



Interdisciplinary Training Program in Education Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Since 2005, the Interdisciplinary Training Program in the Education Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison has been helping to address the need for skilled researchers who can carry out research that will provide solid evidence about what programs will most benefit our nation's students. As one of a network of 20 predoctoral training programs funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences, UW's program is preparing a new generation of outstanding education science scholars. By drawing on the talents and research interests of over 20 outstanding campus scholars and pairing academic, professional, and financial supports with field research opportunities and practical experience, ITP offers a select group of doctoral students in economics, political science, psychology, social welfare, sociology, educational leadership & policy analysis, educational policy studies, and educational psychology the opportunity to learn how to design, carry out, and translate research on educational processes and educational improvement.



PROGRAM GOAL

The training program focuses on three themes:

- Design and implementation of field-based randomized studies in schools and other complex, real-world settings
- Statistical analysis of quantitative survey, observational, and assessment data on education, with special attention to questions of causal inference
- Translation of research to maximize impact on educational policy at the federal, state, and local levels

While our focus on rigorous methodological training remains paramount, starting in 2015 we gave greater attention to providing relevant and timely opportunities that engage ITP fellows by linking this methodological training to the real-world problems in the field through research-to-practice internships and weekly seminars that encourage broad participation from policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. Our new program encourages a more active dialogue between research and practice by opening participation to graduate students from the School of Education's (SoE) departments of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Educational Psychology, and Educational Policy Studies. We believe that including SoE students will

foster stronger and more deliberate focus by all our students on the potential translational impacts of their work on educational policy and practice.

ELIGIBILITY

Students in the training program must be enrolled full-time as doctoral students in economics, political science, psychology, social welfare, sociology, educational leadership & policy analysis, educational policy studies, or educational psychology. They must fulfill all the requirements of their disciplinary homes, including coursework, seminars, comprehensive examinations, qualifying papers and/or master's theses, proposals, and dissertations and be firmly grounded in the theoretical and methodological tools of their respective disciplines, including advanced statistical training. Within this framework, the training program will allow students and their mentors to craft individualized experiences that are suited to the interests of the students and the requirements of their disciplines. Participating students will engage in research that addresses pressing questions about education policies and programs. Doctoral dissertations will emphasize questions of "what works" in education that are theoretically informed, but also stimulated by practical concerns. In addition, all will attend seriously to issues of causal inference, through randomized field trials, quasi-experimental studies, and/or rigorous statistical adjustments to non-experimental data from surveys, observations, and assessments.



Two categories of students are admitted to the program: **Entry-level students** are in their first or second year of graduate study when they enter the ITP. Entry-level students can receive up to five years of funding. **Advanced students** are dissertators when they enter the ITP and will complete their dissertations within two years after entry. Advanced students can receive up to two years of funding. For both entry level and advanced students at least two members of the training program faculty will sit on each student's dissertation committee.

(Above: Jeffrey Grigg, Brian An. Left: Andrew Young, Martha Alibali, Richard Prather, Pooja Sidney Shanta Hattikudur)

MINOR IN EDUCATION SCIENCES

Entry-level students will pursue a distributed Minor in Education Sciences, consisting of four courses outside their home departments related to their scholarship on education. For most, the minor will include at least one course in *experimental design*, at least one course in *measurement*, and two substantive courses in *education in context*. The UW-ITP is not a “one size fits all” program and one of its strengths is the flexibility it provides to students and their mentors to craft individualized sequences of coursework. Through the minor courses, the interdisciplinary seminar, and translational workshops, the training program ensures that students work with a variety of faculty from outside their home departments.

INTERNSHIP

Each entry-level student will serve a semester-long research-to-practice internship in which they demonstrate two or more research competencies. Typically, the internship will occur in the student’s 3rd year in the program. Most internship opportunities are provided through campus-based projects directed by ITP faculty. In addition, we have developed partnerships with regional educational laboratories, state and local education agencies, and applied policy-research firms that provide direct work with practitioners, or policy work at a regional or federal level. We seek to ensure that trainees are placed in internships that expand their skills sets; in effect this means matching fellows who have never worked in schools with practitioner-focused internships, and placing those with less research experience into research-focused settings.

SUPPORT & BENEFITS FOR FELLOWS

Funds are available to support a total of 25 students during the project’s third five-year award period from 2015 to 2020. Students receive a \$30,000 stipend along with full tuition and benefits. In addition, during fellowship years, students are eligible to request up to \$2000 for travel or research support.

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Graduate students at UW-Madison are encouraged to participate in professional meetings, conferences, and networks. ITP Fellows’ participation in the network of interdisciplinary training programs established through this IES grant program also enhances their research and professional opportunities. ITP Fellows share two suites in the Education Sciences building. A half-time project coordinator and part-time project assistant provide administrative and program support for students and faculty. Each Fellow has access to a personal work space and PC, as well as to high-level statistical software and information processing tools and experts. Although many students also have office space in their disciplinary homes, the ITP Fellows Work Area provides a common community space that allows students to network and communicate across disciplines.



2014 program graduate Alyn McCarty

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AND PARTICIPATING FACULTY 2016-17

Geoffrey Borman (Director), Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis, Educational Policy Studies

Martha Alibali (Deputy Director), Psychology

Eric Grodsky (ITP Internship Coordinator), Sociology

Eric Camburn, Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Katherine Magnuson, Social Work

Peter M. Steiner, Educational Psychology

Chris Taber, Economics

David Weimer, Political Science and Public Affairs

Daniel Bolt, Educational Psychology

Markus Brauer, Psychology

Aaron Brower, Social Work

Steven Durlauf, Economics

Felix Elwert, Sociology

Peter Goff, Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

Judith Harackiewicz, Psychology

Charles Kalish, Educational Psychology

David Kaplan, Educational Psychology

Jee-Seon Kim, Educational Psychology

John Logan, Sociology

Claudia Persico, Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

John Karl Scholz, Economics, Dean L& S

Mark Seidenberg, Psychology and Neuroscience

Geoffrey Wallace, Public Affairs and Economics

John Witte, Political Science (Emeritus)

