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## Undergraduate Research: Moving Toward Publication

*Excerpts from a symposium presented at the Southeastern Psychological Association*

Valerie W. Lawrence, Associate Professor of Psychology

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Most undergraduates feel their goal is to take required courses and finish with a decent grade-point average. Al-

though it is possible to get into graduate school without having published research, publishing provides valuable experience that will give an

added advantage. Below are rules that students should consider when submitting a paper for publication.

### Rules to consider when submitting a paper for publication

**Rule 1-** Take into account the extent of the reader's technical vocabulary. Whenever a complicated word can be replaced with a simple word, replace it. If technical words must be used, define them.

**Rule 2 -** Maintain a level of formality in writing that is appropriate for the audience. Formality is not a substitute for readability.

**Rule 3 -** Include only those details that are appropriate for the audience.

**Rule 4 -** Avoid abbreviations. They can be annoying and often interfere with the reader's comprehension of the text.

**Rule 5 -** Write clearly. A major reason for lack of clarity in writing is an author's unwillingness to go back over what

has been written and rewrite it; the writer can't assume the imperfections in writing will pass by the reader unnoticed.

**Rule 6 -** Eliminate redundancy. Although repetition in writing is sometimes appropriate, it can easily slip into redundancy. Writers usually find it difficult distinguishing what they have thought about from what they have written. Have someone else read the paper because other people are more likely to recognize redundancy.

**Rule 7-** Don't rely on textbooks or outdated journal articles in developing a paper. In pursuing a topic, consider whether it is of current interest. Students relying on these sources may find themselves generating ideas that someone else thought of

several years before.

**Rule 8 -** Proofread your paper. The best method of proofreading is to check the final typed copy line-by-line; do this after putting the paper down for a couple of days so the reading is fresh.

**Rule 9-** Request a critical reading of the paper by an advisor or colleague. Encourage the readers to be critical and offer critical paper reading services to them in return. Also, make sure the colleague publishes in the area related to the paper or is familiar with current work in the area.

*Undergraduates who follow these suggestions should succeed in overcoming some of the obstacles in getting research published!*

*"What I did with my summer stipend"*

## Developing a Teaching Conference for Theater

Kurt Daw, Associate Professor of Theater

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I spent my summer planning for a regional teaching conference on the topic of teaching theater in a liberal arts context, scheduled for March 31, April 1 & 2, 1995 at Kennesaw State. This conference is being co-sponsored by The Forum on Theater as a Liberal Art (TLA),

which is the largest and most prestigious division of the Association for Theater in Higher Education.

Planning has included establishing a steering committee with national representation, and a local committee deeply involved in organizing the arrange-

ments. I have developed budgets, agendas and publicity materials, and I traveled to Chicago to discuss our plans with, and get approval from, the executive committee of TLA.

The announcement brochure is about to go out, and informa-

*(See DAW, page 12)*

# You're Not Getting Older; You're Getting Better

## Student Characteristics and Academic Achievement

Michael Reiner, Bill Hill and Clayton Small  
Department of Psychology

*This is a condensed version of a paper presented at the Conference on Human Development last April. Full text and statistical results are available from the authors.*

While research on academic achievement in higher education often has examined the relationship between performance (GPA) and ability (SAT), few studies have investigated differences in student motivation and academic success. This gap in research may be particularly noteworthy given the demographic changes in the student population.

Anecdotal evidence across many institutions indicates that adult learners generally are more serious about their studies than traditional-age students. Adults are more committed to the learning process and have greater appreciation for the value of education than their younger classmates.

In a study of 410 traditional and non-traditional students, respondents were asked to complete an

(DAW, continued from page 11)  
tion requests are already coming in, so I have great hopes for good attendance at this first, and perhaps annual, event on this topic here.

For anyone considering a teaching conference at KSC, the support systems available here are terrific. I have been able to talk to experienced planners in English, nursing and psychology to tap their expertise. The conference office of Continuing Education has been unflagging in its support, especially on the complicated local arrangements. I encourage anyone with an inkling to take the plunge, because the help you need is available.

instrument that assesses differences in learning orientation (LO) and grade orientation (GO). Past research indicated that LO students are eager for the college experience to enhance their personal and intellectual development. GO students engage in academic work primarily for grades.

Results indicated that the strongest effect is due to age, with increasing age associated with higher GPA. Women were more likely to have a higher GPA than men. When all of the predictors were considered, LO and GO scores did not contribute to predicting GPA.

As was expected, the greater number of hours a students works,

the lower the GPA. In our sample, students worked an average of 24 hours per week, reflecting the nature of our campus, where the mean age is 26.5.

Adult learners are often burdened by the demands of a full-time job and family responsibilities in addition to their studies.

Nevertheless, the good news is that with increasing age comes greater maturity. Adult learners generally are more successful academically in spite of greater obstacles as they pursue their educational goals. So relax; they're getting older, but they're getting better.



# REACTING

THROUGH TEACHING

Contributions from KSC faculty are solicited. Please submit articles to CETL on a 5.25" or 3.5" disk in WordPerfect. Preferred length of articles is 900 words. Deadline for the next issue is February 6.

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