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EIGHTH ANNUAL

**Graduate Student Research
& Scholarship Symposium**

APRIL 22, 2016

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

April 22, 2016

4:00 - 6:00 p.m. • UC Magnolia Room

Welcome: Dr. James LaPlant, Assistant Vice President for Research and
Dean of the Graduate School

Opening Remarks: Dr. Cecil Staton, Interim President

Special Recognitions: Dr. James LaPlant

Enjoy the Posters!

Refreshments provided by the Office of University Advancement.



College of the Arts

Music

ESTUDOS BEM HUMORADOS PARA TROMPETE SOLO BY FERNANDO MORAIS: AN INTRODUCTION

Gilmar Cavalcante da Silva

**Dr. Kenneth Kirk, Faculty Mentor
Department of Music**

The purpose of this research was to make known the *Estudos Bem Humorados para Trompete Solo* (*Humorous Etudes for Solo Trumpet*) (2013), an unpublished collection of 12 short character pieces in native Brazilian styles by Fernando Morais (b. 1966). The history and current practices of Brazilian trumpet pedagogy were examined, and the *Estudos* placed within that context and the broader international context. The *Estudos Bem Humorados para Trompete Solo* merit attention for three reasons. First, they are good music, worthy of study and performance. Second, they can act as a resource to preserve native Brazilian popular styles and to introduce those styles to non-Brazilians. Third, they are pedagogically useful as alternatives to other, better-known, etudes. To support these claims two of the etudes were analyzed in detail.

A PERFORMANCE OF *Six Pack for Solo Tuba* BY JAMES MEADOR

Curtis L. Thornton

**Dr. Daniel Rowland, Faculty Mentor
Department of Music**

All too often when people think of tuba playing what comes to mind is marching band or bass lines in marches, themselves, commonly referred to as “oom-pahs.” While those thoughts are not incorrect, the tuba is capable of a variety of musical styles, colors, and techniques. *Six Pack for Solo Tuba* by James Meador showcases much of what the tuba is capable of doing. It is a virtuosic piece that is comprised of large intervals, contrasting movements, and extended techniques. This piece portrays a person’s emotions, from “Anger” to “Melancholy,” as he or she would come home from a long day at work and drink a six pack of beer. Each movement displaying a different mood or emotion ensures an enjoyable experience for performer and audience alike.

College of Business Administration**Management and Healthcare Administration****AN OVERVIEW OF NURSING RETENTION****Anissa Bowers****Dr. Gary Hackbarth, Faculty Mentor
Department of Management and Healthcare Administration**

As the American population escalates, especially individuals aged 65 and over, and the drive for an increased quality of life intensifies, there will be a boosted requirement for qualified nurses within the U.S. healthcare system. Particularly, hospital administrations will face the challenge of attracting qualified nurses and furthermore, must find feasible ways to retain these nurses. There is an average turnover of 20% in the nursing career field. Attracting and retaining nurses is especially challenging when college and universities are not able to graduate the required numbers of nurses to meet the current nationwide demand; higher population numbers in the future will exacerbate the requirements. This research paper identifies factors that are important to registered nurses and their impact on the nurses' intent to remain on the job and in the nursing career field. Hospital leadership must master these elements to recruit and retain a qualified nursing staff.

College of Arts and Sciences**Biology****KNOTTING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PACIFIC HAGFISH****William A. Haney****Dr. Theodore Uyeno, Faculty Mentor
Department of Biology**

Hagfish are jawless, invertebrate chordates that employ body knots to feed, clean off mucous, and escape from confined spaces. The mechanical characterization of knotting has not been well-described because it is difficult to consistently control and stimulate this behavior experimentally. Through the use of a custom restraint device that holds a sedated hagfish securely in place, we were able to record high speed video of knotting in *Eptatretus stoutii* (Pacific hagfish) in a consistent and controlled manner. We used this setup to define steps in the knotting process and describe geometric and kinematic knotting characteristics. After kinematic analysis (Tracker V. 4.90) of video frames from 22 knotting events performed by 11 animals, we found that the kinematic parameters of knotting in *E. stoutii* are stereotyped; they preferentially form right-handed (77%) figure-eight knots (81.8%), using 12 characteristic steps to form the knot. This analysis may be useful in designing soft-construction robots.

**THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ECOLOGICAL CHANGE OF CHERRY LAKE, FL, USA
FROM THE MID-HOLOCENE TO MODERN DAY:
PLACING HUMAN IMPACTS IN THE CONTEXT OF NATURAL HISTORY**

James Ragan

**Dr. Matthew Waters, Faculty Mentor
Department of Biology**

Humans often play a direct role in the influx of nutrients into a lake ecosystem. High concentrations of phosphorus (P) and nitrogen (N) cause trophic state shifts from desired algal communities and natural ecosystem states to potentially harmful cyanobacteria dominance. Lake sediments are able to store information about climate change, internal lake changes, and changes to the catchment area by deposition of allochthonous and autochthonous materials. Here, we utilize paleolimnological tools to reconstruct ecosystem changes in Cherry Lake, FL from the mid-Holocene to present day. Sediment cores were retrieved in order to reconstruct nutrient inputs and primary producer responses over time prior to human settlement to understand baseline conditions and establish management targets for the future. Sediment cores show very low primary productivity and oligotrophic conditions throughout the Holocene with recent rapid increases in primary production corresponding to human impacts.

**DETERMINATION OF A GENE EXPRESSED ONLY IN THE
INFECTIVE LARVAL STAGE OF *DIROFILARIA IMMITIS***

Simone J. Thompson

**Dr. Eric W. Chambers, Faculty Mentor
Department of Biology**

Current molecular assays for detecting *Dirofilaria immitis* DNA in mosquitoes by PCR cannot differentiate between infected mosquitoes that contain any stage of parasite DNA and infective mosquitoes that harbor third-stage larvae (L3) capable of establishing infections in canines. This inability could lead to over-estimates of transmission risks to canines. To accurately evaluate transmission risks we have developed an L3-detection assay for *D. immitis* in the vector *Aedes aegypti* based on a RT-PCR test that detects an L3-activated gene transcript. Putative L3 stage genes were identified using bioinformatics tools and were screened by PCR using cDNA libraries as templates. Candidate genes were screened for stage-specific expression using RNA isolated from both *D. immitis* infected and uninfected mosquitoes. The L3 specific gene transcript CK855471A and a constitutively expressed control transcript, *Ditph*, for all vector-stage filarial larvae, can be used to detect filarial infectivity in pools of 25 mosquitoes.

Modern and Classical Languages

ACCENT AND IDENTITY IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Jackie Kelly

**Dr. Victoria Russell, Faculty Mentor
Department of Modern and Classical Languages**

Many believe that second language (L2) learning involves the acquisition of a second identity, which is greatly influenced by one's accent. This leads us to question, "Do students want to identify with the target language (TL) accent or with their mother tongue accent when acquiring and learning a L2?" Studies have shown us that a majority of students want to have a native-like accent when speaking and learning a L2; however, there has been a mismatch between learners' accent goals and their ability to perceive accents (Scales et al., 2006). This project explores the reasons why English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL) learners want to identify with the TL accent. The results of five studies that investigated the relationship between accent and identity with respect to second language acquisition are presented as well as practical implications for instructors of ESL and EFL students.

College of Education and Human Services

Communication Sciences and Disorders

EFFECTS OF CHANGING CLINICIANS ON CLIENTS' PROGRESS

Mary A. Adams

**Dr. Mary Gorham-Rowan, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

Many speech-language pathology graduate programs require students to become student clinicians. Typically, students alter clients every semester. The question raised within this research was how changing clinicians each semester effects clients' progress. School-age clients' rate of progress in speech and language therapy was obtained and compared in order to determine client progress when remaining with the same clinician versus changing clinicians each semester. Data were taken and compared among two consecutive semesters for two clients who had the same student clinician (looped clients) and two clients who changed student clinicians (non-looped clients). Results revealed that both types of clients showed the same amount of progress within goals continued throughout semesters. Results also revealed that looped clients showed less progress within goals that were increased to a more difficult skill level and goals that were unrelated to previous goals. A decrease in overall progress among semesters was observed in looped clients

