Directory of UVM Developmental Disabilities Researchers Network

Complied by the Research & Evaluation Committee of UVM's Center on Disability & Community Inclusion
(Last Updated 1-18-2017)

N of Researchers = 35       N of UVM Departments & Centers Represented = 12

Request: If you know other UVM faculty who are engaged in research pertaining to children, youth, or adults with developmental disabilities, please encourage them to contact the Center on Disability & Community Inclusion to be added to this directory.

Robert R. Althoff, PhD, MD
Department: Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Psychology
Email: ralthoff@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~neurogp/?Page=althoffindex.html
        http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/vccyf/
Research Focus: My research focus is on children with multiple psychiatric conditions. I study children with problems in social communication and problems with self-regulation using genetically-informed designs.
Methodological Approaches: Twin and Family studies, genetics, epigenetics, eye movement monitoring, psychophysiology

Maria "Mercedes" Avila, PhD
Department: Pediatrics - Vermont Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (VT LEND) & Vermont Child Health Improvement Program (VCHIP)
Email: maria.avila@med.uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/vt-ilehp/?Page=bio_avila.html
Research Focus: My research interests include cultural and linguistic competence for social justice, social determinants of health, health and behavioral health disparities, youth suicide prevention, youth behavioral health, interdisciplinary leadership education, neurodevelopmental and related disabilities, family and person centered care, former refugee and immigrant populations.
Methodological Approaches: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research studies. Experience in program evaluation and survey development.

Michael S. Cannizzaro, PhD, CCC-SLP
Department: Communication Sciences and Disorders
Email: michael.cannizzaro@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/?Page=faculty/cannizzaro.html
Research Focus: My research explores the complex relationships between cognition and communication in typical adults, as well as in persons who experience traumatic brain injury. This work focuses on the use of brain imaging technologies (fNIRS & fMRI) to monitor neural function during cognitive and communicative process. In particular, the frontal lobes are monitored in relation to executive function abilities and during
naturalistic communication such as narrative discourse comprehension/production, text reading, and conversation.  

**Methodological Approaches:** Comparisons of language and cognitive skills in persons with and without brain injuries functional near infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) of the prefrontal cortex to measure blood flow; linguistic and narrative analysis for language comprehension and production measures cognitive and neuropsychological measures of cognition and executive functions

**Emily Coderre, PhD**  
*Department:* Communication Sciences and Disorders  
*Email:* emily.coderre@gmail.com  
*Website:* www.emilycoderre.com  
*Research Focus:* My research focuses on understanding language deficits in individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), specifically deficits in semantics, or the meaning of language. I use a variety of behavioral, electrophysiological, and neuroimaging methodologies to explore language functions, as well as the brain activity and connectivity underlying these functions, in individuals with ASD.  
*Methodological Approaches:* EEG, neuroimaging, behavioral

**Michael Coleman, PhD**  
*Department:* Engineering  
*Email:* mcoledman@cems.uvm.edu  
*Website:* http://www.cem.uvm.edu/~mcoleman/  
*Research Focus:* Enhanced freehand, automated, tactile graphics technology for people who are blind and sight-impaired  
*Methodological Approaches:* To be added

**Stephen Contompasis, MD**  
*Department:* Pediatrics  
*Email:* Stephen.Contompasis@uvm.edu  
*Website:* http://www.med.uvm.edu/pediatrics/bio?BioID=22978  
*Research Focus:* Vermont Interdisciplinary Leadership Education for Health Professionals (ILEHP) Program, interdisciplinary training, developmental disability awareness, developmental screening, autism  
*Methodological Approaches:* Primarily descriptive research, both quantitative and qualitative as well as reporting program evaluation data for quality improvement and national dissemination amongst our training network

**Bryan Dague, EdD**  
*Department:* Center on Disability & Community Inclusion  
*Email:* Bryan.Dague@uvm.edu  
*Website:* http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=edague  
*Research Focus:* Inclusion of people with disabilities into the workplace (NIDRR grant with UNH); Post-school transition centered on college experiences for young adults with intellectual disabilities (e.g., academic, social, independent living, self-advocacy, integrated work experiences and career skills) -- continued collaboration with the Think-College initiative at the Institute for Community Inclusion at UMass-Boston and Johnson State College.  
*Methodological Approaches:* Qualitative research case study design with semi-structured
interviews, participant observation, and archival review

**Reuben Escorpizo, PT, DPT, MSc**  
*Department:* Rehabilitation and Movement Science  
*Email:* Reuben.Escorpizo@uvm.edu  
*Research Focus:* Work rehabilitation and return-to-work strategies, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, patient reported outcomes, instrument / scale development  
*Methodological Approaches:* Quantitative and qualitative methods; psychometric studies; looking into enhancing skills in the area of item response theory, computer adaptive testing, crowdsourcing / big data analysis.

