

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

The Fifth Annual
**Graduate Student
Research & Scholarship
Symposium**

April 12, 2013



GRADUATE
STUDENTS
ON THE
ROAD TO
INNOVATION



**Valdosta State University's Graduate School presents
the Fifth Annual Graduate Student Research
and Scholarship Symposium**

April 12, 2013

3:00 - 6:00 p.m. • UC Magnolia Room

- Welcome:** Dr. James LaPlant, Interim Assistant Vice
President for Research and Dean of the
Graduate School
- Opening Remarks:** Dr. William McKinney, President
Dr. Sharon Gravett, Assistant Vice
President for Academic Affairs
- Introduction of Deans:** Dr. James LaPlant
- Special Recognitions:** Dr. James LaPlant
- Enjoy the Posters!**

Refreshments provided by the Association for Graduate Students.



Colleges of Arts and Sciences

Biology

COMPARISON AND IDENTIFICATION OF *KRYPTOLEBIAS MARMORATUS*, *KRYPTOLEBIAS OCELATUS* AND THEIR HYBRID 'GITMO' USING GENE STUDY

Fiifi A. Dadzie

John F. Elder, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Biology

The identification and classification of *Kryptolebias marmoratus* and *Kryptolebias ocelatus* as separate or similar species has been a problem. *K. marmoratus* and *K. ocelatus* belong to the Aplocheilidae family and order CYPRINODONTIFORME. They are both self-fertilizing vertebrates resulting in clonal reproduction suitable for genetic studies. Based on morphological studies, both fishes were thought to be synonymous but recent mitochondrial studies of these fishes suggest otherwise. Though they are known to be self-fertilizing, out crossing has been observed which results in a form of heterozygous offspring. Recently, a viable hybrid (Gitmo) between *K. marmoratus* and *K. ocelatus* was isolated in the VSU aquatic lab. This hybrid questions the species status of these congener fishes. Here we present a comparative genomic study on the Gitmo hybrid and its parents. A phylogenetic analysis of these sequences among loci commonly used in standard systematic studies will be employed. Analysis of ribosomal RNA and the mitochondrial COI gene should help resolve the questionable relationships among these killifishes.

TOXICITY OF ZNO NANOPARTICLES TO THE COPEPOD, *ACARTIA TONSA*, EXPOSED THROUGH A PHYTOPLANKTON DIET

Tayler A. Jarvis

Gretchen K. Bielmyer, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Biology

ZnO nanoparticles (NPs) are being increasingly utilized in applications and are commonly discharged into aquatic environments, increasing exposure and potentially impacting aquatic organisms. We tested whether feeding on ZnO-exposed phytoplankton could cause toxic effects in the copepod, *Acartia tonsa*. We exposed the diatom *Thalassiosira weissflogii* to ZnO NPs for 7 d and measured growth, zinc accumulation, and zinc distribution within the algal cells. *T. weissflogii* cultured with ZnO NPs was fed to *A. tonsa* for 7 d and reproduction and survival were quantified. A growth reduction was observed in *T. weissflogii* exposed to ZnO NPs. Zinc accumulation in the algae occurred with the majority of the zinc partitioning into the cell wall fraction. Feeding on ZnO-exposed diatoms led to a decrease in copepod survival and reproduction. These results provide evidence of trophic transfer of nanomaterials within a marine plankton community leading to the reduction in performance of a marine grazer.

STUDY OF THE GENE REGULATORY NETWORK FOR SEA URCHIN PIGMENT CELLS DEVELOPMENT

Antonio C. Ortiz

Cristina Calestani, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Biology

Embryogenesis is a remarkably dynamic and precisely regulated process, and the exact genetic programming required has not been entirely uncovered. We utilize *Strongylocentrotus purpuratus* to study cell differentiation during embryogenesis. Our objective is to gain further understanding of the gene transcriptional regulation of differentiation genes, using as a model the development of larval pigment cells. We study cis-regulatory elements, more specifically those controlling the expression of the differentiation gene *polyketide synthase* (*pks*). Comparative genomics was performed utilizing the software FamilyRelationsII, MEME, and SANN to predict cis-regulatory modules and putative DNA-binding sites in the -3kb region of the *pks* promoter. From these analyses we selected putative sites to test via site-directed mutagenesis. Moreover, we utilized the Yeast-One-Hybrid system to identify putative transcription factors that bind to the *pks* promoter. As a result, Otx and Eve have been identified and will be confirmed by site-directed mutagenesis and gene knock-down approaches.