THE EFFECTS OF THE LSVT ON VOCAL QUALITY ON AN ADOLESCENT WITH PARKINSONIAN-LIKE SYMPTOMS

Jade A. Dampier

**Dr. Matthew Carter, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness the LSVT program had on an adolescent's vocal quality that was diagnosed with Parkinsonian like symptoms. The treatment was implemented over the course of three weeks with a total of twelve sessions. During treatment sessions, the participant worked on various speech exercises to increase overall vocal loudness. The participant's sound pressure levels were obtained prior to and immediately after her treatment sessions. Results from the pre-treatment session were averaged and compared to results from the post-treatment session. The results from this study revealed that when implementing the LSVT program the participant experienced an increase in her vocal loudness following treatment, as measured by the sound pressure levels. Therefore, this study supports the positive influence the LSVT has on an adolescent experiencing the reduced vocal quality that is associated with having Parkinson's disease or Parkinsonian like symptoms.

THE EFFECTS OF CAFFEINE ON PREMENOPAUSAL AND POSTMENOPAUSAL WOMEN'S CEPSTRAL MEASURES OF VOICE

Ashley D. Fowler

**Dr. Mary Gorham-Rowan, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of caffeine on premenopausal versus postmenopausal women's vocal production using cepstral measured analysis. These measures included CPP, CPP F_0 , and L/H Ratio. The statistical relevance of each measure was determined using the median through a series of Wilcoxon signed ranks tests. This testing gave a P value for analytical purposes. Four premenopausal and four postmenopausal women produced a section of the Rainbow Passage for three trials. After completion, the participants consumed 8 oz. of coffee, waited 30 minutes, and repeated the reading of the Rainbow passage. The measures were averaged for each individual's trials and a median was established for pre- and post-caffeine ingestion. The results of the current study showed no statistical difference for any of the measures for either group. This leads to the conclusion that caffeine does not affect vocal production differently in premenopausal and postmenopausal women.

PRESENCE OF PROSODIC DEFICITS IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN THE ABSENCE OF LINGUISTIC INFORMATION

Kelsey M. Hedman

**Drs. Matthew Carter and Lynn Adams, Faculty Mentors
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

This study was designed to examine the prosodic abilities of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in the absence of linguistic information. Previous studies have shown that children with ASD commonly exhibit prosodic deficits at the word and sentence level, these deficits could potentially be explained by deficient lower-level non-linguistic abilities. Assessing the child's prosodic ability at a more basic level may allow clinicians to assess a child's ability at an earlier age and determine any present deficits. The study contained two participants, a 6 year 3 month old child with high functioning autism (HFA), and a 5 year 10 month old typically developing child. The researcher assessed each child's ability to accurately reproduce 2- and 3- pure tone sequences when presented in a sound attenuated booth. Overall, the researcher found that the child with HFA exhibited greater difficulty reproducing the 2- and 3-tone sequences than the typically developing child.

EFFECTS OF HYPERTEXT ON LANGUAGE DELAYED SCHOOL AGE LANGUAGE STUDENTS

Hannah Leicher

**Dr. Crystal Randolph, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

With the increase use of technology in the classroom, children with language disorders use more hypertext versus printed text. In completing a thorough search using several, it was discovered that no research has examined the effects of using hypertext versus printed on students with a diagnosed language disorder. The purpose of the current research was to investigate the effects of hypertext versus printed text on reading comprehension, reading miscues, and reading fluency in 7-10 year olds with language disorders. Each participant read aloud two stories; each presented in hypertext and printed text. Analysis of the data revealed that there is significant difference overall. In hypertext reading miscues, story retell quantity, and reading comprehension questions was higher than printed text. In printed text story retell quality was higher than that of hypertext.

