

**THOMAS POLLEY**  
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## DUKE UNIVERSITY

Placement Director: Chris Timmins

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### **Undergraduate Studies:**

B.A. Physics, University of California, Berkeley, 2010

### **Graduate Studies:**

Duke University, 2013 to present

Ph.D. Candidate in Economics

Thesis Title: “*Essays on Human Capital Development*”

Expected Completion Date: May 2019

### **References:**

Professor Erica M. Field  
Economics Department  
Field.Erica@duke.edu

Professor Duncan Thomas  
Economics Department  
DThomas@econ.duke.edu

Professor Robert Garlick  
Economics Department  
Robert.Garlick@duke.edu

### **Teaching and Research Fields:**

Primary: Applied Microeconomics, Development, Education

Secondary: Psychology and Economics

### **Teaching Experience:**

2017-2018	Mentor to Bass Connections Undergraduate Researchers
Spring, 2018	Intro. to Microeconomics, Duke, teaching assistant to Prof. Chelsea Garber
Summer, 2018	Intro to Economic Principles, Instructor
Fall, 2018	Intro to Economic Principles, teaching assistant to Prof. Connel Fullenkamp

### **Research Experience and Other Employment:**

2009	UC Berkeley Economics, Research Assistant to Professor Edward Miguel
2010 - 2013	Innovations for Poverty Action, Project Associate International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh, Elective Fellow UC Berkeley Haas, Research Assistant to Professor David Levine

**Fellowships and Grants:**

- 2014/16 Duke Graduate School Summer Research Fellowship: \$5,500 per summer
- 2016 Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab Post-Primary Education Initiative: \$50,000.
- 2016 Director of Graduate Studies Grant: \$2,500
- 2016 Duke Economics Development Travel Grants: \$1,754
- 2017 Bass Connections: Education and Human Development: \$7,900.

**Professional Activities:**

- 2015 IZA/DFID Short Course on Program Evaluation-Bangladesh, Teaching Assistant

**Publications:**

The Pursuit of Balance in Sequential Randomized Trials. *Development Engineering*, 1(1): 12-25, June 2016. (with R. P. Guiteras and D. I. Levine)

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352728515300580>

Disgust, shame and Soapy Water: Tests of Novel Interventions to Promote Safe Water and Hygiene. *Journal of the Association of Environmental and Resource Economists*, 3(2): 321-359, June 2016. (with R. P. Guiteras, S. Luby, K. Khatun-e-Jannat and L. Unicomb)

<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/11b9f9s4>

**Working Papers:**

Credit Constraints, Discounting and Investment in Health: Evidence from Micropayments for Clean Water in Dhaka. February 2016. (With R. P. Guiteras, D. I. Levine and B. Quistorff), *Working paper*

**Research in Progress:**

“Beliefs Matter: Experimental Evidence on Growth Mindset in Bangladesh Schools” ([Job Market Paper](#))

Growth mindset interventions attempt to increase the perceived returns to effort by teaching students that the brain physically grows more powerful while we study. Such interventions have been shown to increase learning, especially among vulnerable populations in the United States but their mechanisms are not thoroughly understood, and they’ve yet to be tested in a developing country setting. I evaluate the impact of a growth mindset intervention in secondary schools in Dhaka using a field experiment designed to isolate the central claim in the literature that the intervention’s impacts are due to changing students’ beliefs about the malleability of intelligence. I do this by including a placebo arm that includes all of the same messaging on the returns to effort but makes no comment on whether the brain actually changes when we learn. I find the intervention increases test scores by 0.12 SD on average and that the impact is heterogeneous across initial effort and gender, with the hardest working students at baseline receiving no impact and with a larger impact on girls than boys. Furthermore I find growth mindset significantly outperforms the placebo and I cannot reject that the placebo had no effect, corroborating theory.