Directory of UVM Developmental Disabilities Researchers

Complied by the Research & Evaluation Committee at UVM's Center on Disability & Community Inclusion: Research & Evaluation Committee (Last Updated 9-10-13)

N of Researchers = 37   N of UVM Departments & Centers Represented = 13

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
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

Patricia Berry, MPH
Department: Pediatrics/Vermont Child Health Improvement Program
Email: Patricia.Berry@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/vchip/?Page=profile.php&bioID=23156
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: Primarily descriptive health policy research; health services quality improvement; program evaluation

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

**Michael Coleman, PhD**  
*Department:* Engineering  
*Email:* mcoleman@cems.uvm.edu  
*Website:* [http://www.cem.uvm.edu/~mcoleman/](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.uvm.edu/~vtilehp/?Page=Faculty/Contompasis.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~vtilehp/?Page=Faculty/Contompasis.html)  
*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  
*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

**Shawn Datchuk, PhD**  
*Department:* Department of Education  
*Email:* Shawn.Datchuk@uvm.edu  
*Research Focus:* Acquisition and fluency of sentence level writing skills, including handwriting, spelling, grammar/usage, and sentence construction; application of sentence level writing skills to paragraphs and extended compositions; academic interventions; single-case design; quantitative early literacy practices; adolescent literacy in content areas  
*Methodological Approaches:* Quantitative analysis of interventions; single-case design, including multiple-baseline across participants/behavior; analysis of permanent products; qualitative interviews for social validity of intervention

**Susan W. Edelman, PT EdD**  
*Department:* Center on Disability & Community Inclusion  
*Email:* Susan.Edelman@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=seledman

Research Focus: Universal Design for Learning (UDL); education of students with deafblindness and cortical visual impairment (CVI)

Methodological Approaches: Primarily descriptive research, both quantitative (e.g., survey) and qualitative (e.g., interviews)

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

Michael F. Giangreco, PhD
Department: 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)

Shana J. Haines, PhD
Department: 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

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  
*Email:* james.hudziak@uvm.edu  
*Website:* http://www.med.uvm.edu/VCCYF  
*Research Focus:* I specialize 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  
*Email:* Jennifer.Hurley@uvm.edu  
*Website:* 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  
*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.

**Youngok Jung, PhD**  
*Department:* Education  
*Email:* youngok.jung@uvm.edu  
*Research Focus:* Personal narratives of children with autism with regard to emotional understanding, theory of mind, global coherence, and story grammar
Methodological Approaches: Mixed-methods; quantitative analysis of large-scale data sets; evaluation of effectiveness of early childhood education programs or teaching practices on child outcomes; single-subject research design

Lutz Kaelber, PhD
Department: Sociology
Email: lkaelber@uvm.edu
Web sites: http://www.uvm.edu/~lkaelber/children/
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.

Colby Kervick, EdD
Department: Education
Email: ckervick@uvm.edu
Web site: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=ckervick

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

George S. Leibowitz, PhD
Department: Social Work
Email: George.Leibowitz@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=gleibowi

Research Focus: Sexual development and behavioral issues; neurodevelopment; mental health; trauma and maltreatment among adolescents in the justice system (primarily quantitative); prevention and intervention with children and adolescents
Methodological Approaches: Primarily quantitative, cross-sectional and longitudinal, using self-administered surveys, and analysis of large data sets. Current research projects also utilize
mixed-methods (with qualitative components that include grounded theory and in person interviews).

**Kelly Melekis, MSW, PhD**  
*Department: Social Work*  
*Email: kelly.melekis@uvm.edu*  
*Research Focus:* Aging/gerontology, home and community-based service systems, housing and homelessness, and interdisciplinary/cross-system collaborations to meet the needs of vulnerable older adults.  
*Methodological Approaches:* Qualitative (especially phenomenological and narrative approaches); Community-Based Participatory Research; Mixed Methods

**Deborah O’Rourke, PT PhD**  
*Department: Rehabilitation and Movement Science*  
*Email: dorourke@uvm.edu*  
*Website: [http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/?Page=faculty/orourke.html](http://www.uvm.edu/~cnhs/?Page=faculty/orourke.html)*  
*Research Focus:* Health-related quality of life in children with cerebral palsy and their families; Pain in children with disabilities.  
*Methodological Approaches:* Cross-sectional and descriptive research, quantitative analysis for both

**Marie-Christine Potvin, PhD, OTR**  
*Department: Center on Disability & Community Inclusion*  
*Email: marie.potvin@uvm.edu*  
*Website: [http://www.uvm.edu/~vtilehp/?Page=Faculty/potvin.htm](http://www.uvm.edu/~vtilehp/?Page=Faculty/potvin.htm)*  
*Research Focus:* Recreational participation and Quality of Life in children with autism; research related to the integration of evidence-based practice  
*Methodological Approaches:* Descriptive studies, single-subject designs and qualitative studies.

**Patricia A. Prelock PhD**  
*Department: Communication Sciences & Disorders*  
*Email: patricia.prelock@uvm.edu*  
*Website: [http://www.uvm.edu/~pprelock/](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

**Michael J. Rosen, PhD**  
*Department: Engineering*  
*Email: mrosen@cems.uvm.edu*  
*Website: [http://www.uvm.edu/~cems/?Page=employee/profile.php&SM=employee/_employeeemenu.html&EmID=305](http://www.uvm.edu/~cems/?Page=employee/profile.php&SM=employee/_employeeemenu.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.

Susan M. Ryan, PhD
Department: Center on Disability & Community Inclusion
Email: susan.ryan@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbion.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
Email: George.Salembier@uvm.edu
Web site: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbion.php&username=gsalembi
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
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
Web site: http://www.uvm.edu/medicine/pediatrics/?Page=profile.php&bioID=23012
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: To be added

Katharine Shepherd, EdD
Department: Education
Email: Katharine.Shepherd@uvm.edu
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=kgshephe
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.

Sondra Elice Solomon, PhD
Department: Psychology (College of Arts and Sciences) & Psychiatry (College of Medicine)
Email: Sondra.Solomon@uvm.edu
Web site: http://www.uvm.edu/~psych/?Page=faculty/SolomonSondra.php
Research Focus: Stigma, HIV, chronic illness, genetic disorders and facial distinctions (e.g., disfigurement). I am curious about resilience and examine the mechanisms of adaptive coping among those whose physical appearance, psychological well-being and physical health departs from mainstream norms of acceptance and am developing empirically validated interventions to provide support to affected individuals and their families.
Methodological Approaches: To be added

Lance Smith, PhD
Department: Leadership and Developmental Sciences (Graduate Program in Counseling)
Email: Lance.Smith@uvm.edu
Web site: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=lcsmith
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](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  
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Website: [http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=jstrolin](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](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  
Website: http://www.uvm.edu/~cess/?Page=facbio.php&username=hjiron

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: To be added