



# Researching creativity-enhancement in the USA: The Fulbright Experience

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**elte | ppk**

Eötvös Loránd University  
Faculty of Education and Psychology  
Institute of Education



# Overview

- Deciding to apply
- Finding the right people and place
- The application process
- After acceptance
- At UConn
- Living in the United States
- Once a Fulbrighter, always a Fulbrighter
- Major takeaways





# Deciding to apply

## My background in 2017

3<sup>rd</sup> year PhD student at the Institute of Education, secondary school teacher and teacher trainer

Research topic: Fostering creativity with technology across the secondary curriculum: A case study research of expert teachers' beliefs and practices

## Motivation to apply

Few Hungarian researchers studying creativity in education, limited technology resources in Hungarian schools

Could bring a new perspective to an American context

Could use the knowledge and experience gained through the grant in my work as a teacher and researcher

# Deciding to apply

## Inspiration for applying

- Encouragement from friends who were studying and working as researchers at US universities
- Fulbright Hungary Info Sessions
- Conference of the Returned





# Choosing the right people and place

## Why the University of Connecticut (UConn)?

### Neag School of Education

Ranked among the top 20 public and top 30 graduate schools of education in the US and in the top 15 public in Educational Psychology in 2017 (not Ivy League)



Renzulli Center for Creativity,  
Gifted Education, and  
Talent Development



Joseph Renzulli

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# The application process

## 1st Round (May, 2017)

CV

Personal statement

Research Proposal

Letter of invitation

Letters of recommendation

Language Certificate (TOEFL short version for  
VSRs)

Transcripts (MA & PhD)

## 2nd Round (June, 2017)

Interview



**FULBRIGHT**  
Hungary





# The application process

## Letter of invitation

### What worked for me

- drafted the research proposal and my personal statement first
- short letter of introduction: who I am, my research interests and how they connect to the professors' work, what I propose that we could do together
- instead of sending attachments: website with application and links
- personalized letters of introduction to more researchers
- sent emails twice

# ENIKO ORSOLYA BERECHKI

FULBRIGHT VISTING STUDENT RESEARCHER APPLICATION

[ABOUT](#) • [PERSONAL STATEMENT](#) • [RESEARCH OBJECTIVES](#) • [CV](#) • [PUBLICATIONS](#) • [COURSES TAUGHT](#) • [CONTACT](#)

## ABOUT

I am a doctoral student at the Faculty of Education and Psychology at ELTE University in Budapest, Hungary where I also work as an instructor in teacher training and as an EFL teacher in a secondary school. I am currently a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the University of Connecticut, Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education, and Talent Development and am working together with Professor Joe Renzulli, my academic advisor, to extend my graduate research on creativity and education. This homepage was created to describe my Fulbright project, as well as present my professional background and personal motivation.

“That’s the great secret of creativity. You treat ideas like cats: you make them follow you.”



# The application process

## Personal Statement

- most difficult part of the application process
- a personal narrative explaining why you are the perfect candidate for program/grant you are applying to
- several samples and books online
- writing workshops organized by Fulbright Hungary

## Research Proposal

- not too technical
- explain why it can be conducted only in the US
- highlight the benefits for research and education both in the USA and Hungary

### PERSONAL STATEMENT

#### NURTURING CREATIVITY IN ICT-INTEGRATED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS ACROSS THE HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

We had been sitting bent over the English workbook for quite some time, when 8-year old Orsi suddenly turned towards me. She looked me straight in the eye and said:

*'I WON'T DO THIS EXERCISE ANY LONGER. IT'S BORING!'*

Then, with a roguish smile she continued 'Let's play something instead!'. My first thought was 'Ok, you're right, the exercise is indeed boring', but then it struck me 'I am the teacher, I have responsibilities, I have material to cover.' I remember talking her into filling in some more blanks with the appropriate forms of the verb to be, promising that we would play afterwards. I was 12 back then, Orsi's private tutor in English. I felt that what had happened that day was not right. Orsi's struggle with the tedious task was all I could think about on my way home after the lesson. I felt horrible and knew one thing for sure: I won't let her down again. I will find a way for her to enjoy learning English and excel in her schoolwork.



