School of Psychology Launches Psychology Science Minute  

Laurence Hayes, M.Ed.

Creating information-packed, creative and accessible pieces of psychology tidbits may be the best solution to meeting the needs to educate community members in a fashion that is applicable to their lifestyle. Faculty emerita, Dr. Juanita Neal-Baker, professor of psychology, retired since 2007, has embarked on a pilgrimage to accomplish this feat. Dr. Baker’s innovative project is entitled the Psychology Science Minute (PSM), which can be found via this website: http://cpla.fit.edu/psych/psychology-science-minute.php. Dr. Baker originally funded to pay for the development of the PSMs. Through this website, Dr. Baker and Dr. Sarah Weinstein-Arnett, ’10 Psy.D., have collaborated to create one-minute-long informative videos for public access and education covering important topics in psychology. WFIT 89.5 FM will be broadcasting them at different times during the week. You can also listen to them online! Below are excerpts from interviews with these pioneers reflecting upon their project in their own words:

What were the sources of inspiration for the PSM?

Dr. Baker: “It goes all back to my childhood. My dad was an electrical engineer. He wired each room with speakers so every school day at 7 a.m. we would hear the “Star Spangled Banner” and hear the news. It was our alarm and our way to start the day. It was a way for us to learn via the radio, but what my father was really thinking was how to creatively use the lastest technology. This has been done with other subjects. While running FLP (Family Learning Program), I noticed the many myths regarding sexual abuse victims, families of abuse, and offenders. Much of the research hence has aimed to remove the myths to get at the truth and educate the public. As a full-time faculty member, there was never the time to conduct the research I wanted. I have been writing them ever since and wanted to expand the focus to not just cover sexual abuse myths … Overtime, the idea evolved and gained faculty support, Dr. Sara Arnett being the most recent addition as the voice of the PSM.”

Dr. Weinstein-Arnett: “We have found it is best to start with what we are passionate about because it translates directly to the listener. Then, we talk with colleagues and review relevant psychology publications to view what is most relevant and buzzing in the area. We always use well-researched, highly credible sources and topics. Dr. Baker is quite talented in that arena.”

What populations are you trying to target with these PSMs?

Dr. Baker: “We hope to reach the general population, including students who likely listen to WFIT.”

How do you choose which topics to cover?

Dr. Baker: “In general, I want to do something relevant to people that will make a difference in our lives. Then I look at the whole field of psychology and try to sample from each, but I am much more familiar with clinical, so that does predominate. Science news daily, American Psychologist, introductory psychology books and [leisure] reading books are sources of inspiration for new topics. Instructors of FIT classes are assigning projects to perform the research for the PSM or composing the PSM themselves. It provides an opportunity for students to use the skills they are developing as a psychologist. It would even be a nice first step in a thesis or DRP.”

What are the steps involved in creating one PSM?

Dr. Baker: “We both come up with the ideas for the minutes and so do the students. Then research is located. Questioning the research to its soundness is next. Then marketing the idea in a catchy way so it can be used. Next, writing begins. Once written, the minute goes through several rounds of editing, and fervent discussion. Creating a PSM has been more difficult than originally thought. For the past two years, we have been learning the
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system, wanting to be creative, and then gain approval from the dean.”

How long does it take to create one PSM?

Dr. Baker: “It depends on the minute. If I know the research and have an idea, it can take two to three hours. If I need to familiarize myself with the research, it can take much longer, even months.”

Any interesting obstacles encountered while launching this project?

Dr. Baker: “The main thing is trying to decide if the research is adequate enough for the minute. Ensuring that the research is of high quality so proper information is disseminated can be time consuming. Finding specific research studies for each minute is key and takes quite a while. We determine whether the research is controlled, if of quality, replicable, and is what it says. It has been a good experience to ask ‘what is the controversy here?’

