



Thomas Alan Smilie

(Left to right) Camp participant Charbel El-Khoury, UCF intern Rachele Rizzo, camp participant Jeffrey Migliori, UCF intern Lisa Sabin, UCF intern Ivelisse Hernandez and camp participant Lauren Waddell



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Camp participant Katie Byrnes, who has special fine motor needs, waits while an intern gets a keyboard with larger keys.

## “Technology in the FAAST Lane”: Interns Help Teenagers With Disabilities Use Assistive Technologies

Fourteen undergraduate speech-language pathology interns recently helped area young adults with disabilities learn to use assistive technology software and hardware to substantially improve their ability to communicate and perform academic tasks.

The interns worked with 11 young adults with disabilities and their parents who attended “Technology in the FAAST Lane,” an innovative five-day camp in June run by the FAAST Atlantic Region Assistive Technology Demonstration Center, known as the ARDC, in cooperation with other community agencies. The camp, held primarily at the Assistive Technology Educational Network (better known as ATEN) facility in Sanford, Fla., also included a curriculum-relevant field trip to Walt Disney World’s Epcot. During the camp, participants used AT software and hardware to research a country of their choice via the Internet and during the field trip.

According to Matthew Press, the occupational therapist for the camp, the UCF interns underwent eight hours of rigorous training over two days to become proficient enough in the assistive software programs, such as Inspiration, Universal Reader and PixWriter, to help camp participants and their parents learn to use the software. This training was part of the students’ service-learning activities in their augmentative and alternative communication course.

Of the intern experience, UCF undergraduate speech-language pathology student Mina Keramati said, “I have learned so much better with this hands-on experience than I have in any other class in this major so far. I had never worked so closely with a client that had AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) needs, and I feel I am much better prepared for clients I may see in the future.”

The assistive programs and devices used during the camp can aid students with a number of disabilities. For example, Universal Reader allows users to highlight areas of text on the Web and have the words read aloud. This program aids those with special visual needs, those who are auditory learners and those who cannot read independently. Some camp participants received physical accommodations as well, with simple tools such as stickers on the keyboard keys with larger letters on them for a visually impaired participant or a keyboard with larger keys for a participant with special fine motor needs. Some also learned to use augmentative and alternative communication devices, supported by camp interns and staff to understand the devices’ real-world applications.

According to Doreen Scribner, mother of camp participant Pammy Scribner, the most important

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thing both she and her daughter gained from the experience was a renewed desire for Pammy to use her assistive communication device, a Dynamyte, more often. Friends and family who Pammy communicates with often understand her without the aid of AT, but communication with others outside of the home is a challenge for her. During the field-trip to Epcot, Pammy used her AT hardware to ask theme park employees questions about the country she was researching. Doreen said when Pammy asked questions and others understood her without her mother having to speak for her, Pammy’s eyes shone. Pammy, who is 18 years old, is becoming more independent and using AT hardware and software is helping with this process.

At the end of the camp, participants demonstrated their knowledge and skills by delivering public presentations on the country

they researched and their experiences at the camp. Each participant received a refurbished desktop computer with the software programs used during the camp included.

Assistant Professor and ARDC Coordinator Jennifer Kent-Walsh said, “What makes this camp different is that we are teaching the participating teenagers and their parents to use assistive technologies to complete challenging and motivating educational activities, and then we send the families home with the computer and software they learned to use during camp. We want these kids to have access to the tools they need to be successful when completing homework, and it is exciting to have the undergraduate student interns play such a key role in this process.”

The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology provided funding to establish the

ARDC in the UCF Communication Disorders Clinic in October 2005. The center provides services to clients with disabilities in nine Florida counties and unique field-experience opportunities to UCF interns, such as this camp.

The FAAST ARDC frequently collaborates with community agencies to provide services. Partners for “Technology in the FAAST Lane” included the Assistive Technology Educational Network, Center for Independent Living of Central Florida, Down Syndrome Association of Central Florida, IDEAS Special Needs Consults Inc., Kiwanis Club of Oviedo–Winter Springs and Walt Disney World. With continued support from sponsors and interest from the community, it is hoped the camp will become an annual event.