*25 YEARS LATER FINDING WAYS TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN MEANINGFUL LEARNING THAT HELPS THEM SUCCEED IN LIFE IS STILL AN OVERARCHING GOAL DRIVING MY PROFESSIONAL PURSUIT BOTH AS A TEACHER AND A RESEARCHER.*

# The application process

## Interview

- both Hungarian and American researchers from the field of educational psychology
- Qs on project feasibility and how the US and Hungary can benefit from sending me to the States



# After acceptance

Acceptance notification (October, 2017)

Preparation (October, 2017 – September, 2018)

- Whole process guided by Fulbright Hungary (family): visa, health insurance, plane tickets etc.
- Tips on living in the US and how find to accommodation
- Opportunities to meet Fulbright alumni from the area you travel to

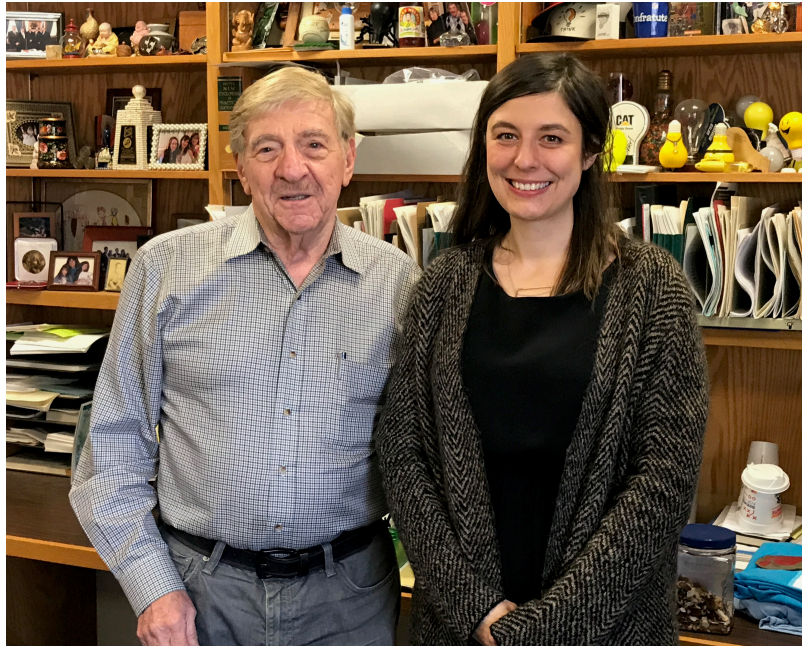
Note: VSR grants are usually for 5 months, but it is possible to apply for additional grants!

At Uconn (7 months)





# At UConn





# At UConn

## Courses audited

Quantitative Research Methods 1, 2  
Structural Equation Modelling

Introduction Into the Science of Creativity  
The Psychology of Teaching and Learning  
Educational Technology

Doctoral Seminar on Intelligence  
Doctoral Seminar on Academic Job Applications

## Info & interesting facts

- One course : 4 hours per week
- Practice based, hands-on approaches even in lectures
- Lots of homework assignments
- Immediate and thorough feedback to students' work
- Take home exams

EPSP5607: Quantitative Methods in Education II  
Assignment 4  
Due Date: February 12, Monday NOON

NAME: Enikő BERECKZI

If you can do this assignment ahead of the due date, please do so. It will help me grade the assignments before class on Tuesday.

1. An Exercise Science researcher wants to study the relationship between exercise and depression. She designs four types of exercise regimens:
- Regimen 1 (No Exercise)
  - Regimen 2 (15 mins of mild exercise)
  - Regimen 3 (15 mins of vigorous exercise)
  - Regimen 4 (30 mins of vigorous exercise)

She obtains volunteers who suffer from "severe" depression (those who have scores between 19-32 on the Hamilton Depression Scale) and who are physically able to do exercise, and assigns them to one of the four exercise regimens. At the end of a certain period, she administers the Depression Scale inventory and obtains depression scores (y).

