



Thomas Alan Smille

*Instructor Joseph M. DiNapoli (right) teaches at both the University of Central Florida campus in Orlando and at the UCF Cocoa campus in Cocoa, Fla.*

## Department Distinguished by Teaching Excellence

At the University of Central Florida Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders students study with award-winning faculty. Of 26 full-time departmental faculty members, nine have been recognized for their teaching excellence, some on several occasions. In 2006, communication sciences and disorders students rated the quality of their instruction to be the best of any department or school in the College of Health and Public Affairs.

Jane Lieberman, department chair, said “Full-time faculty members teach 75 percent of undergraduate and 98 percent of graduate courses, which contributes to outstanding instructional quality and distinguishes our instruction from that at many universities which rely heavily on adjunct faculty and graduate teaching assistants, particularly at the undergraduate level.”

The inspiration to become university professors took many forms for award recipients. Harold Utt’s younger brother, who lost his hearing at age 3, piqued Utt’s curiosity about the ear and how it works and motivated him to become an audiologist and eventually teach at the university level. Jennifer Kent-Walsh, Barbara Ehren and Linda Rosa-Lugo started their careers as classroom teachers, working with children who experienced severe communication disorders, language-learning disabilities and hearing-impairment. These early experiences led them to teach at the university-level and impact the next generation of speech-language pathologists as a way to help more than just one child at a time.

Other faculty members took inspiration from mentors who believed in them and provided them with a glimpse of what academic life is all about. Kenyatta Rivers and Bari Hoffman-Ruddy received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in

communicative disorders from UCF. Along the way, professors encouraged them to conduct research and teach. Both pursued doctoral education and returned to UCF to influence their students to find rewarding career paths.

Joseph M. DiNapoli spent many years in clinical and consulting work before turning to university teaching. As a practitioner, he maintained affiliations with several graduate programs and provided onsite clinical education for students.

“Classroom teaching seemed [like] the next logical step,” said DiNapoli. “It allowed me to share the knowledge I obtained from so many patients, colleagues, students and the professors who had taught me and had been so generous with themselves. Through teaching, I could pass on some legacies.”

The department’s award-winning instructors recognize that teaching is a reciprocal process. Here are some of their thoughts on important lessons learned from students:

- Good teachers remain good students throughout life.  
— Bari Hoffman-Ruddy
  - When you respect and care for students, they will respect and care for you.  
— Kenyatta O. Rivers
  - If you want to maintain your credibility, be prepared and always be honest.  
— Joseph DiNapoli
  - Each student is a unique learner. If students are struggling with learning, it’s my responsibility to figure out another way to teach them.  
— Barbara Ehren
  - Students continually teach us how to teach.  
— Linda I. Rosa-Lugo
  - When teachers hold high standards, students rise to the challenge.  
— Jennifer Kent-Walsh
  - Students don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care about them.  
— Harold Utt, Jr.
  - Students have taught me about new ways to deliver information, new areas of research and new technology.  
— Martine Vanryckeghem
- (See “Excellence,” p. 2)

## Excellence (continued from p. 1)

“There is simply no doubt,” said Lieberman, “that our department’s instructors dedicate themselves to teaching excellence while motivating students to think critically, grow into competent professionals, implement best clinical practices and become life long learners. When I was a professor, nothing thrilled me more than seeing my students surpass me. Then, I knew, I had done a good job. Now that I’m a chair, I’m just as thrilled by seeing the faculty surpass me.”

— R. Jane Lieberman

## Faculty Awards

### Barbara Ehren, Professor

- 1982, 1985 Distinguished Teacher Award, Florida Atlantic University

### Joseph M. DiNapoli, Instructor

- 2006 Teaching Incentive Performance Award, University of Central Florida

### Jennifer Kent-Walsh, Assistant Professor

- 2005 COHPA Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award, UCF
- 2007 Faculty Service-Learning Recognition Award, UCF

### R. Jane Lieberman, Professor and Chair

- 1977 Outstanding Service as Teaching Assistant Award, University of Florida
- 1989 Outstanding Teaching Award, Appalachian State University
- 1991 Distinguished Graduate Faculty Award, Appalachian State University