**Bernice R. Garnett, ScD**  
*Department:* Education  
*Email:* bernice.garnett@uvm.edu  
*Research Focus:* Integration of youth obesity and eating disorders prevention, bullying, discrimination and harassment, intersectionality, youth health disparities and public health program design and evaluation.  
*Methodological Approaches:* Mixed-methods studies, qualitative inquiry (interviews, focus groups, parent-child dyad observations), quantitative data analysis (latent variable modeling, multi-level modeling), scale development and validation, program evaluation and community based participatory research  
*Data Analysis Tools:* STATA, M+, and NVivo

**Michael F. Giangreco, PhD**  
*Department:* Education (Special Education)  
*Email:* Michael.Giangreco@uvm.edu  
*Website:* http://www.uvm.edu/~mgiangre  
*Research Focus:* Various aspects of inclusive education for students with disabilities, special education service delivery, alternatives to overreliance on paraprofessionals, related services decision-making  
*Methodological Approaches:* Primarily descriptive research, both quantitative (e.g., survey, direct observation), qualitative (e.g., interview, participant observation, document analysis), and mixed-methods studies; background in single-subject experimental design (e.g., multiple baseline/probe, return-to-baseline)  
*Data Analysis Tools:* SAS, SuperHyperQual

**Shana J. Haines, PhD**  
*Department:* Education (Special Education)  
*Email:* Shana.Haines@uvm.edu  
*Research Focus:* Family-professional partnerships, community partnerships, refugee students and their families, special and general education teacher preparation, and inclusive education. Currently working with the School Wide Integration For Transformation (SWIFT) Technical Assistance Center to develop and implement an approach to inclusive education that combines resources from general and special education, families, and communities in innovative ways to better meet the needs of all students, teachers, and families.  
*Methodological Approaches:* Mostly qualitative research, including deep case studies, interview studies, focus group studies, and survey research.
Betsy Hoza, PhD  
**Department:** Psychology  
**Email:** bhoza@uvm.edu  
**Website:** [http://www.uvm.edu/~psych/?Page=faculty/Hoza.php](http://www.uvm.edu/~psych/?Page=faculty/Hoza.php)  
**Research Focus:** My research is geared toward better understanding the social, academic, and self-system functioning of children with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) from a developmental psychopathology perspective. Of note, most of my research is designed with the end goal of applying what is learned toward developing better evidence-based treatments for children with ADHD.  
**Methodological Approaches:** Both correlational and experimental designs; quantitative data analysis using both concurrent and longitudinal approaches

James J. Hudziak, MD  
**Department:** Psychiatry and Medicine, & Pediatrics  
**Email:** james.hudziak@uvm.edu (cc: jeri.ogle@med.uvm.edu)  
**Website:** [http://www.med.uvm.edu/VCCYF](http://www.med.uvm.edu/VCCYF)  
**Research Focus:** I specialize in psychiatric genetics of child psychiatric disorders, application of family study, twin study, and molecular genetic techniques to the study of attention deficit disorder, anxiety and affective disorders, autism, and children in foster care.  
**Methodological Approaches:** Twin and Family studies, genetics, epigenetics, neuroimaging, EEG

Jennifer Hurley, PhD  
**Department:** Education (Early Childhood Special Education)  
**Email:** Jennifer.Hurley@uvm.edu  
**Website:** [http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=jjhurley](http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=jjhurley)  
**Research Focus:** Research emphasis is on classroom based social competence interventions for young children in inclusive environments with specific focus on the social validity of social competence interventions from the perspective of professionals in the field. Additional focus is on family and professional priorities for inclusive early childhood settings. More recently research attention on young children who are refugees who may qualify for special education services with specific focus on barriers and facilitators for service provision and classroom based interventions for communication and social competence.  
**Methodological Approaches:** Q-methodology, single subject, and qualitative

Tiffany L. Hutchins, PhD  
**Department:** Communication Sciences & Disorders  
**Email:** tiffany.hutchins@uvm.edu  
**Website:** [http://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/?Page=faculty/hutchins.html](http://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/?Page=faculty/hutchins.html)  
**Research Focus:** My focus of research involves examining the efficacy of social pragmatic approaches for remediating the deficits (social, communicative, behavioral) in autism spectrum disorders. In a related vein, my research has focused on the measurement of theory of mind in typically developing children and individuals with ASD (from across the spectrum). I am also investigating the visual attention of individuals with ASD when presented with face stimuli.
Methodological Approaches: Single-case and group designs to examine social validity of ASD intervention. Large scale studies to evaluate the psychometric properties of Theory of Mind measures. Eye tracking methodology to examine visual scanning patterns.

