

Journey



Florida Institute
of Technology

High Tech with a Human Touch™

School of Psychology

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“Our central principle in reaching the post-traditional student is ‘If they cannot come to us, we will bring the education to them.’”

Mary Beth Kenkel, Ph.D.

Reaching Post-Traditional Students

Mary Beth Kenkel, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Psychology and Liberal Arts

Higher education is being transformed before our eyes. Today’s typical student is no longer the 18 to 24 year old studying full time on campus. In fact, fewer than 20% of the roughly 20 million enrolled students fit that traditional image. The post-traditional students who comprise the rest of the group may differ in a number of ways. They may be older, part-timers, commuters, employed full time, and/or taking courses at a distance.

A variety of educational approaches is needed to reach this expanded and diverse group of students. The Schools of Psychology and Behavior Analysis within the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts have stepped up to that challenge and instituted a number of new programs and strategies to bring education in psychology and behavior analysis to the post-traditionals.

One way we use to reach these students is through our online programs with Florida Tech’s University Alliance. Our online associate and bachelor’s programs in applied psychology and in criminal justice are directed to students living anywhere in the world. They may be full-time employees, or stay-at-home moms with multiple child-rearing duties, or active military personnel. In all cases, they are seeking educational opportunities but are unable to devote the time or resources for full-time, on-campus academic study. Although the students are at a distance and online, they have a strong affiliation with Florida Tech as shown by the number who come to campus, maybe for the first time, for commencement. I feel such admiration for our online students because I know that completing their studies amidst their demanding home and work duties took tremendous effort and commitment. I also feel very glad that through our distance education programs we are able to reach this dedicated post-traditional student.

Another group of post-traditional students are college graduates working in a given field who need additional credentials and training for career advancement. Our School of Behavior Analysis has developed a number of innovative master’s programs in applied behavior analysis (ABA) which will enable the graduates to become Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), a professional in high demand. First we developed a Friday–Saturday program for working professionals in Orlando. The curriculum is the same as that on the Melbourne campus but delivered in a concentrated format, and the same faculty teach in both programs. As the Orlando program has grown, so has the need for quality practicum sites in the Orlando area. In this issue of *Journey*, Dr. David Wilder, chair of the behavior analysis campus programs, describes our new collaboration with the Nemours Children Hospital Orlando for training and research activities.

However, we are taking the ABA master’s program even farther than Orlando to reach a greatly needed group of working professionals. These are the behavior specialists working in centers specializing in treatment for autism and related disabilities. Since the most current estimate of autism is 1 in 68 children, the need for such centers and capable staff continues to grow. The article in this *Journey* issue by Dr. Bryon Wine and Dr. Jose Martinez-Diaz, associate dean and mastermind of these creative programs, describes our establishment of “hybrid” ABA programs at treatment centers throughout the U.S. These programs allow the students to continue their important work at the centers while pursuing the excellent ABA graduate training provided by Florida Tech faculty.

Our central principle in reaching the post-traditional student is *If they cannot come to us, we will bring the education to them*. We are well on our way in doing so, and look forward to many more initiatives in the future.

“Hybrid” Master of Arts in Professional Behavior Analysis Launched

Byron Wine, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Site Director, Indiana

and Jose Martinez-Diaz, Ph.D., BCBA-D, Professor, Associate Dean and Head of the School of Behavior Analysis

The School of Behavior Analysis is offering a new M.A. program in professional behavior analysis due to the continued demand for well-trained Board Certified Behavior Analysts. It combines 24 credits of online course work with a year of residency at one of several satellite sites located throughout the country. Each satellite facility provides valuable practicum experience and requires students to complete course work and a capstone project. Students who are unable to attend classes in Central Florida now can earn their highly regarded Florida Tech degree closer to home!

In May 2014, Dr. Thomas Szabo began leading the first off-site program in Los Angeles, Calif., for our initial student cohort, now scheduled to graduate in May 2015. In August 2014, Dr. Lina Majdalany began to lead a site in Irvine,

Calif., and Dr. Adam Brewer, one in Woodruff, S.C. Four additional sites are scheduled to open in January 2015. Dr. Leon Yaherys will be the site director in Miami, Fla. Dr. Deirdre Fitzgerald will oversee the Sacramento, Calif., site. Dr. Byron Wine will provide oversight of the Charlottesville/Richmond, Virginia areas, while Dr. Byron Neff will be responsible for the Indianapolis site. Faculty members for these sites have been identified and will be announced in the next issue of *Journey*. We plan to open five additional sites in the 2015–2016 academic year. We are confident this new program will help fill the expanding need for qualified behavior analysts, especially in areas where applied behavior analysis (ABA) services are sorely needed, but not yet available!