### Kenyatta O. Rivers, Associate Professor

- 2002 Teaching Incentive Performance Award, UCF
- 2003, 2006 COHPA Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching Award, UCF

### Linda I. Rosa-Lugo, Associate Professor

- 2001, 2006 Teaching Incentive Performance Award, UCF

### Bari Hoffman-Ruddy, Associate Professor

- 2006 COHPA, University Excellence in Graduate Teaching Award, UCF
- 2006 Teaching Incentive Performance Award, UCF

### Harold Utt, Jr., Assistant Professor

- 1996, 2001, 2006 Teaching Incentive Performance Award, UCF

### Martine Vanryckeghem, Professor

- 2003 Teaching Incentive Performance Award, UCF

## New Faculty and Staff Members



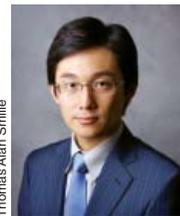
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**Barbara J. Ehren, Ed.D.**, joined the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders faculty as a professor and the director of the doctoral program in language and literacy. Formerly she

was a research scientist with the University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning, focusing on research and development in adolescent literacy and effective approaches to professional development of educators.

Prior to this position, Ehren held a variety of positions in the School District of Palm Beach County, Fla., the 11th largest school district in the nation. She began her career as an itinerant speech-language pathologist in New York City and Dade County, Fla., schools. She also served as a classroom teacher and began the first classroom program for students with language learning disabilities in Florida in Broward County.

Her publication and research activities focus on effective communication intervention models and methods with the school-age population. A special area of interest is literacy instruction for diverse learners in inclusive settings. Ehren received the Clinical Career Achievement Award from the Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists and is a fellow of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. She has a special interest in assisting school districts to build capacity at the school level for more effective literacy programs for diverse learners.



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**Anthony Kong, Ph.D.** joined the department faculty as an assistant professor. Kong comes to UCF from Hong Kong, China. At the University of Hong Kong, he earned his Bachelor of Science and

Doctor of Philosophy in Speech and Hearing Sciences.

Kong has worked with the Hong Kong Society for the Deaf; he was a vice chairperson of the executive committee of the Hong Kong

Association of Speech Therapists and served as the external secretary for the association's executive committee.

Kong's research areas include aphasia and acquired neurogenic communication disorders, Cantonese aphasiology, development of clinical language assessment tools and theoretically motivated language intervention for aphasic individuals, communication disabilities in the geriatric population, and community support for aphasic individuals and families. His research has been funded by the University of Hong Kong's Sik Sik Yuen Education Research Fund, and he received a Committee on Research and Conference Grants Award from the university.

Kong's work has appeared in *Brain and Language*, *Aphasiology*, the *Journal of Multilingual Communication Disorders*, and the *Asia Pacific Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing*.



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**Tom C. Ehren, M.S., CCC-SLP**, joined the department as the director of clinical education. He earned his Master of Science at the University of South Florida and completed post-graduate work at

Kent State in the area of severe and profound disabilities. Ehren holds Florida licensure in speech-language pathology and Florida educator certification in speech-language impaired and in administration and supervision.

Ehren has always worked in schools, first as a therapist and later as a district administrator. He was the curriculum supervisor for the Speech, Language and Physically Impaired Programs for the School District of Broward County, Fla., since 1979. In this role, he developed the speech and language therapy and the physically impaired programs that served over 17,000 students.

Ehren has served as an executive board member and convention committee chair for the Florida Speech-Language-Hearing Association and is currently serving a second term as an American Speech-Language-Hearing Association legislative councilor. Through

(See “New Faculty,” p. 3)



## New Faculty *(continued from p. 2)*

his ASHA service, national presentations, continuing education offerings, publications, policy and program development, and advocacy efforts, Ehren encourages speech-language pathologists to assume leadership roles. He provides them with the knowledge and skills to participate with other educators as they work to improve services for students with communication disorders that will make a difference in their school experience.

Ehren's professional interests include quality program design and service delivery; innovative professional development, leadership and advocacy development for SLPs; and clinical practice procedures.



