

# Speech and Hearing Sciences

DEPARTMENT of  
ALLIED HEALTH SCIENCES  
UNC CHAPEL HILL



## Project Core Aims to Improve Implementation of Technology Tools for Students with Disabilities

The Center for Literacy and Disability Studies (CLDS) has been awarded \$2.5 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education, for *Project Core*, an Educational Technology, Media, and Materials for Individuals with Disabilities—Stepping-Up Technology Implementation grant. Stepping-Up Technology grants are aimed at identifying strategies needed to effectively implement evidence-based technology tools that benefit students with disabilities as well as disseminating products that will help a broad range of schools to effectively implement these technology tools.

The project will be under the direction of Dr. Karen Erickson, Director of the CLDS, Professor in the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences, and Yoder Distinguished Professor. The four-year project (with a contingent fifth year) will improve access to evidence-based augmentative and alter-

native communication (AAC) interventions required for access and academic achievement in the general education curriculum for students with significant cognitive disabilities (SCD) and complex communication needs (CCN). The evidence-based technology that is the target of the intervention is the Dynamic Learning Maps™ Core Vocabulary (DLM® Core). DLM® Core includes words determined to be necessary for students with SCD and CCN to engage, learn, and demonstrate knowledge in an academic environment. Grounded in the principles of implementation science and scaling up to 10 schools over five potential years, the project will entail iterative cycles of collaborative planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of the DLM® Core. Throughout each stage, tools will be refined for training, coaching, assessing readiness, and monitoring fidelity of implementation. The project will result in a web portal of professional development resources. The project will start



Photo courtesy of CLDS

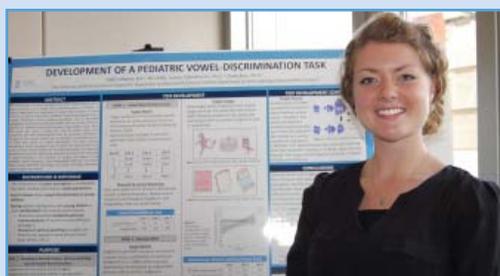
Students utilize technology tools.

January 2015. Additional members of the research team include Penny Hatch (Speech and Hearing Sciences 2009 PhD graduate), Lori Geist, Claire Greer, Skip Ryan, and Allison Dennis. [Read more at www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/clds-project-core.](http://www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/clds-project-core)

## LEND AuD Fellows Awarded Research Traineeships

Sadie Schwarz and Jenna Browning, third-year graduate students in UNC's Doctor of Audiology (AuD) program, were each awarded T35 Research Traineeships for the summer of 2014. Schwarz completed her research experience at Vanderbilt University under the mentorship of Dr. Ben Hornsby with a focus on behavioral and subjective listening fatigue. Browning's research experience at Boystown National Research Hospital in Omaha was mentored by Dr. Ryan McCreery with a focus on hearing aid features designed to improve the understanding of speech in children with hearing loss.

Their work will be presented at the annual convention of the American Auditory Society in 2015. Both students described the summer experience as a valuable learning opportunity and an ideal complement to their Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) program training at UNC. Schwarz and Browning are funded by a supplemental grant to LEND aimed at increasing the number of audiologists with knowledge and skill in specialized areas of pediatric audiology. Schwarz, who completed her undergraduate degree at Ohio State University, and Browning, a graduate of the University of Washington-Seattle, are planning audiology careers that combine clinical service with participation in clinical research.



Above, Sadie Schwarz at the Annual SHS Research Day. Left, Jenna Browning with Dr. Jack Roush at the 2013 Scholarships Brunch, where Browning was recognized for receiving the Audiology Alumni Scholarship.