Byron Wine, Ph.D.

Nemours Children’s Hospital

David Wilder, Ph.D., Chair, On-Campus Behavior Analysis Programs

The Florida Tech Behavior Analysis programs recently negotiated a partnership with Nemours Children’s Hospital in Orlando. As part of this arrangement, a Florida Tech faculty member will provide on-site consultation services to Nemours on a weekly basis. The consultation centers around services for children with autism and other intellectual disabilities. Dr. Alison Betz, assistant professor of behavior analysis, began providing consultation in August 2014. In addition, during the 2014–2015 academic year, some Florida Tech graduate students in applied behavior analysis will be doing their practicum work at Nemours under the supervision of Dr. Betz and a Nemours-based behavior analyst and Florida Tech alumna. “We are excited to be working with Nemours, and we are confident that all involved will benefit from the arrangement”, says Dr. David Wilder, chair of the on-campus behavior analysis programs at Florida Tech. The arrangement also calls for applied research to be conducted at Nemours, which Dr. Betz and her students have already begun.

Nemours Children’s Hospital



Doctoral Internship Experience

Cara Bortz, M.S., Clinical Psychology

I was thrilled to match at the prestigious James A. Haley VA Hospital for my internship year. I was matched as a trauma intern, meaning I would have the unique opportunity to specialize in trauma and obtain VA certification in evidence-based psychotherapies for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Thus far in my internship, I have completed national trainings in trauma processing psychotherapies including cognitive processing therapy (CPT) and prolonged exposure therapy (PE). I completed a rotation in Military Sexual Trauma, where I had the opportunity to work with male and female veterans who have endured sexual traumas during their military service. I am currently completing my second rotation on the Combat PTSD rotation, where I work primarily with male and female veterans who have endured various combat traumas from several war eras. I have also been afforded the opportunity to complete many comprehensive evaluations for multiple referral questions and have completed several comprehensive evaluations for PTSD diagnosis. In my third rotation, I will work

in Primary Care/Behavioral Health and will complete my fourth rotation on the Inpatient Traumatic Brain Injury Clinic, which is one of five VA facilities in the country designed to provide intensive rehabilitative care to veterans and active duty service members who have experienced severe traumatic brain injuries.

Receiving my bachelor's and master's degrees, and upcoming Doctor of Psychology degree (Psy.D.) from Florida Tech, I can truly speak to the unique and thorough education that is provided. Florida Tech provided strong generalist training with the opportunity to seek specialization in unique domains. While ensuring a quality generalist foundation, the program truly encourages us to seek opportunities in our areas of potential specialization. The ability to speak to various experiences provided in the breadth of opportunities at Florida Tech, while ensuring competence in the depth received in areas of specialization has proved invaluable throughout my internship experience. I have felt confident and capable of stepping into



Cara Bortz

leadership roles and speaking to clinical research in hospital multidisciplinary meetings. I am grateful to all of the Florida Tech professors and staff who have fostered a supportive and enriching learning environment and greatly look forward to the futures of all of our students.

“Class, Now Take Out Your Cell Phones”

Travis Conradt, Ph.D., Assistant Professor

As college educators in today's technology-centric learning environment, we often struggle to hold a student's undivided attention during class as they check their cell phones and email, text and surf the Internet. One strategy can be to ban the use of cell phones, tablets and even laptops in the classroom. In fact, research supports this strategy as recent evidence indicates that taking handwritten notes improves learning and retention of material over typing notes on a computer (Mueller & Oppenheimer, 2014). However, eliminating technology altogether from the classroom may limit learning opportunities for students. In particular, the current generation of college students is extremely tech savvy and will likely need to use technology on a daily basis in their future profession. The question for educators is how can we integrate the use of technology in the classroom so that it is a constructive tool that promotes learning without inviting distraction?

In an effort to answer this question, I worked with Instructional Technology staff members last semester to pilot new classroom technology known as Top Hat. Top Hat is an in-class student response system that allows students to use their own devices (cell phones, tablets, computers) to engage in classroom activities. This provides students with designated times during each class in which they can use their devices for specific classroom purposes. Educators can use Top Hat during class to track student attendance, present lecture material to students' devices, pose quiz questions with immediate feedback, take classroom polls, engage in discussions, and allow students to ask questions or seek clarification during lecture. Overall, the student feedback to the use of Top Hat in class was overwhelmingly positive. Personally, I noticed that Top Hat allowed all students to become engaged and involved in the class. By having every student answer questions, all students had

to pay attention and be prepared and not just students who raised their hand. Also, because responses could be anonymous, it allowed students who may be unwilling to raise their hand and speak in front of the class to become involved in discussions or share an unpopular viewpoint that helped generate more robust discussions.