Dr. Weinstein-Arnett: “Interestingly, the early obstacles were getting all of this incredibly exciting information condensed into under 90 seconds. With time for intro and closing along with music you have around 74 seconds or so. That is not a lot of time to share the research and a take home message that the listener remember is the myth and not the important research that follows. So, we have had to change the structure of how we start the PSMs. We start each one with asking questions and then providing the information. We do not put the myth in the PSM to begin with. Also, searching for the original paper can be most challenging. Additionally, getting at the essence of the science of the topic in just one minute and focusing on one idea at a time instead of three.”

Dr. Weinstein-Arnett: “I have the most challenging aspect to be keeping the written PSM to under 90 seconds when spoken. There is so much riveting information that we want to share with the public about our profession, linking psychology science to subjects that the public may be unaware of the influence of our field, reducing stigma in the profession and giving people tangible tools that they can apply in their everyday lives.”

What is the grand vision for the PSM?

Dr. Baker: “Research should be available to anyone in the world. That is what we really need more of. The PSM is starting with WFIT radio to build success. Projected launch is ASAP. Currently, we need music to introduce the minute. Erin Fox, marketing coordinator, has proposed the idea of working on developing a psychology blog for the minutes so the general public can make comments on the post and a dialogue can be initiated about each topic. This would be an interactive site with the capabilities to subscribe to the blog with links to read or hear the PSM.”

A Psychology Science Minute  Topic: Hate, Prejudice, Racial Conflict

Psychology Science Minute brought to you by the Psychology Department at Florida Institute of Technology …

When Elliot Aronson was 9 years old in New York City, he was beat up repeatedly as a Jewish boy walking to school through different ethnic neighborhoods. One day nursing a bloody lip, he thought, “Why do they hate me so when they don’t even know me!”

Aronson became a social psychologist when he learned that psychology asks and answers this kind of real-world question. In Texas in 1963 schools were integrating, fights between black and white students broke out. Some schools closed. Dr. Aronson sent his grad team into classrooms. They observed children’s interactions were very competitive, unfairly setting black students up for failure. They designed an alternative teaching style, putting black and white students together on teams. For a team to be successful, all had to work well together … then their team shined. Within six weeks, fights on the playground reduced, relations between children improved and integration proceeded smoothly there.

How can we use this research? We humans too often treat others who are different with prejudice … not just race, but gender, religion, class, age, politics, culture, etc. How can you encourage cooperative projects requiring joint cooperation on common goals, bringing diverse or opposing people together?

If you would like to support this project, please mail contributions to: Florida Institute of Technology, School of Psychology, 150 W. University Blvd., Melbourne, FL 32901

Indicate on the check that the funding is for the Psychology Science Minute
School of Psychology Faculty Invited to Speak in Brazil

Laurence Hayes, M.Ed.

The Sao Paulo School for Advanced Sciences Research and Treatment of Autistic Behavior (ESPCA Autism) invited Dr. David Wilder, professor of psychology, Dr. Allison M. Betz, assistant professor of psychology and interim director of behavioral programming at The Scott Center for Autism Treatment, Andrew Morgan, behavior analyst at The Scott Center, and graduate students Yanerys Leon-Enriquez and Catherine Martinez to Sao Carlo, Brazil, to provide students, faculty, researchers, educators and other professionals who work with children with autism in Brazil an opportunity to learn more about the current research and practices in areas related to autism. The ultimate goal of the conference was to facilitate collaboration between those working in Brazil and other researchers and universities with programs that specialize in autism. From January 9–13, 2012, ESPCA Autism promoted the meeting of young scientists and recognized researchers who study autism in centers and universities of Brazil, United States, Canada, Norway and Spain, mainly in the areas of behavioral analysis, genetics and molecular medicine. They discussed issues related to identification, treatment and education. Dr. Betz presented the lecture “The Use of Stimulus Control Procedures to Manage Problem Behavior during Early Intervention Services with Children with Autism.” Dr. Wilder presented the lecture “Noncompliance and Oppositional Behavior in Children and Adults with Autism Spectrum Disorders.”

Update on Neuropsychology Research in the School of Psychology

Frank M. Webbe, Ph.D.