BRIDGES AS REFUGIA FOR FISH AND MACROINVERTEBRATE ASSEMBLAGES THROUGH DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Charles W. Wright

David L. Bechler, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Biology

Bridge sites can alter established streambed morphology and associated ecology. However restoring channels and reducing negative anthropogenic practices allows the return of natural habitats. Recent conservation studies have suggested that bridge sites may serve as potential habitats for reestablishment of populations following drought events. Fish and macroinvertebrate assemblages were examined at 14 bridge sites involving first through fourth order streams. Fish assemblages were least diverse upstream of bridge sites, most diverse at bridge sites and intermediate downstream of bridge sites. Macroinvertebrate assemblages did not exhibit as distinctive a pattern as did fish assemblages. Upstream macroinvertebrate assemblages were less diverse than bridge sites and downstream assemblages, a pattern that was only disrupted for the bridge sites by third order streams. The results from this study suggest that bridge sites, if properly engineered, can serve as valuable refuges for reestablishing fish and macroinvertebrate assemblages up and down stream.

History

A MIDWIFE'S TRAVAIL: CHANGES IN THE ART OF MIDWIFERY BETWEEN 1775 AND 1888

Jessica Gandy

Catherine Oglesby, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of History

Midwifery was once considered a prestigious occupation held by women within the community. As it evolved from a communal event to a medical mystery, the role of women during childbirth changed. Historically, midwives have been both revered and demonized in the communities they served. The stories of two midwives, Martha Ballard practicing in Maine during the years of the Early Republic and Patty Bartlett Sessions practicing on the frontier well into the late 19th century, have survived thanks to the journals they left behind. Their daily, descriptive entries between the years of 1775 and 1888 reveal the changing role of midwives, a new understanding of the female anatomy and childbirth, and the clashing of pre-modern with modern values during a time of critical developments in science and medicine.

MASQUERADE FASHION: MASKING EUROPEAN SOCIAL ISSUES, 1814-1900

Alexandra A. Melick

Melanie Byrd, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of History

In the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Century, with the rise of mass production, fashion became an accepted mode of personal, artistic, and political expression. An individual's fashion distinguished his or her social status, pedigree, and affluence or lack thereof within society. This trend was especially evident in the arena of masked balls which were popular during this period among the lower, middle, and upper classes. Across class structures, costumes and regalia for such events varied drastically. For the upper classes, extravagance and decadence motivated their party wears, for the middle classes, the need to appear affluent drove their recreational attire and for the lower classes, creativity caused by lack of funds made for entertaining masquerade ensembles. Masked balls served a collective purpose across all social classes to provide diversion through escapism by donning festive regalia thus allowing an individual's freedom from social inhibitions through a lack of personal identification.

WHITES EXECUTED IN THE U.S. FOR MURDERING AFRICAN AMERICANS: 1739–1972

Phillip Williams

Thomas Aiello, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of History

From the beginning of the colonization of the Americas, whites were rarely convicted and punished for crimes against African Americans. Between 1739 and 1972 when a moratorium on executions in the United States began, there were only thirty men executed for crimes against blacks. Ten of those men were executed following the death of slaves. The death penalty was used very rarely in cases of white on black crime, and in most of those cases the convict already had a long criminal history, was a stranger to the community, or a foreigner. In addition there were several men convicted and sentenced to death, but later saved due to intervention by governors in their cases.

Marriage and Family Therapy

PARK PARENTS AND PIPSQUEAKS: OBSERVING PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONS IN PUBLIC PARKS

Kelly Godfrey

Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

The purpose of this qualitative study is to observe parent-child interactions in public settings to assess racial, cultural, and age differences in parenting styles and children's behaviors. Interactions were assessed by a coding system with a checklist of particular behaviors. Observations were conducted in rural, southeastern public settings in Georgia. The study included 10 observations with 5 families identified as Caucasian and 5 families identified as African American. The age range of the parents was 23-32, and the age range of the children was 3-5. According to the data collected, White parents generally had an authoritative style of parenting, whereas African American parents displayed an authoritarian style of parenting. However, style of parenting varied in parent age. The data showed that younger parents displayed more authoritarian parenting styles, whereas older parents displayed authoritative parenting styles.

DEPLOYMENT EFFECTS TO MILITARY FAMILIES

Kathryn Mathews

Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

This paper discusses deployment effects to military families. Based upon available research, spouses and children were the most common two family groups studied. Studies reported that the length of a deployment, the attitude, and demeanor of the parent at home were the main issues that impacted children. For the spouse, worries about finances, children, fidelity, and the possible death of a spouse were the main factors that determined the deployment effect. While the issue of deployment is known to cause stress for the entire family, there is little research being conducted which investigates how this phenomenon impacts the whole family and their adjustment to the deployment. The researcher wanted to understand how families prepare for a deployment, cope during the deployment, and re-adjust after the deployment. Families reported that staying busy was a main factor in coping with the deployment but preparing and re-adjusting varied among each family member.