**Lutz Kaelber, PhD**  
*Department: Sociology*  
*Email: lkaelber@uvm.edu*  
[http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/eugenics/]*

**Research Focus**: Commemoration of crimes against people with disabilities in Nazi Germany, and in the U.S. in the context of state eugenic sterilizations

**Methodological Approaches**: Qualitative analysis of current and historical data sources such as trial records, patient records, and accounts of victims and survivors.

**Susan Kasser, PhD**  
*Department: Rehabilitation and Movement Science*  
*Email: Susan.Kasser@uvm.edu*  
*Website: [http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/?Page=faculty/kasser.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/?Page=faculty/kasser.html)*

**Research Focus**: Postural control and fall risk as well as physical activity and health outcomes associated with exercise in adults with multiple sclerosis

**Methodological Approaches**: Quantitative approaches including correlational and experimental designs, laboratory and clinical measures; background in multivariate, replicated, single-subject repeated measures (MRSRM) designs

**Danra Kazenski, PhD, CCC-SLP**  
*Department: Communication Sciences and Disorders*  
*Email: dkazensk@uvm.edu*  
*Website: [http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/?Page=faculty/kazenski.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/?Page=faculty/kazenski.html)*

**Research Focus**: Our research explores how the brains of adults who stutter differ from typical speakers, how temperament and language skills are associated with treatment outcomes in younger children who stutter and what barriers exist for implementation of the Lidcombe Program treatment for stuttering in a preschool setting.

**Methodological Approaches**: We have used functional near infrared spectroscopy (fNIRS) brain imaging technology to monitor neural function in the prefrontal lobe during fluent and stuttered speech as well as acoustic startle eyblink response and galvanic skin response (GSR) to measure emotional reactivity during low and high “stress” speaking situations. We also train and coach local Vermont speech language pathologists to implement an operationalized treatment with preschoolers who stutter with long-term data on child/family outcomes and factors which impact the effectiveness of treatment delivery outside the clinic setting.

**Colby Kervick, EdD**  
*Department: Education (Special Education)*  
*Email: ckervick@uvm.edu*  

**Research Focus**: Fostering positive collaborative teaming experiences with families of children with disabilities, dual-endorsement undergraduate teacher training as a model to prepare highly competent teachers
*Methodological Approaches:* Qualitative research using primarily interview techniques, focus groups and cross-case analysis

**Tammy Kolbe, EdD**  
**Department:** Leadership & Developmental Sciences  
(Educational Leadership & Policy Studies)  
**Email:** tkolbe@uvm.edu  
**Research Focus:** Allocation of educational resources in states, districts and schools, and the economic evaluation of educational policies and programs, with a focus on programs for students with special learning needs (e.g., students with disabilities, students at-risk for academic failure); special education funding and finance; application of quantitative research methods and use of large-scale education datasets to study policies, practices and resources for students with disabilities.  
**Methodological Approaches:** Quantitative research methods; statistical analysis of large-scale data sets; program evaluation (e.g., implementation, outcome/impact; and action-oriented research); economic evaluation of education and social service programs, including cost analysis and cost-effectiveness analysis

**Lori Erbrederis Meyer, PhD**  
**Department:** Education (Early Childhood & Early Childhood Special Education)  
**Email:** lori.meyer@uvm.edu  
**Research Focus:** The development of peer-related social competence among young children with developmental delays or disabilities and ecological facilitators/barriers to supporting kindergartners’ skills in this domain. Additionally, I am interested in the delivery of long-distance training/coaching to parents of young children with disabilities (specifically autism spectrum disorders) to support their use of evidence-based, naturalistic teaching strategies to facilitate children’s development of social communication skills.  
**Methodological Approaches:** Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods research. Specific experience/knowledge in single-subject, focus group, and case study methods.