Alzheimer’s Disease Assessment

Although the diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease is not confirmed until brain autopsy after death, modern approaches in neuropsychological testing and medical imaging allow probable diagnoses to be made in many instances with living patients. In collaboration with the East Central Florida Memory Disorder Clinic and the Health First Aging Institute, Florida Tech faculty Drs. Kevin Mulligan and Frank Webbe and their team of clinical psychology doctoral students led by Tiffany Cummings, Jackie Marcinak and Danielle Schuster have contributed to several efforts aimed at improving differential diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias. These projects have included collaboration with the faculty at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach on the use of standard clinical MRIs for more precise contribution to Alzheimer’s disease assessment.

Recent publications arising from this effort include the following:


Sport Related Concussion

Frank Webbe and a team of clinical doctoral students comprise Florida Tech’s Sport Related Concussion Project. They have been pioneers in research aimed at determining why some athletes are more prone to concussion than others, and why some recover quicker than others. In addition to current research that addresses reliability and validity issues in obtaining baseline measures of neurocognitive functioning, Webbe and his students also are working collaboratively with other investigators in a Department of Defense project aimed at developing new, objective measures to verify in the field that a concussion has occurred.

Recent publications arising from this effort include the following:


Behavior Analysis Student Association Hosts Interdisciplinary Conference

Scott Miller, B.A.

The Behavior Analysis Student Association and the Society for Performance Management (BASA/SPM) is a student association made up primarily of master’s students in the behavior analysis program at Florida Institute of Technology. The association’s primary function is to host an annual conference. Every conference is a one-day, single-track event so a specific topic is selected and speakers are chosen who have made significant contributions either in research, practice or both to that topic.

This year the conference was on Feb. 10 and the theme was “Behavior Analytic Approaches to Education and Instruction.” Behavior analysts have contributed a substantial amount of research and practical models into many different education settings. Despite this, there has been little integration of the products of the science into actual practice.

In order to educate and help local area teachers and instructors, we recruited some of the country’s top practitioners who have successfully implemented behavior analysis into education at a multidimensional level.

We had the honor of hosting Denise Ross, Ph.D., Claire St. Peter-Pipkin, Ph.D., and Kent Johnson, Ph.D. Dr. Ross has opened a charter school of which she is the principal in the urban Chicago area. Her school fully integrates behavior analysis into their instructional model for typical and struggling students with remarkable results. Dr. Ross highlighted some of the aspects of their school programs and protocols that have been key for success.

Dr. St. Peter-Pipkin has worked as a consultant for many schools and described the education system in which she is currently working that also embraces behavior analysis into their practice and resulting in improvement in their overall performance. Finally, Dr. Johnson is the founder of the Morningside Academy, a remedial education facility. Dr. Johnson outlined the robust results of their approach to instruction. He also discussed how successfully the Morningside Model has been integrated into other schools more than doubling their performance in less than three years on several measures.

At the end of the conference, the three speakers took the stage and participated in an audience-driven Q&A for the remaining time period.

This year’s conference was a great success. Attendance surpassed last year’s totals because of a seamless online streaming experience that almost quadrupled our number of online attendees. We received positive feedback from both the audience and our speakers. I personally look forward to “passing the torch” to the next year of master’s students who will be able to improve where we may need improvement and further increase the reputation and presence of the students on campus.

New Space & New Neighbors for the School of Psychology

In May 2012, the School of Psychology will be moving to a new building. We will occupy the second floor of the Florida Tech Commons. The building will provide classrooms, office space, computer and research labs. On the first floor will be a “one stop shop” for Florida Tech students including admissions, registration and financial aid offices.

From left is Patricia Teague (BASA Secretary), Dr. Denise Ross, Dr. Claire St. Peter-Pipkin, Michael Fantetti (BASA President-Elect), Dr. Kent Johnson and Lina Majdalaney (Second-year master’s student, BASA member).
Making Something from Nothing: ICCM and Strategic Planning

Rich Griffith, Ph.D.