SYSTEMIC INFLUENCE OF MEDICAL DIAGNOSES UPON FAMILY MEMBERS: A QUALITATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

Elizabeth Mueller

Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

A qualitative literature review was conducted regarding experiences of family members when one member of the family was diagnosed with a medical condition. Articles which were reviewed focused on family perceptions of palliative care, post-mortem familial responsibilities and meaning making, parenting of diagnosed child, child perception of ill-sibling, or child care-giver to aged parent. Several articles differentiated between mental health and physiological health experiences, while others focused on themes of resiliency, responsibility, overall family health, conversations around diagnosis, and child psychological adaptation. Areas for future study include the experiences of children in young families with diagnosed parents, qualitative interviews around family role adaptation to diagnosis, and a comparison between resiliencies in families diagnosed with a medical condition versus a mental health condition. The poster will also include clinical implications for therapists working with families who have a member diagnosed with a mental condition based on the findings of the review.

AFRICAN AMERICAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE MENTAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Anthony L. Potter and Donteal L. Mitchell-Hunter

Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

A disproportionate number of African Americans, compared with white men and women, come into contact with mental health services via adversarial or crisis-related routes. This research is aimed to provide a better understanding of African American's perceptions of mental health and their experiences of mental health services. This project is also aimed at raising awareness of mental health problems and services among African Americans. Data was obtained from African American males and females, ages 18-65, in Valdosta, Georgia. Participants in this study were given a qualitative survey (n = 20) describing their interactions and experiences with the mental health system. The subjects polled had different perspectives of the mental health care system as well as there was a general reluctance of African American males to engage with services due to mistrust of services, reinforced by racialized experiences of services that lack cultural competence, as well as gender attitudes to health, and stigmatization of mental ill health in society.

AN EXPLORATION OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPISTS' EXPERIENCES WITH ADHD AND THE DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN WRITTEN RESEARCH

Jordana Price

Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

This qualitative study investigates and identifies Marriage and Family Therapists' (MFT) views on effective therapy when clients present with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). A comparison was made between these findings and what current literature suggests as effective treatments for ADHD. The participant's demographics varied, yet each participant claimed the identity of an MFT. Interviews were conducted and transcribed; common themes were then identified and compared to common themes found within the literature reviews. The preliminary results demonstrated an overlapping of themes within current therapeutic techniques and written literature; however a discrepancy in pharmaceutical treatment views for effective coping was discovered. By identifying common themes within practice and research we will expand the possibilities for effective ADHD treatment. This will allow for more treatment options when clients present ADHD in therapy.

THERAPISTS' REFLECTIONS: WORKING WITH LOSS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS

Joshua Waters and Jessica Moger

Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Marriage and Family Therapy Program

This study provides an in-depth examination of the grief therapy process surrounding the loss of children and young adults. Specifically, the research questions were designed to assess for: basic assumptions about conducting grief therapy, any theoretical influences that aid the clinician's orientation to grief therapy, and details about what the process entails or "looks like." Interviews were conducted with four licensed mental health professionals in the Lowndes County, Georgia, area who were identified beforehand to have significant experience conducting grief therapy. The interviews were about forty minutes on average. Each interview was transcribed and then analyzed for themes and interventions/techniques that were common among the practitioners interviewed. Implications of this work include a better understanding of the differences in working with grief surrounding the loss of children and young adults versus the adult population. Future research may be conducted to include a larger, more representative sample of the larger population.

Modern and Classical Languages

THE ROLE OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Sydney Earley

Victoria Russell, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Modern and Classical Languages

This research project investigated the role of corrective feedback in second and foreign language classrooms. Acquiring a second language is a complex process and both individual differences and instructional techniques may affect the learning process and the rate of acquisition. Corrective feedback refers to the various types of error feedback offered by teachers during language instruction. The most common types of corrective feedback include: recasts, elicitation, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, explicit correction, and repetition. However, there is evidence that the type of feedback offered by the teacher is largely dependent upon the learner's error and not all corrections result in learner uptake and repair (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, 1998). This poster presentation provides annotated bibliographies of five research articles that investigated corrective feedback in second language classrooms. In addition, a list of practical implications from these studies, key terms, visual aids, and references are provided.

HOW DOES THE ACQUISITION OF A SECOND LANGUAGE AFFECT COGNITION?

Christan Marsh

Victoria Russell, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Modern and Classical Languages

This presentation focuses on the effect learning a second language (L2) has on cognition. The studies presented in this poster session investigated the influence of the L2 on thought and the benefits of being bilingual. Much of what is examined in these studies is the organization of the bilingual memory and the effects of two languages on comprehension, production, and processing. Implications of the findings of these studies include the activation of two lexicons, negative interference of the first language (L1) with L2, and the access of linguistic knowledge in the memory. The purpose of this presentation is to encourage further research on bilingualism and the effects of an L2 on a learner's general cognition. This poster presentation provides annotated bibliographies of four research articles that investigated the effects of bilingualism on cognition. In addition, a list of practical implications from these studies, key terms, visual aids, and references are included.