**Hope Morris, M.S., CCC-SLP**  
**Department:** Communication Sciences & Disorders  
**Email:** hope.morris@uvm.edu  
**Website:**  
**Research Focus:** Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders using parent training programs  
**Methodological Approaches:** Single-subject, multiple baseline designs; descriptive research, including analysis of direct observation as well as interview/questionnaire data

**Patricia A. Prelock PhD**  
**Department:** Communication Sciences & Disorders  
**Email:** patricia.prelock@uvm.edu  
**Website:** http://www.uvm.edu/~pprelock/  
**Research Focus:** Nature and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders (joint attention training, parent training, emotion regulation, theory of mind, social stories & comic strip conversations, peer play)
Methodological Approaches: Single-subject, multiple baseline designs; descriptive research, including analysis of direct observation as well as interview/questionnaire data
Data Analysis Tools: SPSS, SALT, SIGMA PLOT

Michael J. Rosen, PhD
Department: Engineering
Email: mrosen@cems.uvm.edu
Web site: http://www.uvm.edu/~cems/?Page=employee/profile.php&SM=employee/_employeemenu.html&EmID=305
Research Focus: Development of a kit of adaptable alternative controls for children and others who cannot use joysticks for control of power wheelchairs (funded via an NIH R21 with University of Florida); Development of raised-line drawing technologies for collaborative graphical communication by blind students and professionals (NIH proposal pending, current supported through the senior design course by the National Federation of the Blind).
Methodological Approaches: As a biomedical engineer, applied research investigator on sensory and motor disabilities, and design engineer focusing on assistive technologies and assessment tools, I have employed a variety of methods. In studying the effectiveness of experimental devices, I’ve used standard statistical methods based on correlation and regression to measure size and significance of changes resulting from these devices. In preliminary studies, single-subject methods have often made sense. As a designer, I’ve made use of Pugh Concept Selection Matrices and elements of the House of Quality (a so-called Total Quality Management, or TQM, method). And, of course, my work has employed a range of engineering analytical tools and mathematical methods to model the anticipated performance of a new device -- typically in combination with a user’s biomechanical and neurological characteristics.
Data Analysis Tools: Pugh Concept Selection Matrix (for comparing design ideas relative to an existing solution); Working Model (for viewing the behavior of a mechanical system, e.g. a power wheelchair with driver)

Susan M. Ryan, PhD
Department: Center on Disability & Community Inclusion
Email: susan.ryan@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=sryan1
Research Focus: Life histories of older Vermonters who experience developmental disabilities; Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (educational and life outcomes; interventions and supports); post secondary education for students with intellectual disabilities (strategies for success)
Methodological Approaches: Primarily descriptive research, qualitative (e.g., interview, participant observation, document analysis), and mixed-methods studies; background in single-subject experimental design (e.g., multiple baseline/probe, withdrawal, alternating treatment designs), extensive experience with program evaluation including involvement in international program evaluation with USAID (United States Agency for International Development).
George Salembier, EdD  
*Department:* Education (Special Education)  
*Email:* [George.Salembier@uvm.edu](mailto:George.Salembier@uvm.edu)  
*Research Focus:* Transition of high school students with developmental disabilities to adult life; early and adolescent literacy and numeracy; formative and summative assessment; differentiating instruction for inclusive classrooms; curriculum design and alignment to the common core standards; leadership for inclusive schools; and models for implementing school-wide Response to Intervention approaches  
*Methodological Approaches:* Primarily descriptive research, both quantitative (e.g., survey, direct observation), qualitative (e.g., interview, participant observation, document analysis), and mixed-methods studies; background in single-subject experimental design (e.g., multiple baseline/probe, return-to-baseline)

Rod C. Scott, MD, PhD  
*Department:* Neurological Sciences  
*Email:* [Rodney.Scott@med.uvm.edu](mailto:Rodney.Scott@med.uvm.edu)  
*Research Focus:* Cognitive impairment associated with childhood epilepsy  
*Methodological Approaches:* neuropsychology, neuroimaging, electrophysiology, animal behavior

Judith Shaw, EdD, MPH, RN  
*Department:* Pediatrics/Vermont Child Health Improvement Program  
*Email:* [Judith.Shaw@uvm.edu](mailto:Judith.Shaw@uvm.edu)  
*Research Focus:* Children and family focused; quality improvement in healthcare delivery and healthcare systems; state relations and public policy; public health practice and outcomes  
*Methodological Approaches:* Quantitative analysis of QI interventions; program evaluation; qualitative evaluation of public health interventions

