

Research Assistant Positions in the Markman Lab

Lab: Markman Lab (<http://markmanlab.stanford.edu/>)

Program: Stanford University, Department of Psychology

Supervising Researcher: Ellen M. Markman (Lewis M. Terman Professor of Psychology),
Marianna Zhang (Graduate Student)

Project Descriptions:

1. **Language and how we think about categories.**

Language can powerfully shape the way we conceptualize the world around us, including the way we organize things into categories. What role does language play in the development of essentialist beliefs about categories? Essentialism is the belief that categories possess some innate essence that produces stable and unchangeable similarities among category members, and that sharply divides category members from non-category members. Essentialism of social categories in particular can be problematic, and can lead to stereotyping and prejudice. In this study, we're particularly interested in the early childhood origins of gender essentialism. How does the language children hear influence whether they develop essentialist beliefs about gender? In this study, we probe the conditions under which children interpret the gender-based explanations they hear (e.g. "Suzy wears pink because Suzy is a girl") in a gender essentialist way. The study involves reading passages to 5 and 6 year old children, and asking them questions probing their representation of gender.

2. **Storybooks to motivate girls into fields in which they've been underrepresented.**

There has been an explosion of storybooks intended to motivate young girls into fields in which they have been historically underrepresented (e.g. science). In this study, we're interested in evaluating how effective different elements of these storybooks are in motivating girls to actually pursue these fields. The study involves reading select excerpts of actual published storybooks to 5 and 6 year olds, and asking them questions about their own motivation and a third-party's motivation to pursue a field.

Duties & Time Commitment: Research assistants will help with developing materials for studies, participant recruitment, data collection (at Bing Nursery School, and perhaps also at the Palo Alto Junior Museum & Zoo and/or the Tech Museum in San Jose, depending on availability and interest), as well as coding, managing, and analyzing data. A commitment of around 9 hours/week is required, preferably for more than one quarter.

Qualifications and Skills: We are looking for applicants interested in developmental psychology who are reliable and highly motivated. Applicants ideally are comfortable with and enjoy working with young children. Coursework in psychology (especially developmental psychology), and familiarity with R (especially tidyverse) are helpful and preferred, but not required.

Compensation: Research assistants can be hired for course credit (Psych 195) or federal work-study (for those eligible). One unit of course credit is equivalent to 3 hours of work per week.

To Apply: Please email your resume/CV, transcript, and brief statement of interest to Marianna Zhang at marianna.zhang@stanford.edu. If you have any questions or concerns, you can email her as well.