Political Science

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT'S IMPACT ON EMPLOYER-SPONSORED INSURANCE, EMPLOYERS, AND EMPLOYEES: THE CASE OF THE LANGDALE COMPANY

Ewelina B. Gad Sparks

James W. Peterson, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Political Science

This study's purpose was to investigate the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) impact on a southeastern Georgia employer, The Langdale Company, and its employees. Specifically, the researcher investigated the ACA's impact on the Company's benefit philosophy and bottom line, and employee satisfaction with health coverage offered by the Company (the Plan) in the post-ACA environment. For this case study, the researcher utilized an employer questionnaire and an employee survey. The results revealed that The Langdale Company plans to keep offering health benefits to its employees and to implement cost-containment measures. Most of the employees are satisfied with their Plan (89.1%) and would like to maintain their health coverage (97.7%). Future implications and recommendations are discussed.

Dewar College of Education

Adult and Career Education

RETENTION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ONLINE COURSES: A CASE IN SPANISH COURSES

Beatriz Potter

Vesta Whisler, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Adult and Career Education

Peggy Moch, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Mathematics and Computer Science

In the past two decades, online education has become an integral part of curricula at most academic institutions. Major challenges to continued growth and success are relatively high student dropout rates and low levels of academic achievement. An important factor in the high dropout and low achievement rates is that online classes require different learning and technical skills. Students who lack these skills are at risk of withdrawal and failure. To improve their potential for success, research is needed to help identify students who are prepared for online education. This research focused on use of The SmarterMeasure online readiness (SMOR) assessment to determine if the assessment was effective in helping students determine if they are prepared for taking online Spanish classes. Findings and recommendations are expected to help stakeholders identify factors that can increase retention and academic success in online courses, and to develop strategies to help with outcomes.

ANDRAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES THAT WORK IN THE MULTICULTURAL COLLEGE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Kristy Singletary

Reynaldo Martinez, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Adult and Career Education

During a college composition course held prior to this study, it was noted that many international students, most from eastern countries, struggled to become self-directed learners, and many of these learners did not have transformative educational experiences. To better address the struggles students experienced and motivate transformative learning, this research study sought to discover the effectiveness of adult learning principles, or “andragogy,” with international students in a four-year university English composition class. The writings, presentations, and in-class activities of 14 international students in the class were analyzed, and results indicated that learners’ English proficiencies increased and more learners became self-directed and experienced some type of transformative learning. Finally, based on the results and analyses of learners’ educational experiences and performances before and after the application of andragogy, it can be reasonably concluded that andragogical principles can be effectively used to educate diverse, multicultural adult learners.

Communication Sciences and Disorders

TANGIBLE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS FOR AN ADULT WITH APRAXIA OF SPEECH

Amanda Alexander

Susan Miller, M.Ed., Faculty Mentor

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the effects of tangible homework assignments on an adult with apraxia of speech. The results indicated that there was an improvement on response time after tangible homework assignments were completed. These findings indicate that tangible homework assignments for adults will improve targeted speech productions. It was recommended that other investigations in this area should examine the benefits of homework assignments and generalization with communication.

EFFECTS OF BOLUS CHARACTERISTICS ON THE NORMAL SWALLOW

Lauren Camara and Lydia Fleming

Mary Gorham-Rowan, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

The purpose of this study was to examine whether there was a notable difference in the oropharyngeal swallow trigger when swallowing typical boluses compared to a bolus that is unexpected in taste. Three healthy women, 22-25 years old, were blind folded and presented with a 3 ml bolus of water, yogurt, and pudding. The participants were also given 3 ml boluses of sweetened water, yogurt with lemon juice, and salty pudding. The time between the bolus entering the oral cavity to hyolaryngeal elevation was measured using a stop watch. Participants had a shorter swallow threshold time when consuming the altered bolus compared to a standard flavored bolus. This pattern may have developed as a result of taste and viscosity directly affecting the swallowing reflex.

THE USE OF STORYBOOK VISUALS TO ELICIT VERBAL RESPONSES TO WH QUESTIONS

Rebecca Golden

Robert G. Johnston, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the use of visual stimuli to elicit WH questions. The results indicated visual stimuli increased correct responses to WH questions. The results also indicated that visual stimuli increased verbal responses. The results also indicated visual cue increased comprehension. This single subject study indicates that improved subject responses can be obtained with the use of visual cues. Further studies should investigate the wide range of visual stimuli in eliciting correct responses.

GENERATED AND TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE SAMPLE ANALYSIS

Sarah Lively

Jade Coston, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Language sample analysis is imperative for language assessment in young children. The *Language Environmental Analysis System (LENA™)* consists of recording equipment and computer software, and is used to collect language samples and generate language assessment based on Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) technology. The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between computer-generated language sample analysis, measured by Automatic Vocalization Assessment (*LENA™* AVA), and traditional language sample analysis, measured by manual calculation of Mean Length of Utterance (MLU). Data were gathered from 26 families with children aged 24 to 48 months old. A small correlation effect was present, but more research is necessary for validation.