PREDICTING ORAL READING COMPREHENSION ABILITIES

Taylor M. Struble

**Dr. Matthew Carter, Faculty Mentor
Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

This study was concerned with predicting reading comprehension abilities by examining standardized test scores from commonly administered tests of reading abilities. A single-word reading fluency test, a single-word reading accuracy test, and a textual reading fluency test were administered to four college students. Analysis of the results indicated the Word Identification subtest from the single-word reading accuracy test was the best indicator of reading comprehension scores on the textual reading fluency test. Thus, the ability to read words accurately by sight was shown to exhibit the highest relation to reading comprehension. Results of this study indicate that administration of the Word Identification subtest can allow for a more accurate indication of reading comprehension versus administration of multiple standardized tests. The findings also indicate that comprehension of short passages included in the textual reading fluency test is not as reliant upon textual reading fluency and single-word reading fluency as previously hypothesized.

Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology

A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE COLLEGE PROFESSIONALS' LIFE HISTORIES ON THEIR PERCEPTIONS REGARDING AAVE VERSUS CODE SWITCHING

Elizabeth Gassel Perkins

**Drs. Richard Schmertzinger and Lorraine Schmertzinger, Faculty Mentors
Department of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology**

In an effort to learn how best to work with students who are speakers of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) in the college English composition classroom, this study examines the perceptions of AAVE, Standard English (SE), and code switching from the perspectives of five African American women, who all work in higher education. After conducting interviews, the researcher used thematic narrative analysis to explain how the familial, educational, professional, and societal experiences of the women developed their attitudes toward AAVE and SE. The researcher also conducted a values narrative analysis to examine what was most important to the participants in regards to language use for themselves, their students, and others. Finally, using post-colonial theory, the researcher examines how the responses provided by the participants is problematic, but reconciles these issues within an understanding of the participants' setting and lived experiences.

**OUT FROM THE SHADOWS: A COUNTERNARRATIVE OF SUCCESSFUL
AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN SCHOOL**

Kevin B. Scott

**Dr. Richard Schmertzing, Faculty Mentor
Department of Curriculum, Leadership, and Technology**

This dissertation centers on the adolescent African American male, his schooling, his life experiences, and my own experiences as a school counselor, and my mission to help and guide as many of these African American males as I can to find to success, both in school and in life. To explore the lived experiences of the four young Black men who participated in my study, I used the theoretical framework of critical race theory (CRT) and in-depth interviewing. I present my finding in the form of a quasi-fictional counternarrative. A goal of this study is to improve my own insights as an African American counselor and educator, via investigation of the majoritarian narrative, and the counternarrative associated with Black males within the educational system.

**A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF SECONDARY CONTENT EDUCATORS USING
LITERACY TO MEET INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS**

Christie A. Wall

**Drs. Richard and Lorraine Schmertzing, Faculty Mentors
Department of Curriculum, Leadership and Technology**

Recent changes in curriculum standards and high stakes tests caused a renewed focus in using literacy to teach content. While content area literacy is not new, the research suggests a different approach for implementation—disciplinary literacy. Disciplinary literacy suggests that secondary educators should begin teaching students to read, write, and discuss content text as experts in that content field. This qualitative study sought to examine one district in middle Georgia’s content area educators’ experiences with and perceptions of using literacy to teach their discipline. Using Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot’s portraiture, each participant’s story highlights the way these educators are using disciplinary literacy as well as more general literacy strategies to positively impact student learning. The portraits were written after semi-structured interviews, observations, and written reflections from each of the participants.

Library and Information Studies

THE NEW FACE OF RESOURCE SHARING: A SURVEY OF ACADEMIC LIBRARY DIRECT BORROWING CONSORTIA

Ashley T. Hoffman

**Dr. Linda Most, Faculty Mentor
Department of Library and Information Studies**

As more academic libraries sacrifice shelf space for social areas, resource sharing consortia now, more than ever, help libraries fill collection gaps and ensure their patrons' needs are met. Traditionally, resource sharing between libraries is facilitated through interlibrary loan software that stands apart from the library catalog and requires staff intervention for processing requests. However, recent software innovations can link library catalogs and allow patrons to request material directly from the library that owns it. This process, known as direct consortial borrowing, decreases staff workload and improves resource sharing turnaround time. Direct consortial borrowing requires libraries to integrate more deeply with a shared integrated library system (SILS) or specialized software. This exploratory study reviews the practice of direct consortial borrowing in U.S. academic libraries and surveys the policies and software used by the major consortia. Several patterns emerged that could lead to increased library collaboration in the future.