Exercise Regimen			
1	2	3	4
19	10	10	10
9	5	5	4
8	7	5	3
9	8	4	3
9	4	3	2

The depression scores are in red!!! Low scores correspond to low level of depression. Pretend that I have recalculated the depression scores to make data entry easy for you. Type in your answers below each question - and don't use red color!! I need that color!!!

- a. What design is this?  
Quasi-experimental non-equivalent groups - One-Way ANOVA (1 point)
- b. What is the research question? (1 point)  
Does physical exercise influence depression in patients suffering from severe depression?
- c. What are the null and alternate hypotheses? (2 points)  
 $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$   
Severe depression patients' mean depression levels are equal across all four programs.  
 $H_1$ : not all the  $\mu_i$  are equal  
There is at least one difference among severe depression patients' mean depression levels across the four programs.

g. Analyze the data- what is the value of the test statistic? Does it fall in the region of rejection or non-rejection? (2 points)

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Chi-Square	10.000 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
Continuity Correction	9.947 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	10.024 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
Fisher's Linear Association	10.024 <sup>a</sup>	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	100		

- $\chi^2_{(3)} = 57.561 > \chi^2_{critical} = 21.82606982$  (It falls in the region of rejection)
- b. What is the probability of obtaining this or larger value of the test statistic? What do you call this probability? Use EXCEL to get the exact value of this probability. (2 points)

1. Do you reject/reject the null hypothesis? Give reasons using the information in part (g) and part (b). State your conclusions. (3 points)

Since the observed  $\chi^2(57.561) > \chi^2_{critical}(21.826)$ , we reject  $H_0$  at alpha=.05

OR

Since the p-value (p=.000000042587307) is less than .05 (or 0.01), we reject  $H_0$  at alpha=.05 (or 0.01).

- g. Determine the strength of the relationship between level of exercise and depression. How strong is the relationship between exercise and depression? (2 points)

Symmetric Measures

	Value	Asymptotic Significance
Nominal by Ordinal	.667	.000
Ordinal by Ordinal	.667	.000
N of Valid Cases	100	

There is a significant moderate relationship ( $C=.267$ ) between people's exercise level and depression level at alpha=.05 (p=.000).

- k. Compare the two approaches (problem 1 and problem 2) for investigating if exercise has any effect on reducing depression, and state the strengths and weaknesses of the two approaches. Which approach do you prefer and why? (3 points)

Based on the approach in Problem 1 (random assignment, random selection assumed) we can make causal inference that the three types of regimens (15 min of mild exercise, 15 min of rigorous exercise and 30 min of rigorous exercise) cause reduction in

- d. No mention of random assignment or random selection is mentioned. Are these needed? Is random assignment possible in this case? (don't just answer Yes/No. Explain why these are needed if they are needed. Then assume that the researcher has incorporated your recommendations into the study. (3 points)

Random assignment is needed if we want to be able to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of treatments. Without assigning subjects randomly to the four groups, even if we find variations among the groups, we will not be able to conclude that these variations were due to the programs. Any effect of the programs might very well be the result of the groups being different at the outset of the programs, rather than different because of the programs.

Random assignment is possible in this case: the recruited patients with severe depression can be assigned randomly to the four groups. Results should, however, be treated with caution, even if groups are formed randomly if we cannot control what patients do in their lives: they might exercise at home.

By randomly selecting participants from the population of patients with severe depression, researchers could make inference to the population with regards to which program would be most effective for them.

I think random selection could be possible in such studies, however, in that case certain adjustments would be needed: "people with severe depression" should be changed to "people identified with severe depression" in the research question and conclusions for example, since many depression patients might go unidentified and thus could not be selected for the study from a database. Secondly, maybe certain other limitations should be applied, e.g. geographical as identified severely depressed people from US might differ from severely depressed people from Hungary (e.g. in lifestyle) etc. This should also be reflected in the research question or conclusions.