## Department Researchers Win Top Poster Awards at 2006 FLASHA Convention

Researchers from the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders took the top four poster presentation awards at the 2006 Annual Convention of the Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, held May 25–28 in Orlando. In addition, Assistant Professor Jennifer Kent-Walsh received a 2005–2006 FLASHA Foundation, Inc., Research Award of \$2,500 to support her work on “The effects of peer instruction on the expressive language of

children using augmentative and alternative communication during shared reading activities.”

Listed below are the names of the award-winning poster presentations and researchers:  
 First Place: “Butch Learns to Read” by Joan Kissel, Kenyatta O. Rivers and David L. Ratusnik  
 Second Place: “FCAT in the Doghouse? Process Artifacts for Multicultural Populations”

by Larry E. Schutz, Kenyatta O. Rivers and Judith A. Schutz

Third Place: “School-Based AAC Service Delivery: Pilot Survey of Speech-Language Pathologists” by Jennifer Kent-Walsh, Chaya Stark and Cathy Binger

Fourth Place: “Bidialectal Training Program for African American Adolescent Dialect Speakers” by Kenyatta O. Rivers, Lisa S. MacKenzie and David L. Ratusnik



Charlotte Harvey

*First-place winners: Associate Professor Kenyatta Rivers (left) and Joan Kissel (center) with FLASHA representative Joseph Langhans. Not pictured is research colleague Professor David Ratusnik.*



Charlotte Harvey

*Second-place winners: (left to right) Judith Schutz, Larry Schutz and Rivers.*



Charlotte Harvey

*Third-place winners: Assistant Professor Jennifer Kent-Walsh (left) and student Chaya Stark (center) with Langhans. Not pictured is research colleague Cathy Binger.*



## Department Name Change

The department's name change to the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders became official this past May, as did the change in name for degrees the department confers. The change brings the UCF department's name in line with the official name of the discipline and with four of the other five educational programs in Florida. The inclusion of "sciences" in the department name emphasizes the sound theoretical and research bases that underlie clinical applications in the assessment and treatment of communication disorders by speech-language pathologists and audiologists.

## New Programs in Language and Literacy Now Accepting Applications

The department is pleased to announce it is accepting applications for two new degree programs specializing in school-speech-language pathology: an Educational Specialist, known as an Ed.S., in Curriculum and Instruction and a Ph.D. in Education, Communication Sciences and Disorders Track.

The Ed.S. prepares school speech-language pathologists to tackle complex spoken and written language needs of children, especially those with communication disorders from lower income areas and diverse backgrounds. Program graduates complete the Florida Department of Education requirements for the Endorsement in Reading. Dual certification enhances graduates' marketability, broadens their scope of practice, provides credentials and significantly increases entry-level pay.

The Ph.D. program prepares doctoral-level personnel for positions in universities, clinics and school administration. The Ph.D. program's mission is to prepare language and literacy leaders to conduct research, design evidence-based instruction and educate the next generation of school practitioners.

For more information about the new programs and admissions process, visit [www.graduate.ucf.edu](http://www.graduate.ucf.edu), call the department at (407) 823-4798 or e-mail at [cdedsphd@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:cdedsphd@mail.ucf.edu).

## Faculty Positions Available for Fall 2007

The department invites applications for three faculty positions. Two positions support the newly-approved, collaborative Ed.S. and Ph.D. programs with the College of Education in language and literacy: a director of the doctoral program and an additional faculty member. The third position enhances programming in neurogenic communication disorders in preparation for a collaborative Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Sciences.

For more information about these positions, visit [www.cohpa.ucf.edu/comdis](http://www.cohpa.ucf.edu/comdis), contact Martine Vanryckeghem, search committee chair at [martinev@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:martinev@mail.ucf.edu) or (407) 823-4808, or contact Jamee Minnetto, coordinator of administrative services at [jminett@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:jminett@mail.ucf.edu) or (407) 823-4792.

