

Continuing My Research with Drs. Katherine Johnson and Alyssa Lederer

|
Amanda Schaller newcomb@tulane.edu

[View PDF](#)



This fall, I started my second semester working as a Research Assistant for Drs. Katherine Johnson and Alyssa Lederer and their ongoing research surrounding the effectiveness of Tulane's GESS 1900 (Sex Power Culture) and SOCI 2100 (Sociology of Sexuality) courses. Their research focuses on evaluating whether these semester-

long courses impact students' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior about gender, sexuality, and sexual violence.

During the summer, we planned and refined measures on the pre-test, the first round of the survey given to students about a week into the semester to gauge baseline knowledge and attitudes. This semester, we administered both the pre-test and post-test survey to our three courses of interest: GESS 1900, SOCI 2100, and SOCI 2500 (Organizational Behavior). After the first round of survey administration, I looked into increasing response rates among samples of college students. The literature suggests that the format of a survey most strongly impacts undergraduate students' willingness to participate; students prefer surveys that are convenient, well-organized, easy to fill out, and require half an hour at most to complete. These results informed our process of evaluating and modifying our post-test survey.

I continued conducting literature searches on various measures for our post-test survey. I also completed the survey and provided feedback, as well as recruited feedback from my housemates, before we administered it. Each measure was evaluated by the entire team, and we discussed the intended purpose of each item to make sure that the survey was as clear, short, and intentional as possible. We also re-read through the entire survey item by item as a team to ensure we had a consensus on items before it was submitted to Tulane's IRB (Institutional Review Board) for approval to administer.

Dr. Johnson and our graduate Research Assistant visited the classrooms to administer the survey for both the pre-and post-test and to answer any questions from the students. We now have the data from both times of surveying the three classes, which we will analyze during the Spring semester. I look forward to beginning to analyze the data and completing more literature searches to learn more about the significance of our various findings. I am also excited to begin drafting and editing papers as a team based on our findings!

I have enjoyed strengthening my investigative skills and expanding my knowledge through many literature searches. Our meetings spent analyzing every detail of the survey helped me gain important knowledge of all that goes into survey development and editing. With each semester in this internship, my knowledge of both our research and survey design continues to grow.

I am very thankful to Drs. Katherine Johnson and Dr. Alyssa Lederer for their patience and kindness this chaotic semester, as well as their readiness to answer my

questions. I am lucky to be a part of this research team and hope to continue contributing as much as I can to this project!