Based on the positive feedback from the pilot program, the School of Psychology is preparing to fully integrate Top Hat into many undergraduate courses. While seemingly counterintuitive, by inviting students to use their cell phones (or other devices) during class for constructive purposes, it provides faculty an opportunity to expand learning and engagement in the classroom while helping students feed the need to use their devices during class.

Behavior Analysis Research for Improving Hospital Patients' Satisfaction

Allison King, M.S., Doctoral Student in Applied Behavior Analysis

In 2011, health care abruptly changed with the introduction of the Hospital Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) program. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) designed this pay-for-performance system, which rewards hospitals for providing high-quality care to patients with Medicare. Eligible Medicare patients of hospitals participating in this program receive a patient satisfaction survey—the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS)—once they are discharged from the hospital. The survey consists of questions that ask the patient to rate the quality of the care they received during their stay at the hospital. The patients' responses greatly impact the hospitals overall quality score. Therefore, it is critical for hospitals participating in VBP to consistently implement best practices that result in an enhanced patient experience and higher patient satisfaction survey scores.

During the fall of 2013, a large health system in Florida participating in the VBP program met with Florida Tech's applied behavior analysis (ABA) faculty. Its largest hospital's overall HCAHPS scores were below the 50th percentile, so its quality scores were lagging. In an effort to fulfill its mission of delivering consistent high-quality and patient-centered care and to increase its VBP incentive payments, the hospital aimed to improve its overall HCAHPS scores to the 90th percentile.

The issue the hospital was facing was not a result of not knowing what best practices to implement—the research showed that consistent and purposeful hourly rounding on patients and conducting shift reports at patients' bedsides were best practices that would improve patient satisfaction. These practices were already included in the hospital's policies and training. The issue was identifying the variables that were contributing to the patients' poor responses to the HCAHPS

questions. Were the established best practices not happening consistently enough or were other organizational processes interfering with patient satisfaction?

To answer these questions and make a positive, sustained change, one must be skilled in observing and understanding how the environment impacts behavior. Students studying behavior analysis learn a natural science-based approach to examining and conceptualizing human behavior. They are trained to identify and understand how environmental events influence behavior. With these skills, they can design functional interventions to change behavior and implement practices that result in sustainable change. Two graduate students in the ABA and organizational behavior management (OBM) program were given the opportunity to conduct an organizational needs assessment and implement an intervention to help the hospital reach its goal of improving patient experiences and HCAHPS scores.

The FIT students spent 30 days conducting a needs assessment on a nursing unit that was consistently receiving HCAHPS scores below the 20th percentile. The assessment consisted of analyzing the questions on the HCAHPS survey, conducting behavioral observations of nurses, certified nursing assistants (CNAs), and nurse managers and directors, and collecting objective data on the occurrence of best practices during their patient interactions. After analyzing the assessment results, the students developed a performance improvement plan.

The students implemented a behavior change initiative that gave managers and directors the tools to pinpoint and track leading indicators of patient satisfaction scores, objectively identify performance gaps to design appropriate training methods, and establish an opportunity for oversight and accountability

by regularly tracking employee performance. Using this approach also allowed managers to give objective feedback to employees about their performance of practices linked to patient satisfaction and reinforce specific behaviors that drove the patient satisfaction scores. After just one month of training key players and implementing this approach consistently, the nursing unit reached the 99th percentile in the HCAHPS domain that was targeted.

Since then, the students' approach to solving patient satisfaction problems in this hospital has quickly advanced and has been implemented on a larger scale. One year later, both students and another OBM student work at the hospital. One took a full-time position as the customer experience analyst and the other two continue to work as part-time interns. They have created and taught a two-week course to the managers and directors of all departments in the hospital about managing employee performance by using the science of behavior change. After the course, all managers pursued a project of their own to improve critical hospital outcomes, such as patient safety, patient satisfaction and stewardship, by using a behavioral approach. The managers are currently implementing their plans with help from the students, and many have seen rapid results. The environmental services team recently won a patient experience award for improving their HCAHPS scores and attributed much of their success to using the behavioral approach they learned from the FIT student consultants.