THE EFFECTS OF DELAYED AUDITORY FEEDBACK ON FLUENT IDENTICAL TWINS

Corie Parfitt

Robert Johnston, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if the delayed auditory feedback (DAF) has any effect on the fluency of identical twins. The results of this study concluded identical twins have virtually the same reaction when reading under DAF conditions. There was neither a significant difference in the number of errors produced nor was there a substantial difference in the performance times while reading under DAF conditions. These results indicated that there may be a genetic predisposition in the acquisition and management of speech and language.

WHAT PEOPLE THINK: IMPRESSIONS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Mollie Riggins

Mary Gorham-Rowan, Ph.D., Program Coordinator

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

The primary purpose of this investigation was to determine the perceptions disabled people make on normal people in various professions. The results indicated that the perceptions of disabled people differed between students enrolled in Mass Media majors and students enrolled in health-related majors. It was concluded that the perception of disabled people may differ as a function of career choice. Future researchers may wish to evaluate the semantics in the description of disabled people.

DECREASING OFF-TASK BEHAVIORS AND ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATION DEFICITS IN INDIVIDUALS WITH TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURIES

David Sampson

Ruth Renee Hannibal, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) results in a myriad of deficits in attention, concentration, response time, pragmatics, memory, and executive function. The purpose of this investigation was to determine if attention and concentration skills could be improved with neurorehabilitative exercises. The client was a fifty-two year old male who sustained a TBI secondary to a fall. The client performed selected exercises to increase sustained attention and concentration skills. Results revealed that over the course of eight treatment sessions, the client's attention and concentration skills increased. Results also revealed that the client exhibited less off-task behaviors and displayed a reduction in response time during all treatment exercises.

EFFECTS OF SUGAR ON ATTENTIVENESS TO A TASK UNDER NORMAL AND ELEVATED CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR

Lauren Temmel

Robert Johnston, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders

This study described an investigation to determine if increased sugar intake has an effect on behavior, attentiveness to a task, and communication behavior. The subject was a normally developing two year seven month old female weighing twenty-eight pounds with no prior history of hyperactivity. The researcher chose a book appropriate for the subject's age that was read three times over two days, the second session including the high intake of sugars. The results demonstrated that a meal high in sugars prior to a task decreased the subject's attentiveness and increased the time it took to complete the task. Future implications and research are discussed.

Curriculum, Leadership and Technology

PORTRAITS OF THE PAST-PERSPECTIVES FOR THE PRESENT: A STUDY OF SEGREGATED AND DESEGREGATED PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN EARLY COUNTY, GEORGIA, 1960-1981

Charla Houston Allen

Richard W. Schmertzing, Ed.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Curriculum, Leadership and Technology

American public school resegregation is a rarely discussed reality, as are the origins and effects of desegregated public schools. This qualitative portraiture study examined segregated and desegregated public schools in rural Early County, Georgia, from 1960-1981. In depth interviews with 27 African American and White participants from three generational groups, archival evidence from public and private sources, and a contextual understanding of the community and its schools from 1818-1960 informed the study. A conceptual framework constructed from relevant literature demonstrated that spiraling silence about race and schooling issues contributed to national school resegregation. Although this spiraling silence about race and schooling developed in Early County, exceptions also developed in the form of cross-racial communication and partnerships. Exceptions existed because of the nontraditional, inclusive, courageous, and optimistic leadership practiced by White and African American educators; a local carrot and stick desegregation strategy combining legal mandates with highly visible federal funding; relentless, positive public relations, and daily perseverance through the difficult and unprecedented work. These factors rewrote the narrative of school desegregation and engendered enduring public school loyalty. This study supported the evolutionary nature of racial attitudes and the positive influence of desegregated education on such changes.

FACTORS THAT PREDICT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN GEORGIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Alisande Fountain Mayer

Ellen Wiley, Ed.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Curriculum, Leadership and Technology

Because of a recent decline in educational funding, state and local departments of education have been compelled to evaluate all of their expenditures in terms of cost versus benefit to student achievement. The purpose of this study was to examine five characteristics of teachers and schools believed to contribute the most to student success—Title I status, teachers' education level, teachers' average years of experience, class size, and computer to student ratio—and their relationship to the achievement of fifth-grade students in 106 Georgia public schools. Student achievement was measured by the percentage of these students receiving scores of *Does Not Meet*, *Meets*, and *Exceeds* on the reading and mathematics portion of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.