Those of you who have been around the I/O program Florida Tech in the past 12 years know that we have been getting more involved in cross cultural work and taking more of an international slant. Little by little, culture has been creeping into our curriculum, our research and our consulting. Our formal efforts at curriculum development go all the way back to 2003, and we have completed more than a dozen theses and dissertations with cross cultural/ international components. Five years ago, we decided to make international I/O one of the foundations of our strategic planning process to accomplish our goal of being the best I/O program in the world. And just two years ago, we formalized that commitment by founding the Institute for Cross Cultural Management (ICCM). So, with more than a dozen years of groundwork, all we needed to do was put out our shingle right? If you said yes, you couldn’t be more wrong.

In June of 2011, we started the strategic planning process for ICCM. Having had a hand in building the I/O program, we didn’t want ICCM to suffer some of the same growing pains that accompany organic growth. In the early stages of an organization’s life cycle, it is easy to get pulled into putting out daily fires, and little time is spent on the big picture issues. So we set out to develop a strategic plan while slowly ramping up product development and grant writing. We were lucky enough to have been introduced to John Byron, a consultant who led our first strategic planning workshop. John took the data from that workshop and helped us form our Transition to Full Operations Plan. And, for the last six months, we have been working in subgroups to put the meat on the bones of that plan. The plan consists of 30 pages of roadmap, marketing, product development, research, advisory board governance and a communications plan. And now rather than just an idea, ICCM has an organizational structure that will allow us to handle the successes we are accumulating.

Dr. Jessie Wildman, our newest faculty member in the I/O program, offered her thoughts on the process of building something for nothing. “I think navigating through the ambiguity of the process has been the most difficult part. It can be very frustrating. Though, that’s the whole point of the process—at the very beginning, there is nothing but ambiguity. The strategic planning process is the only way to move from ambiguity toward measurable, achievable actions.” She adds this advice regarding start-up plans. “Make sure you have a clear understanding of the big picture (the primary goals and scope of the organization) before getting down in the weeds regarding each particular sub-goal. It becomes difficult to maintain focus if you are trying to figure out both at the same time.”

So what does a plan buy you besides some dead trees and empty ink cartridges? An institute without a vision and a plan is like a ship without a rudder. It just floats around looking good, but going nowhere. Our goal was to build an infrastructure that would allow us to be able to handle large grants when they come down the pike. Currently, we are administering $150,000 in grants and have $2 million in pending proposals. We also wanted to build a process of developing products that would allow us to quickly respond to customer’s needs, like we did when developing our Cross-Cultural Competence and Global Leadership workshops for the Harris Corporation. Finally, a solid business plan was necessary to convince donors that ICCM could complete its mission of developing leaders and organizations to succeed in the global environment through evidence-based research and programs. Hopefully as ICCM continues to grow and develop, the I/O alumni will be pleased with the “something we built from nothing.” Find out more about ICCM at http://research.fit.edu/iccm.

FIT Well Represented at Southeastern Psychological Association Annual Conference

Laurence Hayes, M.Ed.

Seven FIT students presented original research posters and papers at the Southeastern Psychological Association (SEPA) Annual Convention in New Orleans. The conference was held Feb. 15–19. FIT Psy.D. students Adam Zimmer, Cara Bortz, Kyle Piecora and Hank Ebner presented a poster entitled “Exploratory Analysis of 1-year Repeated Administration of a Measure of Baseline Postural Stability.” Laurence Hayes, Psy.D. graduate student, presented a poster regarding “Promoting the Approval of Positive Parenting by Examining Parent Attitudes, Knowledge and Behaviors.” Stephanie Field, Psy.D. graduate student, presented her paper “Sexuality Myths Among College Students.” The undergraduate program was represented well by Elizabeth Beasley who presented two posters “Defendant Decision-Making: Factors that Contribute to a Guilty Plea” and “Campus Sexual Assault Awareness Programs: Decreasing Risk and Increasing Empathy.” Several students also traveled to attend the conference.