- e. Display the table of means and the ANOVA table (3 points)

Descriptive Statistics

Regimen	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
1	2.0000	2.16024	4
2	6.0000	1.41421	4
3	6.0000	1.41421	4
4	2.0000	2.16024	4
Total	6.0000	2.24271	16

ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.000 <sup>a</sup>	3	4.000	1.923	.158
Within Groups	24.000	12	2.000		
Total	36.000	15			

Dependent Variable: Depression

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	12.000 <sup>a</sup>	3	4.000	1.923	.158
Corrected Total	36.000	15			
Total	72.000	16			

Dependent Variable: Depression

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	12.000 <sup>a</sup>	3	4.000	1.923	.158
Corrected Total	36.000	15			
Total	72.000	16			

Based on the second approach in Problem 1, we can conclude that there is a moderate relationship between depression and exercise. There is, however, no evidence to support that exercise reduces depression. The Chi-square test can only tell us whether two variables are related to one another, but it does not imply that one variable has causal effect on the other.

I prefer approach one, since it provides stronger evidence for the effect of certain types of exercise on depression. It also produces more nuanced results (we know exactly what the regimens consist of).

3. The researcher in Problem 1 replicated her study with another group of subjects and obtained the following results:
- The means of the four exercise groups (none, low, medium, high) were found to be 10, 6, 5, and 3 respectively. The sample sizes in each group was 10, 6, 5, and 8 respectively. A partial ANOVA table is given below:

Fill in the ANOVA table.

SOURCE	df	SS	MS	F
Exercise Regimen	3	4.0	1.333	19.417
Error	28	1.0	.036	4
Total	31	5.0		

- (a) Complete the ANOVA table above (3 points)
- (b) What is the region of rejection? What is the p-value? (2 points)

The critical value for  $F_{(3,28)} = 2.991$ , and so the region of rejection is  $F_{(3,28)} > 2.991$  (red)

p-value for  $F(19.417; 3; 28)$  is 0.000010285.

- (c) State the null hypothesis and your decision to reject/reject the null hypothesis (2 points)

$H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3 = \mu_4$   
Severe depression patients' mean depression levels are equal across all four programs.  
 $H_1$ : not all the  $\mu_i$  are equal  
There is at least one difference among severe depression patients' mean depression levels across the four programs.

Since p-value (0.000010285) < .05, we reject  $H_0$  at alpha=.05 and we conclude, that the means are unequal.

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	12.000 <sup>a</sup>	3	4.000	19.230	.000
Corrected Total	36.000	15			
Total	72.000	16			

- f. Compute the p-value using EXCEL (Assume alpha = .05). What is your conclusion to reject/reject the null hypothesis? Explain your reason. (3 points)
- p-value for  $F_{(3,28)}$  is 0.000059545 < .05

Since the p-value (.000) is less than .05 we reject  $H_0$  at alpha=.05 and we can conclude, that the means are unequal.

- g. State your conclusions. Can you conclude that exercise reduces depression? (Don't complete that the sample size is too small!!! I am giving you a small data set so you can enter the data easily. Also, if the null hypothesis is rejected, then the sample size is adequate. You should complete about power and sample size only if you don't reject the null hypothesis). (3 points)

Assuming that the researcher has incorporated the recommendations into the study, and based on the ANOVA, we can conclude that exercise (or the lack of it) has a significant effect on those American patients' depression who were diagnosed with severe depression, however, we cannot make any recommendations about which regimen could be more effective at this point. Also, we would advise to treat our conclusions with caution since we could not control what patients did in their free-time (exercise or not).

- h. You can make a recommendation about the level of exercise and depression. Using SPSS or, run the Tukey post hoc comparisons. Using this information, make a recommendation about the level of exercise and reduction of depression. (3 points)

Since the p-value (.000) is less than .05 we reject  $H_0$  at alpha=.05 and we can conclude, that the means are unequal.

- (i) What are the sample sizes in these two groups? (3 points)

Since the p-value (.000) is less than .05 we reject  $H_0$  at alpha=.05 and we can conclude, that the means are unequal.