IMPROVING STUDENT HEALTH CENTERS BY INCORPORATING MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS

Doel A. Parrilla

James G. Archibald, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Curriculum, Leadership and Technology

With budget cuts increasingly growing in higher education, institutions are brainstorming different ways to cut costs and save money. As a result, many organizational changes are made in order to accommodate these fiscal constraints. For example, several institutions have considered combining counseling centers and student health services. As the planning for potential mergers and integrations are being developed, the effect it will have on the utilization of counseling services by students should be taken into full consideration. By integrating the physical and mental health care, it increases the probability of students will utilizing mental health services that many need (Tucker, Sloan, Vance, & Brownson, 2008). It is hypothesized that minority students will be impacted the most. The purpose of this project is to explore the positive and negative impact this integration could potentially have on college students.

Early Childhood and Special Education

EFFECTIVENESS OF POSITIVE ADULT INTERACTION IN READING AND TAKING MORE ACCELERATED READING TESTS

Sarah Cain

Janet Foster, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Early Childhood and Special Education

The Accelerated Reading Program is a computer based program used to test student comprehension after reading a book. This research focused on the effectiveness of conferencing with individual students on their reading goals to impact children's results on Accelerated Reading tests. Methods included conferencing with students, Accelerated Reading test data, and a reading survey completed by students. The results indicate that positive adult interaction can benefit student outcomes in the Accelerated Reading program. The research focused on the students receiving a significant amount of positive praise for reading and reaching their goals—rather than tangible rewards. This information is important because it may be the foundation for increasing positive adult interaction with Accelerated Reading tests, instead of candy and prizes.

INCREASING APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR DURING TRANSITIONS FOR AN ELEMENTAR-AGED STUDENT WITH AUTISM

Kimberly Walden

Kelly Heckaman, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Early Childhood and Special Education

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of antecedent modifications and positive reinforcement on transitioning behavior with an elementary-aged student with autism who demonstrated disruptive behaviors during transitions. Indirect and direct functional behavioral assessments indicated that the disruptive behaviors appeared to function as an escape from school work and non-preferred activities. An intervention was developed and tested before implementation in the classroom. The researcher utilized a reversal design to determine the effectiveness of the intervention plan. After the introduction and consistent implementation of the intervention plan, disruptive transition behaviors decreased while appropriate transition behaviors increased.

EFFECTIVENESS OF GRANT BASED AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS IN RAISING CLASSROOM GRADES

Julie Wilson

Janet Foster, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Early Childhood and Special Education

Afterschool homework programs have become widespread and can support students' academic learning when effectively implemented. This research focused on the effectiveness of the 21st Century Afterschool Program in raising classroom grades in participating fourth grade students. Methods included interviewing fourth grade teachers, afterschool teachers, and conferencing with small groups of students. The results show that this program offers enrichment activities that are not offered to students during school, as well as, improving classroom and homework grades because it offers extra help for struggling learners. This information is important in that it may be the basis for developing more afterschool programs that focus on raising students' homework and classroom grades.

Middle, Secondary, Reading, and Deaf Education

EFFECT OF ROSETTA STONE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SCORES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL ENGLISH LEARNERS

Robert A. Griffin

Ellice P. Martin, Ed.D., Faculty Mentor

James Martinez, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Middle, Secondary, Reading and Deaf Education

This study examined the effect of Rosetta Stone computer-assisted language learning (CALL) on English proficiency achievement, engagement in the language learning process, and student perceptions of the effectiveness of CALL-based instruction as compared to traditional workbook-based direct instruction for 36 English Learners in a suburban high school in the southeastern United States. Students were randomly divided into control and treatment groups. The control group received language instruction using traditional language workbooks, while the intervention group supplemented traditional language instruction with use of Rosetta Stone. Results were determined using pre and post scores from the WIDA-ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT), mean achievement scores on workbook exercises, an observational engagement checklist, attitudinal surveys, and post-intervention interviews. Language proficiency scores, student engagement, and student attitudes improved significantly. Workbook achievement also increased, but that difference was not statistically significant. Rosetta Stone was found to have a positive impact on English proficiency achievement, student engagement, and student attitudes toward the CALL-based application.

EFFECTS OF MATHEMATICS ACCELERATION ON ACHIEVEMENT, PERCEPTION, AND BEHAVIOR IN LOW-PERFORMING SECONDARY STUDENTS

Jennifer Head

Dawn Lambeth, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Department of Middle, Secondary, Reading, and Deaf Education

This study evaluated acceleration used as a differentiation technique and its effects on achievement, perception and time on-task compared with the current method of remediation in low achieving mathematics students in a support classroom setting. The intervention consisted of a 6-week period. Students were equitably divided into two groups of eight between the acceleration and remediation groups. All participants were given the same pre/post mathematics computerized achievement tests, Mathematics Perception Survey, and attention to task was observed using the same instrument. Results of the study showed statistically significant gains in mathematics achievement of the acceleration group. However, results of the survey were inconclusive and differences in the percent of time on-task were minimal. The researcher concluded that the use of acceleration in similar groups should increase mathematics achievement more than the use of remediation.

