speak about our lives as students and our interests in addition to answering questions about the research we were planning on doing with the children. The vice versa is true as well since we were able to learn about the families we would be working with. Those intimate and small details of someones life, such as their immigration story or what their children love to play with, really allow one to connect with others and understand different circumstances; all of which is vital to performing research and even more generally; growing as a person.

One of the most exciting experiences was taking a tour of the head start center in Harlem, meeting all of the children, and learning about their educational programs. There is always a playful or exciting aspect about working and interacting with children. From the babies of the center (9 months old) to the children about to graduate into kindergarten, many of these children seemed to be thriving, learning, engaging in their own education, and generally very excited to be in school. This make the prospect of working with these children even more exciting!

Posted in **Getting Some Space: Using Spatial Language and Spatial Play to Promote Children's Spatial Skills**

NYC Prep

Posted on **June 4, 2015** by **Patricia Hanna Donskoy**

June 4th, 2015

Finals are over and summer has finally begun. This week was the major prep week for this preschool spatial skills study. Like any research endeavor, there is a lot of planning and organization. From organizing coding sheets to finalizing the experimental procedure and tasks everything must be in place before testing begins.

This upcoming week we will be recruiting participants, and to do this we must inform the parents about the study and obtain their consent. This process includes attending a parent meeting and hosting an information session. Therefore, the primary task this week has been creating and editing a powerpoint presentation that will be effective in conveying what the study is about, but at the same time, simple enough for everyone to understand.

Throughout this week it has been interesting and exciting adjusting to living in NYC and experiencing a different community than Ithaca. It is definitely louder and more hectic, as well as, more energetic. My research team and I are excited to see what this new community and new children will mean for the results and the study. Additionally, we hope we can positively impact those we are working with and improve the educational careers of any preschool child we come into contact with.



For now, we are preparing and getting excited to start testing!