## Faculty Awards

### Bari Hoffman Ruddy

- Teaching Incentive Program Award
- 2006 College and University Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching

### Jennifer Kent-Walsh

- 2006 College Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching

### Jack Ryalls

- Fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

## Upcoming ASHA Convention Presentations

**"Bridging the Bilingual Communication Gap: Best Practices for Hispanic Students"**  
Alejandro Brice

**"Simulated AAC Intervention: Pilot Investigation Targeting Comprehension of Locative Concepts"**  
Jennifer Kent-Walsh, Cathy Binger (UNM), Hope McLeod, Christopher Stapleton and Eileen Smith (UNM)

**"Teaching Educators and Parents to Support Language Development in AAC"**  
Jennifer Kent-Walsh, Stephanie del Campo (UNM), Stacy Hickman (UNM), Carey Marquez (UNM) and Donna Rivera (UNM)

**"Classroom Community Connections: Undergraduate Service-Learning in AAC"**  
Jennifer Kent-Walsh and Jamie Rubin

**"Phonetic Analysis of a New Case of Foreign Accent Syndrome"**  
Rosalie Perkins, Jack Ryalls and Janet Whiteside

**"State Mandated Testing Under the Microscope"**  
Kenyatta Rivers, Larry Schutz and Judith Schutz

**"Butch Learns to Read"**  
Joan Kissel (OCPS), Kenyatta Rivers and David Ratusnik

**"Bidialectal Training Program for Facilitating Code-Switching Skills in Adolescent Dialect Speakers"**  
Kenyatta Rivers, Lisa Simmons (OCPS) and David Ratusnik

**"Differences in Treatment Outcomes for Persons With Acquired Alexia"**  
Sue Ann Eidson (UF), Janet Whiteside and Debbie Harrison

**"Mixed Reality Environment Enhances Learning for a Stroke Patient"**  
Janet Whiteside and Cali Fidopiastis

**"Working Effectively With Cognitively Impaired Individuals"**  
Dorey Wolf, Alaine Prignon and Erin Jarvis

## Friends of the Communication Disorders Clinic Clients Fund Update

The "Friends of the CDC Clients" fund received a \$4,000 donation from an anonymous donor. Donations benefit select adults and children who have a clearly demonstrated need by allowing the clinic to defer fees for these individuals. Donations can be mailed to Jamee Minnetto, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, University of Central Florida, P.O. Box 162215, Orlando, Fla. 32816-2215. Checks can be made payable to the UCF Foundation, with "Friends of CDC Clients" in the memo line. All donations are tax-deductible.



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Assistant Professor Bari Hoffman Ruddy (center) supervises as Tia Horn evaluates Haley Willis using videolaryngostroboscopy.

## Collaboration Enables Students to Evaluate Vocal Performance Majors

In a unique collaboration, students from Assistant Professor Bari Hoffman Ruddy's Differential Diagnosis in Speech and Language course are evaluating vocal performance majors from UCF's Department of Music using a variety of sophisticated diagnostic tools this semester.

Under the direction of Ruddy and Jeffrey J. Lehman, M.D., twelve graduate students will conduct the assessment of 65 vocal performance majors at the David B. Ingram Voice Care Center, part of the department's Communication Disorders Clinic in the Central Florida Research Park. Assistant Professor Jeremy Hunt from the Department of Music is co-coordinating the program.

Because of their rigorous activities, vocal performance students can be at risk for vocal pathology. One goal of this collaboration is to intervene proactively to educate vocal performance majors about maintaining their vocal health and minimizing the potential for injury. Another goal is to provide participating differential diagnosis students with clinical experience using a variety of diagnostic

instruments, interpreting results and making recommendations based on their evaluations. Vocal performance students have attended an initial information session with Ruddy, during which she gave the students an overview of the anatomy and physiology of the voice; discussed common sources of vocal misuse; outlined common problems encountered by singers, actors and public speakers; and explained what the examination the students would undergo would entail. Students were given an individual appointment time for their evaluation and voice therapy session.

The differential diagnosis students use videolaryngostroboscopy, acoustic and aerodynamic assessment to provide the vocal performance students with a complete evaluation of the structure and function of the laryngeal mechanism.

"This is an excellent opportunity for our students to have practice with sophisticated equipment and learn to integrate those measures into an appropriate treatment plan," said Ruddy.

