FIRST DRAFT

Select a topic, find a mentor, collect data, perform an analysis. These are just a few steps that shape the entire foundation of Intel, more commonly known as the SUNY Albany research program. Commencing as a sophomore, I had three years to complete a series of twelve clear checkpoints, a deceivingly "straightforward" task.

Prior to my official induction into the program, I had the good fortune of knowing exactly what it was that I wanted to study: the fabrication of false memories.

As a fourteen year old, I entered into a vast field of professional scientists, pursuing dozens of potential "mentors" through emails and phone calls. After months of searching, I acquired my current mentor Dr. Daniel Greenberg from the College of Charleston.

With his assistance, I ~~have~~ constructed two novel projects studying both the progression of memory in adults, as well as the formation of memories in infants. From my mentor's lab, I tested old and young participants alike, recording the amount and types of remembrances they could evoke, given set categories, under a designated period of time. My findings have challenged prior theories of memory degradation, due to the impressive ability of adults above age 65 to recover far more "memoirs" than younger adults. Rather than age hindering recollection, the array of memories and experiences throughout one's life may in fact aid the process.

Following the completion of this experiment, I have progressed towards the exploration of the factors of memory formation in infants, a project I am currently in the midst of.

Intel has meant going door to door to collect consent forms for my experiment. It has meant 147 personal interviews and surveys, and the unique memories and stories they entailed. It has meant the analysis of thousands of numbers, the conclusions that were drawn from them, and the proud presentations that followed.

It has meant seeing a problem, and finding a new solution. More so, it has meant thinking, learning, and creating in new ways I would have never known before.

FINAL DRAFT

Select a topic, find a mentor, collect data, conduct an analysis. These are several of the dozen steps that shape the foundation of SUNY Albany Research Program, more commonly known as Intel. The guidelines for Intel are deceivingly clear. While the program initially appeared to be a series of formulaic procedures, my experience proved it to be much more than that. These benchmarks did not predict the dozens of door-to-door visits I would have to make, nor the perseverance I would need to continue these attempts. They did not mention the 147 personal interviews and surveys, or the bonds I would consequently form with my participants. Moreover, these simple guidelines did not foretell the immense personal growth I would ultimately achieve.

Prior to my official induction into the program, I was already dedicated to a set field of study: the fabrication of false memories. I was just fourteen when I began my first year of Intel. I ventured into a vast field of professional scientists, pursuing dozens of potential mentors through emails and phone calls. After months of searching, I finally

acquired my current mentor Dr. Daniel Greenberg from the College of Charleston. With his online assistance, I constructed two original projects studying the progression of memory in adults and the formation of memories in infants.

During a summer spent in my mentor's lab, I was able to test both young and old participants and record their personal memories. My weeks of data collection resulted in new scientific theories, as well as unexpected connections. As part of the survey, participants were asked to recount their most vivid memory. Their intimate responses included a range of accounts: war memories, journeys to the Middle East, job interviews, or the vivid narration of a grandchild's first steps. From my standardized surveys, I was allowed incredible insight into the lives of my participants, turning data tables into substance, and giving dimension to what were once just statistics. While I had entered Intel to evaluate prior theories of memory degradation and formulate my own conclusions, I had not anticipated the stories, relationships, and personal growth that my investigations would yield.