Neuropsychology graduate students present their research at SEPA, from left to right: Hank Ebner, Kyle Piecora, Adam Zimmer.
An Evening of Hope IV  
Colleen Middlebrooks, Outreach Coordinator for The Scott Center for Autism Treatment

An Evening of Hope IV was held Saturday, April 21, 2012 from 7–10 p.m. at the home of Joe Flammio, a Florida Tech trustee. Over 200 guests attended. The live auction featured items such as an island getaway off the coast of Honduras, golf at Lake Nona, and tasting and tour of the new Florida Beer facility at the Port. Also featured was the chance to win a Rolex watch donated by Kempf’s Jewelers. The event would not be possible without the dedicated members of the EOH committee made up of members of the community. This year’s chair was Mark Malek of Zies Widerman and Malek. Other members included Aimee Balda, Ivy Chong, Ph.D., Carol Craig, Pennie DiPrima, Bobbie Dyer, Leasha Flammio-Watson, Dr. Rachel Fornes, John and Susan Hopkins, Jane Kirschenbaum, Gale Kempf, Mary Beth Kenkel, Ph.D., Colleen Middlebrooks, Polly Molnar, Claudia O’Brien, Holly Pollock, Adrienne Roth, Barbara Wall Scanlon and Theresa Travis. The event raised $190,000.

Taylor 4 Teens: FIT Psy.D. Students Reaching Out
Laurence Hayes, M.Ed.

Clinical psychology doctoral students at Florida Tech volunteer their time and talents to support Taylor 4 Teens, a local charitable organization. Taylor 4 Teens is a nonprofit group with a vital mission: to bring awareness to teen issues and guide teens to available resources. This group was founded in 2010 after Taylor Renae King, granddaughter to Dr. Thom Harrell and Pam Harrell, decided to end her suffering by taking her own life at the age of 14. In response to this tragic loss, her family members created this group in Taylor’s name to educate the community and empower teens with the knowledge and resources needed to identify mental health issues and obtain help in an effort to prevent any additional premature termination of life in our local area. In addition to family members, Taylor 4 Teens is highly supported by a small army of 15 impassioned FIT Psy.D. student volunteers. These students are eager to donate their time, their training and creative approaches to design and deliver presentations and discussion groups, and assist running fundraisers and table events to spread awareness to teens and their parents about adolescent issues, signs of distress and how to help. Recent presentations have addressed such topics as being able to identify various substances and their effects on the body, accepting differences in others, a two-part series on applying and transitioning to college, bullying, facebook and sexting: how to stay safe in the cyber world, depression and suicide, and body image and self-esteem. Upcoming topics will include parent sessions about how to communicate with your child throughout their development, substances and how to help, and depression and bullying. Community support for this group is continuing to increase as this group is operated completely on donations of time and gifts. For information regarding Taylor 4 Teens and future events, please visit their website www.taylor4teens.org.

Radhika Krishnamurthy and her assessment team of Psy.D. students (from left: Stacey Polott, Corinne Russell, Laura McCord and Lauren King) presented papers on therapeutic assessment at the Society for Personality Assessment (SPA) conference in Chicago, March, 2012. Lauren King and Laura McCord also presented papers on their DRP research; each had received a competitive dissertation grant from SPA to support their research. All four student presenters received travel grants from SPA. At this conference, Dr. Krishnamurthy delivered her presidential address titled “The Dharma of good personality assessment work.”
Two in Industrial/Organizational Program Honored

