
HDGG Newsletter Spring 2023



UC DAVIS
Human Development
Graduate Group

Message from the HDGG Chair:

Dr. Lenna Ontai



As we approach the end of the 2022-23 academic year, I am feeling grateful for that we have pulled through another year together, even with some disruptions along the way. And what a successful year it was! We have 6 graduating students this year – 2 from the PhD program and 4 from the MS program, in addition to 9 students who advanced to candidacy this year. A huge congratulations to all of them as they continue with the next steps in their training and careers. We also had fun reconnecting through the year as we brought back in-person events, including recruitment, writing retreats, our annual meeting/student research showcase, and upcoming graduation and annual year end celebration. I am looking forward to hosting more of these next year. In the meantime, I wish you all a healthy, happy, and productive (for those who need it!) summer.



HDGG Spotlight

Each newsletter we will be spotlighting one faculty member and one student about their current research.

HDGG Spotlight Faculty:

Masoud Jasbi



Communication Committee (CC): From the past year, what is one professional or research-related accomplishment you are particularly proud of?

Masoud Jasbi (MJ): In one of our studies we had a puppet help us with running the study and the puppet's image appeared as a figure in the paper. Picture attached (see below)!

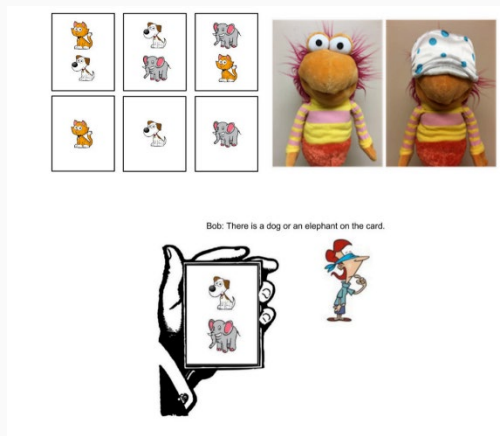


Figure 15. Cards used in the connective guessing game, sample scenario for adults in Experiment 1, and the puppet in children's experiments with the sleeping mask on and off.

CC: What are your current research interests or professional goals?

MJ: I am currently interested in three areas of research: 1. the emergence of logical words like “not”, “or”, “and” in children’s language and their comprehension of logical concepts. 2. improving our research methods for testing human understanding of linguistic meaning, especially children’s and 3. testing machine understanding of meaning, especially large language models such as the GPTs

CC: What is one active or upcoming project that you are most excited about?

MJ: We are going to study how logical words like the negative word “not” or the disjunction word “or” can help world learning in preschool children.

HDGG Student Spotlight:

Elisa Ugarte



Communication Committee (CC): From the past year, what is one professional or research-related accomplishment you are particularly proud of?

Elisa Ugarte (EU): I have two accomplishments I'm proud of. The first one is that I published my qualifying exam paper in *Development & Psychopathology*. It is a theory and methodological paper focusing on assessing caregiver unpredictability. I'm proud because it is something that came from my own head, like my theory baby. This sounds weird, lol. What I mean is that, because it was a QE paper, the conceptualization and direction were 100% mine. I had support from my advisor, of course! But overall, it feels like a personal achievement.

I'm also proud of the research relationships I've built throughout these years. I feel so supported by a community of mostly women in the area of developmental psychobiology. This includes my fantastic lab mates, my cohort sister Lisa, the Hibbel lab team, and female trainees from other Universities across the US. It feels like a cheerleading team that I can reach out to feel empowered, reach my goals, cry about the losses, and celebrate the wins!

CC: What are your current research interests?

EU: This is a tough one! I'm so swamped in dissertation that I have a love/hate relationship with my research interests and 0 capacity to lift my head up and think about the future!

Anyways, my dissertation focuses on assessing and understanding variations in experiences of unpredictability and their implications for children and adolescents biopsychosocial development. My dissertation aimed to tackle three key questions about unpredictability: whether it's domain-general (e.g., caregivers who are unpredictable in one aspect are also unpredictable in another) or domain-specific (e.g., caregivers might be predictable in one aspect but unpredictable in others), how different types of unpredictability connect with each other, and which aspects of development are most affected by unpredictable environments and caregivers. By looking into these questions, this research hopes to improve our understanding and help create better support programs to bring stability to children and families.

CC: What are your goals or plans post-dissertation?