Kinesiology and Physical Education

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: BRIDGING THE GAP

Sandra F. Masci

**Dr. Sonya Sanderson, Faculty Mentor
Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education**

A meta-analytic review was conducted on the adverse outcomes and prevalence of sexual harassment in a federally operated workplace. Both males and females were included in the analysis which fills a gap in prior research. Researchers report a total of 11 studies, nine examining sexual harassment prevalence rates, and two examining adverse work outcomes. Results found that sexual harassment was prevalent in the federal workplace $r = .60$, with women experiencing sexual harassment significantly more than men. Gender harassment had the greatest adverse effects as reported by employees $r = .84$ and was positively correlated with sexual harassment. The present findings suggest that sexual harassment in the workplace is still a critical topic of concern to employers. Future research should address both same sex and opposite sex harassment to display the value of providing more comprehensive trainings and prevention programs to employers.

Marriage and Family Therapy

MARRIED COUPLES' EXPERIENCES OF PREMARITAL COUNSELING

Isadora Burnham, Violina Lilova, and Elizabeth Newton

**Dr. Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Faculty Mentor
Department of Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy**

In this study, we sought to explore the ways in which a couple's experience with premarital counseling has impacted their marriage if such an impact exists. Our focus was to unpack the experiences of participants to obtain a better understanding of how attending premarital counseling impacts their relationships and their ideas of counseling. Williamson, Trial, Bradbury, and Karney (2014) explored the impact of attending premarital counseling on a couple's later help-seeking behavior and found that couples were more likely to seek counseling later in their marriage if they had attended premarital counseling compared to those who had not. Tambling and Glebova (2013) explored the following themes that impact couples' experiences: who conducts the premarital counseling, the number of sessions required, cost, preferred topics, and the like. In considering the themes among previous research findings, we conducted semi-structured interviews utilizing the snowball sampling method to recruit participants.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE BENEFITS OF THERAPY IN THE AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Cheryl Coleman, La'Wanda Maxwell, and Jennifer Yingling

**Dr. Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Faculty Mentor
Department of Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy**

Mistrust of the medical field has been a long standing theme in the African American community. The purpose of this study is to explore perceptions of the benefits, or lack thereof, of African American communities. Research will explore prominent themes pertaining to psychotherapy and collect data using interviews. These themes include but are not limited to improper diagnosis, family/community assumptions, ridicule, and religious views. The researchers hope to gain better insight on the reasons why psychotherapy is not widely used in these communities and attempt to bridge the gap between the medical field and African Americans.

GENDER ROLES IN BINATIONAL COUPLES OF MIXED-IMMIGRATION STATUS LIVING IN THE UNITED STATES

Ashley N. Lanier, Katelyn O. Coburn, Ellory K. Bishop, and Christina E. Vrandopulo

**Dr. Jennifer Lambert-Shute, Faculty Mentor
Department of Psychology, Counseling, and Family Therapy**

Currently there is a lack of research on the ways in which the confluence of cultural values influences the gender roles within intermarriages. For this reason, we chose to interview women who immigrated to the U.S. and are married to U.S. nationals. This qualitative study explores the ways in which American values and beliefs about gender influence binational marriages. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with four immigrant women. The interviews explore perceptions of marriage in the women's country of origin and marriage in the United States. Interviews also explore the binational couple's parenting roles, division of household chores, and decision-making processes. We hope to better understand how American values and beliefs influence the gender roles of binational couples and how cultural differences are negotiated within these marriages. We also hope to contribute knowledge and greater cultural awareness within the Marriage and Family Therapy Field.