Congratulations to Dr. Lisa Steelman and Beth Gitlin who received the Joan Bixby Award this past March. The Joan Bixby Award recognizes a Florida Tech faculty member, staff and student (male or female) who enhances the climate for women’s participation and development on campus. The Women’s Business Center at Florida Tech in collaboration with the Florida Institute of Technology Alumni Association and Zonta Club of Melbourne hosted a celebration in honor of Women’s History Month during which the awards were presented. Dr. Steelman is the associate dean of the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts and chair of the I/O Psychology program. She empowers graduate students and faculty members through mentoring and role modeling. She demonstrates that one can serve her colleagues, her students, her family and her community with equal grace. Beth Gitlin is a doctoral student in the I/O psychology program. She was recognized for her active promotion of women on a global scale. She is on the board of directors for the Women’s Business Center, is the chair of the Institute of Cross Cultural Management Steering committee, and is an active member in the local chapter of Rotary International. The accomplishments of these outstanding leaders are a testament to the culture of diversity present in the I/O psychology program at Florida Tech. While I/O psychology is a business-dominated field, 70% of the students in the program are female. In addition, more than 30% of the students come from Florida Tech from other countries. The I/O program is a leader in the development of intercultural training, and many of the students are interns and employees of the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, an organization dedicated to inclusion and fair treatment of all. We are proud that the leaders of our program are being recognized as leaders of the university and community, and that they carry the values of the program forward.

Recent Faculty Publications


Wilder, D., Myers, K., Nicholson, K., Allison, J., & Fuchette, A. (manuscript accepted for publication). The effects of rationales, differential reinforcement, and a guided compliance procedure to increase compliance among preschool children. Education and Treatment of Children.


Clinical Psychology Doctoral Student Internship Matches

Kyle Culver—Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI

Tiffany Cummings—Henry Ford Health Sciences Center, Detroit, MI

Natalie Fala—McGüere Veterans Administration Medical Center, Richmond, VA

Amber Hasty—Mills Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Briana Haut—Devereux Foundation, Villanova, PA

Ashley Hoffman—Oversawa Wastach Mental Health, Provo, UT

Briana Hoffman—Wichita Collaborative Psychology, Wichita, KS

Stephen Holwerda—Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD

Erica Johnson—Florida State University—Counseling, Tallahassee, FL

Lauren King—Eastern Virginia Medical School, Norfolk, VA

Nicole Grace—Knox Youth Opportunity Center, Muncie, IN

Joana Kopech—Heart of America Psychology Consort, Springfield, MO

Isaac Levinsky—VA Medical Center—Atlanta, Decatur, GA

Laura Martin—McCord Fulton State Hospital, Fulton, MD

Stacey Polott—Coatesville VA Medical Center, Coatesville, PA

Trisha Ross—Houston Independent School District, Houston, TX

S. Corinne Russell—Cherokee Health Systems, Knoxville, TN

Paige Spencer—Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System, Biloxi, MS

Benjamin Steinberg—Cornerstone Behavioral Health, Evanston, WV

Nikki Styra—University of Idaho, Moscow, ID

Rebekah Travis—Tuba Center for Child Psychology, Vinita, OK

Dr. Lisa Steelman, winner of the Joan Bixby Award from the Women's History Luncheon.
Where are they now?

Do you know a former alum who has said to you “I don’t ever get a copy of Journey.” Or “I wonder why so-and-so doesn’t write to me from Florida Tech anymore.” Well—maybe they are among the missing. Each semester when we send out Journey, we receive a multitude of address updates and a goodly number of “return to sender—address unknown.” If you know someone who may not have let us know of their recent move, or recent change in email—call them, email them, contact them in some way and ask them to get in touch with us. We are always interested in hearing what our alumni are up to, where they are headed and what wonderful accomplishments they are making. Let us hear from you. We want to expand our alumni update section. Send your information any time throughout the year, not just when you hear from us about the next issue of Journey.

Take care, be well and keep in touch. Send your updates to jmccray@fit.edu.

P.S. Your pictures are a welcome addition, please include yourself in the pictures of your children and pets … after all … we went to school with you!

Please renew my support for the coming year.

I give my annual support to Florida Tech’s School of Psychology for the coming year in the amount of: □ $50 □ $75 □ $100 □ Other $ ________________

Please make check payable to Florida Tech School of Psychology Endowment Fund and return with this renewal invoice in the enclosed envelope, or mail to:
Florida Tech School of Psychology, 150 W. University Blvd., Melbourne, FL 32901.

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