Clinical Psychology Just Got A Little More Interesting

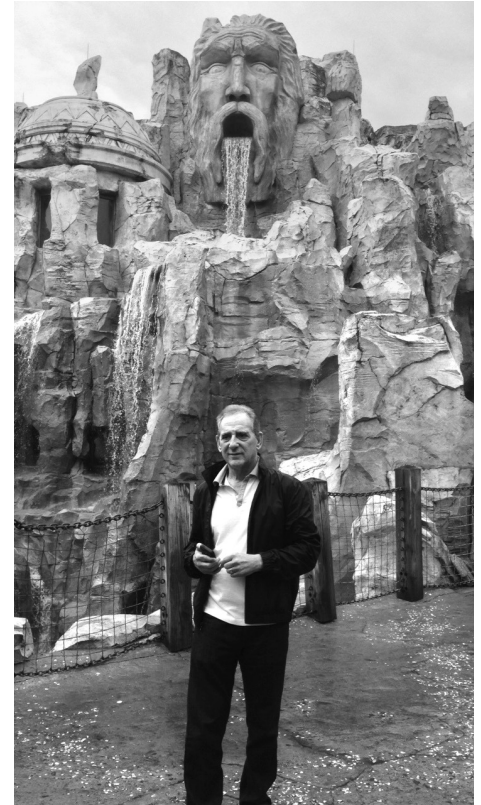
Christina Baker, M.S., Clinical Psychology Student

One cannot think of the Florida Tech clinical psychology program without referencing Dr. Philip Farber. It is something about his demeanor, his tone and his concerned expressions that allow students to feel a Rogerian unconditional positive regard when in his presence. It is this sense of safety and security, built on a foundation of mutual trust, which has made it possible for him to broach a topic like death and dying. Taught in the spring, "Death and Dying" is in its second year, receiving rave reviews from those who have had the benefit of participating in it last year.

Dr. Farber states that his interest in providing such a course really stems from his growing interest in existential and humanistic philosophies and psychotherapies. Specifically, he references the notion that death is typically seen by many as one of the few givens of existence; however, he notes, it is not commonly deemed a proper topic of conversation mainly because many people have yet to reach a good sense of peace with their own mortality. As a reflection of this, he adds that our own discipline has been less open to embracing this topic as an area of study, when compared to the other social sciences. Dr. Farber also candidly references his own experience with mortality as a catalyst for examining this topic more closely. In true Dr. Farber fashion, he very clearly

explains, "pedagogical acceptance of this field must start from the top (i.e., the educator), and when mutual consideration and respect with students within the class is offered, anything can happen." Thus, this course provides students the unique opportunity to turn toward the literature to examine this uncomfortable subject, in order to help students provide guidance to their clientele who will inevitably struggle with it, as well as to themselves.

When discussing this course, Dr. Farber makes it explicitly clear this class is not a therapy group for those taking it, but rather a chance to assess and hopefully increase the students' own sense of comfort when discussing loss in a therapeutic atmosphere. He further describes how research in this field is somewhat lacking, both in literature and in practice. There has been really no other class that covers this prevalent topic exclusively, until now, and its offering reflects the Psy.D. program's growing commitment to more philosophical and existential issues. When considering taking this course, know that you will be challenged in many ways. Most challenging of all will be the acceptance that this class will leave you, as Dr. Farber believes, with the somewhat paradoxical, "If you leave with more questions than answers, I have done my job."



Philip Farber, Ph.D.

Center for Applied Criminal Case Analysis

Carlos Salazar, M.S., Clinical Psychology Student

The Florida Institute of Technology is known for being on the forefront of scientific knowledge and research. This year, Florida Tech is home to a unique center that will allow it to become a nationally recognized resource in applied criminal justice research. The Center for Applied Criminal Case Analysis (CACCA) is directed by Marshall Jones, faculty member in the undergraduate psychology programs, with support from students and other faculty. The center endeavors to be an invaluable resource to criminal justice organizations including the FBI, state and local police departments. Through the use of applied research and analysis of available data, the CACCA manages to maintain a niche for itself in the process of applied research. The main goal of the center is providing a low-cost set of responses to field-driven inquiries from different criminal justice entities in order to better serve not only the criminal justice system but also the community at large. This goal results in a center where responses are generated much more quickly and with the intent to solve real-world problems. Made up of undergraduates, graduate students and alumni, the CACCA encompasses the spirit of academic collaboration where a true investment in the work involved is the driving force.

New Faculty

Christopher Podlesnik, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Undergraduate Psychology and Behavior Analysis Programs

I was born and raised in Latrobe, Pa. I received my B.A. in psychology from West Virginia University, my master's and Ph.D. in psychology from Utah State University, and gained postdoctoral research experience in behavioral pharmacology at the University of Michigan. I was a faculty member at the University of Auckland in New Zealand before coming to Florida Institute of Technology with my wife, Corina, two kids, Porter and Vera, and our dog, Frankie. My research and teaching interests mainly involve the importance of understanding basic learning processes when developing behavioral treatments. I play the guitar poorly and used to mountain bike a lot before coming to Florida.