Middle, Secondary, Reading and Deaf Education

DEVELOPING WH-QUESTIONS WITH A DEAF STUDENT: AN INTERVENTION USING TEACHER MODELING, STUDENT SCAFFOLDING, AND PICTURE SUPPORT

Myra Cerecero

**Dr. Jennifer Beal-Alvarez, Faculty Mentor
Department of Middle, Secondary, Reading, and Deaf Education**

The development of Wh- questions (who, what, when, where and why) by a fourth grade deaf student in a mainstream setting was examined using an intervention that included teacher modeling, scaffolding, and picture support for 6 weeks via a single-case experimental design. The communication mode of the student was spoken English with signed support when needed. The student was presented with a picture stimulus and asked a series of questions with teacher scaffolding to aid him in developing WH questions. Following this intervention, the student increased his development of WH questions from 0-1 Wh- questions in the initial baseline phase to 4-5 in the intervention phases. These results suggest that this intervention was effective and add to the scant literature available for question development with DHH students.

CIVIC EDUCATION IN THE ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSROOM

Erin E. Goff

**Dr. Julia McKissack, Faculty Mentor
Department of Middle, Secondary, Reading and Deaf Education**

Constitutional literacy is low among Americans, and schools are tasked with educating students about civic participation and should be utilized in these efforts. The need to provide a rigorous and also relevant curriculum has increased enrollment in Advanced Placement courses throughout the nation. This study addressed the effects problem based learning (PBL), a student led pedagogical method of presenting a problem for solving before concepts and subject information is taught, had on student achievement, engagement, and attitudes in an Advanced Placement United States Government and Politics course. The study found student achievement, engagement, and attitudes to be greater during PBL instruction than current teacher led best practices instruction. The large effect PBL had on student achievement and behavior illustrates the positive impact this approach has on the opportunity for student learning in advanced classrooms.

EFFECTS OF TARGETED DRILLS ON COMPUTATIONAL FLUENCY FOR FIRST-GRADE STUDENTS

Amber L. Hare

**Dr. Ellice P. Martin, Faculty Mentor
Department of Middle, Secondary, Reading and Deaf Education**

This study examined the effects of timed targeted drills (TTD) on the math achievement, attitudes toward math, and student engagement during math instruction and practice for first-grade students compared to timed drills (TD). Participants participated in 4 weeks of TTD intervention treatment, followed by 4 weeks of TD control treatment. Math achievement was measured using a commercially-available instrument designed to measure computational fluency. Attitudes toward math were measured using a survey. Student engagement was measured with an observation checklist. Both instruments were developed by the teacher-researcher. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, paired one-tailed t tests, and Cohen's d . Results indicated small, statistically significant gains for achievement and attitude. Results for engagement were mixed and were therefore inconclusive. The TTD intervention was an effective intervention, but the gains were minimal. As such, it may not be worth the time or effort involved for implementation in first-grade.

**EFFECTS OF MULTIFACETED LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR
MIDDLE SCHOOL ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS LEARNERS WITH
MODERATE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**

Judy Hall Lippincott

**Drs. Dawn Lambeth and Ellice Martin, Faculty Mentors
Department of Middle, Secondary, Reading and Deaf Education**

The current study's purpose was to ascertain the effects of integrating multifaceted literacy instruction on learner achievement, attitude, and engagement for English/Language Arts learners with moderate intellectual disabilities (MoID) at the middle school level. The 8-week study involved seven learners with MoID. Achievement was measured using pretests and posttests. The p score of .24 indicated no significant difference in achievement. Learners' attitudes toward literacy skills instruction were measured using a pre-intervention and post-intervention survey. The post-intervention survey results indicated an increase over the pre-intervention survey results that indicated the intervention had positive effect on learners' attitudes. Engagement checklist results indicated there was no significant difference in participation levels between the groups. Fieldnotes indicated an increased interest and positive responses during the FMSV instruction by learners and adults. Based on the findings, the teacher-researcher concluded that the use of the FMSV intervention did not have a significant impact on learners.