- (ii) Compute the SE. (2 points)

SE =  $\sqrt{\frac{MS_{error}}{n}} = \sqrt{\frac{1.0}{10}} = 0.316$

- (iii) What is the pooled variance from the ANOVA table above? (1 point)

$MS_{error} = 1.0$

- (iv) There are 8 possible pairwise comparisons that you may want to do. You want the overall alpha to be .05. What is the critical value (CV) for constructing the confidence interval, controlling for the 8 confidence intervals? What distribution will you use, the Z or the t-distribution to find this critical value? Use EXCEL to determine the critical value. (3 points)

alpha=.05/8=.00625; 2-tailed; t-distribution; two-tailed

Critical Value: t-value=2.864933846

- (v) Construct the confidence interval using your conclusion; is there a difference in the means between exercise regimen 1 and 2? Can you recommend that exercise regimen be used to reduce depression? (3 points)

Family-wise Conf. Int. 95%  
Individual Conf. Int.: 99.17% CI:  $(x_1 - x_2) \pm 10.008333; 25$ ; two-tailed - SE

99.17% CI: [-6.26651, 2.86518]

95% CI: [-4.47922, 4.47922]

Since 99.17% CI does not contain 0 (the estimate of  $H_0$ ), we fail to reject  $H_0$  at individual  $\alpha=.008333$  and conclude that the means of Regimen 1 and Regimen 2 are not equal and that Regimen 2 caused significantly lower depression levels (random selection, random assignment assumed). We can recommend Regimen 2 to be used to reduce depression in the population from which our sample is from - with some caution though, since we could not control exactly our conditions (we do not know what participants did in their free-time).

- (e) Repeat part (d) to compare regimens 2 with 3 and 3 with 4. State your conclusions. (4 points)

Comparison of Regimen 2 and Regimen 3

Post Hoc Test

Regimen

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Depression	Regimen	Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval
Tukey HSD					
1	2	4.0000	.86603	.000	2.2768 5.7232
1	3	4.0000	.86603	.000	2.2768 5.7232
1	4	4.0000	.86603	.000	2.2768 5.7232
2	3	0.0000	.86603	.999	-1.2232 1.2232
2	4	0.0000	.86603	.999	-1.2232 1.2232
3	4	0.0000	.86603	.999	-1.2232 1.2232

Based on observed means

The error term is Mean Squared Error = 1.000

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Post hoc analysis were conducted given the statistically significant ANOVA F test. Tukey HSD tests were conducted on all possible pairwise contrasts. The following pairs of groups were found to be statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ):

- Regimen 1 (no exercise;  $M = 9$ ;  $SD = 3.16585$ ) and Regimen 2 (15 min of mild exercise;  $M = 6$ ;  $SD = 1.58114$ )
- Regimen 1 (no exercise;  $M = 9$ ;  $SD = 3.16585$ ) and Regimen 3 (15 min of rigorous exercise;  $M = 5$ ;  $SD = 2.23607$ )
- Regimen 1 (no exercise;  $M = 9$ ;  $SD = 3.16585$ ) and Regimen 4 (30 min of rigorous exercise;  $M = 3$ ;  $SD = 3.16585$ )
- Regimen 2 (15 min of mild exercise;  $M = 6$ ;  $SD = 1.58114$ ) and Regimen 4 (30 min of rigorous exercise;  $M = 3$ ;  $SD = 3.16585$ )
- Regimen 3 (15 min of rigorous exercise;  $M = 5$ ;  $SD = 2.23607$ ) and Regimen 4 (30 min of rigorous exercise;  $M = 3$ ;  $SD = 3.16585$ )

In other words, American patients diagnosed with severe depression who performed no exercise had significantly higher depression scores than those patients who performed some exercise in the other groups. Among the three exercise groups, patients who performed 30 minutes of rigorous exercise (Regimen 4) had significantly lower depression scores than patients in the other two exercise groups (Regimen 2 and 3), therefore, I would recommend the implementation of Regimen 4 among American patients identified with a severe form of depression (random assignment, random selection assumed). Also, I would advise to treat the conclusions with caution since we

Comparison of Regimen 2 and Regimen 4

Family-wise Conf. Int. 95%  
Individual Conf. Int.: 99.17% CI:  $(x_1 - x_2) \pm 10.008333; 25$ ; two-tailed - SE

99.17% CI: [-6.26651, 2.86518]

95% CI: [-4.47922, 4.47922]

Since the 99.17% CI contains 0 (the estimate of  $H_0$ ), we fail to reject  $H_0$  at individual  $\alpha=.008333$  and conclude that the means of Regimen 2 and Regimen 4 are not significantly different at alpha=.008333 level. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that Regimen 2 is significantly more effective than Regimen 3 to reduce depression in patients diagnosed with severe depression.