EU: If everything goes smoothly, I'm moving back to Chile for a couple of years at least. I rented a house in a cute beach town. I'll be working as an independent consultant for Global TIES, a research center at NYU. Global TIES mission is to generate rigorous evidence in support of the best and most effective humanitarian and developmental aid for refugee families in different countries. Specifically, I'll work on a project focused on the intergenerational transmission of trauma and resilience in Rohingya families who currently live in the largest refugee camp in the world, located in Bangladesh. These families have been fleeing from the genocide by the Myanmar military.



Graduating HDGG Students!



**Kristina Sayler
Armstrong**

Ph.D. student



Elisa Ugarte

Ph.D. student



Jamila Espinosa

M.S. student



Sarah Hudson

M.S. student



Van Pham

M.S. student



Rachel Wilson

M.S. student



HDGG Annual Meeting

Faculty and students gathered at Eichhorn Family House to celebrate the year's accomplishments, participate in the creative Student Research Showcase and cell-phone bingo as well as nosh on a yummy lunch from Dos Coyotes. We're looking forward to more festivities in the fall!











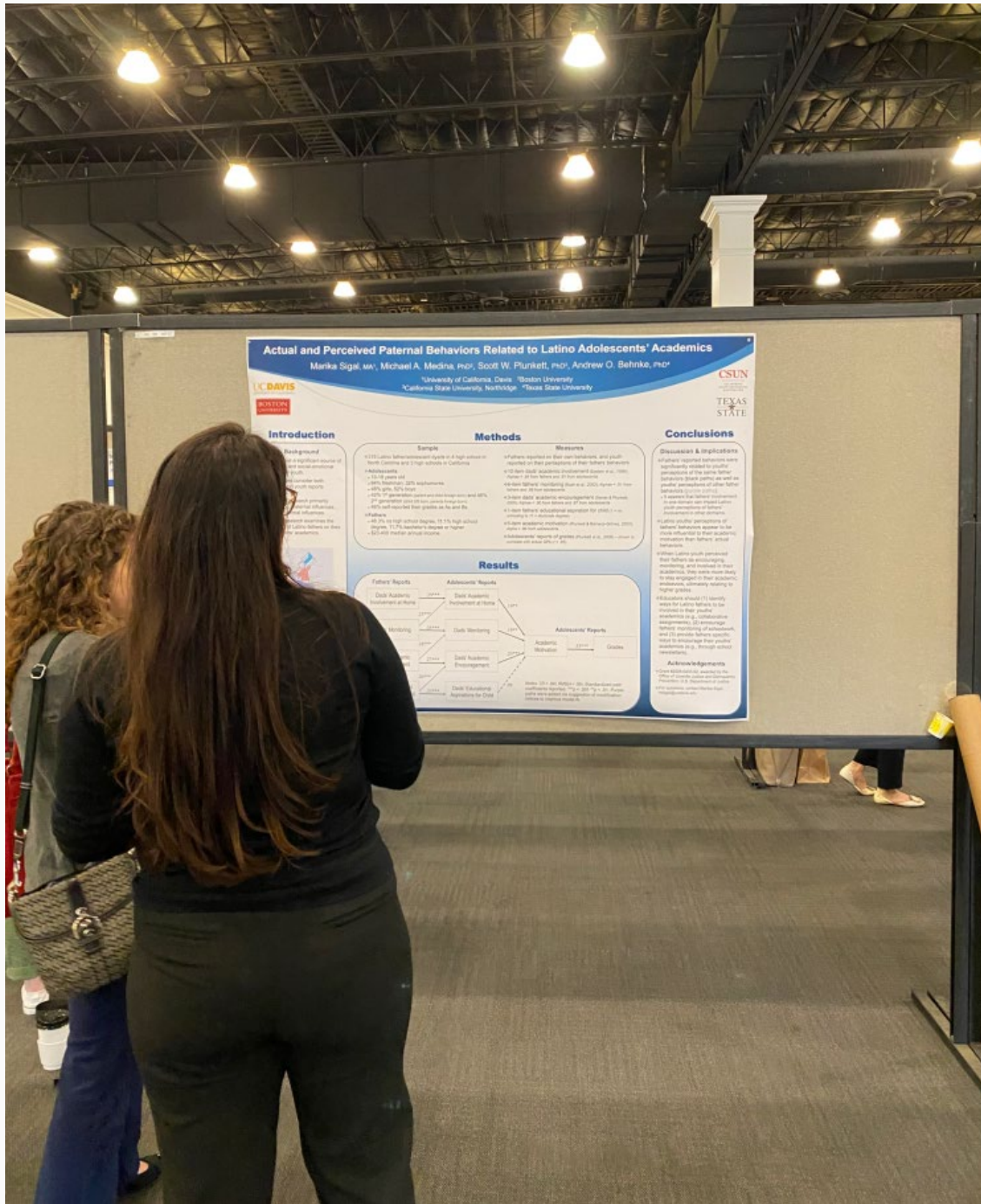




Snapshot of Conferences



Tseng Vang presenting on his birthday (thanks Adrienne for the cupcakes).



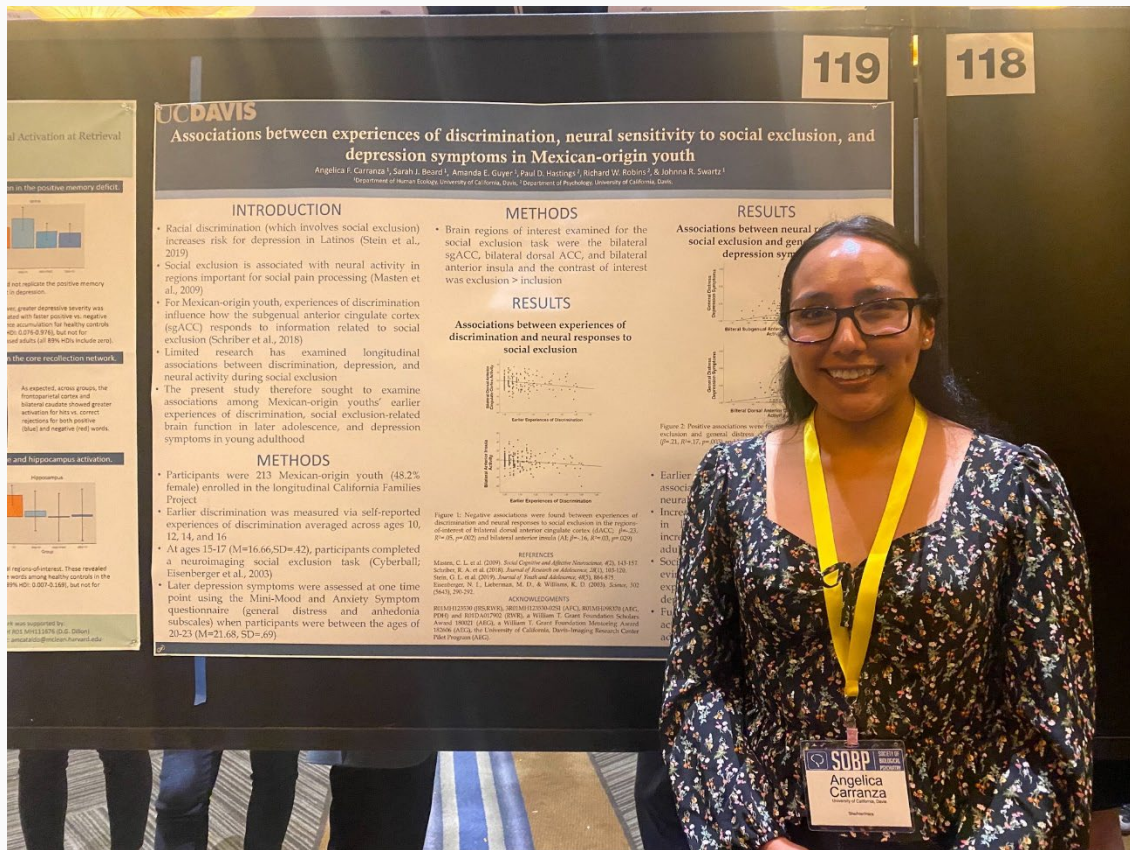
Marika Sigal presenting her poster to a fellow conference attendee.



Dr. Daniel Choe presenting during his talk.



Dr Jay Belsky and Elisa Ugarte.



Angelica Carranza presenting her poster.



Maddy Frazier presenting her poster.



The Brain Development, Psychopathology, and Mental Health Lab

*For a complete list of accomplishments please check full list
here: <https://humandevlopment.ucdavis.edu/accomplishments>*

