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# Research *focus*

ADVANCING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH INVESTIGATION, IMPROVING LIVES BY ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS IN OUR COMMUNITIES & PLANTING THE SEEDS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE.

## APPsolute Genius



**Dr. Richard Dressler** is developing an iPad app called iRecognize. It is designed to give persons with language impairments, such as aphasia, autism, TBI, etc. a tool to practice comprehending words, pictures, and text.

The therapist can import photographs of the patient, their family & friends, places, and things. The clinician can customize each exercise by controlling the stimuli, the number of choices, and the type of feedback.

Clinicians can also add text and

audio tags to each photo. This feature will allow iRecognize to be utilized with any language extending its potential to intervention services for second language learners including ASL learners.

The results of each exercise are recorded. The therapist can retrieve the results in item-by-item lists or graphs to facilitate accurate data analysis.

The app is slated to be available for purchase for iDevices through the App Store in 2013.



Soon to be...



## Shackelford Takes Two Publications

**Dr. Jo Shackelford** has recently published two articles. The first study explored which types of interaction are most predictive of students' sense of community in online graduate courses at WKU. Interactions that were most predictive of a sense of community and those which offer the highest payoff to instructors include introductions,

collaborative group projects, sharing personal experiences, entire class discussions, and exchanging resources. The second article explores the types of learner-instructor interaction which emerged as predictive of sense of community in online learning. Results indicated interactions that are

most contributive to sense of community include instructor modeling, support and encouragement, facilitating discussions, multiple communication modes, and required participation. The interaction which offered the highest payoff to instructors was instructor modeling.

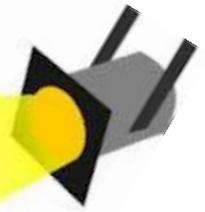


Shackelford, J.L. & Maxwell, M. (2012). Sense of community in graduate online education: Contribution of learner-learner interaction. *International Review of Research in Distance and Open Learning*, 13(4), 228-249.

Shackelford, J.L. & Maxwell, M. (2012). Contribution of learner-instructor interaction to sense of community in graduate online education. *Journal of Online Learning*, In press.

# THE SPOTLIGHT

## on Student Researchers



### Parents' Perspective of Executive Function in Their Children with Autism

**Julana Shaw Smith**



was awarded \$1500 in student research grant money to assist her exploratory research evaluating parents' perspective of the executive functioning in their child with autism. Her study will use the Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF)

and parent interviews. Julana is also interested in the relationship between children's problem solving abilities and their executive function abilities.

On a larger scale, this research is expected to yield knowledge to assist clinicians in learning to better understand and develop treatment plans, thus expanding the knowledge base of the profession of speech language pathology.

In addition, this type of information may be used to enhance the current service plans of children with autism and facilitate future independence as they grow into adulthood.

Julana will be presenting her findings at the Student Research Conference on March 23, 2013 as a part of REACH week activities.

*Janice Carter Smith serves as her faculty mentor.*



### Students Present Qualitative Findings at ASHA

The purpose of their presentation was to share the academic and clinical experiences of distance learners enrolled in a graduate program in communication disorders.

Students shared their perspectives in two areas:  
**Online Learning:** "I would have had to wait several years to start a traditional on-campus program, and it would

have meant moving my young family at least an hour away. The Distance Learning program also allowed me the flexibility to keep working in my job as a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant. Working full time while maintaining the status of a full-time graduate student was challenging and stressful, but it gave me an immediate place to apply all of the knowledge I was learning in classes, ... I know it made me a stronger clinician." - Heather Hetler, WKU Alumni, August 2012

**Technology:** "Advances with newer and more efficient technology for curriculum delivery gives me a level of flexibility which means that I can study how I want, when I want. I appreciate the live chats as a means to clarify confusions and dissect content,

and the ability to re-watch lectures at a later time are of the most benefit to me to ensure the synthesizing of information." Eve Reinert Welte, current Distance Learning Student

In addition, students shared the positive feedback they had received from their Clinical Supervisors regarding their **level of readiness** to enter the profession: "Her clinical knowledge base, willingness to consult the research, openness to looking up answers and find the evidence base and expansive clinical "toolbox" put her in a class above most of my other students." Jennifer Essig, M.A., CCC-SLP, Clinical Externship Supervisor



*Pictured from left to right:*

Jennifer Goble, Heather VanWechel Hetler, Eve Welte, Jan Sandidge (Faculty Advisor) & Wanda Wilson Bowser

# REACH Week Fast Approaching!

**REACH Week will be held March 18-23, 2013.**

Research Experiences And Creative Heights week is dedicated to students that have engaged in research and scholarly activities at WKU. A series of showcases will be taking place across campus during the week with the Student Research Conference wrapping up the week's activities on March 23, 2013.

Congratulations to Graduate Student **Natalie Walker** on beautifully presenting her research at WKU's 42nd Annual Student Research Conference in March 2012! Reviewers gave Natalie high scores in both presentation and knowledge of the subject.

**Faculty, please encourage your students to get involved with REACH week activities!**  
For more information go to <http://www.wku.edu/research/celebrate.php>.