Comparison of Regimen 3 and Regimen 4

Family-wise Conf. Int. 95%  
Individual Conf. Int.: 99.17% CI:  $(x_1 - x_2) \pm 10.008333; 25$ ; two-tailed - SE

99.17% CI: [-6.26651, 2.86518]

95% CI: [-4.47922, 4.47922]

Since the 99.17% CI contains 0 (the estimate of  $H_0$ ), we fail to reject  $H_0$  at individual  $\alpha=.008333$  and conclude that the means of Regimen 3 and Regimen 4 are not significantly different at alpha=.008333 level. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that Regimen 4 is significantly more effective than Regimen 3 to reduce depression in patients diagnosed with severe depression.

Comparison of Regimen 2 and Regimen 3

Family-wise Conf. Int. 95%  
Individual Conf. Int.: 99.17% CI:  $(x_1 - x_2) \pm 10.008333; 25$ ; two-tailed - SE

99.17% CI: [-6.26651, 2.86518]

95% CI: [-4.47922, 4.47922]

Since the 99.17% CI contains 0 (the estimate of  $H_0$ ), we fail to reject  $H_0$  at individual  $\alpha=.008333$  and conclude that the means of Regimen 2 and Regimen 3 are not significantly different at alpha=.008333 level. There is insufficient evidence to conclude that Regimen 3 is significantly more effective than Regimen 2 to reduce depression in patients diagnosed with severe depression.

could not control what the patients did in their free-time (whether they did further exercise or not).

- 25 points
2. Another Exercise Science researcher who wants to examine the relationship between depression and exercise, sends out a questionnaire to a random sample of 1000 people in the country. In the questionnaire, he asks each respondent to indicate their depression level as: None, Low, Medium, High. Very High (these are the categories used in the Hamilton Depression Scale). He also asks them about their exercise habits and asks them to indicate their level of exercise as: None, Low, Medium, and High using the number of minutes of exercise/day. Assume the exercise regimens in problem 1). He tallies the responses to the two questions and records the numbers of respondents with respect to depression level and exercise level.

Exercise level	Depression level			
	1	2	3	4
None	15	25	30	55
Low	10	15	20	45
Medium	5	10	15	35
High	5	10	15	35

The number of people with various exercise and depression levels.

- a. What do the entries in each cell denote? (1 point)
- b. What is the difference, if any, between this data and the data in problem 1? (2 points)

In the previous problem, the dependent variable was a continuous, ratio variable, whereas here we have two categorical nominal variables: exercise level and depression level.

- c. What are the null and alternate hypotheses? (2 points)
- $H_0$ : There is no relationship between people's exercise and depression level.  
 $H_1$ : There is a relationship between people's exercise and depression level.

- d. How would you analyze this data? (1 point)

