Undergraduate Spotlight

For Alicia (Yi Jun) Low, the Children’s School is where she unearthed a new passion. Alicia never truly realized how much she adores children until her internship with Dr. Sharon Carver's Practicum in Child Development class. This is her second semester with the Blue and Red Room friends, and she says, "Being around these bright and energetic children never fails to make me smile!" She is especially excited about the science experiments in this month's Water unit, where the children are asked to create hypotheses, observe outcomes, and form conclusions.

Alicia has had a long-standing interest in child development and infant language acquisition. In the past, she was actively involved in her church’s Sunday School and day camps, and she has worked as a research assistant in Dr. Erik Thiessen’s Infant Language and Learning Lab. This semester, Alicia sought opportunities to get more involved in education. She is mentoring high school students for a community literacy project as part of a class, and she will be working with Guatemalan children for a week with the “Alternative Spring Break” group.

Alicia is a senior and will graduate this coming May with degrees in linguistics and psychology (concentration in cognitive neuroscience). She will be heading back to Malaysia, where she will participate in a 6-week internship program with Voice of the Children or Teach for Malaysia. She hopes to pursue a career in education policy or education research.

Undergraduate Researchers in Training

Dr. Anna Fisher’s two sections of Developmental Research Methods students are preparing their final projects for the semester. Though the research protocols are still being developed, the students are planning to study the impact of many educationally relevant strategies on children’s performance on typical early childhood tasks. For example, groups are studying whether working alone vs. working with a partner yields better performance on puzzles, whether children modulate the speed of their motor performance based on the pace of background music, whether comprehension prompting increases children’s understanding of different perspectives, whether using familiar task materials makes it easier for children to imagine viewpoints counter to their own, whether verbal prompting increases sharing behavior, whether giving synonyms or examples helps children learn vocabulary in context better, and whether physically pointing to items in a story helps with recall. Families whose children participate will receive fuller parent descriptions via the child’s backpack. Everyone can read the study descriptions on the Research Bulletin Board outside the Children’s School Office. What an interesting set of developmental psychology topics!