Library and Information Science

OVERCONFIDENT AND OVERWHELMED: EXAMINING RESEARCH ANXIETY IN MILLENNIAL FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATES

Amy L. Ellison

Anita Ondrusek, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Library and Information Science

First-year college students who are part of the millennial generation remain dangerously poised between two extremes: overconfidence in their own abilities and a transition into overwhelming anxiety as they discover how much they must learn. As a result of this changing self-assessment, this qualitative study evaluated the confidence levels of 24 traditional first-year students within a single freshman composition class from the University of West Georgia. The study followed these students throughout their first research paper assigned in the Fall 2012 semester of English 1101. Likert-scale questionnaires were given during each of four major stages of research project instruction identified by the instructor: initiation and topic formulation, introduction to research methods and active searching, project composition, and closure. The questionnaires asked students to self-assess their confidence and anxiety levels. The resulting data illustrated the progression from overconfidence into anxiety and the critical loss of self-confidence for students. This research study aims to provide greater understanding of the Millennial student experience in addition to presenting information that will assist librarians and instructors of first-year Millennial undergraduates with addressing overconfidence and alleviating the research anxiety associated with first-year courses.

SERVICES TO THE AGING AT PERRY PUBLIC LIBRARY AS MEASURED BY THE ALA GUIDELINES FOR SERVICES TO OLDER ADULTS

Jennifer Lautzenheiser

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Library and Information Science

Seniors are a growing portion of the population with their own information needs. This case study measures older adult patrons' perceptions of strengths and weaknesses of library services at Perry Public Library. The standard for service was determined by ALA Guidelines for Services to Older Adults. The ALA defines older adults as age 55 and over. A written survey using a Likert scale was constructed to measure the extent to which patrons believed the ALA Guidelines were met. It was distributed to qualifying patrons over a two week period. Some results were predictable. Other results identified opportunities for improvement of which the library was previously unaware. This information is being utilized to identify and prioritize potential improvement efforts. Actions are recommended based upon these concerns. There are limitations to this study. Limitations are addressed and recommendations made to further user assessment.

College of Nursing

A MODEL FOR THE USE OF NURSE PRACTITIONERS IN SKILLED NURSING FACILITIES

Gladys Sone

Brenda Dyal, D.N.P., Faculty Mentor

College of Nursing

The purpose of this project was to develop a job description for a Nurse Practitioner (NP) employed in a Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF). SNFs are facilities that provide medical, skilled nursing care and rehabilitation services to the elderly and disabled persons. Treatment of these individuals usually results in costly hospitalizations that could be avoided with proper interventions. Hospitalizations of these patients are not only costly but also dangerous and detrimental to their quality of life. NPs are advanced practiced nurses with prescriptive privileges able to provide a wide variety of cost effective preventive and acute care services with good patient outcomes. This project proposes the use of NPs in these settings as an intervention to combat the rise of avoidable hospitalizations, thereby reducing health cost and improving quality of life of the elderly.

HYPERTENSION PROTOCOL UPDATE FOR USE IN THE PARTNERSHIP HEALTH CENTER OF LOWNDES COUNTY

Lori Tomlinson and Susan Bellinger

Brenda Dyal, D.N.P., Faculty Mentor

College of Nursing

Hypertension is the most commonly diagnosed condition in the United States of America, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, (2003). This project was based on the desire to improve health of individuals in the local community with the chronic disease of hypertension by up-dating the protocol utilized for hypertension in adults at the Lowndes County Partnership Health Center. An extensive literature review was performed comparing data from the current protocol for the diagnosis, treatment, and management of hypertension in adults utilized at the LCPHC and updated evidence-based research. Once the recommended changes were made to the protocol, an interdisciplinary review was made for the incorporation of clinical experience, which included a dietician, pharmacist, registered nurses, advance practice registered nurses, and medical doctors. The final document is an invaluable tool due to the extensive review of evidence and collaborative effort.

Division of Social Work

THE NEW CIVIL RIGHTS: AN IN DEPTH LOOK AT SAME SEX MARRIAGE

Shauna Daniels

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Division of Social Work

The issue of legalizing same sex marriage is regularly, in the media, and at the forefront of political platforms. With the ever changing laws, it is imperative that we, as social workers, are aware of the effects that it has on our cliental. This piece of legislation is one of the most, if not the most controversial policies facing us today. The Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) states that marriage is between a man and a woman. DOMA does not recognize, federally, same sex unions; this makes it illegal for federal employees to share certain benefits with their same sex partners. These benefits not allotted to same sex couples include insurance benefits for government employees, social security survivors, and the filing of joint tax returns. It also states that each state has the right to define marriage as it wants, leaving state benefits up to the state definition of marriage. This research covers the history and the most current information on DOMA and individual state regulations on marriage. Strategies for advocacy for same sex couples are also included in this research.