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**Steven Lerner, M.A.**, joined the department as coordinator of academic support. He earned his Master of Arts in Higher Education Administration from Boston College, Mass., and his Bachelor

of Arts and Sciences in Psychology from the University of Maine at Orono. Lerner served in the Peace Corps as a health and water resources manager in Mali, West Africa. Lerner has a wealth of experience working in higher education. He served as a class dean/assistant dean of students for Babson College in Wellesley, Mass., and a coordinator of academic student services, trainings and events for the College of Business Administration at Northeastern University in Boston. Lerner has held a number of other academic positions, including serving as a student life coordinator for Brown University in Providence, R.I.

Lerner also has spent several years working in the arts, overseeing marketing, sales and special events for the Norton Museum of Art in West Palm Beach, Fla., and as an art broker for Lerner Fine Art in Boynton Beach, Fla.

Lerner is a member of the National Association of Student Affairs Professionals, the National Academic Advising Association and several other professional organizations.

## Student Awards and Recognition



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**Damany Phifer**, a communication sciences and disorders graduate student, is one of 40 students nationwide selected to participate in the American Speech-Language-Hearing

Association's Minority Student Leadership Program for 2007. The program will be held in Boston on Nov. 13–17, during ASHA's annual convention.

At the 2007 Showcase of Undergraduate Research Excellence, which took place on April 5, **Claudia Nunez** won first place with her research on "Communication Disorders Professionals' Perceptions about Death and Dying." Kenyatta O. Rivers was her mentor.

**Heather Heffernan** won second place at the showcase for her research on "Parents' Use of Language Facilitation Strategies During Interactions with Their Child with Autism." Jamie Schwartz served as Heffernan's mentor.

At the showcase, **Emilio Lobato** earned an honorable mention for his research: "Prevalence of Traumatic Brain Injury in Post-Secondary Schools." Kenyatta O. Rivers was Lobato's mentor as well.

During UCF Research Week 2007, which took place on April 2–9, **Rosalie Perkins** won the College of Health and Public Affairs' Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant Award.

Also during UCF Research Week 2007, **Julie Baker** won the COHPA award for Outstanding Master's Thesis. Her mentor is Jack Ryalls.

**Ana Rivera** received a McNair Graduate Fellowship.

**Heather Heffernan** received a Graduate Research and Mentoring Program Fellowship. Jamie Schwartz is her research mentor.

**Joseph Prusas** received a Graduate Provost Fellowship for 2006–2007.

**Julie Gaskins** was awarded a Graduate Research and Mentoring Program Fellowship. Jamie Schwartz is Gaskins' mentor.

**Chaya Stark** was the 2007 Founders' Day Award recipient for the College of Health and Public Affairs.



Charlote Harvey

(Photo above) **Emilio Lobato** (left), Associate Professor Kenyatta O. Rivers (right) and neuropsychologist Larry Schutz (not pictured) won the First Place Research Presentation Award on May 26 at the Annual Convention of the Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists.

**Kinsey Bickford** and **Adair Kopani** received the Hokannen Scholarship. Janet Whiteside was their research mentor.

**Hope McLeod**, **Rosalie Perkins** and **Joseph Prusas** received graduate fellowships. Graduate Research and Mentoring Program Fellowships for 2006–2007.

**Julie Baker**, **Jennifer Dennis**, **Rosalie Perkins** and **Edgard Robelo** completed their master's theses.

**Ana Rivera** and **Claudia Nunez** were chosen as undergraduate McNair Scholars for 2006–2007.

**Alexis Crawford**, **Julie Gaskins**, **Heather Heffernan**, **Emilio Lobato**, **Claudia Nunez** and **Chaya Stark** participated in the Undergraduate Research and Mentoring Program.

## Research Team Investigates Relationship Between Traumatic Brain Injury and Academic Performance

Traumatic brain injury has long been a hidden disability. Even those who suffer from TBI may not know much about the condition. Today, many more individuals suffer from TBI as it is one of the principal disabilities experienced by troops returning from the Iraq war. Recently, Kenyatta O. Rivers, associate professor; Larry E. Schutz, neuropsychologist, courtesy clinical professor, and university head injury program developer; and Emilio J. Lobato, Research and Mentoring Program student, investigated the number of UCF undergraduate students who suffer from traumatic brain injury.