Social Work

**PROTECTING THE PROTECTORS: EXPLORING THE REALITIES OF
CHILD WELFARE WORKERS IN GEORGIA**

Trudy H. Cape and Tonya W. Brown

**Dr. Diane Holliman, Faculty Mentor
Department of Social Work**

It is not uncommon for a child welfare worker to be the only advocate for a child that has been abused or neglected; that is, when the worker is able to effectively complete their assigned tasks. The primary challenges facing Georgia's child welfare system include high caseloads, inadequate training, inadequate salaries, lack of supervision, and poor working conditions. Georgia has failed to remedy this long standing issue, as in 2013 there were 90 total child fatalities and in 1998 there were only 37 child fatalities (Department of Health and Human Services, 1998-2015). Data has been collected from policy reviews, personal experiences, first-hand interviews, and literature reviews to provide a robust overview of the experiences encountered as a child welfare case worker. This is presented with the hope that a small portion of the secret, yet real, lives of child welfare case workers will come forth, and society will begin to work towards protecting their protectors.

SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE ON POLICY REGARDING THE EDUCATION OF HOMELESS CHILDREN

Catherine M. Citta

**Dr. Phillip Dybicz, Faculty Mentor
Department of Social Work**

Children who experience homelessness often face barriers in accessing their education. This research, using the social justice framework, analyzes the values guiding policy regarding the education of homeless children. Through historical and comparative analyses, it is found that a right based value supplemented with need based value is the most adequate in guiding such policy. The implications these findings have on the social work field and the effectiveness of the currently policy is addressed.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MINDFULNESS MEDITATION FOR CLIENTS WITH HIGH ANXIETY AND LIMITED SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Kasey Knight Griner

**Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor
Department of Social Work**

There are many day-to-day challenges faced by individuals who suffer from mental health disorders that the general population does not have to deal with. Two common challenges are general anxiety and fear associated with being around other individuals in a social setting. In this research study, mindfulness was incorporated to an individual's inpatient substance abuse treatment setting in addition to the normal program structure. The goal was to teach and evaluate the effectiveness of using the coping skill of mindful-meditation in an effort to reduce the patient's anxiety and promote continued success with treatment. In addition to reducing anxiety, the amount of social interactions was measured to help the patient develop interpersonal communication skills that can be used outside of the inpatient treatment setting. The research design proved that incorporating mindfulness into this patient's daily treatment did have a positive effect on the levels of her anxiety and the amount of social interactions in which she participated. "The Effectiveness of Mindfulness Meditation for Clients with High Anxiety and Limited Social Interactions "

SOCIAL JUSTICE FRAMEWORK: FAIR SENTENCING ACT OF 2010

Kenyetta T. Hayes

**Dr. Phillip Dybicz, Faculty Mentor
Department of Social Work**

Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 as a direct response to the increased Cocaine usage and arrests in the 1980s. The 1986 law increased the “racial imbalance” in U.S. prisons due to minor crack cocaine convictions that disproportionately represented minority populations as the culprit. The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 is the most recent U.S. legislative policy to guide crack/cocaine violations, which was created to decrease the racial discrimination in drug sentencing. The purpose of this comparative analysis is to make a moral argument utilizing the social justice framework to determine which values (needs, rights, deserts, and equality) are best to guide policy in drug sentencing in order to reduce racial discrimination. The analysis focus on a U.S. historical evaluation and a cross-country comparative analysis. Based on the social justice framework, the best values to guide preferred policy to reduce racial discrimination in drug sentencing, are formal equality informed by deserts and moral equality informed by rights. These values are consistent with all of the social work values with special emphasis on service, social justice, and dignity and worth of the person.

