**Student Expertise in Specialized Areas of Cognitive and Information Science**

**Summary of Survey Data**

**July 2014**

**Respondent Information**

3 out of 4 eligible students responded to the survey request. Of those respondents, one was a third year student, one was a fourth year student, and one was a fifth year student.

**Chosen field(s) of study within CIS:**

* Cognitive linguistics, numerical cognition, and language evolution
* Human search and law behaviors
* Interactive memory foraging, interpersonal alignment and synchrony, memory processes

**The factors that most influenced students’ choice of specialization:**

* 3 of 3 respondents said faculty research projects/Interaction with faculty
* 1 of 3 respondents said the Integrative review papers
* 1 of 3 respondents said Personal interests
* 1 of 3 respondents said Conferences

**Student Perception of their Level of Expertise:**

*Students were asked to rate their level of expertise on the following scale:* ***Expert/Advanced/Intermediate/Introductory****, where Introductory equated to the level of knowledge of a Bachelor's degree recipient and Expert equated to the level of knowledge of a Post-Doctoral Scholar/Assistant Professor.*

* 2 respondents rated their current level of expertise in their specializations as **Advanced**.
* 1 respondent rated their current level of expertise in their specializations as **Expert**.
* 2 respondents rated their level of expertise upon entering the program as **Introductory**.
* 1 respondent rated their level of expertise upon entering the program as **Intermediate**.

**Questions relating to the Integrative Review Paper**

**How did the IRP help narrow your research focus?**

1. Encourages very thorough literature review.
2. Helps to contextualize the research questions within the broader field.
3. Helps to identify open questions in the literature that can be answered as part of the dissertation.
4. Helps to identify the unifying theme or “cohesive vision” across many ideas.

**Suggestions for improving the IRP process:**

All three respondents noted that the process of writing the IRP was extremely useful and that there wasn’t much they would change. Being required to look at so many approaches was useful considering the breadth of certain specializations.

Suggestions for improvement were:

1. Receiving more extensive written feedback on the paper, including specific comments and edits on paragraphs and the ideas of the paper.
2. More flexibility in topic selection.
3. Requiring (or stressing more emphatically) that the topics of the papers have to be synthesized so that the paper can compare and contrast the contributions of the different approaches.

**How did the IRP affect your level of expertise in your area of specialization?**

1. Requires an extensive amount of reading and reference checking to be able to support claims, enabling you to feel more certain about what you know.
2. Became a source for publication submissions.
3. Improved knowledge of the literature, especially competing theories.
4. Allows you to explore your own ideas in a relatively unconstrained format, rather than working in the language and form constraints of publications and conference papers.

**Are there any other activities, resources, or products that could accompany the IRP to help with specialization at this stage?**

1 respondent suggested that examples or more thoroughly documented expectations of the final product would be helpful.