HISTORY OF SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND CIVIL UNIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Aelred Bernard Dean

Diane Holliman, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Division of Social Work

The research will look at early attitudes of same-sex marriage and civil unions from multiple frameworks: religious beliefs, political action and civil rights. There will also be an examination of current policies that both support and oppose same-sex marriage or civil unions. The policies that have been enacted by state governments will be analyzed through their impact on same-sex couples. As a clearer understanding of same-sex marriage policies in the United States is presented, there will be a comparison of the Canadian model and policies regarding same-sex marriage. Finally, after due consideration of historical understandings, there will be a review on how this impacts the practice of social work, especially in upholding the core values of social work as stated in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.

A COMPENDIUM ON RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE CLINICAL ENVIRONMENT

Cynthia L. Doss

Diane Holliman, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Division of Social Work

The potential risk individuals with mental illness present to society has been heightened since the mass shootings of innocents in universities, theaters, and mental health clinics. The compendium's purpose is to identify historical antecedents and practices of risk assessment in clinical environments and to ascertain current best practices in the assessment of risk for the protection of the individual and the public. A synergistic reaction by psychiatric and legal communities to the complexity of assessing dangerousness culminates in three generations of risk assessment and legal decisions that continue to impact today's practitioners. The impact of risk assessment is most evident when the stakes of both a false positive (restriction of an individual's liberty) and a false negative (lack of protection to an identified victim) are realized. Social workers work within these two realities and must remain cognizant of the jurisdictional legal standards and clinical best practices applicable to risk assessment.

THE VETERAN'S ADMINISTRATION (VA) AND POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

James K Eustis

Hanae Kanno, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Division of Social Work

The VA's history can be traced back to 1636 when the English colonies provided pensions for vets disabled in the defense against Indians. Improvements in veteran's compensation came slowly and were not always easily won. There is still room for improvement and the U.S. could benefit by adapting portions of what works well in other countries. Veterans' mental health issues have only recently began getting appropriate attention. PTSD was not officially acknowledged until the late 20th century. Veterans are 4 times more likely to be diagnosed with PTSD than the general population but they are very hesitant to seek treatment...especially while still in the military. Interestingly, even though the VA is the single largest employer of MSWs, MSW programs don't provide training in veteran's mental health issues.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRAISE ON DURING PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT YEARS

Gerilyn Pepin

Hanae Kanno, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Division of Social Work

This study described is an investigation to determine if praise increases or decreases a child's attention span during the child's pre-school development years in a classroom setting. The sample was a four-year old girl with severe attention problems. The first operational measure in this research, in collaboration with the teacher and assistant, was to reduce the number of times she had to be reminded by her teacher and assistant to pay attention during her circle time. The second operational measure was based on shape identification of four shapes. Because of limited time spent with her, the results showed little improvement in both operational measures; however working with her teacher during the days of her circle time, she was able to stay focus. The goal of this research was to establish the effectiveness of praise to improve her behaviors in her pre-school class.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF UTILIZING REPETITION TO INCREASE ACADEMIC SKILLS FOR A KINDERGARTEN STUDENT

Brandi Porter

Hanae Kanno, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Division of Social Work

This study was conducted to determine if repetition of letters and name writing would increase a kindergarten student's ability to recognize the letters of the alphabet and hand writing. The subject was a five year old male. To increase the subject's recognition of the alphabet, the researcher created note cards with the each letter of the alphabet and the subject would trace the letter and recite the letter during each session. The researcher also had the subject create letters with creative supplies, such as acorns. To increase the subject's ability to write his name, the researcher had the subject write his first name at the beginning of each session, as well as at the end of each session. The results indicated that the repetition of presenting the letters of the alphabet and name writing increased the subject's academic skill.

IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rochelle Schube

Diane Holliman, Ph.D., Faculty Mentor

Division of Social Work

Full implementation of the Affordable Care Act is fast approaching. With the changes in health care availability and affordability, we must be aware of the impact on client services. Research indicates that The Affordable Care Act is one of the most controversial pieces of legislation in the past century. The provisions of the ACA span from the illegality of insurance companies discriminating against individuals with pre-existing conditions to the expansion of Medicaid. This research focuses on the coverage gap experienced by elderly individuals through Medicare. Medicare Part D, prescription drug coverage, includes a “donut hole”, a payment coverage gap. After a designated amount has been paid out for prescriptions, payments, in full, are the responsibility of the individual. This is an immense cost for elderly people, often retired and on fixed or low incomes. The ACA Medicare Part D provision will slowly close the “donut hole” over the next 10 years until the gap is completely closed.

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