

First Month of Research with Dr. Lederer

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The first month and a half of my internship as a research assistant for Dr. Lederer at the School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine has gone very well. My main tasks have included continuing to compile a literature review on web-based sex education interventions as well as helping Dr. Lederer create posters to present her research at the upcoming American Public Health Association (APHA) conference in Atlanta.

Dr. Lederer's dissertation research focused on the impact of graphic images within a web-based STI education intervention. Among many other things, she collected data on how well the participants' knowledge improved and also included several questions on how well the participants liked the intervention. Together this provides information on the efficacy of web-based sex education interventions, which is the focus of my smaller project. I have been searching for literature containing pre-existing information on how well sex education works when it is delivered digitally rather than in person in order to explore the need for a new study. While we thought there would be an excess of research on this topic, it seems that most literature focuses on the effectiveness of sex education websites rather than digital interventions, like a teacher's voice recording over a PowerPoint. I have been improving my literature review techniques through this project, and may continue to refine my searches to make sure that we have encountered all relevant literature. However, it appears that there may be justification to analyze and publish this subset of Dr. Lederer's data, which is very exciting! The next steps would be coding and statistically analyzing survey responses.

The other major task I have been working on is creating and editing Dr. Lederer's poster presentations for the upcoming APHA conference. This has been challenging because I have no background in graphic design, but in the process I have learned the basics of using three software programs to produce info-graphics and posters. I have also learned more about the process that researchers go through to present their work, and what I may be able to look forward to if I am able to publish my thesis.

Overall, I'm very grateful for the experience I have had through the RRRH internship this year and am excited to continue through the end of this year and into next semester!