The goals of the study were to determine how many students at UCF have TBI and the effects of their condition on their academic performance and social lives. Although other studies have investigated the prevalence of TBI, this study is one of the first to gather information on the academic consequences of TBI.

The researchers administered surveys to 451 freshmen and sophomores in general education courses. Seventy-nine students reported losing consciousness after a head injury and 89 sought medical attention for a head injury. Eight or nine students (approximately 10 percent) with reported head injuries noted experiencing increased academic difficulties. These data are revealing because fewer than 15 students in the entire UCF student body with TBI have registered with Student Disability Services.

Based on these data, Rivers, Schutz and Lobato estimate that approximately 6,000 to 8,000 students at UCF suffer from TBI and approximately 600 to 800 are academically disabled. Other colleges and universities likely have similar numbers of students suffering from this disability, many of whom go undiagnosed. Students who have TBI and struggle with academic tasks often attribute their challenges to laziness or poor time management; they do not realize they have a disability. Educators and administrators are not sufficiently aware of how TBI affects students academically and socially; therefore, institutions lack effective identification, evaluation and treatment services to meet students' needs.



Courtesy of University Marketing

*Fewer than 15 students with TBI are registered with UCF Student Disability Services, though study results indicate between 600 and 800 UCF students are academically disabled from TBI.*

According to Schutz, the California State University system attempted to aid students with TBI in the 1980s. CSUS focused its efforts on trying to help students by encouraging them to exercise their deficient skills. TBI, however, cannot be cured; it can only be managed. A new TBI program directed by Schutz at the UCF Communication Disorders Clinic will teach students how to cope with the academic challenges they face as a result of TBI.

UCF's TBI program educates students about TBI, assesses how their brain skills have been affected and provides them with straightforward, easy-to-implement techniques for class participation, test-taking and studying. After an intensive, one-semester training program, students continue to provide self-therapy by using the coping techniques they have been taught. An aftercare program is also under development.

In May at the 2007 Annual Convention of the Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists, Rivers, Schutz, and Lobato won the First Place Research Presentation Award for their poster, titled "Prevalence of Traumatic Brain Injury in Post-Secondary Schools." The presentation has also been accepted for the 2007 annual convention of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association in Boston, held November 13–18.

### **You might be suffering from a head injury if**

- You lost consciousness during a car or motorcycle accident.
- You fell and struck your head.
- You were in a fight and were knocked out by blows to the head.

### **If any of these things happened to you, you may be experiencing academic disabilities.**

#### **Here are some warning signs:**

- You read material again and again, but don't seem to learn it.
- When you take lecture notes, you can't keep up with the lecturer.
- You understand the material when you're studying but get it wrong on the test.
- You spend a lot of time writing term papers, but your instructor doesn't fully understand them.
- You try to stay busy during your time outside of class but don't accomplish much.
- When you get upset, your mind becomes confused or blanks-out for a period of time.
- You try to talk to your instructor but get frustrated and can't get your point across.

**If you or someone you know experiences these problems, contact the Traumatic Brain Injury Program at the UCF Communication Disorders Clinic at 407-882-0468.**



## Researchers Pair Children Using AAC With Typically Developing Peers for Shared Reading

Assistant Professor and FFAST Center Director Jennifer Kent-Walsh recently collaborated with UCF student investigators Jamie Rubin, Julia Quevedo and Chaya Stark to conduct innovative and practical research on the effects of peer instruction on the expressive language of school-age children using augmentative and alternative communication during shared reading activities.

Throughout the study, three pairs of typically developing children and children using AAC met regularly to complete shared storybook reading activities. The goal was to determine the effects of training typically developing children to use supportive communication strategies with peers using AAC to improve the frequency and quality of communicative turns taken by the children using AAC during shared storybook reading. In previous work, Kent-Walsh and colleagues established the efficacy of this intervention program when training adults to facilitate communication, language and literacy skills of children using AAC.

Kent-Walsh said, “The power of providing interaction training for communication partners of children using AAC has become increasingly evident to us. We have seen children using AAC take off with their communication once they are given supportive opportunities to communicate.”