THE EFFECTS OF EXERCISE AND MEDITATION ON STRESS AND DEPRESSION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

Sandra Y. G. Jones

**Drs. Hanae Kanno and Mizanur Miah, Faculty Mentors
Department of Social Work**

Social workers endure countless hours in environments and with populations at risk that can be both stressful and depressing. This research assessed a specific social program that deals with families often in extreme poverty. From September 21, 2015 - November 16, 2015, I conducted a Single Subject Research Design (SSRD) to improve the stress and depression levels of three social workers working in different positions in this social program: (1) program director, (2) program coordinator, and (3) caseworker; using a multiple baseline design and weekly scores from Beck Depression Inventory, and The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory to track their progress. Guidelines for the exercise or meditation intervention were at least three times per week consistently for no less than 30 minutes. Using exercise and meditation as interventions, their stress levels and depression improved. Improving these two elements should extend to improved endurance in the field.

SOCIAL WORK, RELIGION, SPIRITUALITY AND POLICY

Glenn Ritchie

**Dr. Diane Holliman, Faculty Mentor
Department of Social Work**

This paper represents a review of literature concerning the influence of religion and spirituality on social welfare policy and social work practice. The review begins by examining the historical trends concerning the influence of religion and spirituality on social welfare policy and social work practice. It also examines policies that prohibit discrimination against faith-based initiatives. The review also compares policy in the United States to that in the United Kingdom. Finally the review explains the relevance to social work practice. The purpose of this research is examine the outcomes of religion and spirituality on social work practice and to determine what areas of impact are worthy for additional research. Additional research is needed to determine possible discrimination by faith-based initiatives benefitting from Charitable Choice legislation.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POLICY AND PERSEVERING THE RIGHTS OF UNDOCUMENTED VICTIMS

Anita Rojas

**Dr. Phillip Dybicz, Faculty Mentor
Department of Social Work**

One in four women in the United States has experienced physical violence by her partner. Immigrant women without documentation are at higher risk of being domestic violence victims due to a number of barriers and circumstances. The purpose of this research was to examine the best social justice value set to guide policy dealing with non-citizen domestic violence victims. The analysis focused on a United States historical evaluation and a cross-country comparative analysis. Through analysis of data, the researcher found that human rights were the best values to guide policy dealing with non-citizen domestic violence victims because rights advanced justice for this vulnerable population and were parallel with the values of the social work profession. Throughout United States history, the standpoint toward domestic violence has changed due to changes in social values. Currently, domestic violence victims, regardless of their immigration status, have the right to seek law enforcement protection without fearing repercussions under the Violence Against Women's Act of 2013.

EXERCISE AS AN INTERVENTION IN THE TREATMENT OF DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM WITH A DISABLED VETERAN

VeShawn L. Webb

**Drs. Mizanur Miah and Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentors
Department of Social Work**

This Single Subject Research Design was implemented to determine if alternative measures such as increased exercise can decrease depressive moods and increase self-esteem. The participant, a 57-year-old African American homeless veteran presented with symptoms of hopelessness and worthlessness. The goal is to increase walking time to decrease depressive moods and increase self-esteem. An AB design was chosen for this study. The A phase followed patterns of depression and self-esteem measured by weekly PHQ-9 and Rosenberg's Self-esteem Questionnaire scores 3 weeks prior to the intervention. The B phase introduced exercise, walking 60-90 minutes weekly to decrease depressive moods and increase self-esteem. The AB design revealed an overall decrease in depressive moods and an overall increase in self-esteem.

INCREASING SKILL SET OF A CAREGIVER TO BETTER MANAGE CHILDREN'S BEHAVIORAL ISSUES WITH BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

Samantha Whisler

**Dr. Hanae Kanno, Faculty Mentor
Department of Social Work**

This Single Subject Research Design (SSRD) was implemented to determine if the assistance of a behavioral specialist would be effective at increasing the skill set of a great-grandmother raising children, with behavioral issues. An AB design was used to conduct this research, with the A phase measuring the reports of incidents with both children, and the B phase measuring the same after the intervention was implemented. The intervention was a behavioral specialist that was tasked with teaching techniques to the caregiver. The service providers included therapists, as well as teachers. The incidents were to include episodes of aggression expressed by the child. The caregiver did show some improvement in what she reported as episodes. However, the service providers' reports remained the same or higher. The caregiver also needed to implement the skills she had learned from the specialist in order to decrease the children's aggression.

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