According to Ruddy, this program is a positive step for the vocal performance majors as well, because it is proactive and by training the students to care for their voices now, Ruddy and her students may be able to spare them developing vocal pathology later.

Any vocal performance students discovered to have existing vocal pathology will be treated at the Voice Care Center or referred for appropriate medical management. This collaboration between the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders and the Department of Music will be an ongoing program, with speech-language pathology students assessing vocal performance majors annually during the fall semester.

Ruddy added that this collaboration may be a factor that vocal performance students and their families consider when choosing a university. UCF now can offer a proactive program of care for those who are training to use their voices professionally, and the program will distinguish UCF from other institutions.



## FAAST Center Welcomes Faye Warren

At the FAAST Atlantic Region Demonstration Center housed in the department's Communication Disorders Clinic, part of Faye Warren's job is to demonstrate assistive technology for clients, and her personal use of AT helps her demonstrate to clients that they too can succeed in pursuing their passions.

Warren recently began working at the FAAST ARDC; her position as a program assistant is funded by a one-year grant from the Prentke Romich Company, a manufacturer of augmentative and alternative communication systems based in Wooster, Ohio. Warren's job duties include assisting with augmentative and alternative communication demonstrations, mentoring clients and students, and completing administrative tasks.

"We are thrilled to have Faye working with us in the FAAST Center. She is an invaluable team member who sends an incredibly positive message to our clients and students," said Assistant Professor and ARDC Coordinator Jennifer Kent-Walsh.

Warren has used a variety of different AAC devices throughout her life, including a TouchTalker and a Liberator. Currently, she communicates using a Pathfinder, which is one of the devices she demonstrates for FAAST ARDC clients. Using Minspeak, a pictorial language system, and word prediction, the Pathfinder enables users to create sentences that are spoken aloud to listeners.

Of her role at the center, Warren said, "Well, I absolutely love helping and teaching students and everybody else English and the communication skills for them to survive and thrive in today's world."

Warren, who earned a B.F.A. with a major in creative writing from St. Andrews Presbyterian College in Laurinburg, N.C., is articulate and patient, attributes that have been and continue to be an asset in her roles as a consultant, speaker, tester and demonstrator of AAC technology.

When asked what drew her to the job at the FAAST ARDC, Warren said, "Well, the assistive technology inspires me to help and encourage those who don't believe in themselves. Therefore, I can give others hope and encouragement that they need in their lives."

According to Clinical Instructor Barbaralyn Harden, Warren's direct supervisor, ARDC staff and students conduct assessments with clients who have assistive technology needs in order to determine relevant and appropriate options that can help clients to communicate and participate effectively in daily activities. The FAAST ARDC has a wide variety of AAC hardware and software available for trial with clients.

Warren said, "Helping and mentoring others is a great joy in my life. That is what I am meant to do."



Above: Warren uses the reflective dot on her forehead to select keys on her Pathfinder hands-free. Right: Warren can also use a chin stick to press buttons on her Pathfinder.



Faye Warren wears a reflective dot on her forehead that she uses to interact with Smart-Nav software, which allows for hands-free operation, on her computer and Pathfinder.



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**For comments, questions or more information:**

**Communiqué**

**Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders**

**College of Health and Public Affairs**

University of Central Florida  
P.O. Box 162215  
Orlando, FL 32816-2215  
(407) 823-4798  
www.cohpa.ucf.edu/comdis/

**Communication Disorders Clinic  
FAAST Demonstration Center**

12424 Research Parkway, Suite 155  
Orlando, FL 32826-2215  
(407) 249-4770

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Cecyle Carson, Ph.D., Associate Professor  
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David B. Ingram, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emeritus  
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Jack Ryalls, Ph.D., Professor  
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Gillian Dreilinger, M.S., CCC-SLP, Clinical Instructor  
Barbaralyn Harden, M.S., CCC-SLP, Clinical Instructor  
Sally Ann Geiss, J.D., Ph.D., CCC-SLP, Clinical Instructor  
Thomas Gibbons, M.A., CCC-SLP, Clinical Instructor  
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Jane Hostetler, M.A., CCC-SLP, Clinical Instructor  
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*Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders*

University of Central Florida  
P.O. Box 162215  
Orlando, FL 32816-2215

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