Christopher Podlesnik

Evelyn Sprinkle, Ph.D., BCBA

Visiting Assistant Professor

Dr. Sprinkle is a visiting assistant professor for the School of Behavior Analysis and will be teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses. She received her Ph.D. from Florida Institute of Technology. Current research interests include applications of EBI to early intervention programs and increasing effectiveness and efficiency of teaching methods for exceptional learners. When she is not working, she enjoys the outdoors and time with friends and family.



Evelyn Sprinkle

Zhiqing Zhou, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, Industrial/Organizational Psychology Program

Dr. Zhiqing Zhou joined the Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at Florida Institute of Technology in August 2014. He received his Ph.D. from the University of South Florida. Dr. Zhou's research interests include workplace mistreatment, employee health and well-being, and organizational climate. He has conducted a number of studies to better understand outcomes of various types of workplace mistreatment (including aggression, violence, incivility and abusive supervision), and how to reduce them and mitigate their impact on employees. Dr. Zhou also conducts research on the role of personality and stressors in predicting employees' work behaviors and well-being. Dr. Zhou currently teaches Statistical Research Method 1 & 2. .



Zhiqing Zhou

Outstanding Alumni Award 2014

Jim Taylor, M.S., College of Psychology & Liberal Arts

Jim Taylor '89 M.S., I/O Psychology, was awarded the College of Psychology and Liberal Arts Outstanding Alumni Award for 2014. Jim is currently senior vice president and managing director of Career Partners International – Florida and Caribbean. Jim directs the company's business development, executive search and executive coaching activities, and runs a national 20+ person team for executive, professional and volume recruiting for multiple industries. He is a valued business partner with expertise in aligning people strategies with business goals. Jim has over 24 years of experience in talent management, executive recruiting, assessment, career transition and executive coaching. His experience also includes 10 years at Johnson & Johnson Worldwide Headquarters, in addition to a number of years in the wealth management practice of Merrill Lynch. Jim is on the board of the Children's Home Society of Brevard. He served for two years as board chair and is currently chairman of a fundraising capital steering committee. Jim also serves on the Florida Tech–Orlando advisory committee. Jim was presented with his award at the annual FIT Homecoming Gala in October.



Jim Taylor

Making a Difference for the School of Psychology

Jeffrey T. Spoeri, J.D., Director of Development

Whether you are a recent graduate or a long-time alum, whatever your degree or career, the School of Psychology undoubtedly has played a major role in your life. As part of Florida Tech's "Create the Future" campaign, the school is committed to increasing its philanthropic support, and we invite you to join your fellow alumni in this important effort.

The opportunities for support are limited only by your creativity and imagination. Are you interested in helping students enjoy the same experiences you had? You can donate to a variety of scholarship and fellowship funds that give students much-needed financial assistance. Committed to a particular program or center? Each of our academic departments, programs and centers has its own fundraising priorities, providing you with a direct way to make a profound impact on them and the students and community members who benefit from them. Want to contribute to cutting-edge research in the field? We welcome your gifts to research funds.

Just as there are many possible destinations for your support, there are many methods of support. Giving or pledging cash is, of course, the most direct, but you might consider gifts of stock or securities, tangible or real property, or deferred gifts through trusts, bequests, life insurance and other instruments. All of these help the School of Psychology fulfill its mission to educate, train and prepare the finest professionals in our field.

For more information on giving to the School of Psychology, please contact me at (321) 674-6162 or jspoeri@fit.edu. I look forward to hearing from you!



Jeffrey T. Spoeri

Alumni Update

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Gina (Wendland) Klimp, Psy.D.

We are once again living near Fort Bragg, North Carolina, where my husband is currently stationed. Since leaving the Army, I have worked on and off as a civilian psychologist on several different military installations, along with some private practice work. Most of our time is devoted to our two sons; Noah is almost 12 now and Ryan is 10. They are both active in school, sports and Scouts, and continue to grow like weeds. We feel blessed, and are thankful to God for what He has entrusted to us.



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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 FIT 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 continue to fully support the FIT School of Psychology's goal of providing graduate research assistantships and resource support for training and research in the department's important programs.

I give my annual support to FIT's School of Psychology for the coming year in the amount of: \$50 \$75 \$100 Other \$ _____

Please make check payable to FIT School of Psychology Endowment Fund and return with this renewal invoice in the enclosed envelope, or mail to:

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