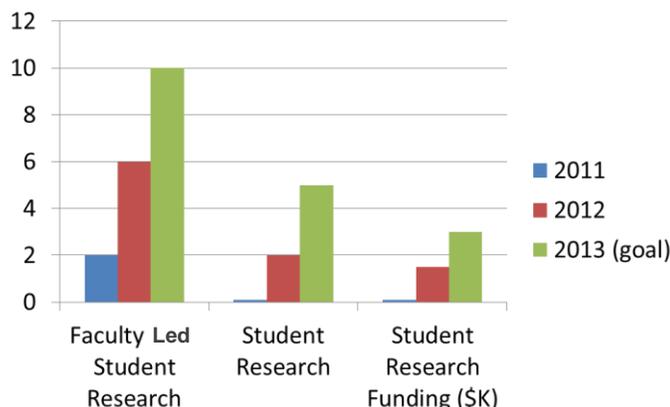


## CSD Students Pick Up the Research Torch

CSD faculty and students have been working diligently to increase the opportunities for student participation in research activities. In 2012 our focus has been to mentor CSD students to independently develop research questions that they can follow through and disseminate at local, state and national levels.

As expected, CSD students eagerly took up the torch and began leading the way for future student researchers. In 2012, we have had more student led research than in years past with one student applying for and receiving funding. We expect this trend to continue upwards in years to come.

**Growth of Student Engagement in Research Activities**



## Autism Speaks U at WKU

The purpose of **Autism Speaks U at Western Kentucky University** is to further the mission of Autism Speaks by engaging the campus community and the local community through awareness, education and fundraising. In so doing, we strive to positively affect the lives of those struggling with autism spectrum disorders and their families.

In less than a month the Chapter raised nearly **\$700** for the Walk Now for Autism Speaks. They also hosted a very successful Club Crawl for Autism Speaks U! These students raised **\$1,775.00** selling raffle tickets, t-shirts, and recruiting event sponsors! In the four months of being a Chapter, students have raised a total of **\$2,739.00!!!**

This money goes directly to support research and resources for those with autism and their families. Aren't our students AMAZING?!?

*Faculty Advisor—Janice Carter Smith*



## American Sign Language Organization

*Faculty Advisor—Ashley Chance Fox*

The purpose of ASLO is to increase the awareness of Deaf Culture and its history, to improve the Sign Language skills of those interested in doing so, and to increase the recognition of American Sign Language (ASL) as a language and its role in the linguistic minority of Deaf and non-deaf users on campus and in the surrounding communities.

ASLO is in the process of planning/organizing a carnival/game day for Deaf and HOH kids in the area. This would allow them to come to WKU, take a tour (with an interpreter), eat lunch and then have fun at the carnival. They plan to invite all the Deaf Education programs in the area to participate. They anticipate that the event may occur Fall 2013.

# Predictive Admission Criteria in Undergraduate & Graduate SLP Programs

In light of the current and upcoming changes that will impact our profession, **Mary Lloyd Moore** is investigating whether variables exist that predict success on the national competency exam (PRAXIS) in speech-language pathology. Correlations will be examined

between various demographic factors: GPA, GRE scores, and scores on the national competency exam (PRAXIS) in speech-language pathology. Information for this study will be obtained from the Western Kentucky University (WKU), Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) and Murray State University (MSU) databases

and supplemented by information related to the PRAXIS exam scores obtained from program administrators at WKU, EKU and MSU. The analysis will involve a retroactive record review of undergraduate and graduate students in speech-language pathology programs at WKU, EKU and MSU.



## Smith Awarded RCAP Grant



**Janice Carter Smith** has been selected to receive a Research & Creative Activities Program (RCAP) award of \$8,000. The RCAP Review Committee received 72 proposals and hers was ranked highly among those applications.

The grant money will serve two purposes. First, equipment and

materials to conduct research with children with autism will be purchased and will partially equip her research lab. Second, these funds will assist in the development of a second larger project involving multi-site assessment using the Rapid Assessment of Problem Solving (RAPS) with children with autism.

**Jeff Barefoot** is working with students in his Aural Rehabilitation course to create a mannequin to assist in educating the community concerning dangerous noise levels. This project provides students with experience in production of a therapeutic product as well as the dissemination of findings at a state-level conference.

Students plan to develop and present a poster for the Kentucky Speech Language Hearing Association (KSHA) concerning community noise ordinances and laws and their relevance to hearing loss and aural rehabilitation.

## Pedagogy that Facilitates Meaningful Learning in SLP Students

What makes a course meaningful to students? **Lauren Bland**'s students will try to find out during the Summer 2013 semester with her CD 512 Seminar in Phonology course. This student cohort is currently reviewing the pedagogy in higher education

literature. Upon completion of the literature review, they will conduct a series of focus groups to determine how current students feel their learning needs can best be met.

Dr. Bland will then, to the greatest extent possible, develop the CD 512 course

from the student perspective. A pretest and posttest will be administered to judge satisfaction and knowledge acquired during the teaching of the course. Findings will be disseminated at ASHA in the Fall semester.

## In the Popper...

 **Barbara Brindle**

Investigation into the viscosity of naturally thickened liquids, found in local grocery stores, for individuals with swallowing difficulties who have been prescribed thickened fluids.

 **Leisa Hutchinson**

Case study to assess the effectiveness of intensive intervention using factory settings on the Springboard Light to improve access to vocabulary for one involved child.

 **Kimberly Green**

Review of how SLP students are prepared for addressing culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

 **Ashley Chance**

Literature review and curriculum development for ASL courses.