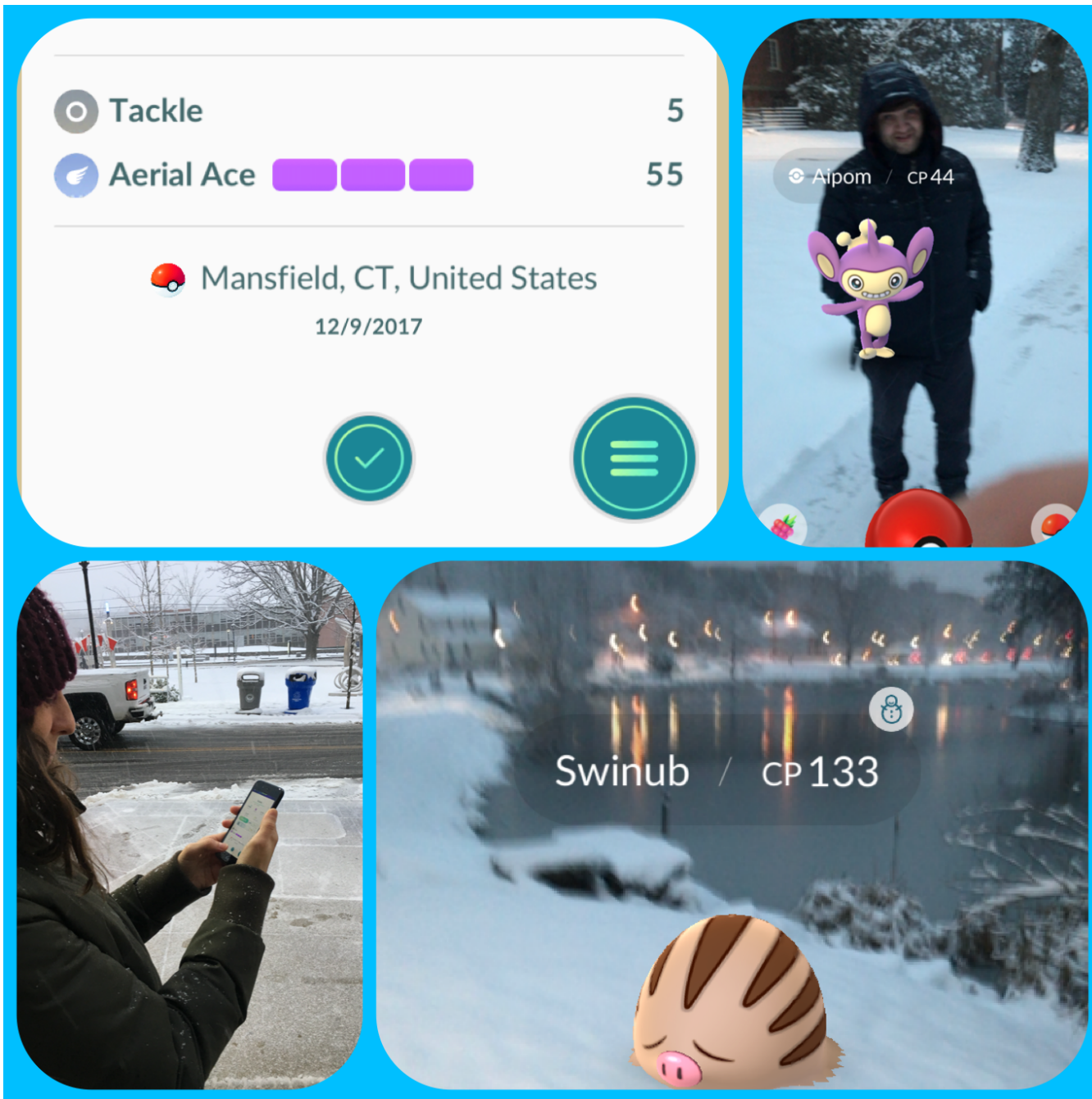
I would perform a Chi-Square Test of Association to determine whether the two variables are related to each other.

- e. What is the test statistic? (1 point)
- Pearson Chi-Square (3)

f. What is the region of rejection? (2 points)

Since the critical value at alpha level .05 is  $\chi^2_{critical} = 21.82606982$ , the region of rejection is  $\chi^2_{(3)} > 21.82606982$ .