## PhD Student Wins ASHA Scholarship

Nicole Corbin, a second-year Speech and Hearing Sciences PhD student, has been awarded a \$5,000 ASHA Foundation Graduate Student Scholarship. Corbin earned her AuD from Arizona State University before beginning the PhD program under the primary mentorship of Dr. Lori Leibold. Corbin is particularly interested in how unilateral hearing loss affects children's development of the ability to hear in complex acoustic environments. This year, Corbin has enjoyed co-teaching the undergraduate Introduction to audiology course with Dr. Jack Roush, preparing a manuscript for submission to *Ear and Hearing*, developing her pre-dissertation project, and seeing patients and supervising AuD students in the UNC Hospitals ENT clinic. [Read more at http://www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/phd-asha-scholarship.](http://www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/phd-asha-scholarship)



Nicole Corbin

# Speech and Hearing Sciences

## Research Team Receives Editors' Award from American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology

Speech and Hearing Sciences Professors Linda Watson and Betsy Crais, Occupational Science Professor Grace Baranek, and Speech and Hearing Sciences PhD graduates Jessica Dykstra and Kaitlyn Wilson authored an article that received the 2013 Editors' Award from the *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*. The award will be presented at the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association conference in November.

The article, titled "Communicative Gesture Use in Infants With and Without Autism: A Retrospective Home Video Study," compared the use of gestures in infants with autism to infants with other devel-

opmental disabilities or with typical development. The authors concluded "differences in gesture use in infancy have implications for early autism screening, assessment, and intervention."

Wilson (MS-SLP Class of 2006 and 2012 PhD graduate) is a now post-doctoral fellow at Kennedy Krieger Institute Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD). Dykstra (MS-SLP Class of 2004 and 2013 PhD graduate) is an investigator at Frank Porter Graham Institute working with the Center on Secondary Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders. [Read more at www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/research-team-editors-award](http://www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/research-team-editors-award).

## Crais Appointed to Chair ASHA Academic Affairs Board

Dr. Elizabeth Crais, Professor, has been appointed by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association to chair the Academic Affairs Board starting in 2015. The Board provides guidance to the almost 300 undergraduate and graduate programs in speech and hearing across the country. The Board's charge is to (a) identify and monitor critical issues, forecast needs and trends, develop resources, implement programs, and recommend actions that address academic preparation and (b) support and enhance capacity building efforts in response to clinical and faculty-researcher personnel needs and shortages.



*Dr. Elizabeth Crais*

Dr. Crais, Coordinator of PhD Studies in the Division of Speech and Hearing Sciences, has 40 years of experience in working with children and youth with disabilities. Her research interests include ASD identification and intervention, personnel preparation, and implementation of family-centered practices. She is currently a PI or Investigator on two IES grants and one Autism Speaks grant. [Read more at www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/crais-appointed-asha-chair](http://www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/crais-appointed-asha-chair).

## Watson Graduates from Faculty Engaged Scholars Program

Dr. Linda Watson, Professor, graduated from the Carolina Center for Public Service's Thorp Faculty Engaged Scholars Program in August. The program brings together selected faculty from across campus to engage in an experiential, competency-based curriculum designed to advance their scholarship. Dr. Watson's area of scholarship is autism research, addressing issues of early development, early identification, and social communication interventions. [Read more at www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/watson-scholars-program](http://www.alliedhealth.unc.edu/sphs/news/watson-scholars-program).



*Dr. Linda Watson with Faculty Course Director Ron Strauss and Community Course Director Melvin Jackson at the Faculty Engaged Scholars graduation.*

## PhD Student Wins Early Career Award

Speech and Hearing Sciences PhD student Jessica Kinard was selected to receive the 2014 Joanne Erwick Roberts Early Career Award. She received the award at the Frank Porter Graham Annual Meeting on Friday, October 10. Kinard will use the monetary value of the award to help support her trip to the ASHA Convention in Orlando, where she will present a session based on her dissertation research and participate in sessions chosen to enhance her early career development.

In late August, Kinard passed the oral defense of her dissertation, which focuses on the impact of a parent responsiveness intervention on young children with ASD in Spanish-speaking families. She has begun a postdoctoral position working with Dr. Gabriel Dichter on a project examining neurophysiological responses (measured with fMRIs) of older children with ASD to social and nonsocial stimuli.



*Jessica Kinard*