In this study, Kent-Walsh shifted the focus from training adult communication partners to training peers of school-age children since

this approach has proven effective with other groups of children, such as those with learning disabilities. In this study, typically developing fifth graders (ages 10 or 11) were paired with children using AAC (ages 7 or 11). The typically developing children underwent five one-on-one training sessions with Kent-Walsh, which included learning a series of techniques to facilitate communication during shared reading, viewing videos of positive interactions with children who use AAC and role-playing with Kent-Walsh to practice the techniques.

After the training, the pairs met and performed the shared reading activities at designated times in the school libraries. Kent-Walsh initially provided prompting and feedback for the peers, which she gradually phased out as the peers became more proficient with the techniques. Researchers videotaped all training sessions and probes and monitored the pairs for at least four weeks following the completion of training.

Initial analyses of the results indicate that peer partners successfully implemented the strategies they were trained to use when reading with children using AAC, and the children using AAC showed remarkable increases in communication during the reading activities. The children have maintained these promising outcomes over time.

Elaine Barnes, M.A., CCC-SLP, the SLP for two of the participating children who use AAC, explained that the children typically

communicated with one-word responses prior to participating in this study. Now, the children have greater confidence and tend to communicate in two- or three-word phrases. Also, Barnes said that the students’ vocabularies increased and their familiarity with their AAC devices has improved, which will help them succeed in other school activities.

Based on these results, school SLPs may be able to use pairings similar to those in the study to assist young readers who use AAC. The participating children who use AAC will be able to use the skills they have learned to progress to the next level in language and literacy skills, and educators and SLPs working with them will be able to set continuing goals based on the improvements children demonstrate.

“Clinicians can use the establishment of an active pattern of communication as an entry point for targeting increasingly complex grammar and traditional literacy skills,” Kent-Walsh explained.

Participating schools expressed interest in future studies and perhaps making paired reading with typically developing children and peers who use AAC a regular occurrence. Kent-Walsh and the student investigators are encouraged to continue their line of research. Currently, they are completing the final data analyses on the peer project and are planning to conduct the first study using similar methods in a group setting with parents of children who use AAC during summer 2008.

The University of Central Florida in-house research program and the Florida Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists funded the study.



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Demarie Rodriguez (left) and Olivia Miracle Stoute (center) participated in the research. Graduate student investigator Julia Quevedo (right) works with the children implementing the same materials and communication techniques they used when reading with their typically developing peers.



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For participating in the study, children received \$100-worth of literacy materials. Children using AAC received the books used during the training; their devices, pictured above, were programmed with vocabulary and messages relevant to the books.

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

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**Degree Programs**

Bachelor of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders

Bachelor of Science in Communication Sciences and Disorders

Master of Arts in Communication Sciences and Disorders

Doctor of Philosophy in Education, Communication Sciences and Disorders Track; Specialization in School Speech-Language Pathology

**Undergraduate Minors**

American Sign Language and Deaf Studies

Communication Sciences and Disorders

**Undergraduate Certificate Programs**

American Sign Language

Language Development and Disorders

**Graduate Certificate Programs**

Child Language Disorders

Medical Speech-Language Pathology

Multicultural/Multilingual Speech-Language Pathology

**Faculty**

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Bari Hoffman-Ruddy, Ph.D., Associate Professor

David B. Ingram, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emeritus

Jennifer Kent-Walsh, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Anthony Kong, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

R. Jane Lieberman, Ph.D., Professor and Chair

Thomas Mullin, Ph.D., Associate Professor Emeritus

Chad Nye, Ph.D., Professor

David Ratusnik, Ph.D., Professor

Kenyatta Rivers, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Linda Rosa-Lugo, Ed.D., Associate Professor

Jack Ryalls, Ph.D., Professor

Jamie Schwartz, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Harold Utt, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

Martine Vanryckeghem, Ph.D., Professor

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The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at UCF and its graduate program in speech-language pathology is accredited by the Council on Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and will be undergoing a reaccreditation site visit in spring 2008. Public comment can be addressed to the CAA by mail to ASHA at 10801 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD, 20852, or online at [www.asha.org/about/credentiating/accreditation/](http://www.asha.org/about/credentiating/accreditation/) (select the link "Call for Public Comment on Graduate Education Programs").



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