# At UConn

## Research

Human subject research with vulnerable population (adolescents)

1. Research Ethics and Compliance Training
2. Ethical Approval from the IRB (Institutional Review Board)

## New opportunities

- collaborated on a creativity program evaluation
- conducted data analysis in Australian Teacher Creativity research

## Info & interesting facts

- Online Research Ethics and Compliance training with lots of modules
- IRB document very detailed and long (60 pages)
- IRB process is very slow (3 months)
- difficult, but not impossible to conduct research in US schools



# Everyday life in Storrs, CT



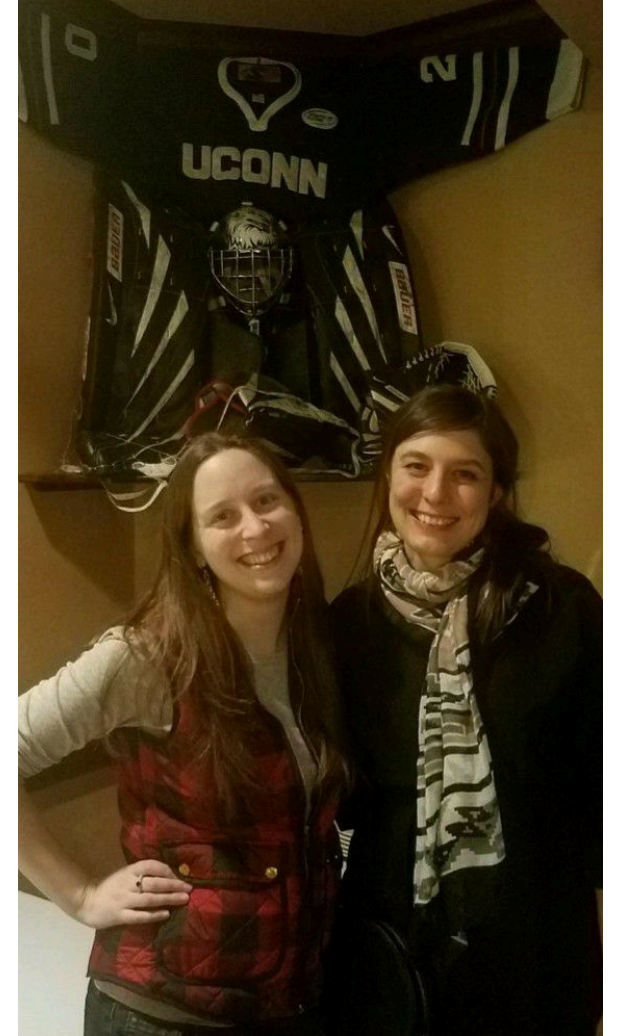


# Everyday life in Storrs, CT





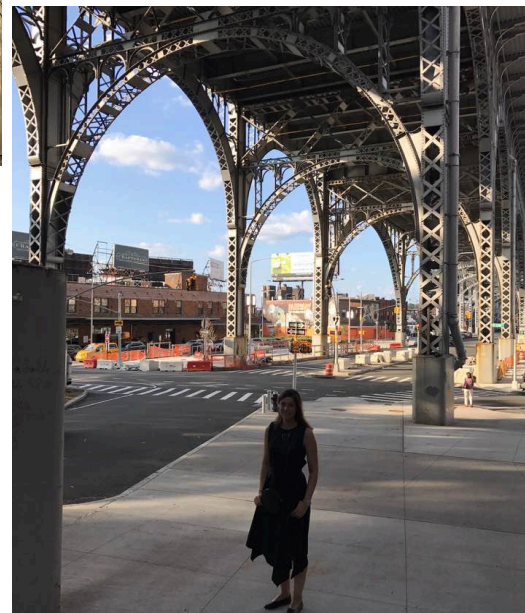
# Making new friends





# Discovering the USA

Trips in the Northeast: New York (NY), Hartford (CT), New Haven (CT), Boston (MA), Plymouth (MA), Newport (RI)





# Discovering the USA

Trips further away (in the grace period): Las Vegas, the Grand Canon, Phoenix and Sedona





# Major takeaways

## Professional

- new knowledge about and through education/research in the USA
- two ongoing joint research projects, one publication on its way
- Creativity and Talent Development Conference in Hungary

## Personal

- mentors, role models
- friends

## Cultural

- work ethics, optimism, determination, collaboration skills
- watching American films from an insider's perspective 😊

# Once a Fulbrighter, always a Fulbrighter



Thank you!  
Questions?