Katharine Shepherd, EdD  
*Department:* Education (Special Education)  
*Email:* [Katharine.Shepherd@uvm.edu](mailto:Katharine.Shepherd@uvm.edu)  
*Research Focus:* Strategies for supporting families of students with developmental disabilities in developing their skills in leadership and collaboration; family-centered approaches to IEP and transition plan development; leadership for inclusive schools; and models for implementing school-wide Response to Intervention/Multi-Tiered Systems of Support.  
*Methodological Approaches:* Primarily descriptive research, both quantitative (e.g., survey, direct observation), qualitative (e.g., interview, participant observation, document analysis), and mixed-methods studies.

Lance Smith, PhD  
*Department:* Leadership and Developmental Sciences (Graduate Program in Counseling)  
*Email:* [Lance.Smith@uvm.edu](mailto:Lance.Smith@uvm.edu)  
Research focus: The development of a critical consciousness scale intended to measure one's critical consciousness regarding disability and social justice issues in society. We are defining critical consciousness as the capacity for critical reflection and critical action regarding social discourses that serve to perpetuate existing structures of inequality.

Methodological Approaches: Qualitative (e.g., psycho-discursive methodology and consensual qualitative research), and quantitative (e.g., non-experimental descriptive and correlational designs, survey construction and validation)

Timothy R. Stickle, PhD
Department: Psychology
Email: tstickle@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~psych/?Page=faculty/Stickle.php&SM=facultysubmenu.html

Research Focus: Developmental psychopathology of aggression and antisocial behavior with a primary focus on adolescents in the juvenile justice system. Research emphasizes understanding vulnerabilities to developing psychopathic traits and antisocial behavior incurred by deficits in emotional recognition, emotional responsiveness, executive functioning, and maltreatment

Methodological Approaches: Quantitative approaches including experimental and correlational designs, laboratory and field data collection, program evaluation, and contemporary data analytic approaches (e.g., structural equation modeling, multilevel models, model-based cluster analysis, mediation, and moderation)

Jessica Strolin-Goltzman, PhD
Department: Social Work
Email: jstrolin@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=jstrolin

Research Focus: Cross system collaboration to provide effective integrated services to children in child welfare facing multiple challenges including learning and emotional/behavioral disabilities

Methodological Approaches: Primarily quantitative analysis (e.g., secondary data analysis with large datasets, survey research, intervention research)

Jesse C. Suter, PhD
Department: Center on Disability & Community Inclusion
Email: jesse.suter@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~jsuter

Research Focus: Interests include the development, research, and evaluation of school and community-based interventions for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities. He is pursuing a line of research in wraparound, a team-based planning process for meeting the needs of students with serious emotional and behavioral disabilities and maintaining them in their homes, schools, and communities. In a related area, he collaborates on research examining ways to improve special education service delivery for students with disabilities.

Shelley L. Velleman, PhD  
*Department:* Communication Sciences and Disorders  
*Email:* Shelley.Velleman@uvm.edu  
*Website:* [http://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/?Page=faculty/velleman.html](http://www.uvm.edu/cnhs/?Page=faculty/velleman.html)  
*Research Focus:* I specialize in the speech development and deficits (and, to a much lesser extent, the literacy development and deficits) of children with various syndromes, including Williams syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Down syndrome, and 7q11.23 syndrome, most of which include developmental disability as a significant feature.  
*Methodological Approaches:* Phonological transcription and analysis; standardized assessments; quantitative descriptive research

Haley Woodside-Jiron, PhD  
*Department:* Education  
*Email:* Haley.Woodside-Jiron@uvm.edu  
*Research Focus:* The focus of my research concentrates on educational policy and school change efforts in high poverty schools. My areas of expertise include reading and literacy education. Currently I am invested in multidisciplinary partnerships focused on translating basic science findings in the field of neuroscience to the field of education. My recent presentations and publications focus on how stress and anxiety affect the learning process and how that, in turn, impacts curriculum development, pedagogical needs, and student outcomes.  
*Methodological Approaches:* Qualitative: Critical policy analysis and classroom discourse studies using critical discourse analysis methodology; Analysis of survey and interview data. Quantitative: Longitudinal comparisons of intervention and matched control groups for cross-sectional comparisons (program evaluation; value added model).