

2007-2008 MELLON FACULTY- STUDENT RESEARCH GRANT

2007-2008 STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANT

“Active Learning: An Effective Technique?”

The Center for Undergraduate Research (CUR): What are your research interests?

Renata Alford (RA): My research interests include, but are not limited to, multicultural counseling, motivation, encouragement, empowerment, self-esteem and body image, and teaching.

CUR: What research have you done in the past?

RA: I have done research on self esteem and body image as well as the influence of Hip-Hop on young African-American Consumers.

CUR: How did you find out about working on this research proposal?

RA: I asked around about different research opportunities and The Office of Graduate Placement mentioned the Center for Undergraduate Research.

CUR: What is your contribution to this research project?

RA: I began by creating an annotated bibliography and did a review of relevant research. After this I then entered data and then analyzed that data with Dr. Schulte. Following this, I attended and presented our project at the South Eastern Teaching of Psychology in Atlanta, GA and at Xavier’s Festival of Scholars.

CUR: How does this proposal fit into your social and academic schedule?

RA: It was challenging at times because I was applying to graduate school taking classes and working on another research project. However, I accepted the challenge and I had a great learning experience. I had extra time in between classes so that helped me fit research into my schedule

CUR: What has been your favorite part about working on this project?

RA: I believe my favorite part was presenting the research at the conference. I was very encouraged to see so many teachers who were passionate about the facilitation of knowledge for their students. It was amazing to see some of the creative ways they taught their class.



RENATA ALFORD

CLASSIFICATION	SENIOR
AGE	22
MAJOR & MINOR	BIOLOGY PSYCHOLOGY & SPANISH (CHEMISTRY)
HOMETOWN	KANKAKEE, IL

RA: Not only was it encouraging to know that so many teachers were trying their best, but to see the more “human” down to earth side of them was very exciting. Many times college students see their teachers as fire breathing dragons who make us do work just for the sake of making us suffer. I never actually thought about how much time and effort needs to be put into one lecture or class activity.

CUR: Will this proposal assist you in your future academic and/or career plans?

RA: This proposal and working on this project have definitely prepared me for graduate level work. With the experience I have gained in data analysis, making a literature review, and presenting at conferences, I know that it helped prepare me for my work in graduate school in pursuit of a Ph.D.

CUR: Do you have any recommendations for future student research assistants who will work in a similar field?

RA: Students should pace themselves with their work, and set reasonable deadlines for turning in work. They should allow structured flexibility throughout the work process by planning with the professor what they are going to do and completing those said goals. I enjoyed working with Dr. Schulte because she was relaxed and patient. We worked together, got everything that we needed done accomplished, and then went on about our days. I also recommend that students attend and present at a conference similar to the one I presented at. Students who extend themselves beyond their comfort level may surprise themselves at how easy it is to present their research. As long as students have a good understanding of what they did throughout the research process (data analysis) and what they learned from reading other journal articles, they have an excellent opportunity to leave the research project with a sense of accomplishment better prepared for graduate study.